

M-Notices - June 2009

MGN 393 (M+F): Navigation Light Units: Maintenance and the Use of New technology Light Sources, such as Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs), as Navigation Lights on SOLAS and non-SOLAS Vessels

Some new technology light sources, such as LED lights, ensure long life and low power consumption – characteristics that are highly desirable for use in navigation lights to reduce battery drain, and to maintain light intensity over a wide voltage range to reduce maintenance costs.

But in the marine environment, they need to perform to their maximum capability, and this guidance gives information about installation criteria and compliance with International Maritime Organisation and colreg rules. Navigation lights fitted to UK-registered commercial vessels must be of a type approved in the MCA's Instructions for the Guidance of Surveyors – Survey of Lights and Signalling Equipment.

Manufacturers' instructions on installation and maintenance should be closely followed, says the M note. Replacement items, such as lamps or new technology light sources, should be identical or equivalent to the original. Chromatic accuracy of any replacement light source, when placed behind a lens, should comply with colregs.

Before the installation of new technology light sources in existing lanterns, the manufacturers of the mounting/lighting unit should be consulted to assess suitability. If there is any doubt about suitability or compatibility of replacement lamps with the lantern, the replacement should not be used, the M note warns. And if there is any doubt about the unit's compliance, when assembled, advice should be sought if possible from the lantern manufacturers rather than the replacement light source supplier.

The MCA advises caution if LED light sources are retrofitted to existing lanterns, as this may invalidate the type approval. It recommends that manufacturers' advice should be sought before substitutions are made.

The M note also includes guidance on maintenance and equipment checks.

MGN 392: (M+F) Radio Survey Service: Authorisation

There are new arrangements for radio surveys on UK vessels. The new arrangements, on which this M note gives guidance, apply from 1 April 2009, replacing SELEX communications arrangements.

From 1 April, the following persons or organisations are authorised to conduct radio surveys:

- for classed vessels except passenger ships and fishing vessels, the appropriate UK-recognised classification society
- for unclassified vessels and passenger ships and fishing vessels, persons authorised by the MCA
- for the radio installation of an emergency response and rescue vessel in accordance with the UK's offshore operations association UKOOA's survey guidelines, persons authorised by the MCA.

Procedures for arranging radio surveys, and for persons wishing to obtain authorisation to carry them out, are explained in the M note.

Information is also included on fees, the conduct of surveys, on certification and endorsement, on survey deficiencies, on surveyor independence, and on exemptions.

MIN 392 (M+F): Research project 577: The Control of the Spread of Non

Indigenous Species through Ballast Water

In 2004, the International Maritime Organisation adopted the convention for the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments – but for the UK the convention raised several issues.

To better understand the underlying issues, the MCA commissioned research, undertaken by Newcastle University, on the control of the spread of non-indigenous species through ballast water.

The research was conducted in two parts. Part A was limited to identifying the ports in which ballast water is 'imported' into the UK, then estimating how much ballast is discharged into those ports. Part B focused on providing information to enable the UK to prepare for implementation of the convention, including technical, scientific, regulatory, statistical and legal issues associated with sampling ballast water on ships for demonstrating compliance.

A full report and executive summary of Part A and B of the project can be downloaded from the MCA website: <http://www.mcga.gov.uk>

The IMO convention came about in recognition of the problems caused by the transportation around the world of non-indigenous species in ships' ballast water. The M notes explains: 'Species that do survive in the ballast tanks have the ability to impact on the aquatic environment by becoming invasive, out-competing native species and multiplying into pest proportions. Their effects can also impact on the economy of a country as tourism and commercial shellfish and fish industries can be undermined.' The note further warns that public health risks have arisen from shellfish contaminated by toxic algae, and that there is a possibility that the disease cholera can be transported in ballast water.

MGN 334 (M): Amendment New National Boatmaster's Licence – Local Information and Local Knowledge

This amendment corrects the information of local requirements for the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads.