



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

MARINE GUIDANCE NOTE

## MGN 375 (M+F)

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### Navigation: Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

**Notice to all Shipowners, Masters, Superintendents and Skippers of Fishing Vessels, Yachts and Other Seagoing Craft**

*This notice replaces Marine Guidance Notes 23 and 44*

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**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

Maritime Safety Information (MSI) is defined in the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention, Chapter IV as *“navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts and other urgent safety related messages broadcast to ships.”*

The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) supports two independent systems for broadcasting MSI:

- The International NAVTEX Service
- The International SafetyNET Service

The United Kingdom NAVTEX station coverage area is given in section 4.3 and is complemented by VHF and MF radiotelephony.

This Notice gives guidance about the principal sources of relevant information. Masters, skippers and others should refer to Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA/064) leaflet via the MCA website at [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk) for details, copies can also be obtained from MCA offices.

Masters, skippers and others should use every available means to obtain the latest MSI.

#### 1. Introduction/ Background

- 1.1 The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is responsible in the UK for the broadcast of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) on NAVTEX, VHF and MF and for the provision of the Radio Medical Advice Link (MEDILINK) Service.

1.2 To ensure that the user knows when to receive MSI for a given area and subject, many MSI broadcasts are scheduled to a particular time, Land Earth Station (LES), and satellite, in accordance with International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidance. For example, all navigational warnings and meteorological forecasts are scheduled broadcasts, while meteorological warning and distress alerts and certain urgent navigational warnings are unscheduled broadcasts.

1.3 NAVTEX receivers should be programmed to receive information from the Radio Stations covering the area in which the ship is navigating, or is about to enter, or adjacent NAVTEX transmission sites. The Enhanced Group Calling Facility should be logged on to the appropriate INMARSAT satellite for the international SafetyNET Service broadcasting MSI to the area in which the ship is navigating, or is about to enter; this may require monitoring broadcasts from separate satellites.

## 2. Navigational Warnings

2.1 Full use should be made of NAVTEX, INMARSAT's Enhanced Group Calling Facility (SafetyNET), HF, MF and VHF radio to obtain the most up-to-date Radio Navigational Warnings.

2.2 Details of the UK COASTAL and NAVAREA elements of the Worldwide Navigational Warnings Service are set out in the **Admiralty List of Radio Signals** and the **Annual Summary of Admiralty Notices to Mariners (Annual Notices to Mariners No. 13)** and in all good nautical almanacs.

2.3 A list of current Navarea One Warnings is published in Section III of Admiralty weekly Notices to Mariners and also available on the UKHO website at [www.ukho.gov.uk](http://www.ukho.gov.uk)

## 3. Weather Information

3.1 Weather information for commercial shipping can be obtained at a number of UK ports or direct from the Met Office by telephoning 0870 900 0100. Forecasts are also available via the Met Office website at [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

3.2 At sea, full use should be made of weather information (including gale and storm warnings and strong wind warnings for inshore waters) broadcast on NAVTEX, INMARSAT's Enhanced Group Calling Facility (SafetyNET), MF and VHF radio.

3.3 HM Coastguard (HMCG) Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCC) broadcast weather information on Radio Telephony (RT) as follows:

- Sea Area (Shipping Forecast) – twice a day;
- Gale Warning – on receipt and every 3 hours;
- Strong Wind Warnings – on receipt becoming part of the next Inshore Forecast
- Inshore Forecasts up to 12 nautical miles offshore – new every 6 hours, repeated after 3 hours;

3.4 Skippers of yachts, in particular, should listen to weather forecasts broadcast on local and national radio, the repetition of meteorological information relayed by the HMCG MRCC service, and refer to other sources which can be found in all good nautical almanacs.

3.5 The definitions of visibility in nautical miles (nm) have been standardised and based on the following:

- Very Poor: less than 0.5 nm
- Poor: 0.5 nm to 2 nm
- Moderate: 2 nm to 5 nm
- Good: greater than 5 nm

**4. NAVTEX**

4.1 The coverage area of a NAVTEX station is a circle, radius 270 nautical miles from the transmitter, whereas the service area is an area agreed between two adjacent stations where their coverage areas overlap and a common boundary is formed.

4.2 Full details of these service and coverage areas can be found in **Admiralty List of Radio Signals Volumes 3 and 5**. Masters should satisfy themselves that the Officer of the Watch is aware of the need to inform them of the content of navigational and meteorological warnings and weather forecasts.

4.3 NAVTEX COVERAGE AREAS (Refer to Annex 1 diagram)

**Cullercoats** S. North Sea, E. Coast of England and E.& N. Coasts of Scotland to 62°N.

**Portpatrick** N.W. Approaches to UK, W. Scotland, N. Channel, Irish Sea and St George’s Channel and E. Coast of Ireland.

