



SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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Subject: **AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AIS)
REQUIREMENT – JULY 1, 2008**

Purpose

Mariners and ship operators are being reminded of an upcoming regulatory deadline concerning the carriage of an AIS on certain domestic ships by **July 1, 2008**. AIS is to enhance safety, efficiency of navigation and the protection of the marine environment.

Regulatory Requirement

The *Navigation Safety Regulations* came into force on May 10, 2005. Subsection 65(3) of the *Navigation Safety Regulations* states:

“Every ship, other than a fishing vessel, of 500 tons or more that is not engaged on an international voyage shall be fitted with an AIS, but if it was constructed before July 1, 2002 it need not be so fitted until July 1, 2008.”

Subsections 65(1) and 65(2) of the Regulations pertain to ships on international voyages that must already be fitted with an AIS as follows; 1) every ship of 150 tons or more that is carrying more than 12 passengers, and 2) every ship, other than a fishing vessel, of 300 tons or more.

The AIS is required to automatically provide information, including ship's identity, type, position, course, speed, navigational status and other safety-related information, to appropriately equipped shore stations, other ships and aircraft. It must also automatically receive such information from similarly fitted ships, monitor and track ships, and exchange data with shore-based facilities.

Keywords:

1. AIS
2. Automatic identification system
3. *Navigation Safety Regulations*

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Standards

The AIS must be type-approved as meeting the IMO performance standard: resolution MSC.74(69) Annex 3 *Recommendation on Performance Standards for a Universal Shipborne Automatic Identification System (AIS)*.¹

Operational Guidelines

The AIS is to be operated taking into account the annex to IMO resolution A.917(22) *Guidelines for the Onboard Operational Use of Shipborne Automatic Identification Systems (AIS)*. These operational guidelines provide important information to the mariner to promote the safe and effective use of AIS and inform them of its limitations. Mariners should be fully familiar with the AIS, its display and these operational guidelines before use.

As mentioned in the guidelines, when making use of AIS information, mariners should keep in mind that AIS is not required on all vessels and that incorrect AIS data is possible as a result of improper installation, sensor input or user entries. AIS should be used in conjunction with other available navigational information on the vessel. Routine checks should be conducted during the voyage to confirm the information being transmitted by the ship's AIS is accurate and up-to-date. This applies to both manually entered data and data provided by the ship's sensors connected to the AIS.

The AIS is to be in operation at all times.² The guidelines, as amended, provide the following guidance: “*AIS should always be in operation when ships are underway or at anchor. If the master believes that the continual operation of AIS might compromise the safety or security of his/her ship, or where security incidents are imminent, the AIS may be switched off. Unless it would further compromise the safety or security, if the ship is operating in a mandatory ship reporting system, the master should report this action and the reason for doing so to the competent authority. Actions of this nature should always be recorded in the ship's logbook together with the reason for doing so. The master should however restart the AIS as soon as the source of danger has disappeared.*” In addition, when the ship is in a port, AIS operation should be in accordance with any port requirements.

¹Testing standard: IEC 61993-2 *Maritime navigation and radiocommunication equipment and systems — Automatic identification systems (AIS) — Part 2: Class A shipborne equipment of the universal automatic identification system (AIS) — Operational and performance requirements, methods of test and required test results.*

² This does not apply; (a) where international agreements, rules or standards provide for the protection of navigational information, or (b) in respect of ships, other than ships operated for a commercial purpose, owned or operated by Her Majesty in right of Canada or by a foreign government that is a party to the Safety Convention.

Display

AIS information should be available at the position from which the ship is normally navigated. Although the AIS is required to have an integral minimum display capacity, connection to an electronic chart display and information system (ECDIS) or radar capable of displaying AIS data, or to a large graphical display unit will greatly increase the effectiveness of AIS.

Installation

To help ensure the correct and reliable operation of the AIS, the AIS should be installed taking into account IMO SN/Circ.227 on *Guidelines for the installation of a shipborne automatic identification system (AIS)*.

Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI)

AIS uses a 9-digit number for identification known as the MMSI. The MMSI number is a unique identifier assigned to the ship. A vessel fitted with a radio capable of digital selective calling (DSC) will already have an MMSI number and this same number must be used in the AIS. You can obtain an MMSI number from Industry Canada free-of-charge from any of their district offices.

References and Further Information

The documents referenced in this bulletin, a list of approved AIS and further information can be found at the following website:

www.tc.gc.ca/AIS-SIA/