

RESOLUTION A.484(XII) adopted on 19 November 1981  
BASIC PRINCIPLES TO BE OBSERVED IN KEEPING A NAVIGATIONAL  
WATCH ON BOARD FISHING VESSELS

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL MARITIME  
CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION

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THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 16(i) of the Convention on the Inter-Governmental  
Maritime Consultative Organization,

BEARING IN MIND that Article III of the International Convention on  
Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978,  
excludes application to fishing vessels of the basic principles relating to  
watchkeeping given in that Convention,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT recommendation 39 of the International Conference on  
Safety of Life at Sea, 1960,

DESIRING to promote safety of life at sea and protection of the marine  
environment,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendation made by the Maritime Safety Committee  
at its forty-fourth session,

1. ADOPTS the recommendation on basic principles to be observed in keeping a  
navigational watch on board fishing vessels given in the Annex to the present  
resolution;
2. URGES Member Governments to implement the measures contained in the  
recommendation as soon as possible.

ANNEX

RECOMMENDED BASIC PRINCIPLES TO BE OBSERVED IN  
KEEPING A NAVIGATIONAL WATCH ON BOARD  
FISHING VESSELS

- 1 The competent authority should ensure that owners and operators of fishing vessels, skippers and watchkeeping personnel observe the following principles to ensure that a safe navigational watch is maintained at all times.
- 2 The skipper of every fishing vessel is bound to ensure that watchkeeping arrangements are adequate for maintaining a safe navigational watch. Under the skipper's general direction, the officers of the watch are responsible for navigating the vessel safely during their periods of duty when they will be particularly concerned with avoiding collision and stranding.
- 3 The basic principles, including but not limited to the following, should be taken into account on all fishing vessels. However, an Administration may exclude very small fishing vessels from fully observing the basic principles.
- 4 En route to or from fishing grounds
  - 4.1 Arrangements of the navigational watch
    - 4.1.1 The composition of the watch should at all times be adequate and appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions and should take into account the need for maintaining a proper look-out.
    - 4.1.2 When deciding the composition of the watch the following factors, inter alia, should be taken into account:
      - .1 at no time should the wheelhouse be left unattended;
      - .2 weather conditions, visibility and whether there is daylight or darkness;
      - .3 proximity of navigational hazards which may make it necessary for the officer in charge of the watch to carry out additional navigational duties;
      - .4 use and operational condition of navigational aids such as radar or electronic position-indicating devices and any other equipment affecting the safe navigation of the vessel;
      - .5 whether the vessel is fitted with automatic steering;
      - .6 any unusual demands on the navigational watch that may arise as a result of special operational circumstances.



#### 4.2 Fitness for duty

4.2.1 The watch system should be such that the efficiency of watchkeeping personnel is not impaired by fatigue. Duties should be so organized that the first watch at the commencement of a voyage and the subsequent relieving watches are sufficiently rested and otherwise fit for duty.

#### 4.3 Navigation

4.3.1 The intended voyage should, as far as practicable, be planned in advance taking into consideration all pertinent information and any course laid down should be checked before the voyage commences.

4.3.2 During the watch the course steered, position and speed should be checked at sufficiently frequent intervals, using any available navigational aids necessary, to ensure that the vessel follows the planned course.

4.3.3 The officer in charge of the watch should have full knowledge of the location and operation of all safety and navigational equipment on board the vessel and should be aware and take account of the operating limitations of such equipment.

4.3.4 The officer in charge of a navigational watch should not be assigned or undertake any duties which would interfere with the safe navigation of the vessel.

#### 4.4 Navigational equipment

4.4.1 The officer in charge of the watch should make the most effective use of all navigational equipment at his disposal.

4.4.2 When using radar the officer in charge of the watch should bear in mind the necessity to comply at all times with the provisions on the use of radar contained in the applicable regulations for preventing collisions at sea.

4.4.3 In cases of need the officer of the watch should not hesitate to use the helm, engines and sound signalling apparatus.

#### 4.5 Navigational duties and responsibilities

4.5.1 The officer in charge of the watch should:

- .1 keep his watch in the wheelhouse which he should in no circumstances leave until properly relieved;
- .2 continue to be responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel despite the presence of the skipper in the wheelhouse until the skipper informs him specifically that he has assumed that responsibility and this is mutually understood;

- .3 notify the skipper when in any doubt as to what action to take in the interest of safety;
- .4 not hand over the watch to a relieving officer if he has reason to believe that the latter is obviously not capable of carrying out his duties effectively, in which case he should notify the skipper accordingly.

4.5.2 On taking over the watch the relieving officer should satisfy himself as to the vessel's estimated or true position and confirm its intended track, course and speed and should note any dangers to navigation expected to be encountered during his watch.

4.5.3 Whenever practicable a proper record should be kept of the movements and activities during the watch relating to the navigation of the vessel.

#### 4.6 Look-out

4.6.1 In addition to maintaining a proper look-out for the purpose of fully appraising the situation and the risk of collision, stranding and other dangers to navigation, the duties of the look-out should include the detection of ships or aircraft in distress, shipwrecked persons, wrecks and debris. In maintaining a look-out the following should be observed:

- .1 The look-out must be able to give full attention to the keeping of a proper look-out and no other duties shall be undertaken or assigned which could interfere with that task.
- .2 The duties of the look-out and helmsman are separate and the helmsman should not be considered to be the look-out while steering except where an unobstructed all-round view is provided at the steering position and there is no impairment of night vision or other impediment to the keeping of a proper look-out. The officer in charge of the watch may be the sole look-out in daylight provided that on each such occasion:
  - .2.1 the situation has been carefully assessed and it has been established without doubt that it is safe to do so;
  - .2.2 full account has been taken of all relevant factors including, but not limited to:
    - state of weather
    - visibility
    - traffic density
    - proximity of danger to navigation
    - the attention necessary when navigating in or near traffic separation schemes;



- .2.3 assistance is immediately available to be summoned to the wheelhouse when any change in the situation so requires.

4.7 Protection of the marine environment

4.7.1 The skipper and the officer in charge of the watch should be aware of the serious effects of operational or accidental pollution of the marine environment and should take all possible precautions to prevent such pollution particularly within the framework of relevant international and port regulations.

4.8 Weather conditions

4.8.1 The officer in charge of the watch should take relevant measures and notify the skipper when adverse changes in weather could affect the safety of the vessel, including conditions leading to ice accretion.

5 Navigation with pilot embarked

5.1 Despite the duties and obligations of a pilot, his presence on board does not relieve the skipper or officer in charge of the watch from their duties and obligations for the safety of the vessel. The skipper and the pilot should exchange information regarding navigation procedures, local conditions and the vessel's characteristics. The skipper and the officer of the watch should co-operate closely with the pilot and maintain an accurate check of the vessel's position and movement.

6 Vessels engaged in fishing or searching for fish

6.1 In addition to the principles enumerated in section 4, the following factors should be considered and properly acted upon by the officer in charge of the watch:

- .1 other vessels engaged in fishing and their gear;
- .2 safety of the crew on deck;
- .3 adverse effects on the safety of the vessel and its crew through reduction of stability and freeboard caused by exceptional forces resulting from fishing operations, catch handling and stowage, and unusual sea and weather conditions.
- .4 the proximity of offshore structures, with special regard to the safety zones;
- .5 wrecks.

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6.2 When stowing the catch, attention should be given to the essential requirements for adequate freeboard and adequate stability at all times during the voyage to the landing port taking into consideration consumption of fuel and stores, risk of adverse weather conditions and, especially in winter, risk of ice accretion on or above exposed decks in areas where ice accretion is likely to occur.

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