



## AMENDMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL CODE FOR THE SAFE CARRIAGE OF GRAIN IN BULK (GRAIN CODE)

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted significant amendments to the [International Grain Code through Resolution MSC.552\(108\)](#)<sup>1</sup>, which will take effect on **1 January 2026** and will be applicable to both new and existing ships. These changes introduce a **new optional loading condition** aimed at improving flexibility and safety in the carriage of grain in bulk.

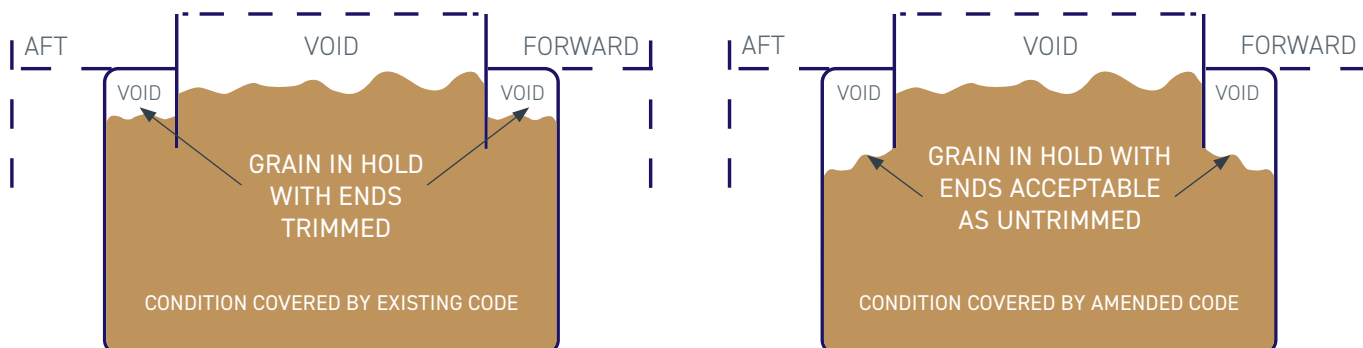
### KEY AMENDMENTS

The Grain Code currently recognises three loading conditions:

- Filled compartments, trimmed
- Filled compartments, untrimmed
- Partly filled compartments

The new amendment adds a fourth loading condition:

- Specially suitable compartment, partly filled in way of the hatch opening, with ends untrimmed



This new condition applies to any “specially suitable compartment”<sup>2</sup> that has not been filled to the maximum extent in way of the hatch opening but are filled to a level equal to or above the bottom edge of the hatch end beams. The grain surface is therefore likely to remain at its natural angle of repose outside the hatch perimeter unless trimmed. When untrimmed voids exist at the ends, the applicable heeling moment becomes unclear.



To address this, the new amendment recognises this specific loading condition and requires the Grain Loading manual to include the corresponding heeling moment values for such scenarios. This will allow an exemption from trimming the ends.

Organisations such as the '[National Cargo Bureau](#)'<sup>3</sup> have recommended proactive update of grain loading manuals to take account of the new loading condition. It is therefore likely that the authorities at many loading ports will apply extra scrutiny to ships who may fit this criterion, to ensure that the grain loading manual correctly reflects the actual loading condition.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SHIPOWNERS AND OPERATORS

Therefore, both new and existing ships intending to use this loading condition should update their grain loading stability manuals including revised grain shift moment and volume curves, reflecting the new loading scenario. The updated manual or an addendum must be submitted to the ship's Flag Administration or Recognised Organisation (RO) for approval.

In addition, onboard grain loading computers must also be updated to incorporate the new condition and calculation assumptions, and it is recommended that shipowners submit revised documentation well ahead of the 1 January 2026 deadline to ensure compliance and avoid operational delays.

## OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

This amendment addresses practical challenges in grain loading operations, particularly where trimming is labour-intensive or impractical. By formally recognising this intermediate condition, the IMO aims to enhance safety while offering greater operational flexibility.

## NEXT STEPS

Shipowners, operators, and designers should:

- Review the applicability of the new loading condition to their fleet
- Prepare and submit updated grain loading manuals or addenda
- Ensure onboard systems are recalibrated to reflect the new regulatory requirements.

---

1 [https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/MSCResolutions/MSC.552\(108\).pdf](https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/KnowledgeCentre/IndexofIMOResolutions/MSCResolutions/MSC.552(108).pdf)

2 A "specially suitable compartment" is defined as "...a cargo space which is constructed with at least two vertical or sloping, longitudinal, grain-tight division with are coincident with the hatch side girders or are so positioned as to limit the effect of any transverse shift of grain. If sloping, the divisions shall have an inclination of not less than 30° to the horizontal."

3 <https://natcargo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/NCB-Advisory-Grain-Code-Amendment-2026.pdf>

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further guidance, Members can refer to the IMO resolution MSC.552(108) in full or contact our Loss Prevention department by email [lossprevention@tindallriley.com](mailto:lossprevention@tindallriley.com).

## DISCLAIMER

THIS LOSS PREVENTION UPDATE IS PUBLISHED BY THE BRITANNIA STEAM SHIP INSURANCE ASSOCIATION EUROPE (THE ASSOCIATION).

Whilst the information is believed to be correct at the date of publication, the Association cannot, and does not, assume any responsibility for the completeness or accuracy of that information. The content of this publication does not constitute legal advice and Members should always contact the Association for specific advice on a particular matter.