



IHB File No. S3/3084

**CIRCULAR LETTER 119/2007
14 December 2007**

**PROMULGATION OF MARITIME SAFETY INFORMATION (MSI) AND THE WORLD-WIDE
NAVIGATIONAL WARNING SERVICE (WWNWS)**

Reference: IHB CL 104/2007 dated 12 November 2007

Dear Hydrographer,

1 The IHB thanks the following 12 Member States: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the UK who provided comments on the draft revised IMO Assembly resolutions A.705 and A.706.

2 All responses supported the submission to IMO of these revised resolutions with three Member States providing amendments to the draft text. These proposals together with the IHB's comments are given in the Annex. The IHB consulted the Chairman of CPRNW and the Chairmen of the IMO SafetyNET and NAVTEX Co-ordinating Panels in formulating the responses to the proposed amendments.

3 It is anticipated that the text of the draft revised resolutions will be discussed further within a Working Group at the IMO COMSAR 12 meeting, 7-11 April 2008.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Annex: Proposals and comments to draft text.

France:

Proposes including an additional definition in section 2.1 of resolution A.706:

“In the operating procedures, *co-ordination* means that: the allocation of the time for data broadcast is centralised; the format and criteria of data transmission are compliant with the Maritime Safety Information (MSI) specifications described in the joint IMO/IHO/WMO publication; and all services are managed in accordance with IMO resolutions.”

Comments by IHB: This definition, with a minor amendment listing the IMO resolutions has been included. It has also been included in the revised draft resolution A.705

Greece:

Draft revised resolution A.705(17)

Paragraph 2.1.5 (Maritime safety information): In order to be in conformity with what is portraying in Fig. 1 “The maritime safety information service of the GMDSS”, it is proposed the definition to be amended as follows:

.5 *Maritime safety information (MSI)*² means navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts, SAR information and other urgent safety-related messages broadcast to ships.

Comments by the IHB: The definition included in the draft resolution is taken directly from SOLAS Chapter IV Regulation 2.9. The CG discussed at length whether to show SAR information as a separate box within Figure 1 or whether it should be part of “Other Urgent Safety Related Information”. It concluded that it merited a separate box in the diagram but that the definition should be consistent with that used in SOLAS.

Paragraph 2.1.14 (NAVTEX service area): It is proposed the definition to be amended as follows:

.14 *NAVTEX service area* means a unique and precisely defined sea area, approved by IMO, for which maritime safety information is provided from a particular NAVTEX transmitter.

Comments by IHB: NAVTEX service areas should be agreed locally and approved by the NAVAREA Co-ordinator. The NAVTEX Manual allows for these issues to be discussed with the IMO NAVTEX Panel.

Draft revised resolution A.706(17)

Paragraph 2.1.8 (Maritime safety information): In order to be in conformity with what is portraying in Fig. 1 “The maritime safety information service of the GMDSS”, it is proposed the definition to be amended as follows:

.8 *Maritime safety information (MSI)*² means navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts, SAR information and other urgent safety-related messages broadcast to ships.

Comments by IHB: See response under A.705 above.

Paragraph 4.2.1.13: Taking into account:

- the coverage area of the transmitter (about 400 miles),
- the transmitter power range (100 - 1000 Watts),
- the service area of each transmitter (250 - 300 miles),
- the difficulties of a vessel to receive NAVTEX broadcasts on 518 KHz for so longtime in advance (not less than five days),

and in order to reduce the amount of information to be broadcasted and the transmission times to be kept in a minimum total of messages, it is proposed that the paragraph in question to be amended as follows:

.13 information concerning special operations which might affect the safety of shipping, sometimes over wide areas, e.g. naval exercises, missile firings, space missions, nuclear tests, ordnance dumping zones, etc. It is important that where the degree of hazard is known, this information is included in the relevant warning. Whenever possible such warnings should be originated ~~not less than five~~ three days in advance of the scheduled event and reference may be made to relevant national publications in the warning;

Comments by the IHB: The length of time included here was discussed at length by the CG which concluded that, given that this refers to both NAVTEX and SafetyNET services, a period of 5 days was necessary to ensure that all vessels received the information in time to make any necessary alterations to their voyage plan.

South Africa:

I found the text of both Resolutions to be acceptable, but are concerned that the choice of language is not more specific with respect to the promulgation of warnings. I would like to recommend the following additions:

Resolution A.705(17): Para 2.1.9 & 2.1.10

Add the words "but the use of the English language is encouraged" at the ends of the sentences.

Resolution A.706(17): Para 2.1.11 & 2.1.12

Add the words "but the use of the English language is encouraged" at the ends of the sentences.

Resolution A.706(17): Para 4.1.1 indicates that Local warnings are not regarded as part of the WWNWS and I think it will be good to add at the end of Para 5.3.3 "The use of the English language is encouraged". I believe that consideration should be given to the fact that foreign mariners make use of local coastal waters and should be fully informed.

Comments by IHB: The internationally co-ordinated service has to be broadcast in English. The introduction of national broadcasts on a different frequency to the international broadcasts was designed to allow broadcasts in a national language for the benefit of local shipping such as fisherman. The CG concluded therefore that it would not be appropriate to encourage these to be in English.