

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS
AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS)**

Reference: IHB CL 26/1998

Dear Sir,

1. The Commission on Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings (CPRNW) at its 4th meeting in February 1998 was invited to address the issue of the definition and implementation of coastal warning areas for either NAVTEX or, alternatively, SafetyNET in lieu of NAVTEX broadcasts, as an important requirement within the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. The points noted by the CPRNW during that meeting were brought to the attention of IHO Member States by CL 26/1998.

2. During its 5th meeting in June 2000, the CPRNW re-visited this important issue and decided that the following points should be brought to the attention of Member States:

- 2.1 In accordance with the Strategic Plan of the IHO, Element 3.5, all regional aspects of navigational warning broadcasts should be a standing agenda item for the Regional Hydrographic Commissions.
- 2.2 NAVAREA Co-ordinators have the responsibility outlined under 1. above under paragraph 6.2.1 of the IMO/IHO World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Guidance Document, IHO Special Publication S-53.
- 2.3 Additional guidance on this matter is also given in IMO Resolution A705 (17), Annex 1, attached herewith.

3. After careful consideration of the issues involved, the CPRNW recommends that the following items be considered when developing, defining, implementing and reviewing coastal warning service areas:

- 3.1 A study should be undertaken, in conjunction with the NAVAREA Co-ordinator and neighbouring states, of the coastal broadcast services available in the area, or planned.

3.2 Opportunities for cooperation of information/coordination of Service Areas between neighbouring states.

3.3 Updating of the GMDSS Master Plan.

4. It is further recommended that active participation, advice and assistance be sought from the CPRNW, WMO, IMO and other interested parties, including National Coordinators for MSI from countries in and adjacent to the NAVAREA, and that proposals should be forwarded to the CPRNW Chairman for review before implementation.

5. The Directing Committee regards this as an extremely important issue having a direct and immediate impact on the safety of life and navigation at sea and encourages Member States to recognize the necessity to actively address the issue or take appropriate actions in due course.

6. It may be of interest in this context that the IMSO representative informed the meeting of the availability of the 3rd edition of the SafetyNET User's Handbook from the INMARSAT WEB site <http://www.inmarsat.org/support/index.html>. It is located under the "Tools" icon and has a file size of 545 kb.

On behalf of the Directing Committee,
Yours sincerely,

Rear Admiral Giuseppe ANGRISANO
President

Encl: Annex 1 (IMO Resolution A 705 (17) Annex 1)
(English only).

Note: Although Inmarsat was privatized about a year ago (now called Inmarsat Ltd.) and a new international organization, called International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), was established to ascertain intergovernmental oversight of public services (GMDSS services) which are now provided by Inmarsat Ltd., it was for formal reasons not possible to make the corresponding changes in this IMO Resolution.

IMO Resolution A.705 (17)

RECOMMENDATION ON PROMULGATION OF MARITIME SAFETY INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The maritime safety information service is an internationally coordinated network of radio broadcasts containing information which is necessary for safe navigation, received in all ships by equipment which automatically ¹ monitors the appropriate frequencies and prints out in simple English only that information which is relevant to the ship. This concept is illustrated in figure 1.
- 1.2 Maritime safety information is of vital concern to all vessels. It is therefore essential that common standards are applied to the collection, editing and dissemination of this information. Only by doing so will the mariner be assured of receiving the information he needs, in a form which he understands, at the earliest possible time.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Recommendation is to set out the organization, standards and methods which should be used for the promulgation and reception of maritime safety information.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 For the purposes of this Recommendation, the following definitions apply :
 - .1 Maritime safety information means navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts and other urgent safety-related messages.
 - .2 Maritime safety information service means the co-ordinated service of navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts and distress alerts.
 - .3 World-wide navigational warning service (WWNWS) means the internationally co-ordinated service for the promulgation of navigational warnings as set out in resolution A . 706 (17) .
 - .4 Meteorological information means the marine meteorological warning and forecast information described in regulation V/4 (b) (i) and (ii) of the 1974 SOLAS Convention.
 - .5 Distress alert means the initial shore-to-ship distress message broadcast in accordance with the Radio Regulations.

¹ The Organization has decided that manual operation will be acceptable for receiving broadcasts of MSI via the operational HF NBDP system (where available) until the full implementation of the GMDSS on 1 February 1999.

