

IMO MSC 102

4-11 November 2020

A report by James Taylor OBE FRIN

IAIN delegate to IMO

The final report was accepted by the Maritime Safety Committee, and now goes to the IMO Council and will thus complete its statutory journey.

COVID-19 restrictions

IMO is currently much concerned, rightly, at the need for Governments and the shipping industry globally, with its wildly varying standards of management and care, to resolve the issue of crew members, out of contract and so unpaid, being isolated in foreign ports during the pandemic, and unable to return home to families. This requires governmental action, and will take some time to resolve to any degree of satisfaction.

Navigation

On navigational issues, Members would wish to be aware of the following:

- There is perceived increasing standardisation of Port State Control, to improve by inspection the technical and training state of ships and crews.
- Measures are considered to improve domestic ferry safety – where casualties are invariably the result of poor maintenance and lack of training, rather than a pure navigational issue.
- The Report of the Navigation, Communications and S&R Committee (NCSR), with its amendments to some traffic separation schemes (we get closer to effective water space managements every year which is good), the recognition of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) and most importantly, approval of the draft VTS revised Guidelines – an excellent job achieved by IALA/AISM, and strongly supported by IAIN in its drafting stages. This will allow VTS to be simplified, and will make operation, oversight and training much more effective.
- There was concern, particularly amongst Southern Ocean states, with their known and vast S&R areas and responsibilities, at the cost of maritime safety over multiple mobile satellite services – this has been

kicked to touch, or more accurately to MSC103, but I have taken the opportunity, in correspondence with the New Zealand team leading on the Polar Code revision, to see if we get some read-across of at least some part of this in that draft revision, even though it applies to non-SOLAS shipping.

Virtual conferencing

The entire meeting was conducted virtually over KUDO web conferencing; we still have some access issues which will be resolved before the next IMO event.

The Chair of MSC, Brad Groves, was excellent as ever, and I believe that we got through more decisions, and fewer needless interruptions due to the virtual style of the meeting, combined with Brad's outstanding chairmanship.

MSC and its various sub-committees are working well. Until further notice, all IMO events will be virtual.

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