IN FORCE | LOAD TESTING

Shipboard cranes and lifting appliances: the new SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13

What has to be tested, examined and marked, by when, and what the certificate has to show.

ISSUED	APPLIES TO	REFERENCE
September 2026	Cranes, lifting appliances and loose gear; SOLAS ships, new and existing	SOLAS II-1/3-13 · Res. MSC.532(107) · MSC.1/Circ.1663

AT A GLANCE

- SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13 entered into force on 1 January 2026. Cargo, stores, engine room and hose handling cranes are now under SOLAS, not only class rules.
- Existing lifting appliances are load tested, thoroughly examined and certified no later than the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026.
- After that: thorough examination every year, and a load test at least once every five years and after major repair or modification.
- The safe working load is permanently marked, and a register of lifting appliances with the certificates is kept on board.

01 What the regulation covers

Until 2026, shipboard cranes were governed by class rules and, for cargo handling, ILO Convention 152. SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13 brings them into the Convention. It covers lifting appliances used for cargo, hatch covers, stores, engine room work, hose handling, tender launch and recovery and personnel handling, with MSC.1/Circ.1663 as the supporting guidelines.

Launching appliances under the LSA Code stay under SOLAS chapter III and MSC.402(96). Mobile offshore drilling units are excluded. For appliances with a safe working load below 1,000 kg the Administration decides how the provisions apply. Anchor handling winches have their own guidelines in MSC.1/Circ.1662.

> **Deadline for existing ships.** Lifting appliances installed before 1 January 2026 are tested, thoroughly examined and certified no later than the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026 (MSC.1/Circ.1663, 3.3.2).

02 Intervals and test loads

ACTIVITY	WHEN	REFERENCE
Load test	After installation and before first use; after major repairs, modifications or alterations; at least once every five years	Circ.1663, 3.2.1
Thorough examination	On completion of every load test, and annually	Circ.1663, 3.2.2
Inspection	Regularly, by a responsible person appointed by the master or company, as part of planned maintenance	Circ.1663, section 3
Loose gear	Proof test documented and repeated after major repair; thoroughly examined annually; inspected before each use	Circ.1663, section 4

SAFE WORKING LOAD	TEST LOAD (CIRC.1663, TABLE 1)
Up to 20 tonnes	1.25 times the SWL
Over 20 and up to 50 tonnes	SWL plus 5 tonnes
Over 50 tonnes	1.10 times the SWL

Where the SWL is not documented, the test load is calculated from a safe working load nominated by the company, to the satisfaction of the Administration (3.2.1.6). Loose gear has its own proof load table in section 4.

03 Who may test, and what the paperwork shows

Load tests and thorough examinations are carried out by a competent person acceptable to the Administration. The result is recorded on a certificate of test and thorough examination (appendix 1 for lifting appliances, appendix 2 for loose gear) and filed in the register of lifting appliances and cargo handling gear (appendix 3). Thorough examinations may be aligned with the statutory survey windows.

> **Marking.** The SWL and any other information essential for safe operation are permanently and clearly marked. Variable radius appliances show the SWL at minimum and maximum radius, with a diagram of permissible loads displayed (3.4).

04 Planning the first certification on an existing ship

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
1. Inventory	Every lifting appliance and item of loose gear listed, with SWL, maker, year and existing certificates
2. Gap check	Missing SWL documentation, missing or illegible marking, expired certificates, loose gear without proof test evidence
3. SWL nomination	Where documentation is missing, the company nominates the SWL from maker data, to the satisfaction of the Administration
4. Test and examination	Load test and thorough examination by a competent person, with class attendance where required
5. Register	Certificates filed in the register; annual examinations and the five-yearly test entered in the planned maintenance system

Schedule the work in a port call before the renewal survey window rather than during it. A failed brake or a missing certificate found at the survey leaves no time to correct it.

WHAT TO DO NOW

- Find the date of each ship's next Safety Construction renewal survey.
- List every lifting appliance with its SWL and certificate status.
- Have the company nominate the SWL where documentation is missing.
- Check SWL marking and load diagrams; open the register of lifting appliances.

HOW OZ MARITIME CAN HELP

- Load testing with certified water bags and calibrated load cells
- Thorough examination of cranes, davits and winches
- Class surveyor attendance arranged where required
- Combined with the annual lifeboat and davit work in one attendance

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SOURCES

- IMO Res. MSC.532(107), SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13
- IMO MSC.1/Circ.1663, Guidelines for lifting appliances, sections 3 and 4 and appendices 1 to 3
- IMO MSC.1/Circ.1662, Guidelines for anchor handling winches
- Bureau Veritas, New SOLAS requirements for lifting appliances
- Indian Register of Shipping, technical circular on lifting appliances
- Britannia P&I, SOLAS amendment affecting lifting appliances

This bulletin summarises the requirements as we read them on the date of issue. It is general technical information, not legal advice, and does not replace the text of the instruments, your flag Administration's notices, your classification society's rules or the equipment maker's instructions, which take precedence for your vessel. Check your flag, not a general claim.