
AIS on Double-Ended Passenger Ferries

Notice to all shipowners/operators, shipbuilders, masters and ship's officers, shore-based maintenance providers, equipment manufacturers, classification societies and VTS Authorities

This notice should be read with MSN 1795(M)

Summary

For double-ended passenger ferries with only one Transmitting Heading Device (THD), an interface must be fitted to maintain correct Heading data into AIS.

1. Introduction/ Background

1.1 Double-ended passenger ferries are designed to operate without the need to turn round - the bow in one direction becomes the stern in the other direction. A number of double-ended passenger ferries fitted with AIS are transmitting the reciprocal heading marker but correct course over ground (COG), when operating in the "return mode". ***This jeopardises the accuracy and effectiveness of AIS.*** Lack of a widely available solution to this problem has delayed the mandatory carriage of AIS (see MSN 1795), especially by Class VI vessels.

2. AIS on double-ended passenger vessels

2.1 To maintain the effectiveness of AIS, a vessel must be able to switch the AIS heading to reciprocal at the same time, and preferably using the same switch, as is used for changing the navigation lights and horn when in "return mode". For example, a vessel operating bow-first on a heading of 220⁰, if returning on an exact reciprocal course, would require a heading input to the AIS of 040⁰. The AIS display icon, as seen by other vessels and coast stations, is an isosceles triangle whose apex points in the direction of passage. It is the heading input from the vessel's THD which orientates this triangle and a heading input of the reciprocal of the vessels actual heading causes confusion to other vessels and shore stations.

2.2 There are interfaces available which will overcome this problem by translating the heading input to the AIS by 180⁰. A means to achieve the correct heading input to the AIS **must be fitted**. It is strongly recommended that the switching arrangement is connected to the main NAV light switch, making the transfer a formal process which will be documented as a pre-departure check.

2.3 Those double-ended passenger ferries which are required by SOLAS Chapter V to carry an AIS system should ensure that they have a means of maintaining correct heading data into AIS, regardless of direction of travel, by 1st July 2006.

3. Carriage Requirements

3.1 Shipowners should refer to MSN 1795 (M) which describes the carriage requirements for AIS.

More Information

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