

MINUTES – INTERNATIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION



A session of the International Regulations Commission of the International Sailing Federation was held at 1000 - 1330 on Friday 7th November at the Palacio de Congresos, Barcelona, Spain.

Present:

Michael Devonshire (Chairman)

Wolfgang Paul (Vice-Chairman)

David Arnold

John Crebbin

Giovanni Iannucci

Jean Lemoine

Also in attendance:

Simon Forbes – ISAF Technical Manager

Sebastian Edmonds – ISAF Technical Coordinator

Paddy Boyd – Offshore Committee

Ken Kershaw – Measurement Committee

Alan E. Green – Special Regulations Sub-Committee

Apologies

Jane Moon

John Osmond

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Michael Devonshire was in the chair and called the meeting to order at 1000 hrs on Friday 7th November.

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2. MINUTES OF EARLIER MEETINGS

- (a) Minutes of the International Regulations Commission Meetings, 8th November 2002
The commission noted the minutes of their meetings, 8th November 2002. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

3. INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION

Reports were received from the Chairman regarding the following items:

- (a) Radar reflectors
It was noted that during the year the IRC (International Regulations Commission) was concerned by reports that new standards proposed by the International Telecommunications Union for RADAR sets voluntarily fitted to non-SOLAS vessels might prohibit the use of existing equipment. Reassurances have been obtained but pressure to control emissions may change the situation. The IRC will keep the position under review.
The Chairman reported on progress made regarding the revisions to SOLAS Chapter V which now require all ships including yachts to carry a reflector, which will enable the detection of the vessel by sets operating on both the 9 and 3 Mghz bands. The IRC participated in the working group, which drafted an updated performance standard for reflectors. The performance standard, which it is anticipated will be finally approved in May 2004, adopts the weight and size parameters proposed by ISAF. It will in due course be supported by an ISO Standard determining the technical specification.
The Commission noted that US Sailing had very recently announced prescriptions to its Safety Regulations regarding the use of radars and radar reflectors. The Commission noted that this would be best dealt by the Special Regulations Sub-Committee.
- (b) Ballast Water
It was noted that the spread throughout the world of harmful aquatic species by Ballast water carried by ships has been a problem for a number of years.
During 2003, the IMO produced a draft International Convention, the terms of which were finally agreed, which will be considered by a UN Diplomatic Conference in February 2004.
Earlier versions of the draft would have required all yachts and other recreational craft which rely on ballast water to control the trim to comply with the same regime for treatment, inspection, survey and recording as a Super tanker. The MEPC at IMO would not agree to exempt all yachts from the provisions of the Convention but accepted an amendment providing that craft which complied with Guidelines should be considered to have complied with Convention controls. The Guidelines have been drafted by the ISAF with the technical advice of a marine environmentalist. Subject to the views of the Offshore Committee the IRC recommends approval of the draft guidelines to be submitted to IMO. They will be considered by an IMO Working Group which is chaired by the IRC Chairman.
- (c) SOLAS Chapter V
It was noted the amendments made over the past year are now in effect and that there were no reported problems from any of the Commission members.
A concern was raised regarding the requirement for planning of all voyages and that this is not the method used by the majority of the cruising world. It was noted that the UK Coastguard did not require a written plan but the owner must of considered all of the factors influencing any voyage.
- (d) IMSAR Search and Rescue Manual
The current SOLAS requirement is for all ships to carry volume 3 of the IMSAR Manual. The International Lifeboat Federation (ILF) and ISAF believe that this does not address the problems of small craft, yachts and fishing vessels alike, which form the largest proportion of the craft needing the services of the SAR authorities.

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The IRC recommends the submission jointly with ILF of a paper to IMO proposing the publication of a simplified guide to Search and Rescue for use by recreational boats and other small craft. The guide should depend principally upon illustrations rather than text, which should be used primarily for training purposes. The proposal will be considered by the IMO at its meetings in February 2004.

4. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ORGANISATION

(a) Application to ISO

It was noted that the application to join ISO was progressing at the same pace as some of its standards. The IRC repeated its opinion that urgent steps should be taken to achieve "consultative status" at the ISO.

