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## **Guidance on the Interpretation of SOLAS Chapter Five for Fishing Vessels**

### **Notice to Ship Owners, Operators, Naval Architects, Designers, Builders, Skippers and Crew**

*This notice should be read in conjunction with "Safety of Navigation – Implementing SOLAS Chapter V, 2002" and its amendment on the 25th November 2003.*

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#### *Summary*

- Chapter five, Safety of Navigation, of the annex to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) has been substantially revised. The new Regulations came into force on 1 July 2002 and are implemented under UK legislation by the Merchant Shipping (Safety of Navigation) Regulations, 2002. It replaces the 1974 Chapter five, which came into force in 1980. The new requirements came into force on 1st July 2002.
- This Marine Guidance Note summarises the applicability of the new regulations to Fishing Vessels.

1. This Marine Guidance Note gives a summary of SOLAS Chapter five regulations and their applicability to Fishing Vessels registered in the UK. document can be obtained from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, or the Maritime and Coastguard Agency website at: [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk) under Guidance and Regulations, 'Safety of Navigation'
2. Within this guidance, wherever "not relevant" to Fishing Vessels is specified, this means that the relevant Rule is not applicable to fishing vessels or that the Rule requirements are covered by existing legislation.
3. The table in Annex 1 gives an overview of the applicability of the various regulations to Fishing Vessels. Annex 2 contains a brief explanation on how SOLAS Chapter five may be implemented on Fishing Vessels in practice.
4. Further information can be gathered from the MCA publication: "Safety of Navigation – Implementing SOLAS Chapter V, 2002" the full text of this
5. The following documents are superseded by the publication "Safety of Navigation – Implementing SOLAS Chapter V, 2002":  
Marine Guidance Note 24 Compliance with mandatory ship-reporting systems.  
Marine Guidance Note 28 Observance of traffic separation schemes.  
Marine Guidance Note 54 Use of automatic pilots (heading control systems).  
Marine Guidance Note 57 Operating, Maintaining & testing Magnetic Compasses.  
Marine Guidance Note 72 Navigation Safety.  
Marine Guidance Note 109 Compliance with Vessel Traffic Service (VTS).

Marine Guidance Note 133 Electronic Charts.

Marine Guidance Note 166 Guidance for Voyage Planning

M.760 Tinted glass for wheel-house and bridge front windows

M.1104 Recording of main propulsion unit movements

M.1638 Radar reflectors for small vessels

M.1641 NW1 the Merchant Shipping (Navigational Warnings) Regs 1996.

Merchant Shipping Note 1688 Navigational Equipment: the Standards for navigational equipment fitted on UK merchant ships

Merchant Shipping Note 1716 Pilot Transfer Arrangements.

### **Further Information**

Further information on the contents of this Notice can be obtained from:

Fishing Safety Branch  
Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
SO15 1EG

Telephone: 023 8032 9130

Fax: 023 8032 9173

Maritime and Coastguard Agency Website

Address: <http://www.mcga.gov.uk>

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*Department for*  
**Transport**

The MCA is an executive agency  
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Applies to new and existing vessels unless otherwise specified

 = Not relevant to Fishing Vessels

SOLAS V Regulation Number	APPLICATION	SUBJECT	CONSEQUENCE OF THE REQUIREMENT
1		Application	Details the range of application to all types of ship
2		Definitions	Defines terms used.
3		Exemptions and Equivalents	Discretionary powers granted to administration
4	For the Marine Administration (Maritime and Coastguard Agency)	Navigational warnings	Sets out requirements for provision of information
5	For the Marine Administration (Maritime and Coastguard Agency)	Meteorological Services and Warnings	Sets out requirements for provision of information
6	For the Marine Administration (Maritime and Coastguard Agency)	North Atlantic Ice Patrol	Ships transiting the zone covered by the service are to make use of the service.
7	For the Marine Administration (Maritime and Coastguard Agency) and passenger ships	Search and Rescue Services	Provision of SAR.
8	For the Marine Administration (Maritime and Coastguard Agency)	Lifesaving Signals	Use of international signals (See regulation 29)
9	For the Marine Administration (Maritime and Coastguard Agency)	Hydrographic Services	Provision of Hydrographic Information

