



Treaty Series No. 7 (1996)

# Amendments

to the International Regulations for Preventing  
Collisions at Sea  
done at London on 20 October 1972

[The Amendments entered into force on 19 November 1989]

*Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
by Command of Her Majesty  
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AMENDMENTS<sup>1</sup>  
TO THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR  
PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA, 1972<sup>2</sup>

1. *Rule 1(e)—Vessel of special construction*

The existing text is replaced by the following:

“(e) Whenever the Government concerned shall have determined that a vessel of special construction or purpose cannot comply fully with the provisions of any of these Rules with respect to the number, position, range or arc of visibility of lights or shapes, as well as to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signalling appliances, such vessel shall comply with such other provisions in regard to the number, position, range or arc of visibility of lights or shapes, as well as to the disposition and characteristics of sound-signalling appliances, as her Government shall have determined to be the closest possible compliance with these Rules in respect of that vessel.”

2. *Rule 3(h)—Vessel constrained by her draught*

The existing text is replaced by the following:

“(h) The term “vessel constrained by her draught” means a power-driven vessel which, because of her draught in relation to the available depth and width of navigable water, is severely restricted in her ability to deviate from the course she is following.”

3. *New rule 8(f)—Not to impede*

The following new paragraph (f) is added:

- “(f)(i) A vessel which, by any of these rules, is required not to impede the passage or safe passage of another vessel shall, when required by the circumstances of the case, take early action to allow sufficient sea room for the safe passage of the other vessel.
- (ii) A vessel required not to impede the passage or safe passage of another vessel is not relieved of this obligation if approaching the other vessel so as to involve risk of collision and shall, when taking action, have full regard to the action which may be required by the rules of this part.
- (iii) A vessel the passage of which is not to be impeded remains fully obliged to comply with the rules of this part when the two vessels are approaching one another so as to involve risk of collision.”

4. *Rule 10(a)—Traffic separation schemes adopted by the Organization*

The existing text is replaced by the following:

“(a) This rule applies to traffic separation schemes adopted by the Organization and does not relieve any vessel of her obligation under any other rule.”

5. *Rule 10(c)—Crossing traffic lanes*

The existing text is replaced by the following:

“(c) A vessel shall, so far as practicable, avoid crossing traffic lanes but if obliged to do so shall cross on a heading as nearly as practicable at right angles to the general direction of traffic flow.”

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<sup>1</sup>The Amendments were adopted by Resolution A.626 (15) at the Assembly of the International Maritime Organization on 19 November 1987.

<sup>2</sup>Treaty Series No. 77 (1977) Cmnd. 6962.

6. *Annex 1, section 2(d)—Uppermost light*

The existing text is replaced by the following:

“(d) A power-driven vessel of less than 12 metres in length may carry the uppermost light at a height of less than 2.5 metres above the gunwale. When however a masthead light is carried in addition to sidelights and a sternlight or the all-round light prescribed in rule 23(c)(i) is carried in addition to sidelights, then such masthead light or all-round light shall be carried at least 1 metre higher than the sidelights.”

7. *Annex 1, section 2(i)(ii)—Vertical spacing of lights*

The existing text is replaced by the following:

“(ii) on a vessel of less than 20 metres in length such lights shall be spaced not less than 1 metre apart and the lowest of these lights shall, except where a towing light is required, be placed at a height of not less than 2 metres above the gunwale.”

8. *Annex 1, section 10—Sailing vessels lights*

In section 10(a):

In the lead-in, the word “underway” is added after “sailing vessels”.

In section 10(b):

In the lead-in, the word “underway” is added after “sailing vessels”.

9. *Annex IV, new paragraph 1(o)—Distress signals*

The following new paragraph (o) is added:

“(o) approved signals transmitted by radiocommunication systems.”

