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MSC.1/Circ.1403/Rev.2
28 November 2022

NAVTEX MANUAL

- 1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 106th session (2 to 11 November 2022), approved the revised *NAVTEX Manual*, set out in the annex, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) at its ninth session (21 to 30 June 2022).
- 2 The Committee decided that the revised NAVTEX Manual would take effect on 1 January 2023.
- 3 Member States are invited to use the Manual, as appropriate, and to bring it to the attention of all parties concerned.
- 4 This circular supersedes MSC.1/Circ.1403/Rev.1.

ANNEX
NAVTEX MANUAL
2023 EDITION

Foreword

SOLAS regulation IV/12.2 states that "Every ship, while at sea, shall maintain a radio watch for broadcasts of maritime safety information on the appropriate frequency or frequencies on which such information is broadcast for the area in which the ship is navigating".

At the request of the IMO Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications (COM), the NAVTEX Manual was first produced in 1988. Three subsequent editions have been produced, with the fourth edition published in 2005 containing amendments endorsed by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its seventy-eighth session in May 2004 by MSC/Circ.1122.

At its seventh meeting in September 2005, the IHO Commission on the Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings (CPRNW)¹ established a working group to review all World-Wide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS) documentation. The working group included representation from the WMO and firstly prepared revisions to resolutions A.705(17) on *Promulgation of maritime safety information* and A.706(17) on *World-Wide Navigational Warning Service*. The proposed revisions of these resolutions were circulated to IHO Member States under IHB CL 104/2007, endorsed by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) at its twelfth session in April 2008 and subsequently approved by MSC 85 in November/December 2008 by means of MSC.1/Circ.1287 and MSC.1/Circ.1288, respectively.

The IHO CPRNW Working Group then prepared the revised *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* incorporating the revised information from resolutions A.705(17), as amended, and A.706(17), as amended. The revised text was circulated to IHO Member States under cover of IHB CL 70/2008, endorsed by COMSAR 13 in January 2009 and subsequently approved by MSC 86 in May/June 2009 by means of MSC.1/Circ.1310. The working group subsequently prepared the third revision of the International SafetyNET Manual. The revised text of the International SafetyNET Manual was circulated to IHO Member States under cover of IHB CL 68/2009, endorsed by COMSAR 14 in March 2010 and approved by MSC 87 in May 2010 by MSC.1/Circ.1364.

Continuing with the holistic approach of reviewing all maritime safety information documents from the top down, the working group prepared the fifth revision of the NAVTEX Manual. The revised text of the NAVTEX Manual was circulated to the IHO Member States under cover of IHB CL 74/2010, endorsed by COMSAR 15 in March 2011 and subsequently approved by MSC 89 in May 2011 by MSC.1/Circ.1403.

Following the review of all WWNWS documentation, an editorial review was conducted. As part of this editorial review, MSC.1/Circ.1287/Rev.1 and MSC.1/Circ.1288/Rev.1 were approved by MSC 92 in June 2013, and MSC.1/Circ.1310/Rev.1 was approved by MSC 94 in November 2014. Following the approval of these circulars, the IHO WWNWS Sub-Committee Working Group reviewed the text of the NAVTEX Manual. This sixth revision of the NAVTEX Manual was endorsed by IHO and WMO through the WWNWS Sub-Committee, endorsed by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) at its

¹ CPRNW was renamed the IHO WWNWS Sub-Committee (WWNWS) with effect from 1 January 2009.

third session in February/March 2016 and subsequently approved by MSC 97 in November 2016 by means of MSC.1/Circ.1403/Rev.1, becoming effective on 1 January 2018.

This Manual can be amended in accordance with the procedure stipulated in appendix 2.

1 General information

1.1 NAVTEX is an international automated direct-printing service for promulgation of maritime safety information (MSI), navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts and other urgent safety-related messages to ships. It was developed to provide a low-cost, simple and automated means of receiving MSI on board ships at sea in coastal waters. The information transmitted may be relevant to all sizes and types of vessels and the selective message-rejection feature ensures that mariners can receive MSI broadcasts which are tailored to their particular needs.

1.2 NAVTEX fulfils an integral role in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and incorporated into the 1988 amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as a requirement for ships to which the Convention applies.

1.3 This Manual describes the structure and operation of the NAVTEX service. It is intended primarily for use by national Administrations and others concerned with the preparation and broadcasting of MSI. It will also be of interest to seafarers, shipowners and others who need to receive such information in order to safely go about their business at sea. It should be used in conjunction with the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* (also published as the IHO/IMO World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Guidance Document, IHO Publication S-53).

2 NAVTEX service

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 NAVTEX provides shipping with navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts and other urgent safety-related messages (as listed in table 1, section 5) by automatic display or printout from a dedicated receiver. It is suitable for use in all sizes and types of ships. Figure 1 illustrates the way the service is typically structured.

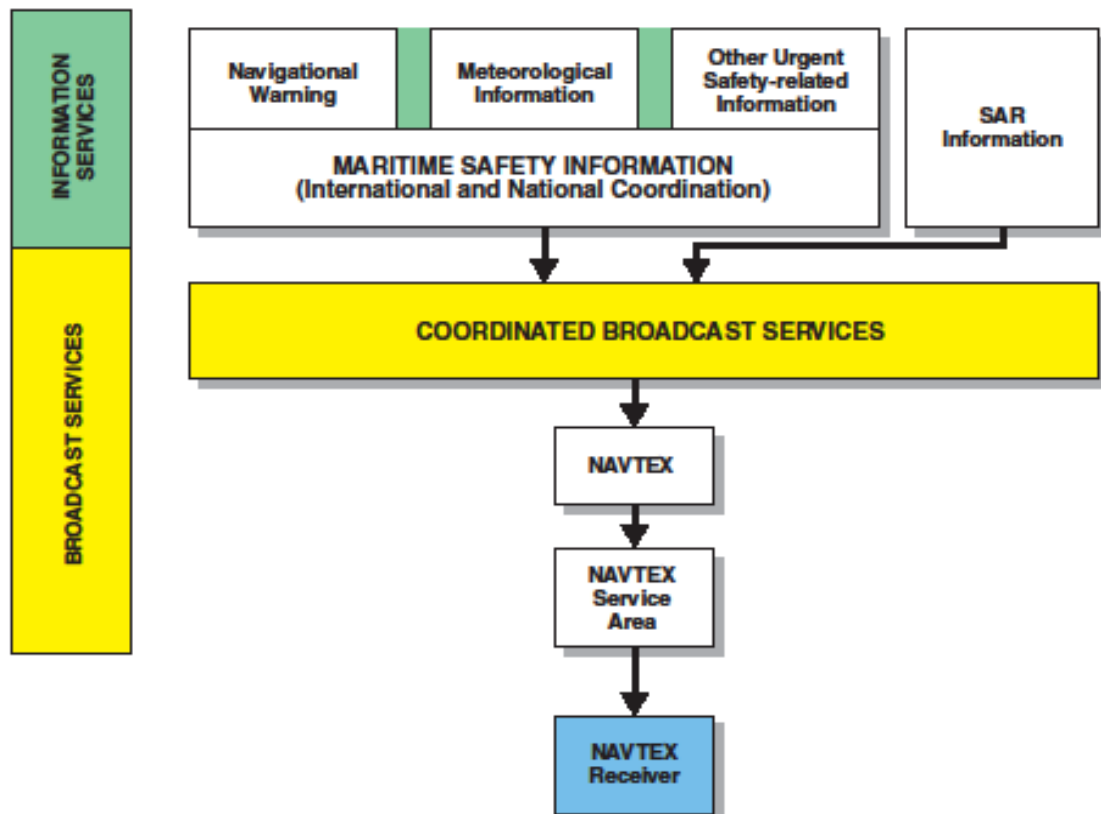


Figure 1 – Basic concept of the NAVTEX system

2.1.2 NAVTEX is a component of the IMO/IHO World-Wide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS) and the IMO/WMO Worldwide Met-Ocean Information and Warning Service (WWMIWS) defined by resolutions A.706(17), as amended, and A.1051(27), as amended. It has also been included as an element of the GMDSS.

