

17A. UNITED KINGDOM — AUTOMATIC SHIP IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING SYSTEM (AIRS) AND AUTOMATIC SHIP IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AIS)

Source: Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Former Notice 17A/04 is cancelled. Additions and amendments to the former notice are indicated by *sidelines*.

Introduction

1. The MCA utilises an Automatic [ship] Identification and Reporting System (AIRS), using VHF Digital Selective Calling (DSC) Ch 70, part of the IMO Universal Automatic Identification System (U AIS), to monitor movements of vessels around the United Kingdom. In December 2003, the MCA established a trial Automatic Identification System (AIS) Network of base station transponders in accordance with SOLAS Chapter V regulation 19 and European Traffic Monitoring Directive **2002/59/EC**. The AIS network is now being upgraded to operational status and it is intended that AIRS will close down early in 2005.

Summary

2. AIRS uses the capability of the VHF DSC installations adopted for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) to decode interrogation calls addressed to specific geographical areas.

3. In simple terms, AIRS operates through a Coastguard VHF DSC station transmitting DSC interrogation calls addressed to the co-ordinates of a pre-defined geographical area on Ch 70 (156.525 MHz) requesting vessels in this area to respond with certain information.

4. The new AIS network will consist of base stations located at the following sites:

Area	Rescue Centre	Radio Site	MMSI
East Coast	MRSC Humber	Cullercoats	002320708
		Flamborough Head	002320709
Pentland Firth	MRSC Forth	St. Abb's, Cross Law	002320710
		Noss Head	002320711
		Dunnet Head	002320712
		Durness	002320713
Fair Isle Gap	MRSC Shetland	Compass Head	002320714
The Minches	MRSC Stornoway	Butt of Lewis	002320715
		Rodel	002320716
		Melvaig	002320717
Irish Sea	MRSC Liverpool	Snaefell	002320718
The Smalls	MRSC Milford Haven	St. Ann's Head	002320719
Scillies	MRCC Falmouth	Lizard	002320720
		Isles of Scilly	002320723
		Land's End	002320721
		The Grove	002320722
South West Approaches	MRSC Portland		
Dover Strait	MRCC Dover	North Foreland	002320706
		Dover	002320704
		Fairlight	002320705

5. The AIS Network is defined to operate within IMO guidelines and will be capable of receiving all message types and in particular AIS message type 5: Ship Static and Voyage related data, provided at 6 minute intervals in accordance with ITU-R M.1371-1. It is anticipated this will provide the following data sets in support of the Directive:

- (1) position
- (2) vessel and cargo type (e.g. tanker or cargo and whether the cargo is hazardous)
- (3) length
- (4) draught
- (5) next port of call
- (6) course
- (7) speed

6. This automated procedure will enable identification and tracking of suitably equipped vessels without further intervention from either the vessel's crew or Coastguard personnel.

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AIS Trials for Aids to Navigation

7. AIS stations using the TDMA broadcast technology have been established at a number of lighthouses round the UK (Sumburgh Head, Dunnet Head, Neist Point, Butt of Lewis, Rubha Reidh (Rubh Re), Barns Ness, Flamborough Head, St Ann's Head, Rathlin East). These stations broadcast the Base Station Message (Type 4) giving identity and location. Trials are also planned or taking place with the aid to navigation message (Type 21) and addressed safety related messages in the Firth of Forth (Elie Ness and Fife Ness), Dublin Bay and the Solent - see local Notices to Mariners for more details.

Areas Covered

8. The areas covered by the AIS Network are shown diagrammatically in ALRS Vol. 1, part 1.

Onboard Equipment

9. The system is specifically designed to be used by any vessel equipped with an IMO AIS. Carriage of AIS became a requirement for ships in a phased programme which started in July 2002.

Further information

10. Further information and advice may be obtained from:

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