

A-7: THE TORREMOLINOS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE SAFETY OF FISHING VESSELS

Name of the convention: The Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels

Acronym or short name: SFV

International organisation in charge of it: International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Summary description (in plain language): The 1977 Convention, adopted at a conference held in Torremolinos, Spain, was the first-ever international Convention on the safety of fishing vessels.

The safety of fishing vessels had been a matter of concern to IMO since the Organization came into existence, but the great differences in design and operation between fishing vessels and other types of ships had always proved a major obstacle to their inclusion in the Conventions on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and Load Lines. While other vessels load cargo in ports, fishing vessels must sail empty and load their cargo at sea. The 1977 Convention contained safety requirements for the construction and equipment of new, decked, seagoing fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over, including those vessels also processing their catch. Existing vessels were covered only in respect of radio requirements. The Convention contains stability requirements for fishing vessels as well as Chapters concerning construction, watertight integrity and equipment; machinery and electrical installations and unattended machinery spaces; fire protection, detection, extinction, and fire fighting; protection of the crew; life-saving appliances; emergency procedures, musters and drills; radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony; and shipborne navigational equipment.

The convention contains an Annex: Regulations for the construction and equipment of fishing vessels.

Date of first approval: 2 april 1977

Date of coming into force: not yet into force

Dates of revision: 1993

Reasons of revisions: [The 1993 Torremolinos Protocol](#) :

The Protocol updates, amends and absorbs the parent Convention, taking into account technological evolution in the intervening years and the need to take a pragmatic approach to encourage ratification of the instrument. The Protocol applies to fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over including those vessels also processing their catch. The Protocol takes into account the trend to exploit deep water fishing grounds on a large scale and to conduct fishing operations in distant waters, resulting in the building of a new generation of more sophisticated fishing vessels. To be successful in their operations, these vessels have to be fitted with advanced fishfinding and navigation equipment. Fishing vessels must also be equipped to carry out environment-friendly trawling, introduced to preserve fishing resources as well as the seabed. The general trend in modern designed fishing vessels, if they are to be economically profitable, must include improvements in machinery and fishing gear, improvements in safety features as a whole and better working conditions for fishermen.

The safety provisions addressed by the Protocol, incorporating and amending the 1977 Convention, are included in an Annex consisting of ten Chapters. The provisions include automatically controlled machinery spaces, improved life-saving appliances, immersion suits and thermal protective aids, satellite communication systems and other components of the global maritime distress and safety system.

Applicability (situation of ratification): The convention shall enter into force 12 months after the date on which not less than 15 States have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance, or approval or accession in accordance with article 9, the aggregate of whose fleets of fishing vessels constitutes not less than 50 % by number of the world's fleet of fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over ([art.10](#)).

Stakes for ports: The convention is of relevance for ports notably by the exercise of Port State Control in the safety of fishing vessels.

Port state authorities are in charge of the inspection of ships. Port State Control Officers have to verify that there is on board a valid certificate. In case of there is not a valid certificate, the officer carrying out the control shall inform the other authority "consul or diplomatic representative". The officer have to ensure that the vessel shall not sail until it can proceed to sea without danger to the vessel or persons on board ([art.4](#)).

Links with other conventions: [STCW-F](#)

Key-words: safety, fishing vessel, certification and control, force majeure, casualties, information

Internet hyperlink with other website:

<http://www.imo.org/>

<http://www.fao.org/>

(full text) <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/seldoc/1977/2521.html>