

ABS introduces guide to tackle containership fire threat

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Classification society ABS has published the [ABS Guide for Fire-Fighting Systems for Cargo Areas of Container Carriers](#) to address firefighting and safety systems of cargo holds of container vessels. The publication contains a broad range of notations to tackle cargo fires.



ABS Vice President of Technology Gareth Burton, said that “container carriers have grown much larger in recent years and the volume of cargo carried has expanded significantly. In addition, the nature of the cargo has changed. Fires involving containers, especially with the volume and type of cargo now being carried, are becoming more frequent and can present a significant risk to the safety of the crew and the vessel”. He added: “Aligned with the ABS safety mission, we address this issue and provide guidance for the development of robust designs that are better suited to address this key industry challenge.”

ABS said that the guide was aimed at designers, builders, owners and operators in the marine industry and specifies the ABS requirements for addressing fire safety in four key areas — fire-fighting for containers stowed on deck, fire-fighting for containers stowed below, fire safety of the deckhouse and container hold flooding as a measure for fire-fighting.

The notations address early fire detection, more efficient fire suppression, better protection of crew, and the safety considerations associated with cargo hold flooding as a means of fire-fighting. The requirements are above and beyond current SOLAS and related industry regulations, considered by many in the sector to be anachronistic for the current spate of 20,000-plus TEUs.

Last month, the International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI) called for all stakeholders to work together and to encourage the IMO to strengthen fire protection in the cargo area of container vessels, amend SOLAS by explicitly including active and/or passive fire protection on board new container vessels and consider the need to address the firefighting equipment of existing container vessels.

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