DYNAMICALLY POSITIONED VESSELS AND THE DANGERS TO DIVERS OPERATING FROM SUCH VESSELS

Notice to Shipowners, Masters and Officers of Merchant Ships and Fishing Vessels

This Notice supersedes Notice No. M.895

1. The attention of mariners is drawn to the special limitations imposed on Dynamically Positioned Vessels by the nature of their work and the need for them to operate in sea conditions as favourable as possible. Further, these vessels when operating in the diving support mode are required to hold position most accurately often very close to the legs of platforms. In the event of movement of the vessel, which may be due, for example, to the wash of a passing ship, risk of serious injury to the divers and/or damage to the vessel or platform could occur.

2. In view of these considerations, mariners are requested to give as wide a berth as possible to vessels displaying the signals required by Rule 27 paragraphs (b) and (d) as applicable of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972, as amended. If they are unable to pass at least ½ mile-clear, they should reduce speed when navigating near such vessels. To assist in identification Dynamically Positioned Diving Support Vessels should, when engaged in diving operations, also use the single letter “A” of the International Code of Signals using any method of signalling which may be appropriate.

3. It is also recommended that a Dynamically Positioned Vessel should, before commencing diving operations, ascertain that no other vessel is operating in its immediate vicinity. The vessel should also broadcast on the appropriate frequencies a navigation warning to all ships indicating the nature of its operation and such broadcast should be repeated at intervals whilst the operation is in progress. Additionally the vessel should ensure that the broadcasts are acknowledged by the appropriate coastal radio station who will rebroadcast them in their routine schedules.

4. Attention is also drawn to the provisions of Rule 36 of the Regulations referred to in paragraph 2 above which enables a vessel to make signals to attract the attention of another vessel to alert her to a danger which may exist.
Note: Further details on the operations of Dynamically Positioned Vessels are contained in a publication issued by the Department of Energy entitled “Guidelines for the Specifications and Operations of Dynamically Positioned Diving Support Vessels” (Ref ISBN 82 7257-123-1).
This publication can be obtained from the Diving Section of the Department of Energy, Thames House South, Millbank, London SW1P 4ZJ.

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