

Commonwealth of Dominica**Office of the Maritime Administrator**

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND AUTHORIZED CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES

SUBJECT: Automatic Identification System (AIS) carriage requirements

REFERENCE: (a) SOLAS, Ch. V, Reg. 19.2.4

APPLICABILITY: (a) all ships of 300GT and upwards engaged on international voyages;
(b) cargo ships of 500GT and upwards not engaged on international voyages; and
(c) all passenger ships irrespective of size

REQUIREMENTS:

The IMO has established mandatory carriage requirements for approved AIS equipment under new SOLAS, Ch. V Reg. 19.2.4, which has been effective since 1 July 2002.

AIS is a shipboard broadcast transponder system by which nearby ships transmit their identification, position, course, speed and other data to each other and to shoreside authorities automatically on a common VHF channel. Equipment performance standards may be found in IMO Res. MSC.74(69) Annex 3, ITU-R Recommendation M.1371-1 and IEC Standard 61993.2. The guidelines for the on board operational use of shipborne Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) are provided in IMO Assembly Resolution A.917(22).

Carriage requirements apply to:

- (a) all ships of 300GT and upwards engaged on international voyages;
- (b) cargo ships of 500GT and upwards not engaged on international voyages; and
- (c) all passenger ships irrespective of size

as follows:

- (a) All ships constructed on or after 1 July 2002 must be fitted with an approved AIS.
- (b) Existing ships engaged on international voyages constructed before 1 July 2002 must be fitted according to the following timetable:
- Passenger ships - not later than 1 July 2003
 - Tankers - not later than the first safety equipment survey after 1 July 2003
- NOTE: The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 requires that all tankers operating in U.S. navigable waters be fitted with AIS by 1 July 2003.
- (c) Existing ships other than passenger ships and tankers of:
- 50,000GT and upwards - not later than 1 July 2004
 - 300GT and upwards but less than 50,000GT - not later than the first safety equipment survey after 1 July 2004 or by 31 December 2004, whichever occurs earlier. The first safety equipment survey means the first annual survey, the first periodical survey, or the first renewal survey for safety equipment, whichever is due first after 1 July 2004 and, in addition, in the case of ships under construction, the initial survey.
- (d) Existing ships not engaged on international voyages, constructed before 1 July 2002 must be fitted not later than 1 July 2008.

Pursuant to the new paragraph 2.4.7 of the SOLAS regulation V/19, 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.

Please be advised that the Panama Canal Authority issued a Maritime Advisory <http://www.pancanal.com/esp/maritime/advisories/a-05-2003.html> stating that, effective 1 July 2003, vessels over 300 gross tons or over 20 meters LOA must be equipped with an automatic identification system (AIS) transponder that meets IMO standards. Until 1 January 2005, when the AIS requirement comes fully into effect, portable AIS units may be rented from the Canal Authority. Owners and operators are reminded of the requirement for installation of a Pilot Plug and power source for AIS use by the Canal pilot.

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