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Cape Town Agreement



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The 2012 Cape Town Agreement, adopted under the International Maritime Organization (IMO), establishes the first mandatory global safety standards for fishing vessels.

It provides essential regulations for vessel design, construction, and equipment, including requirements for stability, seaworthiness, life-saving appliances, and communications. Beyond improving safety, it also aims to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and forced labour.

The Agreement specifically applies to fishing vessels 24 meters in length and over, or their equivalent in gross tonnage. For the purposes of the Protocol, the Administration may decide to use the following gross tonnages in place of length as the basis for measurement for all chapters.

- A gross tonnage of 300 shall be considered equivalent to a length (L) of 24m;
- A gross tonnage of 950 shall be considered equivalent to a length (L) of 45m;
- A gross tonnage of 2,000 shall be considered equivalent to a length (L) of 60m;
- A gross tonnage of 3,000 shall be considered equivalent to a length (L) of 75m.



While many technical requirements target new vessels, some apply to existing ships, though States may grant certain exemptions for vessels operating solely within their exclusive economic zones.

Following decades of development, the Agreement met its ratification requirements and will officially enter into force on 24 February 2027. Once in effect, it will empower port States to conduct safety inspections, ensuring a level playing field and higher global safety standards.

Members requiring further information should contact the Club's Loss Prevention department.