



# IMO NCSR 9 Meeting Summary

July 7, 2022

The 9th meeting of the IMO’s Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communication and Search and Rescue (NCSR 9) was held 21-30 June 2022 online.

Liberia participated in plenary and the following groups:

Group	Subject
WG 1	Working Group on Communications
WG 2	Working Group on Navigation
WG 3	Working Group on Search and Rescue and other technical matters

## SHIPS ROUTEING AND NAVIGATION

### Ship’s routeing

The following routeing systems were approved for consideration by MSC 106:

- Routeing measures in the Black Sea (Amendments)
- The Santa Barbara Channel (Amendments)
- Areas to be avoided Off the California coast (Amendments)
- No anchoring area in the southern portion of Pulley Ridge off the coast of Florida (New)
- TSS for containerships Off Vlieland, Terschelling-German Bight, Off Friesland and German Bight western approach (Amendments)
- Recommended route Off the coast of Shio-no-Misaki

### Mandatory ship reporting system

NCSR 9 recalled that resolution MSC 433(98) on the revised Guidelines and criteria for ship reporting systems introduced automated reporting systems, and noted that there are still many manually operated (VHF-voice) ship reporting systems, which imposed an additional burden to watch officers. NCSR invited those States to update NCSR the current operational status of these manual reporting systems, i.e. whether they will be revoked or upgrading into an automatic system.

### Polar navigation

MSC 101 instructed NCSR to consider the consequences and feasibility of applying chapters 9 (SAFETY OF NAVIGATION) and 11 (VOYAGE PLANNING) of the Polar

Code to ships not certified under the SOLAS Convention and how best to enhance the safety of these ships, including possible development of amendments to SOLAS and/or the Polar Code.

NCSR 9 developed the draft amendments to the SOLAS Chapter XV which will require the following ships to comply with chapter 9-1 (Navigation) and 11-1 (Voyage planning) of the Polar Code when they operate in the polar water outside of the territorial water of the flag State:

- fishing vessels of 24 metres in length overall and above;
- pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade; and
- cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage.

These amendments are subject to approval and subsequent adoption by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC). Expected entry into force is on 1 January 2026. There is one year lead-in time for existing ships.

### Guidelines on places of refuge

MSC 100 instructed NCSR to review the Guidelines on places of refuge for ships in need of assistance (resolution A.949(23)), to ensure that they remained up to date and continued to serve as an effective instrument providing a clear framework to deal with a ship in need of assistance seeking a place of refuge in a consistent and harmonized manner globally.

Key updates are recognition of involvement of multiple States in such an incident. The work was based on the experiences gained by States, but met challenges since

NCSR 8 who insisted their sovereign right in assessing the risk and acceptance of a ship that needs a place of refuge.

The final draft of the guidelines clearly distinguished roles of the ship and the coastal authority in assessing the risk.

The Guidelines will be adopted by the 33rd session of the IMO Assembly scheduled for December 2023, following review by relevant committees.

### **HFO ban in the arctic – guidelines on navigation, voyage planning and communication**

As requested by the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR), the NCSR Sub-Committee reviewed the relevant part of the guidelines, which aims to reduce risks using and carrying the heavy fuel oil as fuel (not cargo) in Arctic Waters.

NCSR 9 responded to the PPR Sub-committee to consider limiting the scope of the draft guidelines addressing the specific guidelines applicable only to ships using, or carrying for use of, heavy fuel oil (HFO) as fuel, in Arctic waters, which are not currently covered by the Polar Code or other IMO instruments.

## **SHIPBORNE NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT**

### **Emergency personal radio devices (EPRD)**

It was proposed that guidance be issued with a view to increasing crew awareness related to characteristics of EPRD.

It is also proposed that these considerations should be part of the ship's safety management system pursuant to the International Safety Management (ISM) Code for ships that might require a multiple casualty evacuation.

NCSR 9, having considered the proposal, prepared the draft MSC Circular on *Guidance on the training on and operation of emergency personal radio devices in multiple casualty situations* for approval by MSC 106.

### **ECDIS Guidance for good practice and performance standard**

#### **Revision of ECDIS Guidance for good practice**

The current *ECDIS Guidance for good practice* (MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1) does not specify matters on ECDIS equipment and its associated upgrades while issuing a Type Approval Certificate (TAC), which leads to different interpretations in verifying ECDIS upgrades.

NCSR 8, prepared the revision to the guidelines which clearly state how to address the updated and approach the type approval authorities in obtaining approval on the updates.

The revision also instructs manufacturers to provide

identified users with information on the associated risk of malfunction and mitigation measures.

The revised guidelines is expected to be approved by MSC 106 scheduled for November 2022.

### **Performance standard**

Primary discussion points were:

- Upgrading the performance standards to refer to the latest IHO standards;
- Review the scope of the task on voyage plan data transfer (task from MSC 105); and
- Connection of AIS signal.