2.1.3 In the GMDSS, a NAVTEX receiving capability is part of the mandatory equipment which is required to be carried in certain vessels under the provisions of the SOLAS Convention.

2.1.4 Authority for coordinating the use of the frequencies 518 kHz, 490 kHz and 4209.5 kHz for NAVTEX services worldwide was delegated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to IMO at World Radiocommunication Conference, 1995 (WRC-95) through resolution 339. This was reaffirmed at WRC-97. IMO has vested responsibility for the overall management and coordination of the global NAVTEX service in the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel. With respect to National NAVTEX broadcasts on 490 kHz and 4 209.5 kHz, the function of the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel is limited to the allocation of transmission identification characters.² It should be noted that the provisions of the NAVTEX Manual do not apply when planning a National NAVTEX service on other nationally assigned frequencies. The terms of reference for this Panel are set out in appendix 1.

² The transmitter identification character is a single letter allocated to each transmitter to identify the NAVTEX station and broadcast times.

2.1.5 Details of operational and planned NAVTEX services are published periodically in the various national lists of radio signals, in an annex to the ITU List IV – List of coast stations and special service stations, and in the [GMDSS Master Plan](#) published in the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS).

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 For the purposes of this Manual, the following definitions apply:

- .1 *Coastal warning* means a navigational warning or in-force bulletin promulgated as part of a numbered series by a national coordinator. Broadcast should be made by the International NAVTEX service to defined NAVTEX service areas and/or by an international enhanced group call service to coastal warning areas (in addition, Administrations may issue coastal warnings by other means).
- .2 *Coastal warning area* means a unique and precisely defined sea area within a NAVAREA/METAREA or Sub-area established by a coastal State for the purpose of coordinating the broadcast of coastal maritime safety information through an international enhanced group call service.
- .3 *Enhanced group call (EGC)* means the broadcast of coordinated maritime safety information and search and rescue related information, to a defined geographical area using a recognized mobile satellite service.
- .4 *Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)* means a system that performs the functions set out in SOLAS regulation IV/4.
- .5 *HF NBDP* means High Frequency narrow-band direct-printing, using radio telegraphy as defined in Recommendation ITU-R M.688.
- .6 *In-force bulletin* means a list of serial numbers of those NAVAREA, sub-area or coastal warnings in force issued and broadcast by the NAVAREA coordinator, sub-area coordinator or national coordinator.
- .7 *International NAVTEX service* means the coordinated broadcast and automatic reception on 518 kHz of maritime safety information by means of narrow-band direct-printing telegraphy using the English language.³
- .8 *International enhanced group call service* means the coordinated broadcast and automatic reception of maritime safety information and search and rescue related information via EGC, using the English language.
- .9 *Issuing service* means a national meteorological and hydrological service (NMHS) or national authority which has accepted responsibility for ensuring that meteorological warnings and forecasts for shipping are disseminated through the International EGC service to the designated METAREA for which the NMHS or national authority has accepted responsibility under the broadcast requirements of the GMDSS.⁴

³ As set out in this Manual.

⁴ As defined in WMO-No.558.

- .10 *Local warning* means a navigational warning which covers inshore waters, often within the limits of jurisdiction of a harbour or port authority.
- .11 *Maritime safety information (MSI)*⁵ means navigational and meteorological warnings, meteorological forecasts and other urgent safety-related messages broadcast to ships.
- .12 *Maritime safety information service* means the internationally and nationally coordinated network of broadcasts containing information which is necessary for safe navigation.
- .13 *METAREA* means a geographical sea area⁶ established for the purpose of coordinating the broadcast of marine meteorological information. The term *METAREA* followed by a roman numeral may be used to identify a particular sea area. The delimitation of such areas is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundaries between States (see figure 2).
- .14 *METAREA coordinator* means the authority charged with coordinating marine meteorological information broadcasts by one or more national meteorological services acting as preparation or issuing services within the *METAREA*.
- .15 *Meteorological information* means the marine meteorological warning and forecast information in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974.
- .16 *National coordinator* means the national authority charged with collating and issuing coastal warnings within a national area of responsibility.
- .17 *National NAVTEX service* means the broadcast and automatic reception of maritime safety information by means of narrow-band direct-printing telegraphy using frequencies other than 518 kHz and languages as decided by the Administration concerned.
- .18 *National enhanced group call service* means the broadcast and automatic reception of maritime safety information via the EGC system, using languages as decided by the Administration concerned.
- .19 *NAVAREA* means a geographical sea area⁷ established for the purpose of coordinating the broadcast of navigational warnings. The term *NAVAREA* followed by a roman numeral may be used to identify a particular sea area. The delimitation of such areas is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundaries between States (see figure 3).
- .20 *NAVAREA coordinator* means the authority charged with coordinating, collating and issuing *NAVAREA* warnings for a designated *NAVAREA*.
- .21 *NAVAREA warning* means a navigational warning or in-force bulletin promulgated as part of a numbered series by a *NAVAREA* coordinator.

⁵ As defined in SOLAS regulation IV/2.

⁶ Which may include inland seas, lakes and waterways navigable by seagoing ships.

⁷ Which may include inland seas, lakes and waterways navigable by seagoing ships.

- .22 *Navigational warning* means a message containing urgent information relevant to safe navigation broadcast to ships in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974.
- .23 *NAVTEX* means the system for the broadcast and automatic reception of maritime safety information by means of narrow-band direct-printing telegraphy.
- .24 *NAVTEX coordinator* means the authority charged with operating and managing one or more NAVTEX stations broadcasting maritime safety information as part of the International NAVTEX service.
- .25 *NAVTEX coverage area* means an area defined by an arc of a circle having a radius from the transmitter calculated according to the method and criteria given in resolution A.801(19), as amended.
- .26 *NAVTEX service area* means a unique and precisely defined sea area, wholly contained within the NAVTEX coverage area, for which maritime safety information is provided from a particular NAVTEX transmitter. It is normally defined by a line that takes full account of local propagation conditions and the character and volume of information and maritime traffic patterns in the region, as given in resolution A.801(19), as amended.
- .27 *Other urgent safety-related information* means maritime safety information broadcast to ships that is not defined as a navigational warning or meteorological information. This may include, but is not limited to, significant malfunctions or changes to maritime communications systems, and new or amended mandatory ship reporting systems or maritime regulations affecting ships at sea.
- .28 *Rescue coordination centre (RCC)* means a unit responsible for promoting efficient organization of search and rescue services and for coordinating the conduct of search and rescue operations within a search and rescue region.⁸
- .29 *Recognized mobile satellite service (RMSS)* means any service which operates through a satellite system and is recognized by IMO, for use in the GMDSS.
- .30 *Search and rescue (SAR) related information* means distress alert relays and other urgent search and rescue information broadcast to ships.
- .31 *Sub-area* means a subdivision of a NAVAREA/METAREA in which a number of countries have established a coordinated system for the promulgation of maritime safety information. The delimitation of such areas is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundaries between States.
- .32 *Sub-area Coordinator* means the authority charged with coordinating, collating and issuing Sub-area warnings for a designated Sub-area.

⁸ The term RCC will be used in this Manual to apply to either joint, aeronautical or maritime centres; JRCC, ARCC or MRCC will be used as the context warrants.

- .33 *Sub-area warning* means a navigational warning or in-force bulletin promulgated as part of a numbered series by a Sub-area Coordinator. Broadcast should be made by the International NAVTEX service to defined NAVTEX service areas or by the international enhanced group call service (through the appropriate NAVAREA coordinator).
- .34 *UTC* means Coordinated Universal Time which is equivalent to GMT (or ZULU) as the international time standard.
- .35 *Worldwide Met-Ocean Information and Warning Service (WWMIWS)*⁹ means the internationally coordinated service for the promulgation of meteorological warnings and forecasts.
- .36 *World-Wide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS)*¹⁰ means the internationally and nationally coordinated service for the promulgation of navigational warnings.
- .37 In the operating procedures, *coordination* means that the allocation of the time for data broadcast is centralized, the format and criteria of data transmissions are compliant as described in the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* and that all services are managed as set out in resolutions A.705(17), as amended, A.706(17), as amended and A.1051(27), as amended.

⁹ As set out in resolution A.1051(27), as amended.

