GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF MARITIME AFFAIRS
(PORTS & SHIPPING WING)
****

No. 3(3)/2021-CNS Karachi, 19th November, 2026.

MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

Circular No. 006/2026

==========

Notice to All Pakistani Flag Shipowners, Ship Managers and Operators, Recognized Organizations authorized by the Government of Pakistan, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation and other concerned shipping companies, Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority, Gwadar Port Authority and other relevant port / terminal operators, Surveyors, Maritime Training Institutes in Public and Private sector.

==========

Subject: IMPLEMENTATION OF SOLAS CHAPTER II-1, REGULATION 3-13 – REQUIREMENTS FOR LIFTING APPLIANCES AND ANCHOR-HANDLING WINCHES ON BOARD SHIPS

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Marine Circular is to bring to the attention of Pakistani-flagged ships, shipowners, operators, ship managers, Masters, Recognized Organizations (ROs), surveyors and other concerned stakeholders the mandatory requirements introduced through IMO Resolution MSC.532(107), which amended SOLAS Chapter II-1 by introducing a new Regulation 3-13 entitled Lifting Appliances and Anchor Handling Winches.

1.2 The amendments establish internationally applicable safety requirements concerning the design, construction, installation, testing, examination, operation, inspection and maintenance of lifting appliances, anchor-handling winches and their associated loose gear installed on board ships.

1.3 The requirements entered into force on 1 January 2026. Accordingly, all concerned parties are required to ensure compliance in accordance with the applicable provisions and transitional arrangements of SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.

2. Applicability

2.1 This Regulation applies to lifting appliances, anchor-handling winches and loose gear utilized in association with such equipment, subject to the exclusions and qualifications expressly provided in SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.

2.2 For the purpose of the Regulation, a lifting appliance includes shipboard load-handling equipment used for:

a. Cargo loading, transfer or discharge;
b. Raising and lowering cargo-hold hatch covers or movable bulkheads;
c. Engine-room cranes;
d. Stores cranes;
e. Hose-handling cranes;
f. Launching and recovery of tender boats and similar applications; and
g. Personnel-handling cranes.

2.3 An anchor-handling winch means any winch used for deploying, recovering and repositioning anchors and mooring lines in subsea operations.

2.4 Loose gear means any item of ship's equipment by which a load may be attached to a lifting appliance or anchor-handling winch, but which does not form an integral part of the appliance or the load.

2.5 The definition of installation date shall be determined in accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/2.33. In particular, for ships whose keel is laid or which are at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2026, the relevant date is the date of installation on the ship. For other ships, the contractual delivery date of the appliance or winch, or, where no contractual delivery date exists, its actual delivery date to the ship, is used.

3. Exclusions from application

3.1 In accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.1.2, the Regulation does not apply to:

a. Lifting appliances installed on ships certified as Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs);
b. Lifting appliances used on offshore construction ships, including pipe-laying, cable-laying, repair, offshore installation and decommissioning vessels, where such equipment complies with standards acceptable to the Administration;
c. Integrated mechanical equipment used for opening and closing cargo-hold hatch covers; and
d. Life-saving launching appliances complying with the International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code.

3.2 The above exclusions shall be applied strictly in accordance with the Regulation. Equipment shall not be considered exempt merely because it is installed on an offshore-related vessel or is used for a specialized operation.

3.3 Under Regulation II-1/3-13.1.3, the Administration shall determine the extent to which the provisions of paragraphs 2.1 and 2.4 may not apply to lifting appliances having a Safe Working Load (SWL) below 1,000 kg. This provision shall not be interpreted as an automatic blanket exemption for all appliances below 1,000 kg.

4. Requirements for new lifting appliances

4.1 In accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.2.1, lifting appliances installed on or after 1 January 2026 shall:

a. Be designed, constructed and installed in accordance with the requirements of a classification society recognized by the Administration under SOLAS Chapter XI-1, Regulation 1, or in accordance with standards acceptable to the Administration providing an equivalent level of safety; and
b. Be load-tested and thoroughly examined after installation and before being placed into service for the first time, and following repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character.

