



სსიპ საზღვაო ტრანსპორტის  
სააგენტო

LEPL MARITIME TRANSPORT  
AGENCY



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TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND  
OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED  
ORGANIZATIONS

**SUBJECT: Automatic Identification Systems (AIS)**

**References:**

- (a) SOLAS, International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, as amended
- (b) IMO Assembly Resolution A.1106 (29), Revised Guidelines for the Onboard Operational Use of Shipborne Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), adopted 02 December 2015
- (c) IMO Resolution MSC.74 (69), Adoption of New and Amended Performance Standards, Annex 3, Recommendation on Performance Standards for a Universal Shipborne Automatic Identification System (AIS), adopted 12 May 1998; and as amended by IMO Resolution MSC.115(73), Adoption of the Revised Performance Standards for Shipborne Combined GPS/GLONASS Receiver Equipment, adopted 01 December 2000
- (d) IMO Circular SN/Circ.227, Guidelines for the Installation of a Shipborne Automatic Identification System (AIS), issued 06 January 2003, as amended by IMO Circular SN/Circ.245, issued 15 December 2004 and as corrected by IMO Circular SN/Circ.227/Corr.1, issued 10 December 2008
- (e) IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1252, Guidelines on the Annual Testing of the Automatic Identification System (AIS), issued on 22 October 2007
- (f) United States Code of Federal Regulations 33 CFR 164.46, Automatic Identification System (AIS)

**PURPOSE:**

This Circular clarifies the carriage requirements for Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), and further provides guidance from Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia (hereinafter referred to as "MTA Georgia") regarding requirements about AIS. This Circular reflects updates per the recently adopted International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.1106(29), Revised Guidelines for the Onboard Operational Use of Shipborne Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), as adopted on 02 December 2015.

**APPLICABILITY:**

The IMO established mandatory carriage requirements for approved AIS equipment under Regulation V/19 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). The carriage requirements apply to:

- (a) all ships\* of 300 gross tons (GT) and upwards engaged on international voyages;
- (b) cargo ships of 500 GT and upwards not engaged on international voyages; and
- (c) all passenger ships of any size whatsoever.

\*All ships means any ship, vessel, or craft irrespective of type and purpose. Therefore, these regulations apply to all registered private, commercial and passenger yachts, and fishing vessels.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Implementation**

1.1 All ships must be fitted with approved AIS, as the IMO timetables for implementation have expired.

**2. Operation**

2.1 SOLAS requires that all ships fitted with AIS maintain the AIS in operation at all times, except where international agreements, rules, or standards provide for the protection of navigational information. With respect to this requirement, Masters should reference SOLAS, Regulation XI-2/8, entitled “Masters’ discretion for ship safety and security”. This regulation reinforces and provides the Master with significant discretion concerning the safety and security of his or her ship where continued operation of the AIS would pose a higher risk.

2.2 For example, within ports, information on the location of all ships will be particularly valuable to port authorities. However, there may be circumstances that would be considered high risk, such as during volatile cargo transfers within storage terminals, where continued use of the AIS may not even be allowed. Continued use of the AIS while transiting areas known for incidents of armed robbery and piracy, such as the Straits of Malacca, may also be considered a very high risk.

2.3 For these and similar other reasons, the ship’s Master may exercise discretionary authority to switch the device off if safety is deemed to be compromised by its continued operation. Such action, however, shall be properly recorded in the official log and reported to the company security officer and any coastal State authority with a vested interest in accordance with ship security plan provisions. Safety concerns are paramount.

### 3. Annual Testing

In accordance with V/18.9:

- The automatic identification system (AIS) shall be subjected to an annual test. The test shall be conducted by an approved surveyor or an approved testing or servicing facility. The test shall verify the correct programming of the ship static information, correct data exchange with connected sensors as well as verifying the radio performance by radio frequency measurement and on-air test using, e.g., a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). A copy of the test report shall be retained on board the ship.
- The Guidelines on Annual Testing of the AIS as contained in the Appendix of MSC.1/Circ.1252, although predating some SOLAS regulations, have not been revoked; therefore MTA Georgia still gives effect to these guidelines, provided that the approved surveyor or approved testing or servicing facility is authorized by an International Association of Classification Societies, Ltd. (IACS) member duly recognized by MTA Georgia.

### 4. United States Coast Guard (USCG) Regulatory Compliance

4.1 On 15 August 2003, the USCG set policy for ships trading with the U.S. When an amendment to SOLAS Chapter V and a provision in USCG regulations address the same navigational safety concern and when applying both would result in an unnecessary duplication of inconsistency between Chapter V and the USCG regulation, the USCG will accept the provision under Chapter V as meeting the corresponding USCG regulation. This will apply to dates of implementation of the respective requirements. In other words, if a vessel meets the SOLAS requirements, the vessel will also meet the requirements of any future USCG regulations regarding SOLAS navigational equipment, including AIS.

4.2 The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 33, subpart 164.46, applies to vessels, structures, and facilities of any kind located under, in, on, or adjacent to waters subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Masters and shipowners should be familiar with these regulatory requirements as they may apply to their vessels operating in U.S. waters.

Acting Director

SIGNED/SEALED  
ELECTRONICALLY 

Zaza Makharadze