

# Safety of Navigation Order – Safety of life at Sea Convention, Chapter V

## Jersey Pleasure Craft: from 1 July 2009

Jersey ships are to be found throughout the world. Whilst these notes are written for all Jersey pleasure craft wherever they are, they should be read in the context of the sailing area and other relevant circumstances. The Convention is mainly directed at large commercial ships, so commonsense is needed when considering how to comply in the case of a small pleasure craft.

**Regulation 17 - Electromagnetic Compatibility.** Skippers must avoid using portable electrical or electronic items in the vicinity of navigational equipment as this might cause interference. Personal items such as mobile 'phones, portable radios or laptops could interfere with GPS, radar or compass equipment.

### **Regulation 19 - Carriage Requirements for Shipborne Navigational Systems and Equipment.**

#### **Pleasure craft *under 7 metres* overall length:**

- \* *If practicable*, a radar reflector is required.

#### **Pleasure craft *of 7 metres or more* overall length:**

- \* A properly adjusted standard magnetic compass;
- \* a hand-bearing or other compass that does not need a power supply and can be used for taking bearings;
- \* *if practicable*, a radar reflector; and
- \* charts and navigational publications (to be adequate and up-to-date).

#### **Notes regarding Regulation 19:**

- (i) A radar reflector is not practicable on some smaller craft. In particular, a reflector is not expected to be carried on sailing dinghies, personal water craft, tenders or small open motor vessels which do not have a mast or A-frame.
- (ii) Where one is fitted, the radar reflector should be the best affordable, taking into account its weight and the size of the vessel. Further useful information can be obtained at <https://mcanet.mcga.gov.uk/public/c4/regulations/safetyofnavigation/annexes/Annex15.htm>
- (iii) For vessels where certain equipment is not a legal requirement, consideration must be given to the nature of the voyage, the weather and visibility and the presence of other shipping. Good seamanship may mean a radar reflector or a compass are still necessary even if the Law does not make them compulsory.
- (iv) Instead of a standard magnetic compass, the Convention allows other devices providing they are independent of a power supply.
- (v) The charts and publications are additional to any GPS or electronic chart plotter that may be on board. According to regulation 27, these must be 'adequate and up to date' and this applies to all vessels over 7m. The Regulation is to be seen in the context of the voyage: A good local cruising guide and the relevant local chart are adequate for a day trip to the Minquiers for example.

**Regulation 28 – Records of navigational activities.** If on an international voyage, a record must be kept of navigational activities and incidents which are important to the safety of navigation and which are sufficiently detailed to be able to restore a complete record of the voyage.

Such a requirement is vital if a serious accident occurs so that an investigation can piece together exactly what happened. The Convention does not make this compulsory for trips from Jersey to the UK. Nevertheless, keeping a written log is strongly recommended as good practice.

Regulation 29 - Life-Saving Signals. Skippers will need to have an illustrated table describing life-saving signals readily available. These are for use in distress situations to communicate with the life-boat, other vessels and search and rescue aircraft. These can be viewed and downloaded from the MCA website at [www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/signals.pdf](http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/signals.pdf)

Regulations 31 and 32 – Danger Messages. Skippers must report any danger to navigation that they encounter and that has not already been reported. These include a dangerous derelict, a half-submerged container or, for Jersey ships overseas, perhaps a tropical storm or other extreme weather. Reporting can be done directly to the Coastguard on VHF or by 'phone. Be prepared to describe the danger and state exactly where and when it was noted.

Regulation 33 – Distress situations. Skippers who are in a position to do so have an obligation to provide assistance to a person or ship in distress. They should inform the Coastguard that they are doing so. If for some reason they cannot help, they are to enter this in their log-book.

Regulation 34 – Safe Navigation and Avoidance of Dangerous Situations. Skippers must do some passage planning, before proceeding to sea. Some of the main issues to consider here are:

- \* Weather – both at the time of departure and forecast for later;
- \* tides – height and range for the day and time in question;
- \* tidal streams – rate and direction;
- \* the limitations of the boat and its equipment;
- \* the experience of the crew;
- \* navigational hazards – use an up-to-date chart, almanac and pilotage guide;
- \* contingency – is there an alternative safe haven to divert to if something goes wrong or the weather gets worse?
- \* inform coastguard and family – make sure people know intended destination and ETA or time of return.

Interpretation here is important. For example, crossing a small bay in good weather conditions and daylight will require less planning than a cross-channel voyage. If regular trips are made to and from fishing grounds little will be recorded, or changes in plans will occur at the last minute because of a poor catch or changing weather conditions. What is required is at least some basic evidence that matters have been thought through and facts checked.

Regulation 35 - Misuse of Distress Signals. Skippers have a duty to make sure that an international distress signal is only ever used to indicate distress and not misused.

#### **N.B.**

1. The full set of SOLAS Chapter V Regulations can be viewed at <https://mcanet.mcga.gov.uk/public/c4/regulations/safetyofnavigation/index.htm>
2. If involved in a boating accident and it is later shown that the Regulations were ignored (especially those outlined in this leaflet), prosecution could follow.
3. For local advice, contact Jersey Harbours Maritime House, La Route du Port Elizabeth, St Helier, Jersey, JE1 1HB, Tel: 447788, e-mail: [jerseyharbours@gov.je](mailto:jerseyharbours@gov.je) or use [www.jersey-harbours.com/infoservice/mail2us.html](http://www.jersey-harbours.com/infoservice/mail2us.html).
4. Jersey ship owners based overseas may contact the Registrar of Shipping at Jubilee Wharf, 24 Esplanade, St Helier, Jersey, JE1 1BB. Tel: +44 (0) 1534 448128 or e-mail: [shipsregsitry@gov.je](mailto:shipsregsitry@gov.je)