¹⁰ As set out in resolution A.706(17), as amended.

2.2.2 Delimitation of METAREAs

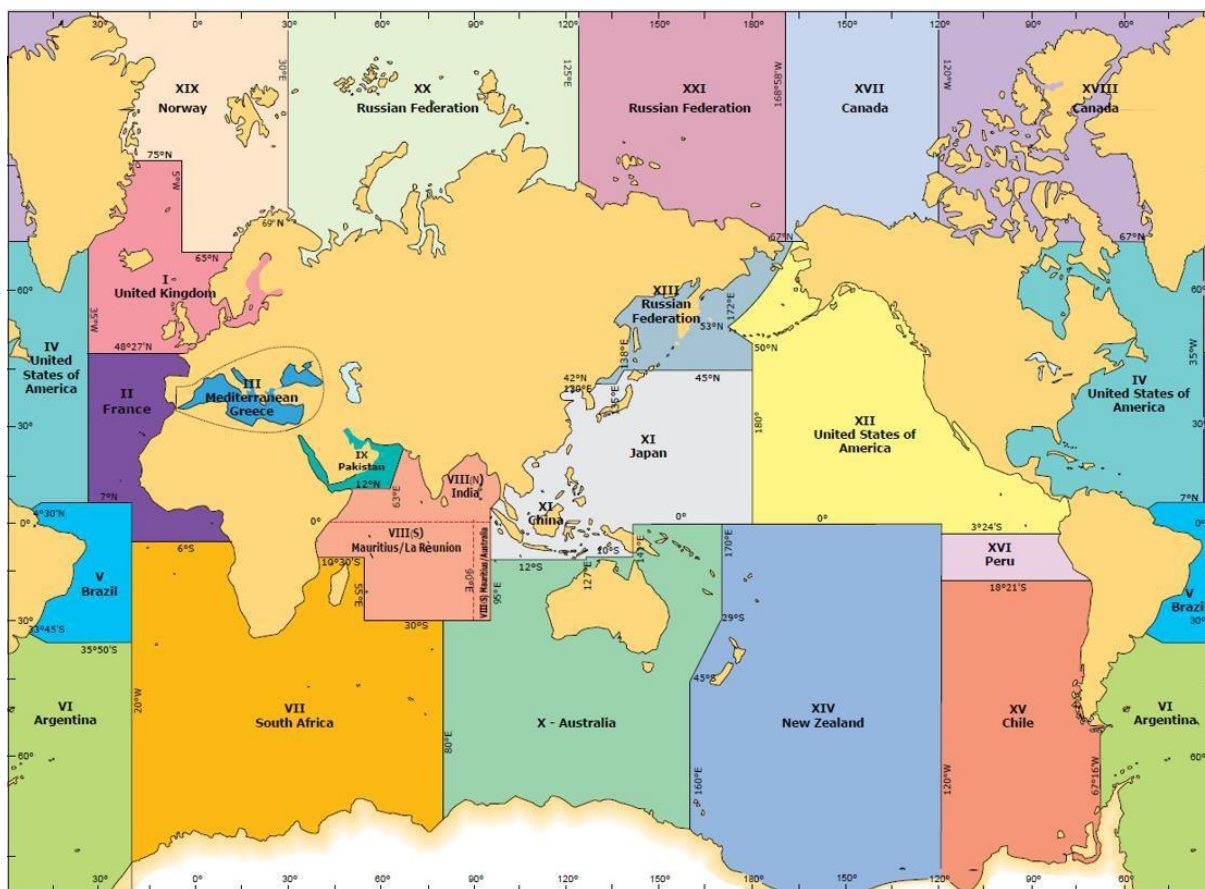


Figure 2 – METAREAs for coordinating and promulgating meteorological warnings and forecasts under the Worldwide Met-Ocean and Information Warning Service within the GMDSS

The delimitation of such areas is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundaries between States.

2.2.3 Delimitation of NAVAREAs

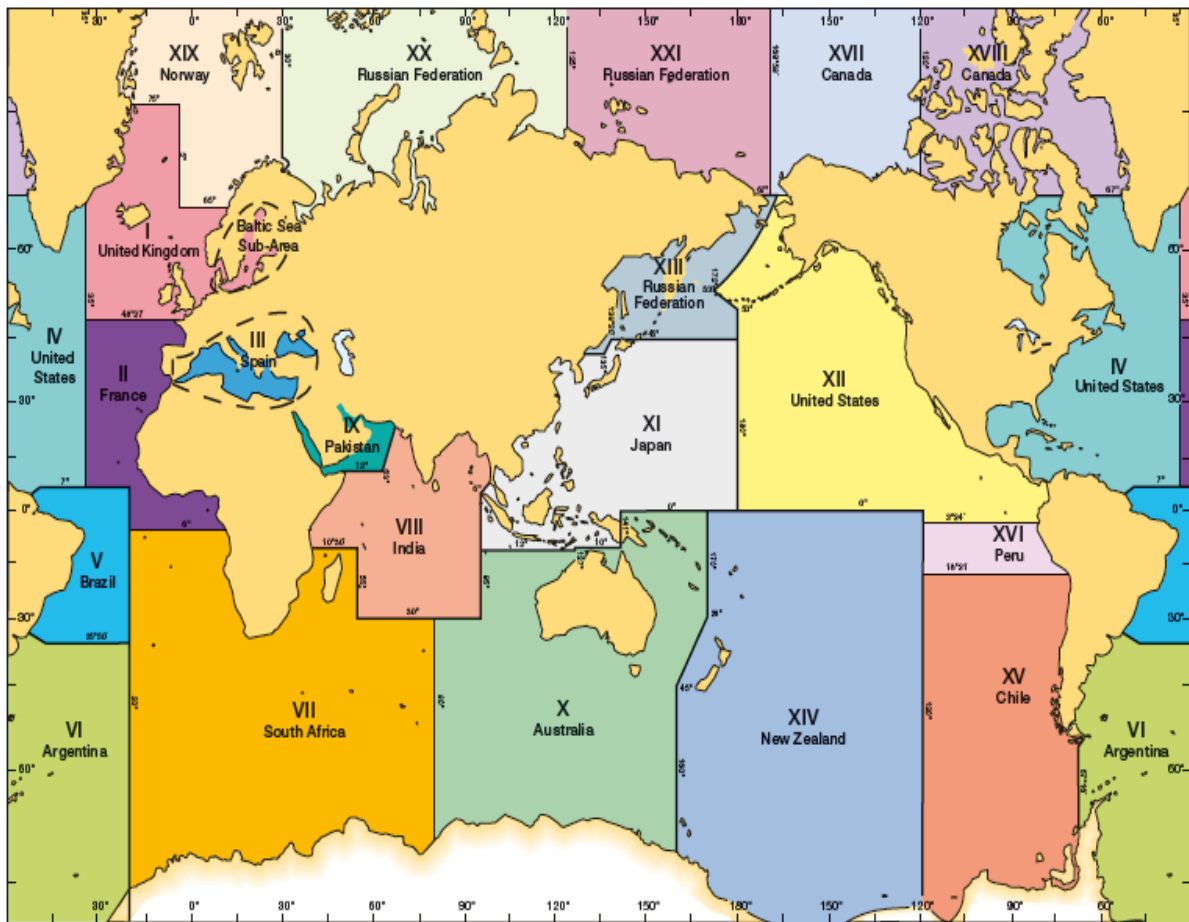


Figure 3 – NAVAREAs for coordinating and promulgating navigational warnings under the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service within the GMDSS

The delimitation of such areas is not related to and shall not prejudice the delimitation of any boundaries between States.