(b) Scantlings Standard

A report was received from Ken Kershaw on progress made regarding the Scantlings Standard. It was noted that the standard had come under the direction of a new Chairman, Gregoire Dolto (FRA). It is anticipated that Part V of the standard will be issued as a draft International Standard before February 2004. Part V deals with FRP construction and power boats over 6m in length.

(c) Stability Standard

A report was received from Ken Kershaw on progress made regarding the Stability Standard. It was noted that 3 new standards had been published in 2002 and that there were a few corrections, which would be published, in early 2004.

It was also noted that the three standards were a culmination of 15 years work.

(d) Liferaft Standard

A report was received from Alan Green on progress made regarding the Liferaft Standard. It was noted that there were three separate standards; Materials, Coastal and Offshore, which are being developed by the group. The Offshore Standard, which is due to be finalised within the next year, is very similar in context to the ISAF Part 2 – Liferafts. It is hoped that the ten years of work regarding these standards will be finalised soon.

(e) PFD's

It was noted that there is no current ISO standard regarding PFD's, however the EN-396 standard is being addressed for adoption by the International ISO Working group.

5. PANAMA CANAL

(a) Panama Canal

It was noted that very little information was available regarding the problems faced by recreational craft transiting the canal and that more research should be done before taking any action. The Chairman requested further information from parties such as the Clipper Race and the Cruising Association on transiting the Canal.

6. RACONS AND RADARS

(a) Racons and Radars

The Commission were disappointed by the number of responses received from the MNAs questioned and determined that more positive action should be taken to contact those who are involved in the work of the Commission.

The responses received indicated that the use of RACONS is very useful to yachtsman. Lighthouse authorities find the power requirements of RACONS a disadvantage and some are considering implementing virtual AIS navigation marks.

7. FUTURE ORGANISATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

(a) Staff Involvement

The Commission noted the need for more part-time consultants to attend the IMO meetings once the Chairman retires at the end of 2004. It was noted that there was a need for consistency amongst the members to attend in order to follow each topic through to completion.

(b) Relations with Union Internationale Motonautique, International Lifeboat Federation and International Council of Marine Industry Associations

The Commission approved the formation of an informal liaison group of the ISAF, ILF and ICOMIA to consider proposals at IMO and representation at IMO meetings. The group had met on two occasions and a good working relationship was emerging. The Commission was saddened to note that the UIM had declined to join.

(c) ISAF Annual Report

The Commission was concerned about the absence of publicity to MNA's in the ISAF Annual report and elsewhere for its work. This was resulting in an absence of response to requests for information and comments on proposals that might impede sailing from IMO and other regulatory authorities. It recommended that a report of the commissions work be included in future annual reports as though it were an ISAF Committee.

It was felt that it is important that the Commission has direct links with sailors who could advise on the impact of any regulatory proposals on non-competitive sailing and it is recommended that steps are taken to compile a list of those individuals able to assist.

(c) ISAF Website

The Commission were very happy with the work being undertaken on the ISAF website.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Automatic Identification Systems (AIS)

The IRC discussed AIS and its value to yachtsmen. It was noted that although AIS initially started out as a safety device, it has been subsequently been taken over by security forces following the September 11th attacks.

The IRC felt that the equipment would be costly and it was important that needs of small craft were taken into account in its design. The performance specification for Class B AIS sets, those intended for fit by craft not subject to SOLAS, was at present being formulated.

The Commission recommended that:

1. ISAF should oppose any steps to require a compulsory fit of AIS equipment to vessels less than 24m in length and 80 gross tonnes.
2. ISAF would not oppose compulsory fit to vessels in excess of that limit or voluntary fit by other vessels.
3. ISAF should participate in the preparation of performance standards of Class B (small ship and voluntary fit sets) and that the Chairman and the ISAF Secretariat should identify a suitable consultant to undertake this work.
4. ISAF be represented at the forthcoming RIN conference on AIS at its own expense.

There being no further business, the session ended at 1330 on Friday 7th November.

Circulation: Member National Authorities (MNAs)
Council
Classes
Affiliate Members
Associate Members
Committee Chairmen