



PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY
Directorate General of Merchant Marine
International Representative Office, N.Y.

Merchant Marine Circular No. 139

**To: Owners/Operators, Master, Marine Inspectors of Panamanian flag Vessels,
and Recognized Organizations**

Subject: AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AIS)

References: Decree Law No. 7, SOLAS 74 as amended, IMO Resolution A. 694(17), IMO Resolution A. 917(22), (17), Resolution MSC.74 (69), Resolution MSC.99(73), Resolution MSC.917(22), Resolution 956(23) and SOLAS/CONF.5/32 and SN/Circ.227.

1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to remind all parties concerned with Panamanian flag ships of the full implementation of the carriage of AIS on board Panamanian flag ships.
2. The 2000 revision of SOLAS Chapter V significantly changed the carriage requirements for shipboard navigation equipment. Regulation V/19 of SOLAS 74, as amended, require ships to be fitted with an automatic identification system (AIS). This regulation became mandatory on July 1, 2002.

Installation of Shipborne AIS

3. AIS purpose is to provide automatically to appropriately equipped shore stations, other ships and aircraft, information including the ship's identity, type, position, course, speed, navigational status and other safety related information.
AIS should be installed according to the guidance provided and adopted by the Organization

Operation of AIS

4. Decisions taken in IMO's Maritime Safety Committee and its Maritime Security Working group have modified the implementation of the AIS carriage. The Amendments to Chapter V of SOLAS include a new paragraph in regulation 19 as follows:
"Ships fitted with AIS shall maintain AIS in operation at all times except where international agreements, rules or standards provide for the protection of navigational information".

Automatic Identification System – Implementation

5. Applies to:
 1. All ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards engaged on international voyages;
 2. Cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged on international voyages; and
 3. All passenger ships irrespective of size.



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6. As follows:

1. All ships constructed on or after 1 July 2002 must be fitted with an approved AIS.
2. Existing ships engaged on international voyages constructed before 1 July 2002 must be fitted as follows:
 1. Passenger ships – not later than 1 July 2003
 2. Tankers – not later than the first Safety Equipment Survey¹ after 1 July 2003
3. Existing ships other than passenger ships and tankers must be fitted as follows:
 1. 50,000 gross tonnage and upwards – not later than 1 July 2004;
 2. 300 gross tonnage and upwards but less than 50,000 gross tonnage, not later than the first safety equipment survey¹ after 1 July 2004 or by 31 December 2004, whichever occurs earlier.

¹ The first safety equipment survey means the first annual survey the first periodical survey or the first renewal survey of the safety equipment, whichever is due first after the specific implementation date and, in addition, in the case of ships under construction, the initial survey.

4. Ships of 500 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged on international voyages constructed before 1 July 2002 must be fitted not later than 1 July 2008,
5. For the purpose of vessels operating in Jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama the AIS will apply to any vessel of foreign flag irrespective of her size and type, and this also will include, tugboats towing non-self propelled ships carrying oil products with Panama Flag irrespective of their size, not later than 1 July 2008

7. Exemptions

1. Regulation V/3.1, allows Administrations to grant a general exemption to ships without mechanical means of propulsion from specific SOLAS regulations, as in MMC # 121, excepting the specified in the paragraph 6.5.
2. The Administration may consider to exempt an existing ship from compliance only if the ship is going to be removed permanently from service within two years after the specific implementation date.

8. Penalty clause

1. All Panamanian flag ships inside the scope of this regulation will be expected to comply in accordance with the above schedule of implementation, Panama Maritime Authority may penalize violations to the provisions of this Merchant Marine Circular according to the national legislation.



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For vessels that requested an exemption for AIS equipment requirements under the understanding that the vessel would be put out of service within two (2) years after the specific implementation date, and if the owners/operators do not comply with the condition to put the vessels out of service, a fine that could reach up to ten thousand U.S. dollars US\$ 10,000.00 shall be imposed.

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