3 General features of the NAVTEX system

3.1 The principal features are:

- .1 use of a single frequency, with transmissions from stations within and between NAVAREAs and METAREAs coordinated on a time-sharing basis to reduce the risk of mutual interference. The following frequencies may be used for NAVTEX broadcasts:

518 kHz	
Type of service:	International
Content:	Maritime safety information
Language:	English
Coordination:	By IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel
490 kHz and 4 209.5 kHz	
Type of service:	National
Content:	Maritime safety information
Language:	As selected by the national Administration
Coordination:	Transmitter identification character allocated by IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel
Other national frequencies allocated by the ITU	
Type of service:	National
Content:	As selected by the national Administration
Language:	As selected by the national Administration
Coordination:	By appropriate national Administration

- .2 a dedicated NAVTEX receiver, comprising radio receivers, a signal processor and either:
- .1 an integrated printing device; or
 - .2 a dedicated display device with a printer output port and a non-volatile message memory; or

- .3 a connection to an integrated navigation system and a non-volatile message memory,

which has the ability to select messages to be printed, or viewed and stored in a memory according to:

- .1 a technical code (B₁B₂B₃B₄), which appears in the preamble of each message; and
- .2 whether or not the particular message has already been printed/received.

3.2 The operational and technical characteristics of the NAVTEX system are contained in Recommendation ITU-R M.540-2. Performance standards for shipborne equipment, if installed before 1 July 2005, are laid down in resolution A.525(13). If installed on or after 1 July 2005 and before 1 January 2024, they shall conform to resolution MSC.148(77). For installations on or after 1 January 2024, they shall conform to resolution MSC.508(105).

4 Establishing or withdrawing NAVTEX services

4.1 Establishing new NAVTEX services

When planning NAVTEX services, Administrations should obtain guidance at an early stage from IMO, through its IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel. This may be particularly important when installation of new stations and/or purchase of new equipment is under consideration. Details of how to contact the Panel may be found in annex 1.

4.2 Withdrawing existing NAVTEX stations and/or services

4.2.1 Administrations wishing to withdraw **International NAVTEX services** and/or stations should provide IMO with timely and adequate notice prior to the planned withdrawal. Early consultation with the relevant NAVAREA/METAREA/SAR coordinators and the IMO NAVTEX Coordination Panel is required. When withdrawing services and/or stations, the Administration should ensure:

- .1 continued provision of MSI services within the area previously covered:
- .2 the impact upon adjoining NAVTEX service areas is considered:
- .3 all appropriate authorities are informed, including the following:
 - .1 IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel;
 - .2 NAVAREA/METAREA coordinators;
 - .3 SAR coordinators;
 - .4 Information providers; and
 - .5 NAVTEX users by notice to mariners.
- .4 six weeks prior to withdrawal of the service and/or station notification should be promulgated by NAVTEX message; and
- .5 the GMDSS Master Plan module of GISIS is updated.

The IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel recommends prior notice of one year is given to NAVTEX stakeholders.

4.2.2 Administrations wishing to withdraw **national NAVTEX services** and/or stations should provide IMO with timely and adequate notice prior to the planned withdrawal and inform the relevant NAVAREA/METAREA/SAR coordinators and the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel as early as practicable. Upon completion, the [GMDSS Master Plan](#) module of GISIS should be updated.

4.3 International NAVTEX services on 518 kHz

When planning an International NAVTEX service, it is essential to appreciate the high level of national and international coordination required. The central principles which should be borne in mind are as follows:

- .1 All NAVTEX stations are part of the strategic infrastructure of both the GMDSS and WWNWS.
- .2 It is essential for the efficiency and effectiveness of the service that a minimum number of stations are used. This may require national Administrations to either share facilities or promulgate information provided by Administrations of other nations.
- .3 Each station contributes to the overall service in a coordinated way, bearing in mind the geographical area covered by each station and the effective coordination and control of information to be transmitted.
- .4 The two basic areas which must be defined when establishing a NAVTEX station are the NAVTEX coverage area and the NAVTEX service area. Each station will provide all the information for a particular NAVTEX service area. The boundaries of the NAVTEX service area must be wholly contained within the coverage area, and must not overlap with adjacent NAVTEX service areas (see figure 4).
- .5 National Administrations seeking to establish NAVTEX services shall undertake preliminary discussions with the NAVAREA coordinator, METAREA coordinator and neighbouring Administrations prior to formal application to IMO through the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel. These discussions shall consider the most appropriate NAVTEX service area boundaries, possible geographical locations for transmitter sites to ensure optimal coverage and links with information providers.
- .6 The range of a NAVTEX transmitter depends on the transmitted power and local radio propagation conditions. The actual range achieved shall be adjusted to the minimum required for adequate reception in the specified NAVTEX service area, taking into account the needs of ships approaching from other areas. Experience indicates that the required range of 250 to 400 nautical miles will normally be attained by transmitted power of no more than 1 kW during daylight **with a minimum of 60% reduction during night conditions.**
- .7 After the choice of transmitter sites, the main need for coordination lies in the assignment of B₁ transmitter identification characters (time schedules) and the agreement of proposed NAVTEX service areas (if appropriate). Preliminary discussions between national Administrations seeking to establish or amend NAVTEX services and neighbouring Administrations shall be coordinated by the NAVAREA coordinator prior to formal application for a B₁ transmitter identification character. Throughout the process the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel is available to advise and liaise on the final limits of NAVTEX service areas if these cannot be agreed locally.

- .8 The IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel will only allocate B₁ transmitter identification characters after the NAVTEX service areas have been agreed.
- .9 Once a NAVTEX transmitter has been declared operational, if a national Administration wishes to:
- .1 move the transmitter site; and/or
 - .2 amend the limits of its NAVTEX service area,
- then the whole coordination process outlined above must be repeated, keeping the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel informed at all times.
- .10 A national NAVTEX coordinator shall be established to oversee the operation of the NAVTEX services established by each national Administration. The responsibilities of the NAVTEX coordinator are defined in section 12 of this Manual.

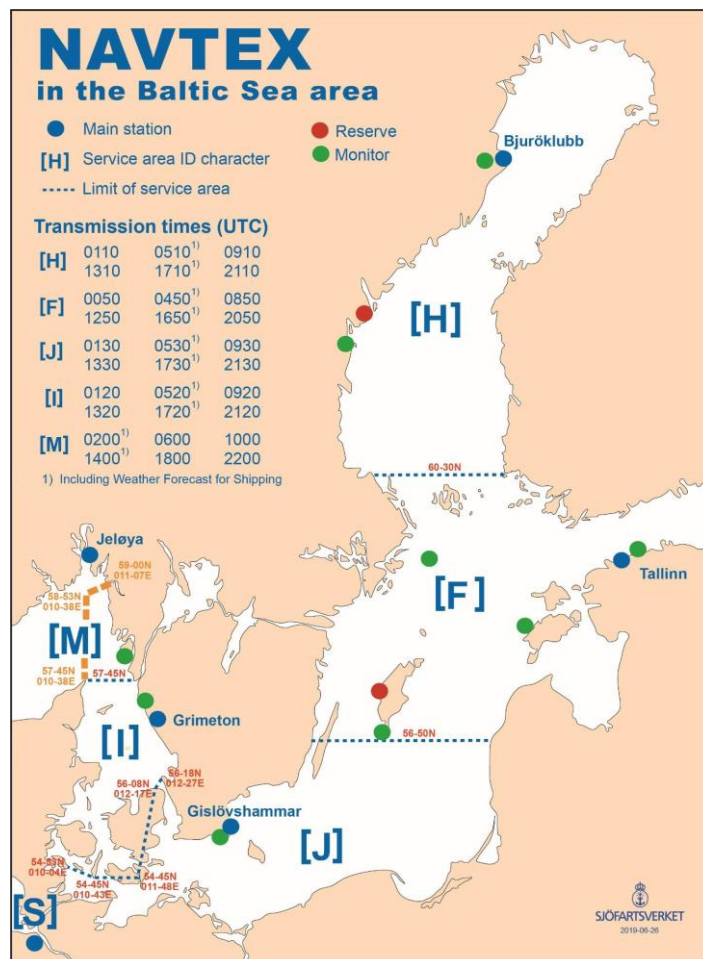


Figure 4 – Example of NAVTEX service areas

The Baltic Sea and its approaches have been divided into five individual NAVTEX service areas. Within each service area, maritime safety information is provided from a separate NAVTEX station which has been allocated a dedicated B₁ transmitter identification character. It is a fundamental requirement that the range of each NAVTEX transmitter is sufficient to include the whole of the NAVTEX service area assigned to its B₁ transmitter identification character.