**Niton** S.W. Approaches N. of 48°27’N, English Channel, Celtic Sea and Dover Strait.

**Ostend** S. North Sea and Dover Strait.

4.4 The 518 kHz NAVTEX service provides MSI and additional weather information as follows:

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>CULLERCOATS – 518 kHz [G]</b>	<b>NITON – 518 kHz [E]</b>	<b>PORTPATRICK - 518 kHz [O]</b>
Gale Warnings on receipt and at	0100, 0500, 0900, 1300, 1700, 2100	0040, 0440, 0840, 1240, 1640, 2040	0220, 0620, 1020, 1420, 1820, 2220
Shipping Forecast 24 Hour Forecast & 24 Hour Outlook	0900, 2100	0840, 2040	0620, 1820
Extended Outlook (3-5 days)	0100	0040	0220
WZ Navigational Warnings	0100, 0500, 0900, 1300, 1700, 2100	0040, 0440, 0840, 1240, 1640, 2040	0220, 0620, 1020, 1420, 1820, 2220
Tidal Surge Warnings S. North Sea	On receipt	On receipt	On receipt
SUBFACTS	-	0440, 1640	0620, 1820
Navarea One Warnings	0500, 1700	0440, 1640	0220, 1420

4.5 The National 490 kHz NAVTEX service also provides the Inshore Waters Forecast (IWF) and Strong Wind Warnings on receipt. Weather Actual Reports are broadcast once only at the next available broadcast schedule as indicated below.

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>CULLERCOATS – 490 kHz [U]</b>	<b>NITON – 490 kHz [I]</b>	<b>PORTPATRICK - 490 kHz [C]</b>
Inshore Forecast	0720, 1920	0520, 1720	0820, 2020
Weather Actual – latest observations	0320, 1120, 1520, 2320	0120, 0920, 1320, 2120	0020, 0420, 1220, 1620

4.6 The broadcast of MSI may be interrupted or delayed as a result of Search and Rescue operations. Any broadcast issues relating to NAVTEX should be addressed to the nearest HMCG MRCC or the SAR Communications Manager on 01326 310800.

#### 4.7 Use of Abbreviations in NAVTEX Weather Broadcasts (Refer to Annex 2 table)

From 1 November 2006 a range of standard abbreviations were introduced to weather forecasts broadcast on the international NAVTEX (518 kHz) service. This change has been necessary to reduce the length of forecasts and overrunning.

#### More Information

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MCA Website Address: [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)

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**COMMON ABBREVIATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NAVTEX SERVICE**

<b>NAVTEX Abbreviations</b>	<b>Terminology in full</b>
<b>N</b>	North or Northerly
<b>NE</b>	Northeast or Northeasterly
<b>E</b>	East or Easterly
<b>SE</b>	Southeast or Southeasterly
<b>S</b>	South or Southerly
<b>SW</b>	Southwest or Southwesterly
<b>W</b>	West or Westerly
<b>NW</b>	Northwest or Northwesterly

<b>DECR</b>	Decreasing
<b>INCR</b>	Increasing
<b>VRB</b>	Variable
<b>BECMG</b>	Becoming
<b>LOC</b>	Locally
<b>MOD</b>	Moderate
<b>OCNL</b>	Occasionally
<b>SCT</b>	Scattered
<b>TEMPO</b>	Temporarily/Temporary
<b>ISOL</b>	Isolated
<b>FRQ</b>	Frequent/Frequency
<b>SHWRS or SH</b>	Showers
<b>C-FRONT or CFNT</b>	Cold Front
<b>W-FRONT or WFNT</b>	Warm Front
<b>O-FRONT or OFNT</b>	Occlusion Front
<b>WKN</b>	Weakening
<b>BLDG</b>	Building
<b>FLN</b>	Filling
<b>DPN</b>	Deepening
<b>INTSF</b>	Intensifying/Intensify
<b>IMPR</b>	Improving/Improve
<b>STNR</b>	Stationary
<b>QSTNR</b>	Quasi-Stationary
<b>MVG or MOV</b>	Moving/Move
<b>VEER</b>	Veering
<b>BACK</b>	Backing
<b>SLWY</b>	Slowly
<b>QCKY</b>	Quickly
<b>RPDY</b>	Rapidly
<b>KT</b>	Knots
<b>KMH</b>	Km/h
<b>NM</b>	Nautical miles
<b>M</b>	Metres
<b>HPA</b>	HectoPascal
<b>MET</b>	Meteo
<b>FCST</b>	Forecast
<b>TEND</b>	Further outlooks
<b>VIS</b>	Visibility
<b>SLGT or SLT</b>	Slight
<b>QUAD</b>	Quadrant
<b>POSS</b>	Possible
<b>PROB</b>	Probability/Probable
<b>SIG</b>	Significant
<b>NC</b>	No change
<b>NOSIG</b>	No significant change
<b>FLW</b>	Following
<b>NXT</b>	Next
<b>HVY</b>	Heavy
<b>SEV or SVR</b>	Severe
<b>STRG</b>	Strong
<b>FM</b>	From
<b>EXP</b>	Expected
<b>LAT/LONG</b>	Latitude/Longitude