

RESOLUTION A.621(15) adopted on 19 November 1987
MEASURES TO PREVENT INFRINGEMENT OF SAFETY ZONES AROUND
OFFSHORE INSTALLATIONS OR STRUCTURES



ASSEMBLY - 15th session
Agenda item 12

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THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 15(j) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to regulations and guidelines concerning maritime safety and the prevention and control of marine pollution from ships,

HAVING CONSIDERED articles 60 and 80 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982,

NOTING article 5 of the Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf, 1958,

RECALLING requirements for ships to maintain a continuous listening watch on VHF Channel 16 prescribed by regulation IV/8 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (the 1974 SOLAS Convention), as amended in 1981,

RECALLING ALSO requirements for ships to carry adequate and up-to-date charts, notices to mariners and other nautical publications prescribed by regulation V/20 of the 1974 SOLAS Convention,

RECALLING FURTHER:

- (a) resolution A.341(IX) containing recommendations on dissemination of information, charting and manning of drilling rigs, production platforms and other similar structures,

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- (b) resolution A.379(X) containing a recommendation for the establishment of safety zones in offshore exploration areas,
- (c) resolution A.572(14) on General Provisions on Ships' Routeing, and
- (d) resolution A.578(14) on Guidelines for Vessel Traffic Services,

BEING INFORMED of infringements by vessels of safety zones around offshore installations or structures,

BEING CONCERNED about the safety of personnel and the risk of serious damage to offshore installations or structures, vessels and the environment in the event of a collision,

BEING FURTHER INFORMED that:

- (a) some flag States do not consistently take action, in accordance with resolution A.379(X), when complaints of infringements of safety zones around offshore installations or structures by their vessels are received,
- (b) on occasion, vessels do not respond to radiotelephone calls initiated by offshore installations or structures and that near misses and collisions could have been avoided if vessels maintained a continuous listening watch on VHF Channel 16,
- (c) vessels identified as having infringed safety zones around offshore installations or structures have, on occasion, been found not to be carrying adequate and up-to-date charts of the area, in violation of regulation V/20 of the 1974 SOLAS Convention,

BEING ALSO INFORMED that not all offshore installations or structures are adequately equipped with devices that would help prevent vessels infringing on the safety zones established around them, including lights and sound signals, racons and means for permanent visual look-out and radar watch, and that not all of them listen for and warn vessels on appropriate VHF channels,

BEING ALSO AWARE that safety zone regulations are applied by coastal States to protect MODUs* on station, production platforms, artificial islands, accommodation platforms, units and ancillary equipment referred to herein as installations or structures,

DESIRING to bring an end to the infringement of safety zones established around offshore installations or structures,

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

1. RECOMMENDS:

(a) vessels which are passing close to offshore installations or structures to:

- (i) navigate with care when passing near offshore installations or structures giving due consideration to safe speed and safe passing distances taking into account the prevailing weather conditions and the presence of other vessels or dangers;
- (ii) where appropriate, take early and substantial avoiding action when approaching such installation or structure to facilitate the installation's or structure's awareness of the vessel's closest point of approach and provide information on any possible safety concerns, particularly where the offshore installation or structure may be used as a navigational aid;
- (iii) use any designated routeing systems established in the area; and
- (iv) maintain a continuous listening watch on the navigating bridge on VHF Channel 16 when navigating near offshore installations or structures to allow radio contact to be

* For the purpose of this resolution mobile offshore drilling units (MODUs) used for exploratory drilling operations offshore are considered to be vessels when they are in transit and not engaged in a drilling operation, but are considered to be installations or structures when engaged in a drilling operation.

established between such installations or structures, vessel traffic services and vessels so that any uncertainty as to a vessel maintaining an adequate passing distance from the installations or structures can be alleviated;

(b) every coastal State which authorizes and regulates the operation and use of offshore installations and structures under its jurisdiction to:

(i) issue early notices to mariners by appropriate means to advise vessels of the location or intended location of offshore installations or structures, the breadth of any safety zones and the rules which apply therein, and any fairways available;

(ii) require operators of MODUs to provide advance notice of change of their location to the appropriate authority of the coastal State so as to allow timely issue of notices to mariners;

(iii) require operators of offshore installations or structures to take adequate measures to prevent infringement of safety zones around such offshore installations or structures; such measures may include effective lights and sound signals, racons, permanent visual look-out and radar watch, listening for and warning vessels on appropriate VHF channels, and the establishment of vessel traffic services;

(iv) request operators of offshore installations or structures to report actions by vessels which jeopardize safety including infringement of safety zones;

(c) every coastal State which is aware of an infringement of the regulations relating to safety zones around offshore installations or structures within its jurisdiction to take action in accordance with international law and, where it considers necessary, to notify the flag State of the infringement allegedly committed by the vessel concerned and provide available factual evidence to substantiate the allegation as follows:

- (i) name, flag and call sign of the vessel;
- (ii) course and speed of the vessel;
- (iii) identification of the installation or structure and its operators;
- (iv) description of the operational status of the offshore installation or structure (i.e. position latitude/longitude, purpose of being on station, length of time on station, breadth of the safety zone, text and date of notice to mariners giving warning of the offshore activity and rules applicable to the safety zone);
- (v) weather conditions at time of the alleged infringement;
- (vi) details of attempts by installation or structure personnel or personnel on service vessels to contact the approaching vessel including radio frequencies used and the interval between attempts;
- (vii) description of any communications with the vessel;
- (viii) statement as to the exhibiting on the installation or structure of the proper signal lights and the sounding of appropriate fog signals;
- (ix) inclusion of photographic evidence or a complete and detailed radar plot, or both, and indication of whether a radar beacon or other warning device was in operation;
- (x) any possible contravention of any other regulation or convention by the intruding vessel such as the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, or the 1974 SOLAS Convention; and
- (xi) name of the Government official to contact regarding the complaint;

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- (d) every flag State which receives a complaint of an infringement of a safety zone by any of its vessels to make inquiries and take action, where appropriate, in accordance with its national legislation, in the light of relevant information, giving due consideration to the rules of the safety zones infringed, the opportunities available to the vessel of being informed of the safety zone, the facts provided in the complaint and the results of any inquiry;
- (e) every flag State which has received a report of an infringement to inform, as appropriate, the coastal State concerned of the follow-up action it has taken;
- (f) every flag State to take appropriate measures, if necessary, to ensure that suitable procedures exist to take action against the owner, master or any person at the time being responsible for the conduct of any of its vessels which commit an infringement against any duly established safety zone, and to inform the coastal State concerned of the follow-up action taken;
- (g) that the prohibition on vessels, other than those involved in rendering services related to the operation of the offshore installation or structure, should not apply to vessels entering or remaining in the safety zone:
 - (i) when in distress;
 - (ii) for the purpose of saving or attempting to save life or property; or
 - (iii) in cases of force-majeure;
- (h) That the attention of seafarers should be drawn to the need, in such cases, to make early radio contact with the offshore installation or structure, vessel traffic services and vessels;

2. REQUESTS the Maritime Safety Committee, in consultation with the Legal Committee, to keep the present resolution under review and to report to the Assembly as necessary.

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