<b>SOLAS V Regulation Number</b>	<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCE OF THE REQUIREMENT</b>
<b>10</b>	All Vessels	Ships routing	All ships to use mandatory International Maritime Organization routing systems as specified for type and size
<b>11</b>	All Vessels	Ship Reporting Systems	All ships to comply with mandatory reporting schemes as specified for the particular scheme
<b>12</b>	All Vessels	Vessel Traffic Services	All ships to participate in and comply with port and coastal Vessel Traffic Systems.
<b>13</b>	For the Marine Administration (UK Ports & LHA)	Establishment and Operation of Aids to Navigation	Provision of lights, Buoy age etc.
<b>14</b>	All Vessels except for 14.2 & 14.4.	Ships' Manning	Working language to be established with any plans and lists translated.
<b>15</b>	All Vessels	Principles Relating to Bridge Design	Principles of design to be applied.
<b>16</b>	All Vessels	Maintenance of Equipment	Provision of manuals to allow maintenance and operation.
<b>17</b>	All Vessels	Electromagnetic Compatibility	Installation of equipment, and precautions when using portable electrical equipment to prevent electrical interference with navigational equipment.
<b>18</b>	Applies as Reg. 19 and 20	Type approval Testing of Equipment	The standards apply where 19 and 20 also apply.
<b>19</b>	Fishing Vessels	Carriage Requirements for Ship borne Navigational Systems and Equipment	See the Codes of Practice.
<b>20</b>	New Vessels on international voyages of >3000GT built on or after 1 July 2002	Voyage Data Recorders	See implementation timetable.

<b>SOLAS V Regulation Number</b>	<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCE OF THE REQUIREMENT</b>
<b>21</b>	for UK ships this new provision will not apply to: - Ships below 150 gross tonnage on international voyages - Ships below 500 gross tonnage not engaged on international voyages, and - Fishing vessels	All ships shall carry an up-to-date copy of Volume III of the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual	See MGN 261
<b>22</b>	All Vessels not less than 45m in length built on or after 1 July 1998	Navigation Bridge Visibility	Application is dealt with in Marine Guidance Note 188(F). The requirement is duplicated in the Torremolinos Protocol chapter 10, regulation 6, but with a lesser application.
<b>23</b>	On vessels where a pilot is likely to be employed	Pilot Transfer Arrangements	Fishing Vessels entering into ports in which pilots are likely to be employed shall be provided with pilot transfer arrangements.
<b>24</b>	All vessels	Use of Heading and/or Track Control Systems	Bridge procedures for steering including: 1. Immediate manual control under particular situations with the availability of a qualified helmsperson and under supervision of a responsible officer. 2. Manual steering tested after prolonged periods in auto.
<b>25</b>	All Vessels	Operation of Main Source of Electrical power and Steering Gear	In situations – use of second steering power unit when capable of simultaneous operation.
<b>26</b>	All Vessels	Steering Gear: Testing and Drills	Specification for steering gear testing and drills, with records of same.
<b>27</b>	All vessels	Nautical Charts & Publications	Charts and publications to be adequate and up to date.
<b>28</b>	All vessels on international voyages only	Records of Navigational Activities	A log book or other Maritime and Coastguard Agency approved format to record navigational activities and events of the voyage.

<b>SOLAS V Regulation Number</b>	<b>APPLICATION</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCE OF THE REQUIREMENT</b>
29	All vessels	Lifesaving signals to be Used by Ships, Aircraft or Persons in Distress	Requires an illustrated table for the officer on watch.
30	Passenger vessels	Operational limitations	
31	All vessels and Administration	Danger messages	The conduct of all ships for danger messages
32	All vessels	Information Required in Danger Messages	The content of all danger messages
33	All vessels	Distress messages: Obligations and procedures	All ships to respond to distress signals or messages
34	Applies to all vessels operating outside waters categorised in Marine Guidance Note 1776	Safe Navigation and Avoidance of Dangerous Situations	Procedures for safe navigation and passage plans. Applies to all vessels operating outside waters categorised in Marine Guidance Note 1776
35	All vessels	Misuse of distress signals	See M.1642/COLREG.1

## ANNEX 2 – Regulations

What follows includes relevant points taken from SOLAS Chapter V relevant to Fishing Vessels however this is not the full text and therefore should not be taken as such.

### **Regulation 10: Ships' Routeing**

Ships' routeing systems contribute to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and/or protection of the marine environment. Ships' routeing systems when provided are mandatory for use by all Fishing Vessels. All details of adopted schemes are shown on the relevant UKHO charts, with any special requirements set out in chart notes.

### **Regulation 11: Ship Reporting Systems**

Ship reporting systems contribute to safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and/or protection of the marine environment. Details of mandatory ship reporting schemes are promulgated through relevant parts of the Admiralty List of Radio Signals, including any amendments, corrections or replacements. Further information may be gathered in the Marine Guidance Note 153 (M+F) Compliance with Mandatory Ship Reporting Systems.

