



MARITIME AUTHORITY OF JAMAICA

May 2006 amendments to SOLAS - LRIT

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The new regulation on LRIT is included in SOLAS chapter V on Safety of Navigation, through which LRIT will be introduced as a mandatory requirement for the following ships on international voyages: passenger ships, including high-speed craft; cargo ships, including high-speed craft, of 300 gross tonnage and upwards; and mobile offshore drilling units.

The SOLAS regulation on LRIT establishes a multilateral agreement for sharing LRIT information for security and search and rescue purposes, amongst SOLAS Contracting Governments, in order to meet the maritime security needs and other concerns of such Governments. It maintains the right of flag States to protect information about the ships entitled to fly their flag, where appropriate, while allowing coastal States access to information about ships navigating off their coasts. The SOLAS regulation on LRIT does not create or affirm any new rights of States over ships beyond those existing in international law, particularly, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), nor does it alter or affect the rights, jurisdiction, duties and obligations of States in connection with UNCLOS.

The LRIT information ships will be required to transmit include the ship's identity, location and date and time of the position. There will be no interface between LRIT and AIS. One of the more important distinctions between LRIT and AIS, apart from the obvious one of range, is that, whereas AIS is a broadcast system, data derived through LRIT will be available only to the recipients who are entitled to receive such information and safeguards concerning the confidentiality of those data have been built into the regulatory provisions. SOLAS Contracting Governments will be entitled to receive information about ships navigating within a distance not exceeding 1000 nautical miles off their coast.

The regulation foresees a phased-in implementation schedule for ships constructed before its expected entry into force date of 1 January 2008 and an exemption for ships operating exclusively in sea area A1 from the requirement to transmit LRIT information, since such ships are already fitted with AIS. It also identifies which authorities may have access to LRIT information.

Also adopted were performance standards and functional requirements for LRIT and an MSC resolution on Arrangements for the timely establishment of the long range identification and tracking system.

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