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EMERGENCY WRECK MARKING BUOY

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-second session (29 November to 8 December 2006), at the request of IALA and with a view to improving the safety of navigation, approved the circulation of a recently adopted IALA **Recommendation O-133**, which introduces, on a trial basis, a new emergency wreck marking buoy that could be used in addition to the IALA Buoyage System.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring the information contained in the IALA recommendation annexed to the present circular to the attention of masters of their ships.

ANNEX

IALA RECOMMENDATION ON EMERGENCY WRECK MARKING BUOY

Recommendation O-133

THE COUNCIL,

NOTING the function of IALA with respect to the safety of marine navigation, the efficiency of maritime transport and the protection of the environment;

NOTING ALSO the provisions contained within the IALA Maritime Buoyage System (MBS), and related IALA Recommendations and IALA Guidelines;

RECOGNIZING the significant hazard to shipping posed by new wrecks or obstructions;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that it is a matter for a National Authority to assess the danger to shipping, navigational requirement, the risk involved, and to decide on emergency wreck marking;

RECOGNIZING FURTHER that emergency marking of dangerous wrecks is intended to preserve the safety of life, safety of navigation and to protect the marine environment;

HAVING CONSIDERED the proposals by the IALA Aids to Navigation Management Committee and taking into account IALA Guideline No. 1046 Response Plan for the Marking of New Wrecks;

ADOPTS the “Emergency Wreck Marking Buoy”, set out in the Annex to this Recommendation, for use on a trial basis; and

RECOMMENDS that Responsible Authorities, in addition to the use of the MBS and in conjunction with other measures, consider the deployment of Emergency Wreck Marking Buoys, as described in the Annex to this Recommendation.

Annex

Emergency Wreck Marking Buoy

1 INTRODUCTION

The wreck of the 'Tricolor' in the Dover Straits in 2002 has brought into sharp focus the effective responses required to adequately and quickly mark such new dangers and prevent collisions. Responsible Authorities need to assess their areas of responsibility and rapid response capability as part of their contingency planning.

The **IALA Guideline No.1046 - Response Plan for the Marking of New Wrecks (June 2005)** provides guidance to Authorities for an immediate, effective and well co-ordinated response in such a situation. The guidelines recommend procedures to be observed, as well as considerations to be taken into account with respect to all necessary measures when confronted with a new danger or an obstruction as a result of an incident within their area of responsibility.

Furthermore, there has been discussion with regards to the limitations of the present IALA Maritime Buoyage System when providing initial marking of new dangers. At present, new dangers are generally marked by cardinal or lateral buoys, although it is recognised that a number of Authorities also deploy isolated danger marks. Recent groundings and collisions have indicated a need for a revision of how new dangers are to be marked, especially in an emergency. As such, Guideline No.1046 provides guidance and recommendations for emergency wreck marking.

2 SCOPE & OBJECTIVES

Within the Guideline, reference is made to an 'emergency wreck marking buoy'. This Recommendation provides details of a new buoy configuration, in addition to that already found in the IALA Maritime Buoyage System, which Authorities may consider deploying when responding to a new danger or obstruction.

3 CONSIDERATIONS

A new wreck can be very dangerous for shipping, not only when its exact position is unknown and is still unmarked, but even when the position is known and the wreck is properly marked. In the past, new wrecks have caused problems to other shipping resulting in damage, pollution and even loss of life. As detailed in the Guideline No.1046, Authorities should consider a range of responses including the deployment of guardships, the use of AIS, temporary VTS and deployment of buoys amongst other risk mitigation measures.

Whatever additional risk mitigation measures are initiated, a new danger must be physically marked. Weather conditions, sea state and unknown facts about the danger can all hamper timely marking. However, it is of great importance that the location of the danger is marked as soon as practicable and that this marking can be readily recognised by ships as a new hazard.

The volume of traffic, background lighting and proliferation of Aids to Navigation (A to N) in the area may make the deployment of cardinal or lateral marks difficult for mariners to quickly identify a new danger in the initial stages of an incident. In these instances, Authorities are invited to consider the deployment of an emergency wreck marking buoy that is specifically designed to mark new dangers.

4 EMERGENCY WRECK MARKING BUOY

The emergency wreck-marking buoy is designed to provide high visual and radio aid to navigation recognition. It should be placed as close to the wreck as possible, or in a pattern around the wreck, and within any other marks that may be subsequently deployed.

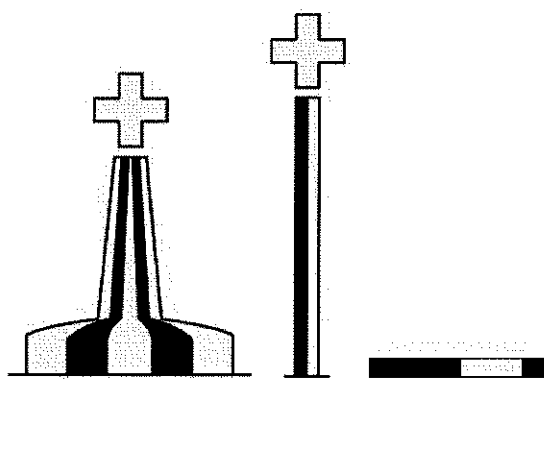
The emergency wreck marking buoy should be maintained in position until:

- the wreck is well known and has been promulgated in nautical publications;
- the wreck has been fully surveyed and exact details such as position and least depth above the wreck are known; and
- a permanent form of marking of the wreck has been carried out.

4.1 Characteristics

The buoy has the following characteristics:

- A pillar or spar buoy, with size dependant on location.
- Coloured in equal number and dimensions of blue and yellow vertical stripes (minimum of 4 stripes and maximum of 8 stripes).
- Fitted with an alternating blue* and yellow flashing light with a nominal range of 4 nautical miles (authorities may wish to alter the range depending on local conditions) where the blue and yellow 1 second flashes are alternated with an interval of 0.5 seconds.
 - $B1.0s + \underline{0.5s} + Y1.0s + \underline{0.5s} = 3.0s$
- If multiple buoys are deployed then the lights should be synchronized.
- Consideration should be given to the use of a racon Morse Code "D" and/or AIS transponder.
- The top mark, if fitted, is to be a standing/upright yellow cross.



* The light characteristic was chosen to eliminate confusion with blue lights to identify law enforcement, security and emergency services.