4.4 National NAVTEX services on 490 kHz or 4 209.5 kHz

The provisions of the NAVTEX Manual apply to national NAVTEX services on 490 kHz or 4 209.5 kHz. When planning a national NAVTEX service, the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel is responsible for the allocation of B₁ transmitter identification characters; however, the establishment of NAVTEX service areas and the compulsory use of the English language are not required.

4.5 National NAVTEX services on other frequencies

The provisions of the NAVTEX Manual do not apply when planning a national NAVTEX service on nationally assigned frequencies.

5 NAVTEX message technical characters

5.1 Overview of technical characters, B₁, B₂, B₃, B₄

5.1.1 NAVTEX messages include instructions to the NAVTEX receiver for processing maritime safety information in the form of the NAVTEX message identity, which consists of four technical "B" characters which make up an alphanumeric code. In order for messages to be correctly processed, they must consist of data conforming to these "B" characters:

B₁ Transmitter identification character

B₂ Subject indicator character

B₃B₄ Message numbering characters

5.2 B₁ – Transmitter identification character

5.2.1 The transmitter identification character (B₁) is a single letter which is allocated to each transmitter. It is used to identify the broadcasts which are to be accepted by the receiver and those which are to be rejected, and also the time slot for the transmission.

5.2.2 In order to avoid erroneous reception and interference of transmissions from two stations having the same transmitter identification character, it is necessary to ensure that such stations have a large geographical separation. Allocation of transmitter identification characters by alphabetical sequence to adjacent sites can also cause problems; hence, consecutive transmitter identification characters are not normally allocated to adjacent stations. Experience has shown that this removes the risk of a station which overruns its time slot masking the phasing signal of an adjacent station which is about to begin its transmission.

Table 1 – Technical "B" characters which make up the full NAVTEX message identity^{11,12}

B₁ Transmitter identification character	B₂ Subject indicator character		B₃B₄ Message numbering characters
1 letter	1 letter		2 digits
A to X (see Table 2)	A = Navigational warnings		01 to 99 (message numbering characters "00" are not to be used for routine messages)
	B = Meteorological warnings		
	C = Ice reports		
	D = Search and rescue information, acts of piracy warnings, tsunamis and other natural phenomena		
	E = Meteorological forecasts		
	F = Pilot and VTS service messages		
	G = AIS service messages (non-navigational aid)		
	H = LORAN messages		
	I = Currently not used		
	J = GNSS messages regarding PRN status		
	K = Other electronic navigational aid system messages		
	L = Other navigational warnings – additional to B ₂ character A ¹²		
	M = N = O = P = Q = R = S = T = U =	}	

¹¹ Use of B₂ character D will automatically set off the alarm at the NAVTEX receiver.

¹² On some older NAVTEX receivers it may be possible to deselect B₂ character L (continuation of B₂ subject group A); however, it is strongly recommended that this character is not deselected.

B ₁ Transmitter identification character	B ₂ Subject indicator character		B ₃ B ₄ Message numbering characters
1 letter	1 letter		2 digits
	V = W = X = Y =	} Special services allocation by the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel	
	Z =		



Figure 5 – Example of NAVTEX receiver with LCD screen

5.2.3 NAVTEX transmissions have a designed maximum range of about 400 nautical miles. The minimum distance between two transmitters with the same transmitter identification identifier must, therefore, be sufficient to ensure that a receiver cannot be within range of both at the same time.

5.2.4 Close coordination between transmitting stations in adjacent NAVAREAs/METAREAs is necessary to achieve this separation. For this reason, national Administrations shall request the advice of the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel at an early stage in the planning of a new NAVTEX service. The Panel will allocate B₁ transmitter identification characters in such a way as to minimize the risk of interference occurring.

5.2.5 Table 2 shows the transmitter identification characters and their associated transmission start times used by the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel to evaluate and allocate transmitter identification characters A to X, regardless of the geographical position of the station anywhere in the world. Each transmitter identification character is allocated a maximum transmission time of 10 minutes every four hours. **Because the NAVTEX system always utilizes a single frequency, it is fundamental to its successful operation that the following time slots are strictly adhered to, and that broadcasts do not overrun their allotted 10 minutes.**

Table 2 – NAVTEX transmission start times

Transmitter identification character (B ₁)	Transmission start times (UTC)					
A	0000	0400	0800	1200	1600	2000
B	0010	0410	0810	1210	1610	2010
C	0020	0420	0820	1220	1620	2020
D	0030	0430	0830	1230	1630	2030
E	0040	0440	0840	1240	1640	2040
F	0050	0450	0850	1250	1650	2050
G	0100	0500	0900	1300	1700	2100
H	0110	0510	0910	1310	1710	2110
I	0120	0520	0920	1320	1720	2120
J	0130	0530	0930	1330	1730	2130
K	0140	0540	0940	1340	1740	2140
L	0150	0550	0950	1350	1750	2150
M	0200	0600	1000	1400	1800	2200
N	0210	0610	1010	1410	1810	2210
O	0220	0620	1020	1420	1820	2220
P	0230	0630	1030	1430	1830	2230
Q	0240	0640	1040	1440	1840	2240
R	0250	0650	1050	1450	1850	2250
S	0300	0700	1100	1500	1900	2300
T	0310	0710	1110	1510	1910	2310
U	0320	0720	1120	1520	1920	2320
V	0330	0730	1130	1530	1930	2330
W	0340	0740	1140	1540	1940	2340
X	0350	0750	1150	1550	1950	2350

5.2.6 In some regions, it has become necessary to accommodate a large number of stations. In extreme cases, it has even been necessary to reuse some transmitter identification characters for a second time within a region. Where this occurs, every effort is made to ensure stations with the same character are as far apart as possible to reduce the risk of mutual interference.

5.3 B₂ – Subject indicator character

5.3.1 Information is grouped by subject in the NAVTEX broadcast and each subject group is allocated a B₂ subject indicator character.

5.3.2 The subject indicator character is used by the receiver to identify the different classes of messages as listed in table 1.

5.3.3 Some subject indicator characters can be used to reject messages concerning certain subjects which may not be required by the ship (e.g. Ice report messages may be rejected by deselecting the B₂ subject indicator character C on the NAVTEX receiver on board a ship).

5.3.4 Reception of messages, transmitted using subject indicator characters A, B, D and L, which have been allocated for navigational warnings, meteorological warnings, search and rescue information, acts of piracy warnings, tsunamis and other natural phenomena, is mandatory and cannot be deselected on the NAVTEX receiver. This has been designed to ensure that ships using NAVTEX always receive the most essential information.

5.3.5 It is not possible to transmit or receive two NAVTEX messages with the same NAVTEX message identity (made up of the four technical characters). Therefore, the B₂ subject indicator character L has been designated for use in the unlikely event that a NAVTEX coordinator has more than 99 navigational warning messages in force and requiring transmission at the same time, all using B₂ subject indicator character A, with the same B₁ transmitter identification character.

5.3.6 Messages received which have been transmitted using subject indicator character D will set off an alarm built into the NAVTEX receiver.

5.3.7 In the International NAVTEX service, Administrations shall obtain the agreement of the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel for all proposals for the use of special service subject indicator characters. Such proposals shall meet the following criteria:

- .1 The full international service must remain unaffected.
- .2 The special service broadcasts shall be transmitted only when time allows, and with due regard to the necessity for the frequency to remain unused for a high percentage of the time.
- .3 The special service broadcast shall only be used for its approved purpose.

5.4 B₃B₄ – Message numbering characters (NAVTEX number)

5.4.1 Each message within each subject group is allocated a two digit sequential serial number beginning at 01 and ending at 99. The B₃B₄ message numbering characters together, are often referred to as the "NAVTEX number".

5.4.2 The NAVTEX number is solely allocated as a component of the NAVTEX message identity and should not be confused with (and bears no correlation to) the series identity and consecutive number of the NAVAREA or Coastal warning contained in the message.

5.4.3 Messages broadcast using NAVTEX number $B_3B_4 = 00$ cannot be rejected and will automatically override any selection of B_1 transmitter identification characters as well as any B_2 subject indicator characters selected on the NAVTEX receiver.

