

REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE IMO SUB-COMMITTEE ON NAVIGATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (NCSR 6)

Action Required: IR Commission members are invited to note the relevant outcomes of NCSR 6.

NCSR 6 was held at IMO Headquarters, London from 16 - 25 January 2019. The agenda items of interest from the meeting are summarised below.

ROUTEING MEASURES AND MANDATORY SHIP REPORTING SYSTEMS

New routeing measures

NCSR agreed to:

- Establish a new traffic separation scheme (TSS) in the Sunda Strait (NCSR 6/3/3) aligned with archipelagic sea lane 1 (ASL 1). The TSS has an associated precautionary area to accommodate existing crossing traffic patterns, and inshore traffic zone (ITZ) between the western limit TSS and Sumatra Island.

With input from the ICS Secretariat, Indonesia agreed to amend the southern entrance to the TSS to provide adequate sea room for ships existing the south-bound lane to be able to comply with Rule 15 of the COLREGS (crossing situation) given the existing flows of crossing traffic in the vicinity of the termination of the traffic lane. The proposed ITZ between the eastern limit of the TSS and Java Island was not established.

- Establish a new TSS in the Lombok Strait (NCSR 6/3/4) aligned with archipelagic sea lane 2 (ASL 2). The TSS has two associated precautionary areas to accommodate existing crossing traffic patterns, and an ITZ between the western limit of the TSS and Lombok Island.

With input from the ICS Secretariat, Indonesia agreed to amend width and position of the TSS to increase its overall width from 3nm to 5.4 nm. This reflected concerns that the new TSS and ITZ could unnecessarily concentrate traffic and increase the risk of collision. Existing traffic patterns demonstrate that the full navigable width of the Strait is used (9nm).

The proposal from Brazil for the establishment of an area to be avoided (ATBA) in the Santos Basin (NCSR 6/3/5) was not further considered. An amended submission is anticipated to be submitted to NCSR 7.

Entry into force

The approved new and amended routeing measures described above are anticipated to be adopted at MSC 101. If adopted, the new routeing measures will enter into force in December 2019.

GUIDELINES ON STANDARDIZED MODES OF OPERATION, S-MODE

NCSR considered the draft Guidelines for the standardization of user interface design for navigation equipment developed by the correspondence group (NCSR 6/7). The Guidelines provide for “always on” standardization of user interfaces on radar equipment, ECDIS and integrated navigation systems (INS).

The focus of the work was on finalising icons and symbols, and amendments to the Guidelines for the Presentation of Navigational-Related Symbols, Terms and Abbreviations (SN.Circ.243/Rev.1) and the Performance Standards for the Presentation of Navigation-Related Information on Shipborne Navigational Displays (resolution MSC.191 (79)).

Further to work done during the correspondence group, amendments to resolution MSC.191 (79)) were agreed. This makes compliance with the Guidelines part of the type-approval of new radar equipment, ECDIS and INS from 1 January 2024, and all other bridge displays from 1 July 2025.

It is anticipated that the new Guidelines will be approved at MSC 101. Amendments to resolution MSC.191 (79) are also expected to be adopted at MSC 101, with any delay likely to also affect the anticipated 1 January 2024 application to new radar equipment, ECDIS and INS.

DEFINITION AND HARMONIZATION OF THE FORMAT AND STRUCTURE OF MARITIME SERVICE PORTFOLIOS

General comment

It is worth noting that notwithstanding extensive discussion on the detail of resolutions and circulars on the definition and harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Services, the beneficial outcome of the work is unclear. e-Navigation explores the concepts for allowing this to happen, but does not mandate or otherwise encourage it worldwide. The IMO has not initiated a wholesale transition to electronic exchange of information covered by the majority of the Maritime Services. In the absence of such a change, preparing harmonizing non-existent information services is academically interesting but of questionable relevance to international shipping.

The Secretariat will continue to monitor developments, reporting to the Radio and Nautical Sub-Committee as required.

Requirements for tele-medical services (TMAS)

NCSR considered an International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) paper (NCSR 6/8/1) on the need for up-to-date medical care at sea in accordance with the relevant provisions of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006.

Concern was expressed that the action being requested was outside the scope of the work on Maritime Services and the IMO-IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM) as it addressed availability of broadband communications, rather than harmonization of the data and technical services required to support TMAS. Whilst this view was not shared during plenary discussions, it was reflected in discussions in the navigation working group. IMHA were invited to make a further submission to a future session to make specific proposals, given the communications aspects of the proposal.

There was some concern that this could emerge as a back-door means of establishing a carriage requirement for broadband internet on board ships. For example, it could be used to argue at ILO that the need to require broadband internet connectivity on all ships has been identified by the IMO.

IMHA is expected to make a further submission to NCSR 7, in response to NCSR's request. The ICS Secretariat will review any such submission and prepare an appropriate commenting document should this be necessary to address proposals which directly, or indirectly, would make broadband internet connectivity a mandatory requirement.

CONSEQUENTIAL WORK RELATED TO THE POLAR CODE

The capabilities of survival craft and rescue boat communications equipment

NCSR considered the report of the correspondence group (NCSR 6/10) and a related unified interpretation submitted by International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) (NCSR 6/19) on

the capabilities of survival craft and rescue boat communications equipment. The latter submission responded to concerns expressed in the correspondence group.

