

INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC
ORGANIZATION



ORGANISATION HYDROGRAPHIQUE
INTERNATIONALE

CHART STANDARDIZATION & PAPER CHART WORKING GROUP (CSPCWG)

[A Working Group of the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC)]

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To Secretary HDWG
and CSPCWG Members

Date 29 July 2010

Dear Colleagues,

Subject: Definitions for inclusion in S-32: request from Secretary HDWG

Results of questionnaire

CSPCWG Letter 8/2010 canvassed opinion on definitions for 'Irregular' and 'Unreliable' lights, which had been submitted to the Hydrographic Dictionary Working Group (HDWG).

A consolidated list of your responses is attached at Annex A. You will see that there is a clear consensus that there is no requirement to indicate on charts whether a light is 'irregular' or 'unreliable'. There is therefore no further action for the CSPCWG.

Although there are a majority of votes accepting the proposed definitions, the comments imply a good deal of doubt as to whether it is relevant to the mariner to distinguish between the two categories. Spain's comment about the inconsistency with S-53 is also pertinent. Indonesia and Norway propose small changes to the definitions.

I believe we have provided the HDWG with all the comment we can, and it is now for that WG to determine whether these definitions should be included in S-32 and/or whether to seek further advice from IALA.

Yours sincerely,

Peter G.B. Jones,
Chairman

Annex A: Consolidated responses to CSPCWG Letter 8/2010.

Copy: Lt Cdr H Milner, Lights List Officer at the UKHO

Consolidated Responses to CSPCWG Letter 8/2010**Definitions for inclusion in S-32: request from Secretary HDWG**

		Yes	No
1	Do you agree with this proposed definition for an irregular light? <i>light is working, however the light characteristics may vary from that specified (caused by storm damage or similar).</i>	BR, CA, DE, DK, ES, (ESRI), FI*, FR, GR, IN, IT, LV, NL, NO, PK, SE*, UA, US(NGA), ZA	AU, ID, NZ, US(NOAA)
2	Do you agree with this proposed definition for an unreliable light? <i>light characteristics are as specified, however light is working intermittently (caused by intermittent or unreliable power supply).</i>	BR, CA, DE, DK, ES, (ESRI), FI*, FR, GR, IN, IT, LV, NL, NO*, PK, SE*, UA, US(NGA), ZA	AU, ID, NZ, US(NOAA)
3	Is it necessary for CSPCWG to consider indicating on charts whether a light is 'irregular' or 'unreliable', in accordance with the proposed definitions?	BR, (ESRI), ID, PK	AU, CA, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, IN, IT, JP, LV, NL, NO, NZ, SE, UA, US(NGA), US(NOAA), ZA

COMMENTS

AUSTRALIA

If you do not agree with the proposed definitions, please provide alternative wording for consideration by HDWG?

1. Irregular light:

2. Unreliable light: *Light is known to be subject to changes in characteristics due to external influences such as storm damage, or is known to be periodically rendered inoperable due to inefficient power supply.*

AU would prefer to see a single definition to cover both "irregular" and "unreliable" lights. From a mariner's perspective, there is probably not a clear enough distinction between "irregular" and "unreliable" to warrant both being defined individually. The key point is that the reliability of the light is questionable for some reason. If such a definition is to be included in S-32, then it should state that the reliability issue is something that is likely to occur on a regular basis or it is known that the light has reliability issues, as distinct from a light that is normally reliable, but is inoperable or has changed characteristics due to an unusual circumstance, such as a climactically remarkable meteorological event (e.g. an unusually powerful storm for the area), or an unusual interruption to the power supply due to a ship collision with the aid or severing of the power supply for some other reason.

In regard to indicating this situation on charts, AU would consider that where lights are considered to be "unreliable", this would be likely due to local circumstances which would influence all the lights in a particular area, which would be best indicated on the chart with a cautionary note. When such changes occur, this should be considered to be a departure from the "normal charted state" and Hydrographic Offices have existing mechanisms to promulgate this information to the chart user such as Radio Navigation Warnings and Temporary NtMs.

CANADA

We feel that though it is acceptable to define these two different situations, lights that fall into these categories would **not** be charted with this definition attached. This differentiation likely would mean little to the mariner, and there are ways to advise mariners of these situations, like radio broadcasts describing the issue, until they are fixed.

SPAIN

The "Joint IHO/IMO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information (MSI)" (S-53) publication (page 27) shows a list for "BUOYS, LANDBYS, SUPERBUOYS", where it is state:

"Use LIGHT UNRELIABLE in place of: Weak, Dim, Low power, Fixed, Out of Character, **Irregular**, Reduced power".