5.4.4 Use of NAVTEX number $B_3B_4 = 00$ must therefore be strictly controlled, since messages carrying it will always be printed or displayed every time they are received. Routine messages and service messages must never be allocated $B_3B_4 = 00$. The correct use of B_2 characters A, B, D and L will ensure that messages containing safety information will always be printed or displayed on first receipt.

6 Message identity

6.1 The individual NAVTEX message identity is the amalgamation of all four technical characters $B_1B_2B_3B_4$ (transmitter identification character/subject indicator character/message numbering characters).

6.2 When a message is received for the first time by a NAVTEX receiver, the message identity is recorded and stored in the memory for 72 hours. This ensures that subsequent transmissions of the same message are not reprinted or repeated in the display, unless they are re-received over 72 hours later. In the unlikely event that all 99 NAVTEX numbers for a particular subject group, from a particular transmitter, are in use at the same time, or have been allocated within the past 72 hours, an alternative B_2 character must be utilized; for example, $B_2 = L$ has been set aside to be used for additional navigational warnings if all 99 NAVTEX numbers for subject group $B_2 = A$ are in use.

6.3 Each NAVTEX message identity shall be allocated by the relevant NAVTEX coordinator, who is the authority responsible for the selection of information to be broadcast by each transmitter within each subject group. A single NAVTEX coordinator may have more than one transmitter under their control. Specific advice on the use of alternative B_2 subject indicator characters as mentioned in 6.2 above, can be provided by the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel.

7 Message format

7.1 NAVTEX messages must be composed in accordance with the guidelines contained in the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* and IHO Publication S-53. The format of all messages must be in strict accordance with figure 6. This defines the essential elements of the messages which influence the operation of the receiver. Great care is required to avoid errors of syntax in the groups ZCZC $B_1B_2B_3B_4$ and NNNN as they will cause receivers to operate incorrectly, and may well result in messages not being received.

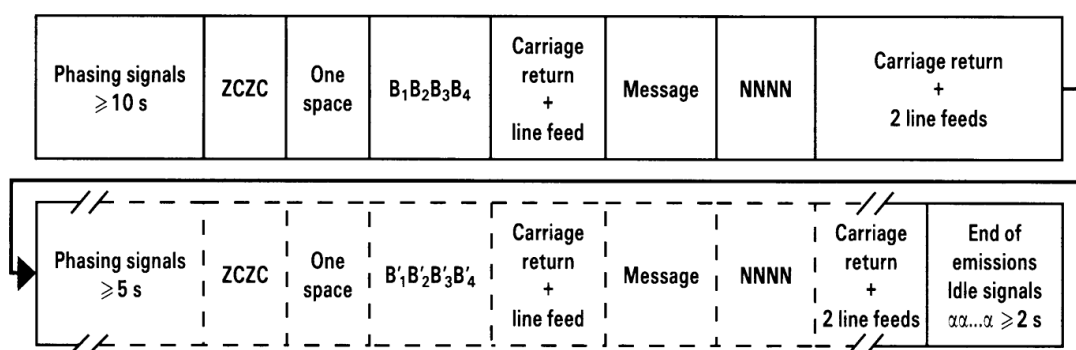


Figure 6 – Standard format for NAVTEX messages

7.2 The phasing signal is automatically transmitted by the NAVTEX transmitter at the beginning of each message and is critical to the effective operation of the system. It is this signal which enables a receiver to lock on to a particular station's transmission, providing the frequency is not already in use.

7.3 If another station within transmitting range and with a time slot prior to the station selected overruns its time slot (regardless of the B₁ transmitter identification character in use), its transmission will blank the phasing signal of the subsequent transmitter. It will then seem to the receiver as if the second station is off the air and its broadcast will not be received, possibly denying the user significant safety information. This is the primary reason behind the importance of each station adhering to its allocated time slots. Similarly, if the phasing signal for a particular station is too short, some receivers will be unable to lock on to the transmission.

7.4 Basic message elements

Table 3 – Basic message elements

Element	Example
Phasing signal	
Start of message group	ZCZC
One space	
NAVTEX message identity	FA01
Carriage return + line feed	
Message content	(Date Time Group – Optional e.g. 040735 UTC OCT 21) NAV I 114/21 ENGLISH CHANNEL. START POINT SOUTHWARD. CHART BA 442 (INT 1701). UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE LOCATED 49-51.97N 003-39.54W AND 49-55.24N 003-40.79W.
End of message instruction	NNNN
Carriage return + two line feeds	
Phasing signal	

7.5 When a message has been received error-free, a record is made by the receiver of the NAVTEX message identity. This unique identifier is used to suppress the printing or display of repeated transmissions of the same message.

7.6 On national NAVTEX services it is important to keep to the same basic message format as that required for the International NAVTEX service. It is also important to ensure that the full broadcast does not overrun the allocated time slot. However, in order to meet national requirements, message content may deviate from the guidelines provided for the International NAVTEX service if required.

7.7 Examples of navigational warning messages

Note: Further examples are available for consultation in the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* and IHO Publication S-53.

```
ZCZC LA18
140356 UTC AUG 22
NORWEGIAN NAV.WARNING 280
CHART 4
AREA OSLOFJORDEN
TORPENE LIGHTBUOY 59-46.1N 010-33.2E UNLIT.
NNNN
ZCZC LA26
250911 UTC JUN 22
DANISH NAVIGATIONAL WARNING NO. 154/21
KATTEGAT, AALBORG BIGHT
LIGHTHOUSE SVITRINGEN RENDE NO.13 56-54.4N 010-30.6E DESTROYED
AND MAKES AN OBSTRUCTION.
DEPTH ABOVE FOUNDATION 1 METRE. THE POS. IS MARKED AS FOLLOWS:
GREEN LIGHT BUOY Q.G. APPROX 50M SW
YELLOW BUOY APPROX. 50M N
YELLOW BUOY APPROX. 50M ESE
MARINERS ARE ADVISED TO KEEP WELL CLEAR
NNNN
ZCZC SA38
NAVTEX-HAMBURG (NCC)
131120 UTC SEP 22
NAV WARN NO. 428
TSS TERSCHELLING-GERMAN BIGHT
'TG 2/GW' LIGHTBUOY 53-52N 006-22E
OFF STATION AND DAMAGED.
NNNN

ZCZC KA79
AVURNAV CHERBOURG 098
DOVER STRAIT TSS
AIS AID TO NAVIGATION
MMSI NUMBER: 992271107
ESTABLISHED ON ZC2 BOUY
50-53.6N 001-30.9E (WGS 84)
NNNN
ZCZC MA99
301435 UTC AUG 22
WZ 972
ENGLAND, EAST COAST.
THAMES ESTUARY.
1. EXPOSED CABLE EXISTS ON SEABED IN VICINITY OF LINE JOINING:
51-28.7N 000-46.8E
51-29.2N 001-01.7E
51-28.5N 001-09.5E
51-28.8N 001-14.0E
51-28.3N 001-18.6E AND
51-28.7N 001-25.2E.
WIDE BERTH REQUESTED.
2. CANCEL WZ957
NNNN
ZCZC JA93
101200 UTC SEP
```

```

GERMAN NAV WARN 424
WESTERN BALTIC. FEHMARN. PUTTGARDEN.
UNDERWATER OPERATIONS BY 'DEEP DIVER 1/J8HC7', IN VICINITY OF:
54-32.8N 011-16.9E. GUARD VESSELS
STANDING BY VHF CHANNEL 16. 0.5 NM
BERTH REQUESTED.
NNNN
ZCZC TA93
151530 UTC JAN
OOSTENDERADIO - INFO 17/22
1. OSTEND HARBOUR - WORKING AREA EASTERN BREAKWATER. ALL
SHIPPING (EXCEPT GOVERNMENT VESSELS AND WORKBOATS INVOLVED IN
THIS PROJECT) FORBIDDEN IN THE WORKING AREA BOUNDED BY THE
FOLLOWING POS:
51-14.278N 002-55.719E
51-14.424N 002-55.696E
51-14.840N 002-55.370E
51-14.579N 002-55.058E
51-14.462N 002-55.186E
51-14.381N 002-55.293E
51-14.253N 002-55.360E
SHIPPING REQUESTED TO PASS WITH REDUCED SPEED
2. CANCEL INFO 121/21
NNNN
ZCZC MA97
291351 UTC AUG
NAVAREA I 238/22
ENGLAND EAST COAST.
THAMES ESTUARY APPROACHES.
CHART BA 1138(INT 1561).
WAVERIDER LIGHT-BUOY AND FOUR GUARD
LIGHT-BUOYS, ALL FL (5) Y.20S,
ESTABLISHED 51-42.5N 001-51.0E.
WIDE BERTH REQUESTED.
NNNN
ZCZC JA38
051444 UTC AUG
KALININGRAD NAV WARN 097
SOUTHEASTERN BALTIC, KUSHKAYA KOSA
LIGHT LESNOJ 55-01.0N 020-36.8E UNLIT
NNNN