4.2 In accordance with Regulation II-1/3-13.2.3, such lifting appliances shall be permanently marked with their Safe Working Load (SWL) and supported by documentary evidence establishing the applicable SWL.

4.3 Shipowners and operators shall ensure that design approval, installation inspection, load testing, thorough examination and certification are completed before the equipment is put into operation.

5. Requirements for new anchor-handling winches

5.1 In accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.2.2, anchor-handling winches installed on or after 1 January 2026 shall be designed, constructed, installed and tested to the satisfaction of the Administration, based on the IMO Guidelines contained in MSC.1/Circ.1662.

5.2 Shipowners and operators of anchor-handling tug supply vessels (AHTS) and other vessels undertaking subsea anchor-handling operations shall ensure that the relevant winches and associated loose gear comply with the applicable design, construction, installation, testing and operational safety requirements.

5.3 The Administration may require the relevant technical documentation, design appraisal, test records and inspection reports to demonstrate compliance.

6. Requirements for existing lifting appliances

6.1 In accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.2.4, lifting appliances installed before 1 January 2026 shall, no later than the date of the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026:

a. Be tested and thoroughly examined in accordance with the IMO Guidelines for Lifting Appliances contained in MSC.1/Circ.1663;
b. Be permanently marked with their Safe Working Load (SWL); and
c. Be provided with documentary evidence of the applicable SWL.

6.2 Shipowners, operators and Masters shall ensure that existing lifting appliances are brought into compliance within the prescribed transitional period. Existing equipment shall not be assumed to be exempt merely because it was installed before 1 January 2026.

7. Requirements for existing anchor-handling winches

7.1 In accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.2.5, anchor-handling winches installed before 1 January 2026 shall be tested and thoroughly examined, based on

the IMO Guidelines contained in MSC.1/Circ.1662, no later than the date of the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026.

7.2 Owners and operators of vessels fitted with anchor-handling winches shall maintain relevant inspection, examination and testing records and make them available to the Administration or its authorized Recognized Organization.

8. Maintenance, operation, inspection and testing

8.1 In accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.3, all lifting appliances and anchor-handling winches, irrespective of their installation date, and all associated loose gear shall be operationally tested, thoroughly examined, inspected, operated and maintained in accordance with the applicable IMO Guidelines.

8.2 Shipowners and operators shall establish and maintain a documented inspection and maintenance programme covering, as appropriate:

a. Routine visual and operational inspections;
b. Thorough examinations by competent persons;
c. Load testing at the intervals and under the conditions prescribed by the applicable IMO Guidelines;
d. Inspection of wire ropes, hooks, shackles, chains, slings, sheaves, brakes and other associated components;
e. Verification of SWL markings and identification;
f. Inspection of foundations, supporting structures and securing arrangements;
g. Maintenance, repair and replacement records; and
h. Procedures for withdrawal from service of defective or unsafe equipment.

8.3 All relevant records, certificates, test reports and examination reports shall be maintained on board and made available for inspection by the Administration, authorized ROs and duly appointed surveyors.

9. Inoperative lifting appliances and anchor-handling winches

9.1 In accordance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.4, reasonable steps shall be taken to maintain lifting appliances, anchor-handling winches and loose gear in proper working order.

9.2 A malfunction of such equipment shall not, by itself, be assumed to render the ship unseaworthy or constitute a reason for delaying the ship in port, provided that the Master has taken the inoperative equipment into account when planning and executing a safe voyage, subject to the provisions of SOLAS Regulation I/11(c).

9.3 The Master shall ensure that defective equipment is isolated, clearly identified and not used until it has been repaired, examined and declared fit for service by the competent person or authorized organization, as applicable.

9.4 The ship's Safety Management System (SMS) shall include appropriate procedures for reporting defects, risk assessment, isolation of unsafe equipment and authorization for return to service.

10. Responsibilities of shipowners, operators and ship managers

10.1 Shipowners, operators and ship managers of Pakistani-flagged ships shall ensure that all lifting appliances, anchor-handling winches and associated loose gear comply with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13.

