

## **M-Notices – January 2010 Telegraph**

### **MIN 361 (M+F) — Maritime safety information: Participation in the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Voluntary Observing Ships' (VOS) Scheme**

This note highlights efforts by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) to recruit more vessels into the Voluntary Observing Ships' Scheme. Under the scheme, participating vessels collect data and send out regular weather reports using equipment provided free of charge by bodies such as the UK Meteorological Office. The reports are used by weather forecasters to improve the quality of the forecasts and warnings that are issued to mariners as part of the maritime safety information service. In addition, they are a valuable source of data for global climate change studies.

Unfortunately, the numbers of participating vessels has declined in recent years, and the MSC has asked national governments to publicise the scheme. It is suspected that some potential recruits have been deterred by the possibility that weather reports sent out by satellite could reveal too much about a vessel's movements. This concern has been addressed with new security measures such as the masking of ships' call signs. Recruitment of ships to the UK voluntary observing fleet is managed by the Met Office. Although UK observing ships operate on a worldwide basis, preference is given to ships that operate in the North Atlantic or near-continental waters, and which return to UK ports so that instruments can be checked and returned for recalibration if necessary. However, vessels operating outside these areas are still welcome, and those travelling to data-sparse areas outside the normal shipping routes are particularly valued.

Contact details for the Met Office are given in MIN 361.

### **MIN 363 (M+F) — Code of practice for controlling risks due to noise and vibration on ships**

This note draws attention to three new codes of practice dealing with noise, hand-transmitted vibration and whole-body vibration. The codes provide guidance from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency to help shipowners and operators comply with the 2007 Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel Regulations now being implemented. Subjects covered in the codes include:

- the assessment of risk from noise and vibration onboard ships
- the measurement and evaluation of noise and vibration
- the assessment of the severity of exposures to noise and vibration
- the identification of controls to eliminate or reduce exposures to noise and vibration
- involvement of crew members in the control of noise and vibration risks, including the provision of information and training
- the provision of health monitoring and surveillance for noise and vibration

The codes are available from The Stationery Office in print or electronic form. MIN 363 gives the ISBN numbers of the publications and full details of how to order them.

**MIN 364 (M) — Revalidating a certificate of competency: new procedure for dispensation**

This note provides information on the new application procedure for dispensation to sail in a lower than certified capacity for revalidating certificates of competency. It replaces paragraph 10.6 in MGN 9 (M).

Masters and officers holding certificates of competency issued under STCW 78 or STCW 95 must revalidate their certificates every five years. This procedure requires proof of recent sea service (details are given in MIN 364). If a master or officer has been away from the sea for a long time and cannot meet the sea time requirements necessary for revalidation, it is possible to obtain a temporary dispensation to sail in a lower than certified capacity in order to update experience. It is the procedure for applying for this dispensation which has now changed, and the new procedure is set out in full in MIN 364.

**MIN 367 (M+F) Research Project 617: Potential impact of out of band emissions from the 2.6GHz auction on S-band maritime radar**

This notice provides information on the results of research commissioned by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency in response to concerns about possible interference to maritime S-band radar as a result of the development of new communications systems in the 2.5 to 2.69GHz band.

The research concluded that interference to S-band radar from out-of-band emissions was inevitable, and the possibility of establishing protection areas for marine radar should be considered. Required protection distances were estimated using a number of different propagation models, and the separation distances ranged from less than 1km to more than 60km assuming flat terrain. A number of other potential mitigations were also identified.

**MGN 289 (M+F) Amendment: Accident Reporting and Investigation**

This note advises that the offices of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) have moved to: Marine Accident Investigation Branch, Mountbatten House, Grosvenor Square, Southampton SO15 2JU. Phone and fax numbers remain the same.