```

7.8 Examples of meteorological messages

Note: Further examples are available for consultation in the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* and IHO Publication S-53.

```

OE44
ISSUED BY THE MET OFFICE AT 0620 ON FRIDAY 27 MARCH

GALE WARNINGS: ROCKALL MALIN HEBRIDES SE ICELAND

THE GENERAL SITUATION AT MIDNIGHT
LOW GERMAN BIGHT 1001 MOV SEAWARDS AND LOSING ITS
IDENTITY. NEW LOW EXP JUST W OF ROCKALL 989 BY MIDNIGHT
TONIGHT

24-HR FCSTS

LUNDY FASTNET
SE VEER SW 5 OR 6, INCR 7, PERHAPS GALE 8 LATER. MOD OR
ROUGH, BECMG ROUGH OR VERY ROUGH LATER. OCCASIONAL RAIN,
FOG PATCHES DEVELOPING. GOOD BECMG POOR OR VERY POOR

IRISH SEA
W 3 OR 4, BACK S 5 OR 6, INCR 7, PERHAPS GALE 8 LATER.

```


SLT OR MOD, BECMG MOD OR ROUGH LATER. RAIN LATER. GOOD,
OCNL POOR LATER

...

NNNN

FQCN36 CWNT 251030
NAVTEX FOR IQALUIT VFF AT 5:30 AM EST THU 25 DEC 2021.

VLD 25/11Z-27/05Z,
WND(KT), VIS(NM) ABV 1 UNL IND, FOG IMPL VIS LESS THAN 1.

SYNOPSIS:
25/12Z INTSF LOW 976 MB OVR SRN QUE. 27/00Z WKN LOW 965 MB OVR
UNGAVA
BAY.

RESOLUTION - E:
WNG: STORM / FREEZING SPRAY.
WND: E30. 25/18Z E35. 26/06Z E50. 26/21Z E30.
SPRAY: 25/11Z-26/11Z MOD-SEV OUT-EDGE.
VIS: 26/03Z-27/05Z 0-1 SN.

...

WAVES(M) VLD 25/10Z-27/05Z.

RESOLUTION - E:
2 OUT-EDGE. 26/06Z 4-6. 26/20Z 2

...

NNNN

FICN36 CWIS 310700
ICE NAVTEX FOR IQALUIT VFF AT 0700 UTC MON 31 AUG 2022.

CUMBERLAND.
WNG: SPECIAL.
1 OI XCPT 8 FYI INCL 3 OI IN THE WRN SECTION.
UNUSUAL PRESENCE OF SEA ICE.

...

NORTHWEST LABRADOR SEA.
WNG: NIL.
BW.

NNNN

FZHW61 PHFO 310955
OFFN10

NAVTEX MARINE FORECAST FOR HAWAIIAN WATERS
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE HONOLULU HI
1200 AM HST MON AUG 31 2022

...PLEASE REFER TO COASTAL WATERS FORECASTS AVAILABLE THROUGH
NOAA WEATHER RADIO AND OTHER MEANS FOR DETAILED COASTAL
FORECASTS...

.SYNOPSIS...THE CENTER OF HURRICANE IGNACIO WAS ABOUT 320 NM
EAST OF HILO HAWAII AT 8 PM HST SUNDAY EVENING...MOVING
NORTHWEST AT 8 KT.
IGNACIO IS FORECAST TO MOVE THROUGH THE NORTHERN OFFSHORE
WATERS
THROUGH WEDNESDAY. IGNACIO FORECAST POSITIONS 8 AM HST TODAY
21.4N 151.1W 8 PM HST TONIGHT 22.5N 152.4W 8 AM HST TUESDAY
23.5N 153.8W 8PM HST TUESDAY 24.5N 155.3W 8 PM HST WEDNESDAY

26.7N 158.7W 8 PM HST THURSDAY 29.0N 162.0W 8 PM HST FRIDAY
33.0N 163.5W
\$\$
...
HAWAIIAN OFFSHORE WATERS
...HURRICANE WARNING...
...REST OF TONIGHT...WINDS 34 KT OR GREATER WITHIN 130 NM OF
CENTER.
SEAS 12 FT OR GREATER WITHIN 270 NM OF CENTER. ELSEWHERE WITHIN
200 NM OF CENTER...WINDS 20 TO 33 KT SEAS 10 TO 15 FT OR MORE.
OTHERWISE... MAINLY NE TO E WINDS 10 TO 20 KT SEAS 8 TO 10 FT.
ISOLATED THUNDERSTORMS NORTHERN WATERS.
...
NNNN

WWST03 SABM 152100
WEATHER BULLETIN FOR NAVTEX STATIONS - METAREA 6 -
JUNE 15, 21:00UTC
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
DATE AND TIME UNIVERSAL TIME COORDINATED - UTC PRESSURE HPA
BEAUFORT SCALE WINDS
STORM WARNING:
WARNING 137: LOW 962HPA AT 54S 72W MOV NE DEEPENING EXPECTED
52S 52W BY 17/0000 PROVOKES WINDS FORCE 10 AROUND ITSELF WITH
GUST FROM 16/0000
...
NNNN

FQSN40 ESWI 311630

ISSUED 170131
ICE ACCRETION WARNING:
SEVERE ICING IN GULF OF FINLAND.
SEVERE ICING IN NORTHERN BALTIC, SEA OF ÅLAND, SEA OF
ARCHIPELAGO AND GULF OF BOTHNIA.
NNNN

IB54

JP73 RJTD 270600
IMPORTANT WARNING FOR YOKOHAMA NAVTEX AREA
270600UTC ISSUED AT 270900UTC
PRESSURE GRADIENT IS STEEP
WARNING (NEAR GALE) WESTERN SEA OFF SANRIKU, NORTHERN SEA OFF
KANTO
WARNING (DENSE FOG) EASTERN SEA OFF SANRIKU, WESTERN SEA OFF
SANRIKU
POOR VISIBILITY 0.3 MILES OR LESS IN PLACES
NEXT WARNING WILL BE ISSUED BEFORE 271500UTC
NNNN

8 Language and national broadcast options

8.1 International NAVTEX service messages on 518 kHz shall be broadcast only in English in accordance with resolutions A.706(17), as amended, and A.1051(27), as amended.

8.2 There is often a requirement for NAVTEX broadcasts to be made in national languages in addition to English. This shall only be achieved by the provision of a national NAVTEX service. National NAVTEX services use frequencies other than 518 kHz, and languages as decided by the Administrations concerned. These national NAVTEX services may be broadcast on 490 kHz or 4 209.5 kHz, or on an alternative nationally assigned frequency.

9 Information control

9.1 The time-shared nature of NAVTEX services imposes the need for strict discipline in controlling the information flow of the broadcast. To achieve this, it is necessary to coordinate the messages in each B₂ category at each transmitter. In general, all messages shall be brief and clear and avoid duplication. Strict adherence to relevant guidelines in resolutions A.706(17), as amended, A.1051(27), as amended, and the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* (MSC.1/Circ.1310, as revised) is recommended.

9.2 In addition, certain operating procedures have also been found necessary:

- .1 messages in each category should be broadcast in reverse order of receipt by the NAVTEX coordinator, with the latest being broadcast first; and
- .2 cancellation messages should be broadcast once only. The cancelled message should not be transmitted on the broadcast in which its cancellation message appears. Generally, the cancellation message will form the final part of the message content.

10 Message content

10.1 It is important that national Administrations operating or planning NAVTEX services are clear about what sort of information should be included in the messages.