NCSR agreed the draft guidance with substantial changes to the draft Guidelines to provide clear, necessary and appropriate guidance. In this regard:

- Recommendations on temperature testing of portable and exposed navigation and communications equipment were simplified to focus on testing at a specific polar service temperature (PST) and making appropriate use of existing IEC environmental test standards; and
- Recommendations on mechanical shock testing applicable to echo-sounders and speed and distance measuring devices were removed, noting that protection of such devices is required by the Polar Code.

The proposed unified interpretation provided by IACS was included in a new appendix to the Guidelines. This makes it clear that design, technical and procedural measures can be taken to ensure that mandatory communications equipment on survival craft, including liferafts and rescue boats, is ready for operation. In the case of technical and procedural measures, these should be included in the vessel specific Polar Waters Operational Manual (PWOM).

Echo-sounders with forward looking capability

NCSR was requested to consider whether one of the two echo-sounders required by the Polar Code should have a forward looking capability. After some discussion, guidance on echo-sounders with forward looking capability was not included in the Guidelines agreed by NCSR.

Approval of the Guidelines

The Guidance for navigation and communications equipment intended for use on ships operating in Polar Waters is anticipated to be approved at MSC 101.

REVISION TO SOLAS CHAPTER III AND IV FOR MODERNIZATION OF THE GMDSS

Modernization of the GMDSS

NCSR agreed in principle to the amendments to SOLAS chapter III and IV for the modernization of the GMDSS. The amendments do not constitute material changes to carriage requirements or the way in which the GMDSS operates. There are no consequential changes identified to the relevant provisions of the STCW Convention and Code.

Phasing out of radar-SART

At NCSR 5, NCSR considered NCSR 5/11/1 (United States) on the phasing out of radar-Search and Rescue Transponder (SART) in favour of AIS-SART. The matter was further considered by both the IMO-ICAO Joint Working Group on SAR and the Joint IMO-ITU Experts Group. On the basis of the outcome of consideration and the advice of both groups, NCSR agreed in principle to amendments to SOLAS chapter IV which allow both radar-SART and AIS-SART to fulfil the carriage requirements for search and rescue transponders.

COMMUNICATIONS MATTERS

Enhanced group calling (EGC) capabilities of Inmarsat Fleet Safety and Iridium

NCSR agreed an interim circular providing interim information on the enhanced group calling (EGC) capabilities of Inmarsat Fleet. This was in response to concerns expressed by the United Kingdom (NCSR 6/9/6) that amendments to the International SafetyNET Manual would not conclude until 2022; resulting in a knowledge gap for Companies and others.

The same approach was also agreed to be used for providing interim information on the EGC capabilities of Iridium whilst the Iridium EGC Manual is finalised.

In both cases, it is anticipated that sufficient information will be available to allow Companies to make informed procurement decisions.

Interim information on Fleet Safety is anticipated to be approved at MSC 101. Draft interim information on Iridium is anticipated to be submitted to NCSR 7 for consideration and agreement. Approval could be achieved at MSC 102 in 2020.

Charging exemptions for distress, urgency and safety messages

NCSR considered the report of the Joint IMO-ITU Experts Group (NCSR 6/12) which included proposals by IMSO for amendments to Charges for distress urgency and safety messages (resolution A.707 (17)). The purpose of the amendments is to establish a common charging exemptions approach in a multi-recognised satellite service provider environment.

During discussions, the cost impact of the recognition of additional mobile satellite service providers in the GMDSS on governments was raised by a number of member States. In some cases, views were expressed that users as the beneficiaries of the distribution of information should meet some of the costs.

World Sailing delegates will monitor both work related to charging exemptions and for further views expressed on cost sharing.

REVISED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY POSITION INDICATING RADIO BEACONS (EPIRB)

NCSR considered amendments to the performance standards for Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB) prepared by the United States (NCSR 6/15), and the relevant comments provided by the IMO-ICAO Joint Working Group on Search and Rescue (JWG SAR) and the Joint IMO-ITU Experts Group.

The amendments provide for:

- Updates necessary to accommodate second generation beacons and associated standards prepared by COSPAS-SARSAT;
- To reduce the 121.5MHz homing cycle, to provide for the incorporation of Automatic Identification System (AIS) transmissions;
- Incorporation of requirements related to AIS, including support for GNSS; and
- Editorials and reference updates.

During consideration of NCSR 6/15, the ICS Secretariat and others raised two concerns. The first was the apparent retroactive application of the amendments to the performance standard which would require all existing EPIRB to be replaced. The second was the need for an appropriate period between entry into force of the new performance standard and application to new installations. This is

considered necessary to ensure that Companies are not required to comply before EPIRB's that are type approved against the amended performance standard are actually available. Consequently, the amended performance standard was modified to:

- Remove retroactive applications of the performance standard; and
- Separate the application date for new installations from the entry into force date of the amendments by a period of three years.

It is anticipated that amendments to the performance standard will be adopted at MSC 101, with entry into force in December 2019. Application to new installations is expected from December 2022.

UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS

Battery validity dates

NCSR considered the implications of not having a unified interpretation of battery expiry, and the potential implications for safety of mislabelled user replaceable batteries raised by CIRM (NCSR 6/19/1).

The importance of having accurate battery expiry dates marked on replacement batteries was recognised, but the communications working group did not consider the issue further due to time constraints. Further consideration is anticipated at NCSR 7.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NCSR 7

For Members planning to attend NCSR 7, the Secretariat advises that it is also expected to be an eight-day meeting. The proposed dates being 15 to 24 January 2020.