

# MSC Guidelines for Furniture and Storage in Category 3, 9 and 5/9 Spaces

Procedure Number: SOLAS-04

Revision Date: 10/22/2012

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## References

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- ❑ SOLAS 2004 Cite: II-2/9.2.2.3.2.2 (3)
  - ❑ SOLAS 2001 Cite: II-2/26.2.2 (3)
  - ❑ MSC.1/Circ. 1274
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## Contact Information

If you have any questions or comments concerning this document, please contact the Marine Safety Center by e-mail or phone. Please refer to Procedure Number: **SOLAS-04.**

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## Reference Text

SOLAS II-2/9.2.2.3.2.2

(3) *Corridors* Passenger and crew corridors and lobbies.

(5) *Open deck spaces* ... shall have no significant fire risk

(9) Sanitary and similar spaces

MSC.1/Circ. 1274 Annex, Part 1:

1.1 External areas have routinely been assumed to have little or no fire risk, and have not been required to comply with SOLAS chapter II-2 requirements applicable to interior spaces.

1.2 While this assumption may be accurate for general open deck areas, the continual evolution of new types of passenger amenities on open deck areas may be introducing levels of fire risk that are not fully accounted for by the existing regulations.

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## Guidance

Limited storage of combustible materials is permitted in category 3, 5 and 9 spaces, however, this storage must not interfere with or endanger any escape or safety functions provided by the space. The combustible materials should be necessary for the functional utility of the space and should be limited to an amount needed for daily use. Combustible materials should be contained within lockers or cabinets meeting the requirements of restricted fire risk as defined in SOLAS II-2/3.40. Lockers, cabinets, including spaces behind the lining, used for storage of combustible material exceeding a deck area of 0.5 m<sup>2</sup> should be protected with an automatic fire suppression system. Lockers and spaces behind the lining with a deck area in excess of 1 m<sup>2</sup> should be provided with automatic fire detection in addition to the sprinkler protection. A locker or space behind the lining with a deck area in excess of 2 m<sup>2</sup> should be considered separate category (7) or (13) space and

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protected as required by SOLAS II-2.

The addition of unprotected storage in excess of 0.5 m<sup>2</sup>, sales kiosks, lounge seating, etc. is inconsistent with the category 3, 5 and 9 designations.

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## Background

The use of corridors and stairways which serve as primary or secondary escape routes is compromised by presence of combustibile material, furniture, or outfitting associated with other categories of spaces. In all cases, adequate clear width, free from combustibile material, furniture, decorations and other hazards must be provided. Furniture, decorations and other material outside the escape path must be fixed or otherwise controlled to prevent it from obstructing the escape path in the event of a fire or other emergency. Open decks and sanitary spaces have historically been considered to be of little to no fire risk. The addition of unprotected storage or excessive protected storage on an open deck requires additional evaluation as described in MSC.1/Circ. 1274.

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## Disclaimer

This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party. It represents the Coast Guard's current thinking on this topic and may assist industry, mariners, the general public, and the Coast Guard, as well as other federal and state regulators, in applying statutory and regulatory requirements. You can use an alternative approach for complying with these requirements if the approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations. If you want to discuss an alternative, you may contact The Marine Safety Center, who is responsible for implementing this guidance.