

Solas V Safety of Life at Sea

The introduction of the Shipping (Safety of Navigation) (Jersey) Order 2009 is part of Jersey's responsibility under Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, otherwise known as SOLAS V.

Most of the SOLAS Convention applies only to large commercial ships, but parts of Chapter V apply to small, privately owned pleasure craft.

This publication highlights some important points within SOLAS V that pleasure boat operators need to be aware of. Most responsible boat owners need not be concerned with the contents of this Order as they will already be compliant. If during an investigation into a boating incident it was shown that a contributory factor to the incident was non-compliance with these requirements, then it is possible that appropriate legal action could be taken.

Solas V

Important Regulations
for Pleasure Craft

Further information:

To view the full set of SOLAS Chapter V Regulations visit:
<https://mcanet.mcga.gov.uk/public/c4/regulations/safetyofnavigation>

For local advice contact: Jersey Coastguard, Maritime House,
La Route du Port Elizabeth, St Helier Jersey JE1 1HB
T: +44 (0) 1534 447788 E: jerseycoastguard@gov.je
or visit www.jersey-harbours.com/infoservice/mail2us.html

For Jersey ship owners based overseas contact:
Registrar of Shipping at Jubilee Wharf, 24 Esplanade,
St Helier, Jersey JE1 1BB T: +44 (0) 1534 448128
E: shipsregistry@gov.je



**JERSEY
COASTGUARD**

Voyage Planning

Regulation V/34 'Safe Navigation and avoidance of dangerous situations', concerns prior-planning for your boating trip, more commonly known as voyage or passage planning. Voyage planning is basically common sense. As a pleasure boat user, you should particularly take into account the following points when planning a boating trip:

- **Weather:** before you go boating, check the most recent weather forecast and get regular updates if you are planning to be out for any length of time.
- **Tides:** check the tidal predictions for your trip and ensure that they fit with what you are planning to do and the route you are planning to take.
- **Limitations of the vessel:** consider whether your boat is capable of undertaking the proposed trip and that there is sufficient safety equipment and stores on board.
- **Crew:** take into account the experience and physical ability of your crew. Crews suffering from cold, tiredness and seasickness won't be able to do their job properly and could even result in an overburdened skipper.
- **Navigational dangers:** make sure you are familiar with any navigational dangers you may encounter during your boating trip. Check up-to-date charts and a current pilot book or almanac.
- **Contingency plan:** always have a contingency plan. Before you go, consider bolt holes and places where you can take refuge should conditions deteriorate or if you suffer an incident or injury. Bear in mind that your GPS is vulnerable and could fail at the most inconvenient time. It is sensible and good practice to make sure you are not over-reliant on your GPS and that you can navigate yourself to safety without it.
- **Information ashore:** make sure that someone ashore knows your plans and knows what to do should they become concerned for your well-being. Jersey Coastguard will receive, log, and when requested amend Traffic Report messages received from pleasure vessels.

Navigational Systems and Equipment V/19

This regulation requires vessels at sea to carry on board specific equipment which will enable someone to navigate safely.

Pleasure craft of over 7 metres or more in length are required to carry the following:

A properly adjusted standard magnetic compass:

so a course can be steered. This is important especially during times of restricted visibility and if other equipment such as GPS and radar were to fail.

A hand-bearing or other compass: that does not need a power supply and can be used for taking bearings; again this piece of equipment will allow for a back up steering compass if needed. It is primarily to take visual bearings so that your vessel's position can be plotted on a chart and equally to take a bearing of a distress signal, if sighted, so you can provide information to the Coastguard and other vessels in the area about the position of a vessel in distress, as well as giving you a course to steer to go to that vessel's aid.

Charts and navigational publications: covering your route and area of operation, tide tables and nautical almanacs giving you advice on port/marina approaches, radio frequencies, times of weather and navigational warning broadcasts etc.

Radar reflectors: Large vessels use radar as an aid to navigation and for collision avoidance planning. So, whatever the size of your boat it's important to make sure that you can be seen by radar. Regulation V/19 requires all small craft to fit a radar reflector 'if practicable'. If your boat is more than 15m in length, you should be able to fit a radar reflector that meets the IMO requirements of 10m². If your boat is less than 15m in length, you should fit the largest radar reflector you can. Irrespective of boat size, the radar reflector should be fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions, and as high as possible to maximise its effectiveness.

Electromagnetic Compatibility

Regulation V/17 requires that electrical and electronic equipment shall be installed so that electromagnetic interference does not affect the proper function of any navigational systems or any other equipment on board that is relied on for the safety of the vessel.

Remember: personal items such as mobile 'phones, portable radios or laptops could interfere with GPS, radar or compass equipment.

Records of Navigational Activities V/28

If you are on an international voyage, you must keep a record 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 clearly vital if a serious accident occurs, so that an investigation can piece together exactly what happened, and to prevent future incidents. 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.

Life Saving Signals

Regulation V/29 requires you to have access to an illustrated table of the recognised life saving signals, so that you can communicate with the search and rescue services or other boats if you get into trouble and so that you can identify a distress signal when it is seen.

Download a free copy from the MCA website at:

www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/signals.pdf. You can also find it in various nautical publications. If your boat is not suitable for carrying a copy of the table on board (because it's small or very exposed), make sure you've studied the table before you go boating. Larger boats should keep a copy on board.

Assistance to other Craft

Regulations V/31, V/32 and V/33 require you to respond to any distress signal that is seen or heard and help anyone or any boat in distress as best you can. In addition any distress signal seen or heard should be reported immediately to the local Coastguard.

You must also let the Coastguard and any other vessels in the vicinity know if you encounter anything that could cause a serious hazard to navigation. The Coastguard will then issue a navigational warning to inform vessels in the area of the danger.

Misuse of Distress Signals

Regulation V/35 prohibits misuse of any distress signals. These are critical to safety at sea and by misusing them you could put your life or someone else's life at risk. They should only be used to indicate a vessel or person is in grave and imminent danger.

These distress signals, especially parachute flares, can be seen from long distances. When a distress flare is reported to the Coastguard the emergency services will automatically respond.

COLREGS In addition to SOLAS V, pleasure boat users should note that the International Convention for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs) applies and you should ensure that when encountering another vessel whilst at sea, you obey those regulations. COLREGs also give detail on lights and shapes to be carried.

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) will also apply in due course. You should not discharge oil or drop garbage into the sea.