



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

## MIN 321 (M+F)

### **Automatic Identification System (AIS) Class B - coding for non-SOLAS vessels.**

**Notice to all Shipowners, Masters, Small Craft Vessel Operators, Leisure Vessel Users, Statutory Harbour Authorities, Marina Operators and VTS Authorities.**

*This notice should be read with Merchant Shipping Notice 'Revised carriage requirements for Automatic Identification Systems', MSN 1795 (M)*

*This MIN expires 28 February 2009*

#### **PLEASE NOTE:-**

Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

#### **Summary**

This MIN advises the maritime community of vessel type coding for non-SOLAS vessels in the Automatic Identification System (AIS) Class B category.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 AIS is a carriage requirement for SOLAS vessels (SOLAS Chapter V Regulation 19), as currently detailed in Merchant Shipping Notice (MSN) 1795, and is an integral part of the EU Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information Directive (VTMD 2002/59/EC). Increasingly, however, non-SOLAS vessels are wishing to take advantage of the AIS system.
- 1.2 The publication of technical standard IEC 62287 for Class B AIS has encouraged the development of transponders for non-SOLAS vessels and increasing numbers of Class B AIS transponders are being fitted to vessels not required to fit AIS Class A transponders, including leisure vessels. This Marine Information Note advises how they should be coded correctly as it is of vital importance to other vessels and shore stations that vessel type information is accurately transmitted.
- 1.3 Trials undertaken by the MCA have demonstrated successful interaction between Class A and B devices and that Class B devices were readily visible on board a Class A fitted vessel. It should be noted that SOLAS vessels are currently required only to fit a "minimum keyboard display" (MKD) for AIS and that this display may not be readily visible to the bridge team. From 1 July 2008, radars on all SOLAS new build vessels and all replacement radars, will be required to have the facility to display AIS.

1.4 It should be noted that different manufacturers produce equipment with varying capability but within the technical standard IEC 62287. As a minimum, vessel operators must ensure that the correct MMSI & vessel code (most probably 36 or 37, please see below) are entered. It is also recommended that, where practicable, the transponder is connected to a suitable display to enable the user to take full advantage of the situational awareness picture of other vessels in the immediate proximity.

## 2. Class B coding

2.1 To some extent, the options available for vessel coding will depend on the manufacturers' software. In all cases coding for Class B AIS systems should follow the format already available for Class A SOLAS compliant vessels, as detailed in ITU-R 1371, 3.3.8.2.3.2, Table 18 'Identifiers to be used by ships to report their type'. This table is reproduced in the Annex to this MIN with details of those codes that are available to non-SOLAS vessels.

### 2.2 Leisure vessels

Provision is made for the main propulsion types, as follows:

**36** – any vessel where the **primary means of propulsion** is sail.

**37** – pleasure craft where the **primary means of propulsion** is other than sail.

*This provision covers all motorboats used for leisure purposes (displacement, semi-displacement, planing and RIBs).*

### 2.3 Codes only permitted to be used if configurable functionality is available

*Please refer to Table B in Annex.*

Certain AIS B systems allow users to change and update the vessel type and activity code while underway and where these facilities exist it is strongly encouraged that the code be altered to accurately represent the vessel's specific activity at any one time.

Example:

**37** - Dive RIB transiting to a dive site;

**34** - Dive RIB on site engaged in diving operations;

**37** - Dive RIB transiting from dive site on completion of dive.

As vessels are expected, under the relevant rule of the International Convention for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (COLREGs, as amended), to show the correct lights, shapes and signals whilst engaged in a specific activity, this activity should also be reflected by the appropriate code in AIS transmissions.

If the transponder is not user-configurable, the most appropriate code should be programmed at installation, please see 2.2 for leisure vessels or 2.4 for commercial vessels.

### 2.4 Codes reserved for commercial vessels

*Please refer to Table C in Annex.*

Codes with first digit 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, are reserved for specific commercial vessels and should only be used as such. It is recommended that the 2<sup>nd</sup> digit always be annotated as "0" (all ships of this type).

## 2.5 Codes reserved for SOLAS vessels

Certain codes are reserved for Class A SOLAS vessels and should not be used for Class B vessels. These codes are included in the table for information.

## 2.6 Further advice and assistance

It is advised that if there is any uncertainty Class B vessels should use the code **90**, but only as a default setting while seeking clarification from the MCA. If individuals perceive a different or specific requirement they are encouraged to contact the MCA for further advice, e mail: [ais@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:ais@mcga.gov.uk)

<b>Key</b>	
	These codes to be used appropriately and only if unit is user configurable.
	Not appropriate for Non-SOLAS vessels.

**Table A:** Commercial vessels not engages in special activities.

<b>Identifiers to be used by ships to report their type</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> Digit	Meaning of 1 <sup>st</sup> digit	2 <sup>nd</sup> Digit	Meaning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> digit
<b>0</b>	Not used	<b>0</b>	All ships of this type
<b>1</b>	Reserved for future use	<b>1</b>	Carrying DG, HS, or MP IMO Hazard or Pollutant category A
<b>2</b>	WIG (Wing-in-Ground)	<b>2</b>	Carrying DG, HS, or MP IMO Hazard or Pollutant category B
<b>3</b>	Other Ships - see table B	<b>3</b>	Carrying DG, HS, or MP IMO Hazard or Pollutant category C
<b>4</b>	HSC - High Speed Craft	<b>4</b>	Carrying DG, HS, or MP IMO Hazard or Pollutant category D
<b>5</b>	Special Craft - see table C	<b>5</b>	Reserved for future use
<b>6</b>	Passenger Ships	<b>6</b>	Reserved for future use
<b>7</b>	Cargo Ships	<b>7</b>	Reserved for future use
<b>8</b>	Tankers(s)	<b>8</b>	Reserved for future use
<b>9</b>	Other types of Ship	<b>9</b>	No additional information

DG = Dangerous Goods, HS = Hazardous Goods, MP = Marine Pollutants

**Table B:** Other ships engaged in Special activities:

1 <sup>st</sup> Digit	2 <sup>nd</sup> Digit	Meaning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> digit
<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	Fishing
<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	Towing
<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	Towing and length of tow exceeds 200M or breadth exceeds 25m
<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	Engaged in dredging or underwater operations
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	Engaged in diving operations
<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	Engaged in military operations
<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	Sailing
<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	Pleasure craft
<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	Reserved for future use
<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	Reserved for future use

**Table C: Special Craft engaged in official activities:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Digit	2 <sup>nd</sup> Digit	Meaning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> digit
5	0	Pilot vessel
5	1	Search and Rescue
5	2	Tug
5	3	Port Tender
5	4	Vessel with anti-pollution facilities or equipment
5	5	Law enforcement vessels
5	6	Spare – for assignments to local vessels
5	7	Spare – for assignments to local vessels
5	8	Medical transport (as defined in the 1949 Geneva Convention and additional protocols)
5	9	Ships according to resolution 18 (MOB-83)

### More Information

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