



IHB File No. S3/3055

**CIRCULAR LETTER 67/2005  
29 June 2005**

### **IMO SHIPS' ROUTEING MEASURES - PROVISION OF HYDROGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Dear Hydrographer,

The Safety of Navigation Sub-Committee (NAV) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) considers, under Agenda Item 3 at each meeting, proposals for the Routeing of Ships, Ship Reporting and Related Matters. If approved these are passed to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) for adoption.

The General Provisions on Ships' Routeing are set out in IMO Resolution A.572(14) (as amended) and at Chapter 3 of the annex to this Resolution it says:

- 3.2.2 In deciding whether or not to adopt or amend a traffic separation scheme, the IMO will consider whether the state of hydrographic surveys in the area is adequate;
- 3.3 In deciding whether or not to adopt or amend a routeing system other than a traffic separation scheme, IMO will consider whether the aids to navigation and the state of hydrographic surveys are adequate for the purpose of the system.

Resolution A.669(16) amends Resolution A.572(14) by adding a footnote to the above two paragraphs which says "The minimum standards to which hydrographic surveys are to be conducted, to verify the accuracy of the charted depths in the traffic lanes of a proposed or amended traffic separation scheme or in a deep water route or other routeing measure, are those defined in Special Publication No. 44 of the International Hydrographic Organization - IHO Standards for Hydrographic Surveys, Classification Criteria for Deep Sea Soundings, Procedures for the Elimination of Doubtful Data."

In order for IMO to fulfil its remit to ascertain whether the hydrographic surveys are adequate as required by Resolution A.572(14), MSC decided at its 57<sup>th</sup> session in 1989, in agreement with the IHO, to invite the IHO, in cooperation with the hydrographic office of the proposing Member State and using its worldwide set of charts, to provide an analysis of the hydrographic accuracy (paragraphs 10.2.10 - 10.2.12 of the report of MSC57).

This is a lengthy and somewhat circular process:

- State A submits to the IMO;
- IMO consults IHO;
- IHO consults State A;
- State A replies to IHO;
- IHO replies to IMO.

The IHB experiences difficulties in that:

- a. The time available to complete the above process can be as little as two months;
- b. The IHB no longer carries an up-to date worldwide set of charts;
- c. In many cases the Bureau has not received a response from the State concerned.

In order to ensure that all proposals for routing measures were properly documented and uniformly considered, the MSC in 2003 issued MSC/Circ.1060 providing guidance on the preparation of proposals on ships' routing systems and ship reporting systems for submission to the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation.

For Ships' Routing Systems it states at paragraph 3.4.3 that the proposal should include the following information 'adequacy of the state of hydrographic surveys and nautical charts in the area of the proposed routing system'.

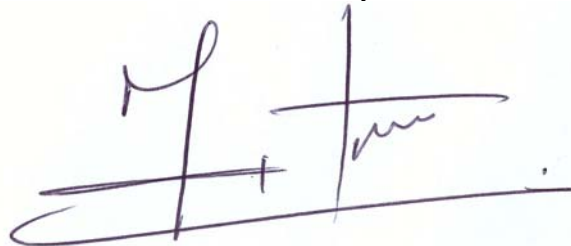
Consequently, if a proposal for a traffic separation scheme or routing measure is made in accordance with the guidance set out in MSC/Circ.1060 it should already contain the information that the IHO is invited to supply.

The IHB is of the opinion that Member States of IMO submitting Routing Measures for adoption should consult their national hydrographic services regarding the 'adequacy of the state of hydrographic surveys and nautical charts in the area of the proposed routing system' in accordance with MSC/Circ.1060 and include this information as part of their initial proposal. In those cases where an IMO MS considers that it does not have the necessary hydrographic capability to provide such information, then it may seek assistance from the IHB. The IHB therefore intends to propose to IMO to:

- a. Cancel the routine consultation process with IHO and;
- b. Remind Member States of IMO that proposals for Routing Measures must contain the required information regarding the 'adequacy of the state of hydrographic surveys and nautical charts in the area of the proposed routing system' and that this must be done in consultation with their national hydrographic office. Those states that do not have the necessary hydrographic capability to provide such information may seek assistance from the IHB.

The IHB would welcome any comments that Member States might have **by 15 August 2005**.

On behalf of the Directing Committee  
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A. Maratos', written over a horizontal line.

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS  
President