



# Marine Order 53 (Vessels in polar waters)

## Consultation feedback report

### Introduction

Marine Order 53 (Vessels in polar waters) gives effect to the Polar Code, other than Chapter 12 of Parts I-A and II-A, in accordance with Chapter XIV of SOLAS. It provides for the certification of vessels as evidence of survey and compliance with the Polar Code and sets out arrangements for the safe operation of vessels in polar waters.

The 107<sup>th</sup> session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) adopted two resolutions mandating new requirements related to safety of navigation and voyage planning for fishing vessels of 24 metres in length overall and above, pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade and cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage operating in polar waters. These requirements came into effect internationally on 1 January 2026. These resolutions are:

1. MSC.532(107), amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) including chapter XIV incorporating the above mentioned non-SOLAS vessels under partial application of the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code).
2. MSC.538(107), amendment to the Polar Code providing new requirements related to safety of navigation and voyage planning for the above-mentioned non-SOLAS vessels when operating in polar waters.

The review and reissue project amends M053 implementing the new requirements and reissues with all necessary and appropriate updates.

### Consultation approach

The external consultation utilised AMSA's targeted consultation lists for M053, which includes stakeholders with an interest in vessels operating in polar waters under the Polar Code.

During public consultation AMSA sought feedback on proposed requirements for relevant non-SOLAS vessels for operating in polar waters relating to:

- safety of navigation including any new equipment requirement, and
- voyage planning.



These changes apply to Regulated Australian Vessels (RAVs), recreational vessels that have Australian nationality and foreign vessel to which chapter XIV of SOLAS applies.

## Public Consultation

### Overview

The public consultation on the proposed amendments took place between 16 February and 15 March 2026 for 4 weeks. A copy of the draft amendment instrument was placed on the AMSA website for public comment. Notification of the public consultation was also emailed to 170 recipients provided in the AMSA's Marine Order 53 stakeholder lists, as well as those that have subscribed via our website. These stakeholders include shipowners, ship operating companies, training organisations, port authorities, seafarer representative organisations, relevant unions, classification societies, shipping industry peak bodies and interested government departments and agencies inviting them to comment.

One submission was received regarding the implementation timeframe for some changes and seeking clarification of some requirements. This feedback was considered during preparation of the draft; however, it did not result in any changes.

### Further information

These amendments are scheduled to take effect on 1 June 2026. Please visit AMSA's website:

- [Marine order 53 – Vessels in polar waters](#)

If you require further information, please [contact AMSA Connect](#).