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CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION



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APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE  
ON MARKING OF OCEANOGRAPHIC STATIONS

RESOLUTION A.50(III)  
adopted on 18 October 1963

THE ASSEMBLY,

TAKING NOTE of Article 16(i) of the Convention concerning  
the functions of the Assembly,

NOTING FURTHER Articles 22 and 30 of the Convention which  
set out the procedure for consideration and adoption of  
recommendations and reports concerning maritime safety,

NOTING IN ADDITION that the recommendations of the Maritime  
Safety Committee were considered by the Council at its ninth  
session and transmitted to the Assembly,

BEARING IN MIND the importance of oceanographic research and  
its close relationship to safety of navigation,

HAVING CONSIDERED the conclusions reached by the Maritime  
Safety Committee on the marking of oceanographic stations,

NOTING that the Maritime Safety Committee authorized the  
Secretary-General pending the approval of the Assembly formally  
to communicate those conclusions to the Intergovernmental  
Oceanographic Commission and other interested bodies,

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DECIDES to accept the conclusions of the Maritime Safety Committee, as set out in the Annex, and approve the action taken by it,

FURTHER DECIDES

- (1) to draw the attention of governments to the need for uniform application of the conclusions of the Maritime Safety Committee in this matter and to the need to ensure that mariners and others concerned are informed accordingly;
- (2) to invite governments to keep the subject under review.

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CONCLUSIONS ON THE MARKING OF OCEANOGRAPHIC STATIONS

1. Growing use by oceanographers and meteorologists of various types of oceanographic stations presents the following problems:
  - (a) Avoidance of collision between vessels and stations;
  - (b) Easy identification and recovery of the stations by the owner and protection of the stations from being tampered with;
  - (c) Avoidance of confusion due to similarities between oceanographic stations and navigational buoys or other aids to navigation.
2. As a basis for the solution of these problems the following classification of existing types of oceanographic stations was adopted by the Committee:
  - (a) Craft which, owing to their size, material and construction, can cause and/or receive damage through collision. Such craft carry personnel and may have moderately heavy equipment on board. They may be operating at any distance from the coast, either anchored or not;
  - (b) Permanent structures embedded in the sea-floor and rising above the sea surface (masts and platforms), manned and unmanned, generally within a short distance of the coast;
  - (c) Equipment which, owing to size, material and construction, is less likely to cause damage through a collision. However, it may receive damage or can



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foul a propellor or rudder or fishing gear. Such equipment is not expected to carry personnel and it may be anchored at any distance from the coast;

- (d) Free-floating equipment generally small in size and operating either independently or in the proximity of research vessels or craft of the type 2(a). Such equipment can be carried away for long distances, drifting with the currents.

3. The Maritime Safety Committee concludes that:

- (a) Craft of type 2(a), since they appear to satisfy the requirements of the definition of "vessel" should be treated as vessels and comply with the appropriate Rules of the International Regulations for preventing Collisions at Sea in force;
- (b) Permanent structures of the type 2(b) should be considered generally as aids to navigation. Their light characteristics and other navigational aids should be adopted in consultation with the country, or countries, most concerned. Their position should be marked on the charts and information should be promulgated as required in paragraph 3(g) below;
- (c) Oceanographic stations of the types 2(c) and 2(d) should carry at night identification lights of a flashing type clearly distinct from those used on navigational buoys and other aids to navigation. The following specifications should be recommended:
  - (i) Colour: white-bluish, high intensity, corresponding to the light of xenon discharge tube;

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- (ii) Repetition rate: short period of quick flashes of a few seconds duration (2-5 seconds) followed by a longer period of darkness (15-18 seconds), the whole cycle being no less than 20 seconds.

Note: The possibility of using a constant white light on floating buoys of experimental or short duration nature should not be excluded provided that those buoys are small and do not represent any danger to navigation.

- (d) For easy identification, oceanographic stations of the types 2(c) and 2(d) should be painted in standard colours presenting the least danger of confusion with the markings being used for the various aids to navigation or other purposes. Fluorescent yellow and red in wide stripes (vertical for anchored stations and horizontal for free-floating ones) should be recommended;
- (e) The following equipment should be fitted on the 2(c) and 2(d) type stations as far as practicable:
  - (i) Radar Reflectors: unless buoys are of such size and configuration as to be good radar targets. If fitted, radar reflectors should be as high above the sea surface as possible;
  - (ii) Fog bells or fog horns: when fitted care should be taken to ensure that the sound emitted is not such as to be confused with the sound emitted by similar navigational warning devices;

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- (f) The requirements specified above should not exclude the possibility of installing on these stations special radio-transmitters for direction-finding purposes;
  - (g) Information concerning oceanographic stations which represent a danger to or an aid to navigation (position, size, safe distances to be observed and other important characteristics) should be promulgated to mariners through the usual channels (notices to mariners, radio warnings, etc.). The IOC might also use other means to ensure the widest possible promulgation of such information especially to fishing interests of the countries concerned;
  - (h) The IOC could, at its discretion, use numbers or other inscriptions on the stations to facilitate identification and to discourage unauthorized handling of such stations;
  - (i) Care should be taken by authorities operating such stations to avoid obstructing fairways used by shipping.
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