

IMDG Code- What is it?

International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code



The International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code was developed as a uniform international code for the transport of dangerous goods by sea covering such matters as packing, container traffic and stowage, with particular reference to the segregation of incompatible substances.

Development of the IMDG Code

The development of the IMDG Code dates back to the 1960 Safety of Life at Sea Conference, which recommended that **Governments should adopt a uniform international code for the transport of dangerous goods by sea** to supplement the regulations contained in the 1960 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

A resolution adopted by the 1960 Conference said the proposed code should cover such matters as packing, container traffic and stowage, with particular reference to the segregation of incompatible substances.

A working group of IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) began preparing the Code in 1961, in close co-operation with the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, which in a 1956 report had established minimum requirements for the transport of dangerous goods by all modes of transport.

Since its adoption by the fourth IMO Assembly in 1965, the IMDG Code has undergone many changes, both in appearance and content to keep pace with the ever-changing needs of industry. Amendments which do not affect the principles upon which the Code is based may be adopted by the MSC, allowing IMO to respond to transport developments in reasonable time.

Amendments to the IMDG Code originate from two sources; proposals submitted directly to IMO by Member States and amendments required to take account of changes to the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods which sets the basic requirements for all the transport modes.

Amendments to the provisions of the United Nations Recommendations are made on a **two-yearly cycle** and approximately two years after their adoption, they are adopted by the authorities responsible for regulating the various transport modes. In that way a basic set of requirements applicable to all modes of transport is established and implemented, thus ensuring that difficulties are not encountered at inter-modal interfaces.

IMDG Code to be made mandatory

Amendments to SOLAS chapter VII (Carriage of Dangerous Goods) adopted in May 2002 make the IMDG Code mandatory from 1 January 2004. Also in May 2002, IMO adopted the IMDG Code in a mandatory form - known as Amendment 31.

In practice, this means that from **the legal point of view, the whole of the IMDG Code is made mandatory.**