

## Foreword

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS), as amended, deals with various aspects of maritime safety and contains in chapter VII the mandatory provisions governing the carriage of dangerous goods in packaged form or in solid form in bulk. The carriage of dangerous goods is prohibited except in accordance with the relevant provisions of chapter VII, which are amplified by the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code.

Regulation II-2/19 of the SOLAS Convention, as amended, specifies the special requirements for a ship intended to carry dangerous goods, the keel of which was laid or which was at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 July 2002.

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78), deals with various aspects of prevention of marine pollution, and contains in its Annex III the mandatory provisions for the prevention of pollution by harmful substances carried by sea in packaged form. Regulation 1(2) prohibits the carriage of harmful substances in ships except in accordance with the provisions of Annex III, which are also amplified by the IMDG Code.

In accordance with the Provisions concerning Reports on Incidents Involving Harmful Substances (Protocol I to MARPOL 73/78), incidents involving losses of such substances from ships must be reported by the master or other person having charge of the ship concerned. Each substance defined as harmful to the marine environment is identified as a marine pollutant in column 4 of its entry in the Dangerous Goods List and in the Index of the IMDG Code by the letter **P**.

The IMDG Code that was adopted by resolution A.716(17) and amended by Amendments 27 to 30 was recommended to Governments for adoption or for use as the basis for national regulations in pursuance of their obligations under regulation VII/1.4 of the 1974 SOLAS Convention, as amended, and regulation 1(3) of Annex III of MARPOL 73/78. The IMDG Code, as amended, attained mandatory status from 1 January 2004 under the umbrella of SOLAS, 1974; however, some parts of the Code continue to be recommendatory. Observance of the Code harmonizes the practices and procedures followed in the carriage of dangerous goods by sea and ensures compliance with the mandatory provisions of the SOLAS Convention and of Annex III of MARPOL 73/78.

The Code, which sets out in detail the requirements applicable to each individual substance, material or article, has undergone many changes, both in layout and content, in order to keep pace with the expansion and progress of industry. IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) is authorized by the Organization's Assembly to adopt amendments to the Code, thus enabling IMO to respond promptly to developments in transport.

The MSC at its eighty-fourth session agreed that, in order to facilitate the multimodal transport of dangerous goods, the provisions of the IMDG Code, 2008, may be applied from 1 January 2009 on a voluntary basis, pending their official entry into force on 1 January 2010 without any transitional period. This is described in resolution MSC.262(84) and the Preamble to this Code. It needs to be emphasized that, in the context of the language of the Code, the words "shall", "should" and "may", when used in the Code, mean that the relevant provisions are "mandatory", "recommendatory" and "optional", respectively.

The IMDG Code is also available as a fully searchable database on CD-ROM (including the items within its Supplement). Intranet and Internet (subscription) versions are also available. For more information, please visit the IMO Publishing Service website at [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org) to see a live demonstration of the CD-ROM version and obtain details of how online subscription to the IMDG Code will work. If and when required, the IMO website will also include any files that show errata or corrigenda to this edition of the IMDG Code.