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MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA NACIONAL
MARINHA

INSTITUTO HIDROGRÁFICO

I.H. 0803 09-10-12

N.º 127/DG *Processo:* 150.01.01

EAtHC Circular Letter 4/2012

Assunto: Mandatory IMO Audit Scheme

Referência:

Dear Colleagues

Rising awareness of the importance of hydrography is a permanent item on our regional hydrographic commission. In spite of the efforts that have been made by the EAtHC's Coastal States it is my duty to draw the attention of the responsibilities of Coastal States, members of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), to comply with the hydrographic services identified on the Convention of Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

The key obligations of SOLAS contracting states are set out in the Code for the Implementation of Mandatory IMO Instruments. The compliance with these obligations is currently tested by voluntary IMO Member State Audits. However, the proposal adopted by the IMO 26th Assembly introduces phased Mandatory Audit Scheme starting in January 2015. For your convenience an explanatory note is provided on annex.

Yours sincerely,

Lisboa, 8th October 2012

O DIRETOR-GERAL
and EAtHC chairman

Agostinho Ramos da Silva
Vice-almirante

Annex: Mandatory IMO Audit Scheme (explanatory note)

ANNEX



IMO Audit Scheme - Change from Voluntary to Mandatory

Explanatory Note

IMO Member State Audit Scheme

“According to the plan adopted by the Assembly through resolution A.1018(26), the IMO Member State Audit Scheme would be phased in as an institutionalized, mandatory scheme, through the introduction of appropriate requirements in the relevant mandatory IMO instruments. Amendments to these instruments would be adopted in 2013, for entry into force in January 2015. A resolution on the Framework and Procedures for the Scheme would also be adopted by the IMO Assembly in 2013, while preparatory work for the commencement of an institutionalized scheme would be carried out during 2014.

The Assembly urged Member States that have not yet volunteered for audits under the current, voluntary scheme to do so, so that lessons can continue to be learned from it. It also requested the Secretary-General to take action, within the Organization’s Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme, to assist Member States to participate in the Scheme and with building capacity to address related needs.

The Assembly also adopted amendments to the Code for the Implementation of Mandatory IMO Instruments, 2007, which serves as the audit standard for the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme. The amendments update the Code, to take into account amendments to mandatory IMO instruments that have entered into force or become effective since it was last revised, in 2007.”¹

The SOLAS obligations of interest to National Hydrographic Offices are identified on the following regulation:

SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 9 - Hydrographic services

1. Contracting Governments undertake to arrange for the collection and compilation of hydrographic data and the publication, dissemination and keeping up to date of all nautical information necessary for safe navigation.

¹ <http://www.imo.org/MediaCentre/MeetingSummaries/Assembly/Pages/Assembly-26th-Session-Outcome.aspx>

2. In particular, Contracting Governments undertake to co-operate in carrying out, as far as possible, the following nautical and hydrographic services, in the manner most suitable for the purpose of aiding navigation:
 - 2.1 to ensure that hydrographic surveying is carried out, as far as possible, adequate to the requirements of safe navigation;
 - 2.2 to prepare and issue nautical charts, sailing directions, lists of lights, tide tables and other nautical publications, where applicable, satisfying the needs of safe navigation;
 - 2.3 to promulgate notices to mariners in order that nautical charts and publications are kept, as far as possible, up to date; and
 - 2.4 to provide data management arrangements to support these services.
3. Contracting Governments undertake to ensure the greatest possible uniformity in charts and nautical publications and to take into account, whenever possible, relevant international resolutions and recommendations.
4. Contracting Governments undertake to co-ordinate their activities to the greatest possible degree in order to ensure that hydrographic and nautical information is made available on a world-wide scale as timely, reliably, and unambiguously as possible.