### **Regulation 12: Vessel Traffic Services**

Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) are provided world-wide to improve navigational safety and efficiency, safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment. There are two types of VTS: Port and Coastal, and there is a clear distinction between the two. A Port (or river) VTS is a service provided when entering or leaving ports or harbours or when sailing along rivers or through waters which restrict the manoeuvring of ships. A Coastal Vessel Traffic Service is mainly concerned with vessel traffic passing through a sea area.

In most ports and within territorial seas, participation in Vessel Traffic Service is mandatory under local regulations. Information on available Vessel Traffic Services is given in the Admiralty List of Radio Signals (ALRS) Volume 6 parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the IALA VTS Manual. Maritime and Coastguard Agency strongly urges all UK ships to make use of any Vessel Traffic Service that is provided. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency will keep compliance of vessels with Vessel Traffic Service under review and if performance is considered unacceptable, appropriate action may be taken.

### **Regulation 29: Life-saving signals to be used by ships, aircraft or persons in distress**

International life-saving signals are to be used by any ship or person in distress, when communicating with Search and Rescue units. It is therefore important that fishermen are familiar with them. Life-saving signals are described in the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual Vol.III, Mobile Facilities, and illustrated in the International Code of Signals, as amended pursuant to resolution A.80(IV). This publication is available through the International Maritime Organization web page: [www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org).

The table of life-saving signals is to be displayed prominently in the wheelhouse and all watch keepers are to be familiar with the signals and ensure that they are correctly used in distress situations.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency encourages all organisations concerned with small craft to ensure that their members are made aware of the international lifesaving signals and that copies of the signals are made available to them.

### **Regulation 31: Danger Messages**

The Skipper of every Fishing Vessel which meets with:

Dangerous ice,  
A dangerous derelict or any other direct danger to navigation,  
A tropical storm,  
Sub-freezing air temperatures associated with gale force winds causing severe ice accretion on superstructures, or  
Winds of force 10 or above on the Beaufort scale for which no storm warning has been received,

is bound to communicate the information, by all means at his disposal, to ships in the vicinity and also to the competent authorities. The form in which the information is sent is not obligatory. It may be transmitted either in plain language (preferably English) or by means of the International Code of Signals.

All such radio messages shall be preceded by the safety signal, using the procedure as prescribed by the Radio Regulations.

The transmission of messages respecting the dangers specified is free of cost to the ships concerned.

The Skipper's report is to be sent to the appropriate National or NAVAREA Co-ordinator for navigational warnings via a coastal station. For NAVAREA 1 (which includes United Kingdom waters) the NAVAREA Co-ordinators are:

For dangers to navigation (listed in Reg.32) - the National Hydrographer, UKHO, Taunton.

For meteorological dangers (listed in Reg.32) - the National Meteorological Centre (NMC) of the Met Office.

For other areas and for details of national authorities refer to Volume 1 of the Admiralty List of Radio Signals (ALRS) obtainable from admiralty chart agents or the Hydrographic Office Publications, Hydrographic Office, Admiralty Way, Taunton. Somerset TA1 2DN.

### **Regulation 32: Information required in danger messages**

The following information is required in danger messages:

Ice, derelicts and other direct dangers to navigation:

The kind of ice, derelict or danger observed.  
The position of the ice, derelict or danger when last observed.  
The time and date (Universal Co-ordinated Time) when the danger was last observed.

### **Tropical cyclones (storms):**

A statement that a tropical cyclone has been encountered. This obligation should be interpreted in a broad spirit, and information transmitted whenever the Skipper has good reason to believe that a tropical cyclone is developing or exists in the neighbourhood.

Time, date (Universal Co-ordinated Time) and position of ship when the observation was taken.  
As much of the following information as is practicable should be included in the message:

- barometric pressure, preferably corrected (stating millibars, millimetres, or inches, and whether corrected or uncorrected);
- barometric tendency (the change in barometric pressure during the past three hours);
- true wind direction;

- wind force (Beaufort scale);
- state of the sea (smooth, moderate, rough, high);
- swell (slight, moderate, heavy) and the true direction from which it comes. Period or length of swell (short, average, long) would also be of value;
- true course and speed of ship

Winds of force 10 or above on the Beaufort scale for which no storm warning has been received:

This is intended to deal with storms other than the tropical cyclones; when such a storm is encountered, the message should contain:

Time, date (Universal Co-ordinated Time) and position of ship when the observation was taken. As much of the following information as is practicable should be included in the message:

- barometric pressure, preferably corrected (stating millibars, millimetres, or inches, and whether corrected or uncorrected);
- barometric tendency (the change in barometric pressure during the past three hours);
- true wind direction;
- wind force (Beaufort scale);
- true course and speed of ship

Sub-freezing air temperatures associated with gale force winds causing severe ice accretion on superstructures:

Time and date (Universal Co-ordinated Time).