10.2 They shall ensure that:

a. All relevant equipment is identified and included in an onboard register;
b. Design and construction documentation is available where required;
c. SWL markings are permanently displayed and supported by documentary evidence;
d. Required load tests and thorough examinations are conducted by competent persons or authorized organizations;
e. Inspection and maintenance programmes are incorporated into the SMS;
f. Defects are reported, assessed and rectified without undue delay; and
g. Masters and relevant crew members are adequately familiar with safe operation and limitations of the equipment.

11. Responsibilities of Masters

11.1 The Master shall ensure that lifting appliances and anchor-handling winches are operated only within their approved operational limits and SWL.

11.2 The Master shall ensure that:

a. Relevant certificates and test records are available on board;
b. Equipment is inspected before use, as appropriate;
c. Personnel involved in lifting operations are competent and adequately instructed;
d. Unsafe equipment is taken out of service;
e. Lifting operations are planned and risk-assessed; and
f. All defects, failures, accidents and unsafe conditions are reported in accordance with the SMS.

12. Recognized Organizations and surveyors

12.1 Recognized Organizations authorized by the Administration under SOLAS Chapter XI-1, Regulation 1, shall take appropriate measures to verify compliance with SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13 within the scope of their authorization.

12.2 ROs and surveyors shall, as applicable:

a. Verify the design, construction and installation of new lifting appliances;
b. Verify compliance of anchor-handling winches with MSC.1/Circ.1662;
c. Examine existing appliances and winches in accordance with the applicable transitional provisions;
d. Verify SWL markings and documentary evidence;
e. Review load-test and thorough-examination reports;
f. Verify onboard inspection, maintenance and operational records; and

g. Report any deficiencies or non-compliance to the Administration in accordance with the applicable reporting procedures.

12.3 The acceptance of an existing certificate or document shall be subject to verification of its adequacy, validity and conformity with the requirements of the Administration and the relevant IMO Guidelines.

13. Occupational health and safety

13.1 Shipowners, operators and Masters shall ensure that lifting operations are carried out in a manner that protects seafarers and other personnel on board from injury, falling loads, equipment failure and other foreseeable hazards.

13.2 The relevant provisions of the ISM Code, particularly sections 6, 7 and 10, and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, Regulation 4.3 and Standard A4.3, shall be taken into consideration when establishing onboard safety procedures, crew familiarization, operational controls and maintenance arrangements.

13.3 Risk assessments and safe systems of work shall be established for lifting operations, including personnel-handling operations and operations involving anchor-handling winches.

14. Action required

14.1 All Pakistani-flagged ships falling within the scope of SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-13 shall ensure compliance with the requirements of this Circular and the relevant IMO instruments.

14.2 Shipowners, PNSC, national shipping companies, ship managers, Masters, ROs, surveyors and other concerned stakeholders are advised to review their existing arrangements and take immediate corrective action wherever compliance has not been demonstrated.

14.3 ROs and surveyors shall bring any significant deficiency or unresolved question concerning application of this Regulation to the attention of Chief Nautical Surveyor of the Directorate General, Ports & Shipping, for further instructions.

15. Effective date

15.1 The amendments introduced by IMO Resolution MSC.532(107) entered into force internationally on 1 January 2026. This Circular is issued to communicate the requirements and facilitate their consistent implementation on Pakistani-flagged ships, subject to the applicable national legal framework.

15.2 This Circular shall be read in conjunction with SOLAS Chapter II-1, Regulation 3-13, and the applicable IMO Guidelines. In case of any discrepancy, the applicable provisions of SOLAS and the relevant IMO instruments shall prevail.

This Circular is issued with the Approval of the Competent Authority.



Capt. Rafaqat Hussain
Chief Nautical Surveyor
Directorate General Ports & Shipping Wing Karachi
Ministry of Maritime Affairs

Distribution:

1. The Director General, Ports & Shipping Wing, Karachi.
2. The Principal Officer, Mercantile Marine Department, Karachi.
3. The Chief Engineering & Ship Surveyor, (CESS)
4. Recognized Organizations authorized by the Administration.
5. The Chairman, Karachi Port Trust
6. Chairman Port Qasim Authority
7. Chairman Gwadar Port Authority.
8. The Chairman, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), Karachi.
9. All Public and Private Maritime Training Institutes.