



Navigation Safety: The Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996 - COLREG

Notice to all Notice to all Ship Owners, Masters, Skippers, Officers and Crews of Merchant Ships, Fishing Vessels, Pleasure Vessels, Yachts and Other Seagoing Craft.

This Notice takes immediate effect and supersedes 'MSN 1781', 'MSN 1781 Corrigendum' and 'MSN 1781 Amendment 1' which have been revoked.

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 Notice and the Rules referred to in it are an integral part of the UK Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996, which came into force on 1 May 1996. These Regulations implement the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended (COLREG). They enhance safe navigation by prescribing the conduct of vessels underway, specify the display of internationally understood lights and sound signals and set out collision avoidance actions in close quarter situations.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 IMO's mandatory audit scheme for assessing Member States' performance in meeting their obligations and responsibilities as flag, port and coastal States under the relevant IMO treaties came into effect from 1 January 2016.
- 1.2 To facilitate the above, IMO also adopted amendments to the COLREG, to make the use of the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code) mandatory in auditing Member States, to determine how they give full and complete effect to the provisions of those Conventions to which they are party.

2. Latest Amendments

- 2.1 This Notice, therefore, incorporates amendments to the COLREG up to and including those implemented via IMO Resolution A.1085(28).



2.2 The latest amendments, adopted in December 2013 and in force from 1 January 2016, include a new part, "Part F", containing three Rules, *Rule 39, 40 and 41*, which provide for IMO verification of Member States' compliance with the provisions of the COLREG convention.

3. Note on the Application of the Regulations

3.1 The application of the Rules of COLREG is limited through the Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996, to the vessels or ships as defined in the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. Application to craft falling outside of this definition, e.g. *Wing-In-Ground, personal water craft, unmanned craft* and others; will therefore be subject to a Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) opinion of what it considers to be good conduct and practice by the owners, operators and those in charge of such craft.

4. Background

4.1 In the COLREG with regard to some particular Regulations:

- The traffic separation schemes referred to in Rule 10(a) are the schemes adopted internationally pursuant to Regulation 10 of the Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (SOLAS);
- The diagram mentioned in paragraph 7 of Annex I is the one specified in the Chromaticity Chart (1975) published by the International Illumination Commission (CIE);
- The International Code of Signals referred to in paragraph 3 of Annex IV implies the current edition published by the International Maritime Organization; and
- The International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual, Volume III (IAMSAR) also referred to in paragraph 3 of Annex IV means the updated version of Volume III of the IAMSAR Manual, which is jointly published by IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

More Information

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Appendix 1

The COLREG table of contents is listed below, for the full script of the currently applicable and extant Rules, in electronic or hardcopy format, please contact IMO Publications as at below link:

<http://www.imo.org/en/Publications/Pages/Home.aspx>

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Appendix 2

Original COLREG and amendments

COLREG/ Amendments	Adopted		Effective date	Amendments to the Convention
	By	Date		
COLREG	Conference	20.10.1972	15.07.1977	
1981 Amendments	Res.A.464(12)	19.11.1981	01.06.1983	Rule 1(c), 3(g), 3(g)(v), 10(b)(iii), 10(d), 10(e), 10(k), 10(l), 13(a), 22(d), 23(c), 24((a)(i), 24(c)(i), 24(d), 24(e), 24(g), 24(h), 24(i), 25(b), 27(b), 27(b)(iii), 27(c) 27(d), 27(e), 27(f), 27(g), 29(a)(iii), 30(e), 30(f), 33(a), 34(b)(iii), 35(d), 36, 37, 38, 38*h), Annex I/sec. 1, 2(f), 2(i)(i),, 2(i)(ii), 2(j), 2(k), 3(b), 3(c), 5, 8, 9(a)(i), 9(a)(ii), 10(a), 10(b), 13, Annex III/1(d), 2(a), 2(b), 3
1987 Amendments	Res.A.626(15)	19.11.1987	19.11.1989	Rule 1(e), 3(h), New rule 8(f), 10(a), 10(c), Annex 1/section 2(d), 2(i)(ii), 10(a), (b), Annex IV/new para 1(o)
1989 Amendments	Res.A.678(16)	19.10.1989	19.04.1991	Rule 10(d), (i), 10(d)(ii)
1993 Amendments	Res.A.736(18)	04.11.1993	04.11.1995	Rule 26(b)(i), 26(c)(i), 26(d), Annex I/sec. 3(d), sec. 9(b), 9(b)(ii), New sec. 13, Annex II/sec. 2 (a), 2(b), 2(c), Annex IV/sub-para. 1(o)
2001 Amendments	Res.A.910(22)	29.11.2001	29.11.2003	Rule 3(a), (m), Rule 8(a), Rule 18(f), Rule 23(c), Rule 31, Rule 33(a), Rule 35(i), Annex I/sec.13, Annex III/sec.1-Whistles para. (a), (c), sec. 2-Bell or gong para. (b).
2007 Amendments	Res.A.1004(25)	29.11.2007	01.12.2009	Annex IV
2013 Amendments	Res.A.1085(28)	10.12.2013	01.01.2016	Rule 39 (new), Rule 40 (new), Rule 41 (new)

