



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Navigation: Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP)

Notice to all Port and VTS Authorities, VTS Personnel, Maritime Training Institutes, Ship Owners, Masters and Deck Officers of Merchant Vessels and Pilots.

*This Note cancels MSN 1252
This MIN expires 31 May 2010*

PLEASE NOTE:-

Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

Summary

This Note contains information on the use and availability of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) and replaces the previously published Merchant Shipping Notice M.1252: Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary (SMNV).

1. Introduction

The IMO's SMCP were adopted by the 22nd Assembly in November 2001 as Resolution A.918(22) IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases, and recommends a wide circulation to all prospective users and all maritime education authorities.

The IMO SMCP includes phrases which have been developed to cover the most important safety-related fields of verbal shore-to-ship (and vice-versa), ship-to-ship and on-board communications. The aim is to get round the problem of language barriers at sea and avoid misunderstandings which can cause accidents.

The IMO SMCP builds on a basic knowledge of English and has been drafted in a simplified version of maritime English. It includes phrases for use in routine situations such as berthing as well as standard phrases and responses for use in emergency situations.

Under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, the ability to understand and use the SMCP is required for the certification of officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or above.

2. Availability

The IMO publication “IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) & IMO SMCP on CD: A pronunciation guide” can be obtained through IMO Publications on the IMO website <http://www.imo.org>

More Information

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