Air temperature.

Sea temperature (if practicable).

Wind force and direction.

The Skipper is required to report the dangers to navigation specified and to report the information to ships in the vicinity and the competent authorities. The competent authorities are then required to promulgate the information.

The Skipper's report is to be sent, preferably in English or using the International Code of Signals, to the appropriate National or NAVAREA Coordinator for navigational warnings via a coastal station. Details of NAVAREAs are given in Vol.1 of the admiralty list of Radio Signals (ALRS).

### **Regulation 33: Distress messages: Obligations and procedures**

The regulation places an obligation on Skippers to respond to messages from any source that indicates persons are in distress at sea. Skippers who, in special circumstances, decide not to respond to a distress must enter their reasons in their log-book and, if they have not responded to the distress, inform the appropriate search and rescue authorities of their decision not to proceed. If, after receipt of a distress message, it becomes apparent that other vessels, and the appropriate search and rescue authorities are not responding then, full details of the distress message should be communicated to the appropriate search and rescue co-ordinating authority.

The Skipper of a Fishing Vessel at sea which is in a position to be able to provide assistance on receiving a signal from any source that persons are in distress at sea, is bound to proceed with all speed to their assistance. If possible he should inform them or the search and rescue service that the ship is doing so.

The Skipper of a Fishing Vessel in distress or the search and rescue service concerned has the right to requisition one or more of the ships that responded as may be considered best able to render assistance. So far as may be possible, the Skipper of the Fishing Vessel that answered the distress alert should be consulted in this process. It shall be the duty of the Skipper or Skippers of the Fishing Vessel or Vessels requisitioned to comply with the requisition by continuing to proceed with all speed to the assistance of persons in distress.

Skippers of Fishing Vessels shall be released from their obligation to proceed on learning that their Fishing Vessel has not been requisitioned and that one or more other ships have been requisitioned and are complying with the requisition. This decision shall, if possible, be communicated to the other requisitioned ships and to the search and rescue service.

The Skipper of a Fishing Vessel shall be released from the obligation to proceed, even if his Fishing Vessel has been requisitioned, on being informed by:

- The persons in distress
- The search and rescue service, or
- The master of another ship which has reached such persons

That assistance is no longer necessary.

#### **Regulation 34: Safe navigation and avoidance of dangerous situations**

Regulation 34 applies to all Fishing Vessels which proceed to sea, outside categorised waters.

The voyage plan shall identify a route which:

- Takes into account any relevant ships' routing systems
- Ensures sufficient sea room for the safe passage of the ship throughout the voyage
- Anticipates all known navigational hazards and adverse weather conditions; and
- Takes into account the marine environmental protection measures that apply, and avoids, as far as possible, actions and activities which could cause damage to the environment.

The owner, the charterer, or the company, operating the Fishing Vessel or any other person shall not prevent or restrict the Skipper of the Fishing Vessel from taking or executing any decision which, in the Skipper's professional judgement, is necessary for safe navigation and protection of the marine environment.

It is important to note that Regulation 34 makes a properly prepared voyage plan mandatory and the plan is liable to be checked during inspections and surveys.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency expects all Skippers of a Fishing Vessel to make a careful assessment of any proposed voyage taking into account all dangers to navigation, weather forecasts, tidal predictions and other relevant factors including the competence of the crew.

An appropriate voyage plan should be left with a responsible person on shore. The voyage plan will help guide Search and Rescue teams in the event of an emergency. An oral message, in some circumstances may be enough; however a written message is recommended.

An example of a voyage plan sheet may be:

<b>Voyage plan sheet</b>	
<b>Fishing Vessel</b> ..... <b>Call sign</b> ..... <b>Mobile</b> .....	
Departure date and time	
Vessel endurance in hours and days	
Intended fishing areas	
Proposed routes	
Estimated date and time of return	
Number of persons on board	
Times of radio calls to person holding plan	
Probable port of refuge	
If fishing with another vessel, name of other vessel	

**Regulation 35: Misuse of distress signals**

The use of an international distress signal, except for the purpose of indicating that a person or persons are in distress, and the use of any signal which may be confused with an international distress signal are prohibited.