On this occasion, NCSR 9 took the introduction of the next generation electronic navigational charts (S-101 ENC) only with the following implementation schedule:

- 1 January 2026 – voluntary application of the new standard
- 1 January 2029 – full transition to the new standard.

This transition is the type approval standards for new installation. IHO will continuously support S-57 ENC.

With regard to the voyage plan transfer, NCSR 9 agreed on the new work for revising the ECDIS performance standard.

With regard to connecting the AIS signal, NCSR 9 was of the view that a new work programme was required.

### **Electronic inclinometer**

MSC 101 instructed the NCSR Sub-Committee to consider mandatory carriage of electronic inclinometer and connection to VDR for new bulk carriers and container ships.

MSC 105 instructed NCSR to consider possible expansion of the scope to all SOLAS ship types of 3,000 GT and upwards.

NCSR 9 decided not to expand the scope of application but keep it to new container ships and bulk carriers. The application excludes those ships that carry container/bulk cargo occasionally.

The proposed amendment will be approved by MSC 106 for adoption MSC 107. Expected entry into force will be 1 January 2026.

### **Bridge alert management – definition of Category A alerts**

Members recognized the inconsistencies between the Category A alerts given in MSC.252(83) on *Revised Performance standards for Integrated Navigation Systems (INS)* and MSC.302(87) on *Performance standards for Bridge Alert Management*. The latter does not include "graphical".

NCSR 9 agreed that this is not a matter of interpretation but proper amendments to the resolution is needed under a

new output.

### Fibre optic gyro compass

A Member State proposes to develop performance standards for the fibre optic gyro compass.

NCSR 9 noted information and encouraged to submit a new work programme. A few Members pointed out that the current performance standard already covered various types of gyro compass thus the fibre optic gyro compass should meet the existing performance standard.

## E-NAVIGATION

E-navigation is not an electronically aided navigation system, but rather it is an advanced ship/shore electronic data exchange, which is illustrated in the YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WenDzWY-tXc>).

NCSR 8 noted the following submissions:

- Information on developments concerning maritime services in the context of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business and the Just-in-Time concept.
- Information on a new international standard for coordinating just-in-time arrivals of ships to ports.

## GMDSS

### Remaining work

MSC 105 finalized amendments to the SOLAS convention and supporting instruments. However, there are still remaining work. NCSR 9 approved the following subject to endorsement by MSC 106:

- COMSAR/Circ.32/Rev.1 on *Harmonization of GMDSS requirements for radio installations on board SOLAS ships* (the table explaining the functions required by GMDSS for each sea area) and revoked COMSAR/Circ.16, COMSAR/Circ.17, COM/Circ.110, COM/Circ.110/Corr.1 and COM/Circ.117, as from the date of entry into force of resolution MSC.496(105) on amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (i.e. 1 January 2024);
- draft revisions of COMSAR/Circ.25 and COMSAR/Circ.45, containing consequential modifications related to the removal of the MF/HF NBDP distress communications capability from SOLAS chapter IV besides other necessary editorial modifications; and

NCSR 9 developed the following for approval by MSC 106:

- a draft revision of MSC/Circ.892 on *Alerting of search*

*and rescue authorities.*

- a draft MSC circular on *GMDSS operating guidance for ships in distress situations*, superseding COM/Circ.108

### Guidelines on Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

#### Bei-Dou system

Having reviewed IMSO's audit report in depth by the Communication Working Group, NCSR 9 agreed to recommend to MSC 106 for recognition of BDMSS subject to further on-site verification of the remotely demonstrated functionalities.

#### MSI dissemination

Dissemination of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) under the multiple Recognized Mobile Satellite Service (RMSS) has been addressed since NCSR 7. While MSC 105 agreed to request all MSI coordinators to provide MSI via all RMSS, NCSR was tasked to further work on interoperability, Interconnectivity and cost sharing mechanism.

NCSR 9 noted:

- the proposal to use a single RMSS provider, as a direct medium to broadcast MSI and SAR-related information over all RMSS providers, should be carefully considered;
- the application programming interface (API) standard developed by the International Hydrographic Organization's (IHO) Sub-Committee on the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS-SC) enabled interoperability between the MSI providers and the RMSS providers; but it did not provide a direct link between the RMSS providers;
- legal liability issues should be considered thoroughly with respect to interoperability and interconnectivity; and
- more discussion would be required through a correspondence group.

NCSR agreed on the following provisional working definitions:

- **Interoperability:** a system using an agreed communication format between an MSI and/or SAR-related information provider and multiple RMSSs, without significant differences between the information sent, and providing confirmation of the information received.
- **Interconnectivity:** the ability for RMSS providers to transfer received MSI and/or SAR-related information between themselves to allow all RMSSs to access MSI and/or SAR-related information from a specific provider without having a direct connection.

