



IHB File No. S1/1005/A

CIRCULAR LETTER 81/2009
24 November 2009

PASSWORD PROTECTION ON IHO WEBSITE

Dear Hydrographer,

1. You will have noticed that the IHO website *www.iho.int* has been undergoing various changes recently. This is part of the transfer of the contents of the IHO website from the old website server - that has been generously hosted by France since the IHO website was established - to a new replacement server managed by the IHB. However, the old server is now obsolete and has become impossible to maintain any longer. As a result, it must be turned off in the next few weeks.
2. Almost all of the IHO website contents that were previously held on the SHOM website server have been successfully transferred to the new dedicated IHO website server. Unfortunately, because of incompatibility between operating systems, the "Member States only" password database that currently controls access to IHO Circular Letters cannot be transferred to the replacement server. This means that it will be necessary to issue new passwords for access to IHO Circular Letters if such protection is to be continued. However, before doing so, the Directing Committee wishes to draw Member States' attention to the fact that, with the exception of IHO Circular Letters, all other working documents of the Organization have always been freely available from the IHO website. Furthermore, the passwords that have been in use have, in many cases, been handed down from user to user over the years. This means that the security originally intended by those passwords has probably been compromised for some time.
3. There are no specific references in the Basic Documents or in the Resolutions of the IHO that direct that Circular Letters should be restricted to Member States' eyes only. In any case, examination of the Circular Letters, currently protected by password access, shows that there is no information contained in them that appears to merit restricted access. On the contrary, many of the CLs contain useful information that also informs our wider audience about the working of the Organization.
4. In the spirit of promoting an open and transparent organization, the Directing Committee therefore proposes to make the Circular Letters posted on the IHO website accessible without restriction in the future. In the most unlikely event that the Directing Committee would need to communicate with Member States on an issue of high sensitivity, then appropriate alternative arrangements would be put into place as required. However, so far in the history of the Organization, such circumstances do not appear to have ever occurred.
5. The Directing Committee therefore proposes that IHO Circular Letters be no longer protected by a "Member States only" password. Member States who consider that such

protection is still warranted are invited to inform the IHB as soon as possible, and in any case **not later than 11 December 2009**, which is the date when the IHB proposes to complete the transfer of the IHO website to the replacement website server.

6. The Directing Committee regrets the short notice of this proposal that has come about due to the pressing need to complete the move to the replacement IHO website server.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Ward', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert WARD
Director