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**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROVED CONTINUOUS
EXAMINATION PROGRAMME (ACEP)**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-second session (12 to 21 June 2013), having considered the proposal by the Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers, at its seventeenth session, approved the *Guidelines for development of an approved continuous examination programme (ACEP)*, as set out in the annex.

2 Contracting Parties to the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, are invited to bring these Guidelines to the attention of all parties concerned.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AN APPROVED CONTINUOUS EXAMINATION PROGRAMME (ACEP)

Background

The International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC), 1972, as amended, requires containers used for international transport, excluding containers specifically designed for air transport, to meet certain safety approval requirements and be periodically examined. Container owners can choose to follow a periodic examination programme (PEP) or may apply to the Administration (Contracting Parties) for approval of a continuous examination programme (ACEP). This document only addresses continuous examination programmes. Therefore, owners desiring to examine containers under a PEP should contact their respective Administration to determine if they have prescribed procedures for periodic examination programmes.

Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to establish a unified approach when developing a continuous examination programme by container owners for submittal to an Administration for approval and when approving continuous examination programmes by Administrations. These Guidelines provide recommendations to help expedite development and approval of examination programmes in accordance with CSC 1972, as amended. Additionally, adherence to these Guidelines will help to establish a means by which details concerning an approved programme can be easily conveyed and communicated by owners to persons responsible for maintaining their containers in accordance with an approved programme.

Discussion

Format: In order to provide for ease of evaluation, reference and filing, continuous examination programmes should follow these format recommendations at the time of applications. Programme submittals in hard copy format should be suitably assembled. Alternatively, Administrations may encourage use of electronic media for document submittals. The front cover should clearly identify the container owner. If the submitted programme is completed on behalf of the container owner by another organization, the submitting organization should be referenced on the front cover as well.

- 1 Cover letter**, requesting approval for the submitted programme.
- 2 Company information**
 - 2.1 Brief description of Company's business operations.
 - 2.2 Brief description of type and quantity of containers to be subject to the programme.
 - 2.3 Company head office contact information. Main phone, fax, e-mail, website and address. Phone number and e-mail of Company point of contact for ACEP issues, if different from head office.
 - 2.4 Basic organization chart or information detailing the responsibilities of key persons or positions associated with the programme.

2.5 Confirmation that the Company agrees to implement the approved programme and to maintain the safety of containers as prescribed by CSC 1972, as amended.

Note: Owners who operate, manage and maintain their container fleet under a certified quality system should be taken into account by the Authority representative in the evaluation of the documentation.

3 Container marking

3.1 Describe procedures for marking new and existing containers with identification to show that the container is examined under an ACEP as well as the procedure for restoration of damaged or lost ACEP markings.

3.2 Describe the placement of the ACEP label on the container and provide supplement with label image.

3.3 Describe how individual containers are uniquely identified.

3.4 Describe procedures and obligation of the container owner to remove (or not remove) the ACEP label if the container is sold/leased.

4 Container examinations

4.1 Detail which industry accepted pass/fail criteria is used for container examinations, repair and maintenance. If an owner criterion is used, provide associated methods, scope and criteria for conducting container examinations, repair and maintenance.

4.2 In case that no industry pass/fail criteria is used, describe the methods for maintenance criteria that address the design characteristics of the specific containers.

4.3 Describe any procedures for auditing container examinations, either internal or external by or on behalf of the container owner.

4.4 Detail the maximum time allowed between container examinations. Identify events that trigger a container examination. Describe the procedures to ensure that the maximum time allowed between examinations is not exceeded.

4.5 Describe the methods to ensure that container examinations are conducted by competent persons.

4.6 Describe procedures for repairing and re-examining failed containers.

5 Documentation

5.1 Describe the procedures for recording container examination results and methods for tracking examinations through the use of unique container serial numbers. If contractual personnel or contracted container yards conduct container examinations, detail the process for recording these examinations and the scope of information to be recorded.

5.2 Describe the process for the automated exchange of interchange and/or repair information. In case of non-automated procedures, provide a copy of container owner inspection form(s) or equipment interchange receipt(s) used in the programme.

- 5.3 Describe the means of identifying containers, their last examination dates and any repair work in their records.
- 5.4 Describe the procedure to control examination dates and the personnel responsible for control.
- 5.5 Specify the period of time that records will be retained under control of the container owner.
- 5.6 Identify the location where examination records are maintained and the personnel or organization responsible for control of that location.
- 5.7 Detail examination record availability to the Administration for inspection upon request.
- 5.8 If applicable, provide details on the inclusion of the programme into the container owner's quality management programme.
- 5.9 Detail procedures for maintaining a file of training certificates or records for personnel qualified to conduct container examinations and the availability for review by the Administration personnel upon request.
- 5.10 Describe the procedures for adding, removing and updating containers in the programme.
- 5.11 Describe the procedure to ensure that only containers equipped with a valid CSC Approval Plate will be included in the programme.

6 Leasing

- 6.1 Detail how the examination programme of the lessor (owner) Company is transferred to the lessee or bailee Company and is implemented under lease agreements.
- 6.2 Provide a sample copy of container lease agreements and identify where the leases are maintained and the personnel and/or organization responsible for control of the location.

7 Container compliance with CSC

- 7.1 Provide a declaration from the applicant that only containers approved under CSC are included in the programme.
- 7.2 Upon request by the Administration, the applicant should provide evidence of approval (e.g. copies of approval certificates or photos of Safety Approval Plates).

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Upon results of consideration of the continuous examination programme submitted to the Administration for approval and of the audit to evaluate that all the provisions of ACEP are fulfilled, the Administration should:
- .1 provide the approval letter; and
 - .2 inform the container owner of their ACEP registration number which includes:
 - .1 the letters ACEP;
 - .2 identification of the Contracting Party; and
 - .3 the assigned number.

8.2 Administrations should make the information on ACEPs publicly available. Such information should include, but may not be limited to:

- .1 Company's name and contact details;
- .2 identification system of ACEP; and
- .3 date of ACEP approval.

8.3 Approved continuous examination programmes should be reviewed by the Administration not later than 10 years after approval or reapproval to ensure their continued viability.

8.4 Owners of approved programmes should notify the approving Administration about significant changes as soon as possible. Such changes may include modifications to:

- .1 contact information;
- .2 responsibilities;
- .3 provisions for conducting examinations; and
- .4 fleet operator.

8.5 Administrations should establish a programme for conducting periodic reviews of approved programmes and periodically enquire about changes made to approved programmes.
