

FURTHER GUIDANCE ON SOLAS V

SOLAS V Regulation 19

Paragraph 1 deal's with application.

Paragraph 2

“2.1.3 Means of correcting heading and bearings to true.”
This is generally achieved with the provision of a compass deviation card. The navigator should be aware of the compass deviation on his vessel and the compass variation in the area they are navigating and thus be able to convert compass course/bearing to true. It is possible for the navigator to make up his own deviation card, there are a number of transits around the island that the ships head can be placed on and the vessels compass checked against the true bearing of the transit.

“2.1.8 When the bridge is totally enclosed and unless the administration determines otherwise a sound reception system or other means to enable the officer in charge of a navigational watch to hear sound signals and determine their direction.”

International conventions often back each other up, there is already a requirement under Rule 5 of the International Regulations for preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended.

Rule 5

Look-out

Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.

This regulation under SOLAS backs up the need to be able to maintain a listening watch. This requirement is most relevant during times of restricted visibility when sound signals are predominantly used. Modern radars are very good and will pick up most vessels but this can not be guaranteed which is why in times of restricted visibility sound signals are sounded. It needs also to be understood that whilst vessels are navigating in confined areas like port approaches sound signals will be used to attract the attention of vessels to dangers of conflicting vessel movements. This Rule under SOLAS highlights this need to keep a proper watch by hearing how this is managed is an issue for the vessel concerned options include such things as wheel house windows to be opened or someone on deck to make reports to the navigator.

“2.1.9 A telephone or other means, to communicate heading information to the emergency steering position, if provided.”

Emergency steering on ships generally requires a helmsman steering the vessel from the steering gear which normally is an enclosed position where the helmsman is remote from the

position that the vessels is normally controlled from, if this is the case then there has to be effective communication system between the vessel's control position and the remote steering position, without this communication system the emergency steering position is useless.

Small vessels often go for a back up steering system so that by turning a switch or hydraulic valve steering can continue from the wheelhouse on an emergency system or the emergency steering from the steering gear is close enough to the control position for simple instructions to be passed with out the need to install telephones etc. Where this is not the case, this regulation recognises the need for this communication system and makes it a requirement. All this said if a vessel does not have an emergency steering position then communications are not needed.

“Regulation 27 - All nautical charts and publications to be up to date.

Nautical charts and nautical publications, such as sailing directions, lists of lights, notices to mariners, tide tables and all other nautical publications necessary for the intended voyage, shall be adequate and up to date”

Regulation 19 paragraph 2.1.4 recognises the need for the navigator to have the necessary information to enable him to safely complete his planed passage; therefore it would be reasonable to expect that any such information is correct. The issues are covered in regulation 34 Safe navigation and avoidance of dangerous situations, in that voyages need to be planned, the information necessary to safely navigate a vessel from point A to point B has to be available to allow that plan to be made and then followed. Only the publications on board a vessel that have relevance to the passage being undertaken need be considered.

Further clarification from Capt. Peter Moore, by email 1st February 2010:

Peter,

Thank you for feedback. Our new website is under development and will have sections for Jersey Coastguard, Port of Jersey and Jersey Marinas. We will publish our guidelines therein in due course. The existing website is so outdated it is not worth adding to.

I wouldn't worry to much about the detail of the regulations contained within SOLAS V as we explained previously. The guidelines for this are most comprehensively reviewed by the MCA and we have added our bits where the Jersey Regulations differ slightly. The Attorney General would never prosecute on one of the technicalities discussed nor indeed would Jersey Coastguard as enforcers of the legislation bring a case to his attention on such detail. There is a danger in reading more into these regulations than the purpose for which they were intended.

The reality of the regulations is to improve safety at sea by setting standards by which private boat owners should conduct their navigation and kit their boats. When the lifeboat tows or rescues a vessel and brings it into port the duty SMC always attends to see what caused the problem. If he were to find that the vessel was unseaworthy, i.e. no proper navigation equipment particularly a compass, charts, passage plans or any attempt made at preplanning he may decide to bring a prosecution. However he would have to be sure that there was sufficient evidence to support his allegation. The points you raised in respect to these regulations would not, in isolation, result in a prosecution. The AG would see to that. Let us be realistic here. Means of communication between conning and emergency steering is aimed at commercial vessels where distance is involved or there are several compartments separating the two spaces. If a leisure vessel returned to port on emergency steering then there is no issue, provided it can be achieved. Communication is by what ever means appropriate to the size of vessel. Commodore Goodwill has, for example, a telephone system, and emergency talkback system between bridge and emergency steering position in the steering flat. They are separated by 21 compartments and over 100m of ships length. That is not an appropriate system for a 32 ft Nelson, where the emergency tiller operator may actually be able to see where he is going in the first place.

When the new website is up and running we will publish our small variation guide with references to the MCAs most comprehensive guide. It is anticipated that our new website will be operation by April 2010.

Regards

Peter

**Captain Peter M Moore - Deputy Harbour Master
Coastguard Operations Director**