NCSR 9 established the CG to further work on:

- dissemination of MSI and SAR-related information via

Enhanced Group Call (EGC) over multiple recognized mobile satellite service (RMSS) providers in particular on, technical solutions, including interoperability and interconnectivity, any necessary amendments to existing instruments;

- the revision of resolution A.707(17) for shore-to-ship, noting public service agreements between IMSO and RMSS providers; and
- options to address cost implications for information providers, identifying advantages and disadvantages.

#### **MSI dissemination in the Arctic region**

NCSR 9 recalling that the current MSI dissemination agreement in the Arctic Region would cease in December 2023, endorsed that the information should be disseminated to the industry.

#### **Dissemination of SAR related information through the international EGC service**

NCSR 9 developed an MSC Circular on *Guidance for the dissemination of SAR related information through the international EGC service* for approval by MSC 106.

The draft circular stresses that SAR authorities should ensure that SAR-related information is appropriately disseminated through all EGC services providing coverage within the SAR regions under their responsibility. This will ensure that all ships navigating within those areas receive the information regardless of the type of EGC receiver installed on board.

In this regard, for modifications to the GMDSS Master Plan and the Global SAR Plan modules of GISIS were also agreed upon.

NCSR 9 also included SAR related information as part of the application programming interface (API) standard developed by IHO for MSI dissemination.

#### **NAVTEX Manual**

NCSR 9 addressed inappropriate use of NAVTEX and sharing information on the temporary suspension of NAVTEX services.

NCSR 9 prepared draft amendments to the NAVTEX Manual (MSC.1/Circ.1403/Rev.1) for approval by MSC 106 with effective date on 1 January 2026.

#### **EPIRB Coding**

NCSR 9 agreed to invite Member States to avoid encoding EPIRBs on craft associated with a parent ship with an MMSI using the 98MID format until a permanent solution had been reached.

### **ITU MATERS (AGENDA ITEMS 10 AND 12)**

NCSR 9 reviewed the matters related to the ITU-R Study Groups and ITU World Radiocommunication Conference.

#### **ITU liaison matters**

NCSR 9 developed the IMO's positions for WRC-23 and WRC-27 meetings, including electromagnetic interference (EMI) effects of light-emitting diode (LED) lighting systems, Technical characteristics for an automatic identification system using time division multiple access in the VHF maritime mobile frequency band, digital voice communication in maritime VHF.

The ITU World Radio Conference allocates frequencies, therefore, these are the first step for utilization of the new technologies and also for protection of the frequency bands for maritime users.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

NCSR 9 agreed to update the footnote in SOLAS regulation V/23.2.3 concerning the updated ISO standard 799-1:2019, Ships and marine technology – Pilot ladders, in the 2020 SOLAS Consolidated Edition.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information please contact: [imo@liscr.com](mailto:imo@liscr.com)

### PROVISIONAL LIST OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS AND CIRCULARS

- Draft amendments to the SOLAS Chapter XV and polar code chapter 9-1 (Navigation) and 11-1 (Voyage planning)
- Draft Assembly resolution on revised *Guidelines on places of refuge for ships in need of assistance* (A.949(23))
- Draft amendments to *Continuity of service plan for the LRIT system* (MSC.1/Circ.1376/Rev.4)
- *Revised Performance standards and functional requirements for the long-range identification and tracking of ships* (resolution MSC.263(84), as amended)
- Draft amendments to *Long-range identification and tracking system – Technical documentation (Part I)* (MSC.1/Circ.1259/Rev.8)
- Draft amendments to *Guidance on the survey and certification of compliance of ships with the requirement to transmit LRIT information* (MSC.1/Circ.1307)
- Draft MSC Circular on *Guidance on the training on and operation of emergency personal radio devices in multiple casualty situations*
- Draft revision to *ECDIS Guidance for good practice* (MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1)
- Draft *Revised performance standards for electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS)* (MSC.232(82))
- COMSAR/Circ.32/Rev.1 on *Harmonization of GMDSS requirements for radio installations on board SOLAS ships*
- COMSAR/Circ.25 on *Procedure for responding to DSC distress alerts by ships* and COMSAR/Circ.45 on *Guidance on distress alerts*
- Draft revision of MSC/Circ.892 on *Alerting of search and rescue authorities*.
- Draft MSC circular on *GMDSS operating guidance for ships in distress situations*, superseding COM/Circ.108
- MSC Circular on *Guidance for the dissemination of SAR related information through the international EGC service*
- Draft amendments to *the NAVTEX Manual* (MSC.1/Circ.1403/Rev.1)
- SAR circular on *the List of documents and publications which should be held by a Maritime or Joint Rescue Coordination Centre* (SAR.7/Circ.15).