- .6 NAVTEX means the system for the broadcast and automatic reception of maritime safety information by means of narrow-band direct-printing telegraphy.
- .7 International NAVTEX service means the co-ordinated broadcast and automatic reception on 518 kHz of maritime safety information by means of narrow-band direct-printing telegraphy using the English language, as set out in the NAVTEX Manual, published by IMO.
- .8 National NAVTEX service means the broadcast and automatic reception of maritime safety information by means of narrow-band direct-printing telegraphy using frequencies and languages as decided by the Administrations concerned.
- .9 International SafetyNET service means the area-addressable global broadcast system, provided by INMARSAT, through the geostationary maritime communications satellite network for promulgation of maritime safety information.

3. BROADCAST SERVICES

- 3.1 Two systems are used for broadcasting maritime safety information. They are provided specifically to serve the requirements of chapter V of the 1974 SOLAS Convention in the areas covered by these systems, as follows :
 - .1 the international NAVTEX service transmissions in coastal regions; and
 - .2 the international SafetyNET service transmissions which cover all the waters of the globe, except for Polar Regions.
- 3.2 Information should be provided for unique and precisely defined sea areas, each being served only by the most appropriate of the above systems. Although there will be some duplication to allow a vessel to change from one system to another, the majority of messages will only be broadcast on one system.
- 3.3 NAVTEX transmissions should be made in accordance with the standards and procedures set out in the NAVTEX Manual. These transmissions are subject to approval by the Maritime Safety Committee. The means of obtaining this approval is described in the NAVTEX Manual.
- 3.4 International SafetyNET service transmissions should be made in accordance with the standards and procedures set out in the International SafetyNET Manual ².
- 3.5 Member Governments may also choose to provide supplementary equivalent broadcasts of maritime safety information in other modes using other frequencies. These may include national NAVTEX services on 4,209.5 kHz and 490 kHz and HF NBDP broadcasts.

4. RECEPTION FACILITIES

- 4.1 Ships are required to be capable of receiving maritime safety information broadcasts for the area in which they operate. This requirement is set out in chapter IV of the 1974 SOLAS Convention, as amended.

² Reference is made to COM/Circ.102/Rev.1 , as it may be amended.

- 4.2 The international SafetyNET service receiving facility should conform to part A of the INMARSAT design and installation guidelines for the EGC SafetyNET equipment and should meet the performance standards adopted by the Organization by resolution A.664 (16).
- 4.3 The NAVTEX receiver should operate in accordance with the technical specifications set out in CCIR Recommendation 540, as amended, and should meet the performance standards adopted by the Organization by resolution A.525 (13).

5. PROVISION OF INFORMATION

- 5.1 Navigational warnings should be provided in accordance with the standards, organization and procedures of the WWNWS under the functional guidance of the International Hydrographic Organization through its Commission on Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings.
- 5.2 Meteorological information should be provided in accordance with the technical regulations and recommendations of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
- 5.3 Distress alerts should be provided by the various authorities responsible for co-ordinating maritime search and rescue operations in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the Organization.

6. CO-ORDINATION PROCEDURES

- 6.1 In order to make the best use of automated reception facilities and to ensure that the mariner receives the minimum information necessary for safe navigation, careful co-ordination is required.
- 6.2 In general, this requirement for co-operation and coordination will be met by the standard operational procedures of IHO, WMO, ITU and INMARSAT.
- 6.3 Cases of difficulty should be referred, in the first instance, to the most appropriate parent body.
- 6.4 Member States wishing to provide maritime safety information services should nominate a national coordinator for each type of information concerned, informing the Organization of such nominations as they are made. The Organization will maintain and, through the Maritime Safety Committee, publish a list of the nominated coordinators.
- 6.5 The establishment of transmissions in the international NAVTEX service is coordinated by the Maritime Safety Committee. Detailed guidance on the provision of NAVTEX services is contained in the NAVTEX Manual.
- 6.6 The use of satellite maritime safety information services is coordinated by the Maritime Safety Committee.
- 6.7 The designation of service areas is an important part of the coordination process since it is intended that a vessel should be able to obtain all the information relevant to a given area from a single source. Information coordinators should, therefore, design their broadcasts to suit a particular service area. The Maritime Safety Committee will designate service areas for the international SafetyNET service and the international NAVTEX service. In doing so, the Committee will take full account of the character and volume of information and the pattern of maritime traffic in the region and the advice of IHO and WMO.

7. SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Proposals for amendment or enhancement of maritime safety information services should be submitted to the Maritime Safety Committee for evaluation.
- 7.2 The agreement of the International Hydrographic Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Telecommunication Union, as appropriate, and the active participation of other bodies should be sought, according to the nature of the proposed amendments.
- 7.3 The active participation of IHO, WMO, ITU and INMARSAT is considered necessary for the coordination of broadcasts of all maritime safety information.
- 7.4 Amendments adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee will be notified to all concerned, will provide at least 12 months' notification and will come into force on 1 January of the following year.
-