So, it seems to be some contradiction when suggesting two new different definitions for lights UNRELIABLE or IRREGULAR when S-53 recommend to use UNRELIABLE instead of IRREGULAR.

FINLAND

*Equally good alternative would be to combine the two definitions as 'unreliable light'.

FRANCE

In some areas where the unreliability of lights is well known or if different characteristics have been regularly reported, FRANCE adds a note on the charts to precise this information as follow:

Lights in the vicinity of ... are unreliable. Mariners are recommended to refer to the list of lights concerning this area.

The mariners can find in the concerned list of lights more details which have been diffused by the usual ways of the nautical information.

GREECE

GR believes that it is not necessary to indicate on charts whether a light is "irregular" or "unreliable", since mariners are being informed for such temporary conditions of lights via NAVWARN.

INDONESIA

1. Irregular light: *light is working, however the light characteristics may vary from that specified (caused by storm damage or similar or caused by any special requirements) (i.e. constructions is underway or other special purpose in that area)*

2. Unreliable light: *light characteristics are as specified, however light is working intermittently (caused by intermittent or unreliable power supply or damaged by any causes)*

INDIA

1. In general the irregularities (pertaining to light characteristics or sectors) are temporary in nature, which will be promulgated through temporary NMs. Otherwise the light characteristics will be reflected in List of Lights. However the relevant information could be made available in the respective ENCs by assigning an attribute 'INFO'.

2. Adding text 'Irregular', 'Unreliable' besides light characteristics may cause data clusters on the charts.

JAPAN (did not indicate whether they accepted the proposed definition of not)

We consider that it is not appropriate to indicate the irregular or unreliable lights on charts.

We inform mariners of the information on unexpected accidents of the lights or change of the light characteristics by Temporary Notices to Mariners and Navigational Warnings.

LATVIA

Q3 – Our opinion is that it should be only together with temporarily NtMs or NAVTEX, like "...temporarily unreliable light in pos...", and that for those whose English language is not the first language it does not make any prominent difference between those two wordings, with word "unreliable" it is understandable enough that you can not rely on lights existence or correct its work. If it is needed to update chart we put "temp unreliable" in both cases.

NETHERLANDS

Not necessary to indicate this on charts; possibly in P or T Notices.

NORWAY

2. Unreliable light: * use the word *uneven* instead of *intermittent*. It will be easier to understand by those who do not have English as their first language.

NEW ZEALAND

1. Irregular light: We consider that the term 'irregular' is not required.
2. Unreliable light: We consider that the term 'unreliable' should cover both meanings above i.e.

light is working, however the light characteristics may vary from that specified (caused by storm damage or similar) and/or light characteristics are as specified, however light is working intermittently (caused by intermittent or unreliable power supply).

The above definitions of 'irregular' and 'unreliable' are closely related. One may lead to the other and both may occur at once. They are promulgated to mariners by the use of temporary NTMs and radio navigational warnings. There is no need to show these on charts by the terms 'irregular' and 'unreliable'. We have a general note on some charts stating:

'The navigational aids shown on this chart are not to be relied on.'

This is put on charts for both the reasons described as 'irregular' and as 'unreliable'. A definition for the one word 'unreliable', as we have proposed above, would fit the meaning of this note.

The Joint IHO/IMO/WMO publication S-53, Manual on Maritime Safety Information (MSI) part 7.1 uses the term 'Light Unreliable' for both the meanings described as 'irregular' and as 'unreliable'.

SWEDEN

*SE agrees with LV that the words *irregular* and *unreliable* would not have a significant difference especially for users not having English as their native language. To distinguish the difference it would be necessary to also provide the above definitions. SMA (Swedish Maritime Administration) uses the English word *unreliable* in NM and Radio Navigational Warnings in both the above mentioned cases. The reason why the light is unreliable would usually be provided (erroneous characteristics, unreliable power supply, etc.).

US(NGA)

Irregular and Unreliable Lights are usually temporary, whether it is a short or extended amount of time. It should be left up to each hydrographic office to determine whether charting is necessary. Indications that a light is either irregular to unreliable should be advertised through Navtex, NAVAREAS, local NtM, etc.

US(NOAA)

It is questionable whether or not a mariner would understand what is meant by "irregular" or "unreliable" without a set of definitions accompanying the notice. Cartographers might understand the difference (maybe) with an updated manual or revised S-32 present. The U.S. Coast Guard uses the term, "Improper characteristic" so that the mariner knows that the characteristic displayed (or not displayed in the case of #2) is not what it should be. In either case, these are temporary conditions that are likely to be corrected quickly and should not be charted.

SOUTH AFRICA

Para 3. In such instance the situation would be considered temporary and would be covered by a coastal navwarning until the situation returns to normal or promulgated by a (T) NtoMs.