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INTERIM OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PASSENGER SHIPS WITH CABIN BALCONIES

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-first session (10 to 19 May 2006), taking into account the information available to date from the ongoing casualty investigation of the very serious cabin balcony fire onboard the passenger ship **Star Princess**, agreed that appropriate recommendations should be developed, on an interim basis, for the passenger ship industry regarding the hazards posed by cabin balconies where there may be a presence of combustible materials and an effective fire detection system or fire suppression system is not installed.

2 Therefore, in order to counter any fire risks associated with these balconies, the Committee agreed to the following recommendations for consideration with a view to implementation by the passenger ship industry:

- .1 increased vigilance such as the deployment of lookouts, fire patrols and television surveillance systems should be enhanced;
- .2 onboard training and response procedures for crew should be reviewed to ensure that the ship's fire-fighting teams are prepared to respond to a fire occurring in these balcony areas;
- .3 passengers and crew should be advised not to leave towels and personal belongings on balconies when they are not in their cabins;
- .4 housekeeping staff should be instructed to place personal articles left on balconies by cabin occupants back in the cabin during their last visit of the day to the guest cabin and to observe balconies during other visits to the cabin;
- .5 fire safety should be re-emphasized in communications to passengers and crew, including the distribution of appropriate informational pamphlets or other alternative media;
- .6 passengers and crew should be reminded of the hazards associated with throwing any items over a ship's side from balconies or other external areas;
- .7 passengers and crew should be reminded of the hazards of not properly extinguishing smoking materials where smoking is authorized and never to leave lit or smoldering smoking materials unattended; and
- .8 passengers and crew should be reminded of the hazards associated with the use of unauthorized heating elements such as electrical heating coils used in cups or mugs and open flames such as candles.

3 Member Governments and international organizations are invited to bring the above recommendations to the attention of passenger ship owners, operators and other parties concerned.