

Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), 11th session, 4-13 June 2024

Action Required: IR Commission members are invited to note the relevant outcomes of NCSR 11.

Performance standards for NAVDAT and criteria for providing a NAVDAT service agreed

NAVDAT is a digital broadcasting system operating on selected medium and high frequency (MF and HF) bands. It can communicate texts, images, graphs and data to compatible receiving equipment on vessels, at speeds much higher than NAVTEX.

The Sub-Committee finalized new Performance standards for the reception of maritime safety information (MSI) and search and rescue (SAR) related information by MF and HF digital navigational data (NAVDAT) system.

The Sub-Committee also approved a draft revision of resolution MSC.509(105) on Provision of radio services for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), which includes criteria for providing a NAVDAT service.

Both resolutions will be submitted to MSC 109 (Dec 2024) for adoption.

Relevance to World Sailing: developments in NAVDAT, GMDSS, MSI provision, protocols and regulations are important for the safety of offshore and oceanic sailing. We would not want to be caught unawares or left behind by accelerating data technologies and/or associated requirements and regulations.

Introduction of VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) - SOLAS amendments in development

The Sub-Committee continued discussions on the introduction of the proposed VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) into the SOLAS framework, including the development of related performance standards and guidelines.

VDES is a radiocommunication system in the VHF maritime mobile band, capable of exchanging digital data faster than AIS (Automatic Identifying System) in the ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore and shore-to-ship directions, using both terrestrial and satellite components.

The Sub-Committee re-established the Correspondence Group on VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) and instructed it to finalize the draft amendments to SOLAS chapter V, including consequential amendments, the draft performance standards for VDES as a navigational equipment and the draft guidelines for the operational use of shipborne VDES.

The Correspondence Group will submit a report to the next session of the Sub-Committee (NCSR 12). ***Relevance to World Sailing: as above.***

Development of guidelines for electronic nautical publications

Ships have long been required to carry nautical charts and publications to plan and display the ship's route and to plot and monitor positions throughout the voyage. The use of electronic publications has greatly increased in recent times, especially in the digital era, requiring official guidelines to ensure global standards.

The Sub-Committee established a correspondence group on Guidelines for the use of electronic nautical publications (ENP) and instructed it to finalize the draft guidelines for ENP use and submit a report to NCSR 12.

Relevance to World Sailing: as above, including also inshore racing and cruising.

Revised criteria for the provision of mobile satellite communication systems in the GMDSS and charges for distress, urgency and safety communications agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed to a draft Assembly resolution revising the Criteria for the provision of mobile satellite communication systems in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) (resolution A.1001(25)). The resolution sets out the requirements for satellite communications systems to be recognized as a service provider in the GMDSS as well as for the oversight of such services.

The Sub-Committee also agreed to a draft Assembly resolution on Charges for distress, urgency and safety communications messages through recognized mobile satellite services in the GMDSS. The resolution revises resolution A.707(17), which specifies charging policies for distress, urgency and safety communications via RMSSs, applicable to both shore authorities and ship stations.

Relevance to World Sailing: as above.

The above resolutions will be submitted for approval by MSC 109, with a view to subsequent adoption by the forthcoming 34th session of the IMO Assembly in 2025.

Revised Performance standards for a universal automatic identification system (AIS) agreed

The Sub-Committee continued its work on possible measures to prevent manipulation of AIS transmissions and tampering of AIS transponders.

The Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MSC resolution revising the Performance standards for a universal shipborne automatic identification system (AIS) (resolution MSC.74(69)), which enhances the existing requirement for providing the IMO ship identification number as part of the static AIS information (or an "official flag State number", where the ship has no IMO number).

The resolution also introduces a new requirement for broadcasting a "unique manufacturer equipment identification number", which should also be physically marked on the equipment. The draft resolution will be submitted for adoption by MSC 109.

Relevance to World Sailing: as above.

Draft amendments to the IAMSAR Manual agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed to draft amendments to the IAMSAR Manual, jointly published by IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The three-volume manual provides guidelines for a common aeronautical and maritime approach to organizing and providing search and rescue services.

The draft amendments will be submitted to MSC109 for approval, and thereafter will become applicable 12 months after approval.

Relevance to World Sailing: to be aware of updates relating to the global provision and organisation of maritime SR services. Of particular relevance to the planning and safety management of offshore and oceanic sailing.

Ships' routing measures

The Sub-Committee agreed the following ships' routing measures, for submission to MSC 109 for adoption:

- revised recommendations on navigation for containerships in traffic separation schemes Off Vlieland, Terschelling-German Bight, Off Friesland and German Bight western approach;
- areas to be avoided off the Brazilian southeast coast – Santos Basin; and
- a no-anchoring area off the Hook of Holland.

Relevance to World Sailing: for the planning and safety management of sailing events in or near the areas specified.

There were no other issues raised of relevance to World Sailing.