10.2 The International NAVTEX service should be used for transmitting maritime safety information only and should not be used as a medium for providing notices to mariners or for broadcasting local warnings. NAVTEX is essentially a medium for broadcasting information that is needed by ships to safely navigate through the NAVTEX service area of the appropriate NAVTEX station, particularly those ships on coastal passages. More detailed guidance in respect to different classes of messages is given below. Examples of the content and layout of NAVTEX messages are shown in the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* and IHO Publication S-53. This publication should be available to all personnel responsible for the drafting of messages to be broadcast by NAVTEX stations.

10.2.1 Navigational warnings

- .1 coastal warnings and NAVAREA warnings (B₂ = A or L) issued under the guidance of resolution A.706(17), as amended, which would be of concern to ships in the NAVTEX service area allocated to the transmitter should be included in the broadcast. Relevant coastal warnings should normally be repeated at every scheduled transmission for as long as they remain in force; if they are to be in force for more than six weeks the information should be

promulgated by other official means, for example in notices to mariners. When readily available to mariners by other means, the warning should not be broadcast by NAVTEX. NAVTEX coordinators should arrange to receive NAVAREA warnings appropriate to their area for inclusion in their broadcasts. These should be broadcast at least twice each day – to avoid overloading the broadcast time slot, they should normally be scheduled for transmission during slots that do not include weather forecasts (see section 12.4);

- .2 in-force bulletins (a summary of navigational warnings in force) should normally be broadcast not less than once per week at a regular scheduled time; and
- .3 local warnings should not be broadcast on international NAVTEX, i.e. information relating to inshore waters, often within the limits of jurisdiction of a harbour or port authority.

10.2.2 Meteorological warnings and forecasts

- .1 meteorological warnings ($B_2 = B$), e.g. gale warnings, should be allocated a priority of IMPORTANT (see section 11) and be repeated at subsequent scheduled transmissions for as long as the warning is in force. These messages should contain only the appropriate warnings and should be separate from the weather forecasts;
- .2 weather forecasts ($B_2 = E$) should be broadcast at least twice each day. This service should be carefully coordinated where transmitters are geographically close together;
- .3 routine ice reports are normally broadcast on NAVTEX once a day; and
- .4 ice accretion warnings (icing warnings) are normally included in gale warnings. If no gale warning is issued, they are to be treated as a meteorological warning (see paragraph 10.2.2.1).

10.2.3 Search and rescue information

- .1 the NAVTEX broadcast is not suitable for distress traffic. Therefore, only the initial distress message should be retransmitted on NAVTEX, using $B_2 = D$, in order to alert mariners to a distress situation, by setting off an audio alarm;
- .2 a single authority, which will normally be a rescue coordination centre (RCC), should be designated SAR coordinator to input information via the NAVTEX coordinator, for a NAVTEX message. The initial shore-to-ship distress-related message should have previously been broadcast on the appropriate distress frequency prior to any related NAVTEX message being broadcast; and
- .3 examples of search and rescue messages.

```
ZCZC OD37
MAYDAY ALERT
53-33N 001-29E
FV DIAMOND
VESSEL ON FIRE CREW ABANDONING
3 POB
HUMBER COASTGUARD COORDINATING
NNNN

ZCZC GD23
OVERDUE WINDSURFER MISSING FROM HUNSTANTON.
WHITE BOARD WITH RED SAIL.
VESSELS ON THE APPROACHES TO THE HUMBER, THE LINCOLNSHIRE
COAST, THE WASH AND THE NORTH NORFOLK COAST TO KEEP A SHARP
LOOK OUT
HUMBER COASTGUARD COORDINATING VHF CH 16
NNNN
```

10.2.4 Piracy warnings

Piracy warnings should be transmitted using $B_2 = D$, in order to alert mariners by setting off an audio alarm. They should be broadcast immediately on receipt and at subsequent scheduled transmissions.

10.2.5 Tsunamis and other natural phenomena warnings

Tsunami, negative tidal surge warnings should be transmitted using $B_2 = D$, in order to alert mariners by setting off an audio alarm. They should be broadcast immediately on receipt and at subsequent scheduled transmissions.

10.2.6 Pilot and VTS service messages

Technical subject indicator character, $B_2 = F$, is only to be used for broadcasting temporary alterations, movement or suspension to pilot or VTS services. This category is for the information of all ships and is not to be used for specific instructions to individual ships or pilots.

10.2.7 No messages on hand

When there are no NAVTEX messages to be disseminated at a scheduled broadcast time, a brief message should be transmitted to advise the mariner that there is no message traffic on hand. Technical subject indicator character, $B_2 = Z$, is to be used to announce "NO MESSAGES ON HAND".

10.2.8 Use of abbreviations

Common examples of abbreviations used in the International NAVTEX service are contained in the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* and IHO Publication S-53.

10.2.9 National NAVTEX services

Transmissions on 490 kHz or 4 209.5 kHz may simply repeat the messages broadcast over the International NAVTEX service but in a national language, or they may be tailored to meet particular national requirements, for example by providing different or additional information to that broadcast on the International NAVTEX service, targeted at recreational vessels or fishing fleets.

11 Message priorities and broadcast procedures in the International NAVTEX service

11.1 Message priorities

11.1.1 The national coordinator or designated authority is responsible for assessing the urgency of the information and inserting the appropriate priority marking. One of three message priorities is used to dictate the timing of the first broadcast of a new warning in the NAVTEX service. In descending order of urgency, they are:

VITAL

for immediate broadcast, subject to avoiding interference to ongoing transmissions. Such messages should also be passed to the appropriate NAVAREA coordinator for possible transmission as a NAVAREA warning via the international enhanced group call service;

IMPORTANT

for broadcast at the next available period when the frequency is unused; and

ROUTINE

for broadcast at the next scheduled transmission.

11.1.2 Both VITAL and IMPORTANT messages should be repeated at each scheduled transmission time slot, if the situation is still valid.

11.1.3 The message priority is a procedural instruction for the NAVTEX coordinator or the transmitting station and should not be included in the message. By selecting the appropriate priority of VITAL, IMPORTANT or ROUTINE at the transmission terminal, the message will be broadcast with the correct priority.

11.1.4 In order to avoid unnecessary disruption to the service, the priority marking VITAL is to be used only in cases of extreme urgency, i.e. to relay an initial shore-to-ship distress related message or acts of piracy warnings, tsunamis and other natural phenomena warnings. In addition, VITAL messages are to be kept as brief as possible and in accordance with the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information*. The information provider is responsible for ensuring that the NAVTEX coordinator is fully and immediately aware when a message should be broadcast with the priority of VITAL.

11.1.5 VITAL messages will normally be broadcast using NAVTEX number B₃B₄ = 00.

11.2 Broadcast procedures

.1 VITAL priority messages

Messages assessed as VITAL are to be broadcast immediately, subject to avoiding interference to ongoing transmissions. On receipt of a message with a VITAL priority, the NAVTEX coordinator will commence monitoring the NAVTEX frequency. If the frequency is clear, the VITAL message is to be transmitted immediately. If the frequency is in use, the NAVTEX coordinator should contact the station which, according to the schedule, will be transmitting during the following time slot and ask it to postpone their transmission start by one minute, to allow a space for the VITAL message. Once the VITAL message has been transmitted, the scheduled station is free to start its routine transmissions;

.2 **IMPORTANT** priority messages

Messages assessed as **IMPORTANT** are to be broadcast during the next available period when the NAVTEX frequency is unused. This is to be identified by monitoring the frequency. It is expected that this level of priority will be sufficient for the majority of urgent information; and

.3 **ROUTINE** priority messages

Messages assessed as **ROUTINE**, are to be broadcast at the next scheduled transmission time. This level of priority will be appropriate for almost all messages broadcast on NAVTEX and is always to be used unless special circumstances dictate the use of the procedures for an **IMPORTANT** or **VITAL** priority message.

11.3 Meteorological NAVTEX messages

The following priorities are to be assigned to meteorological NAVTEX messages:

- .1 Tsunami warnings = **VITAL**
- .2 Meteorological warnings = **IMPORTANT**
- .3 Meteorological forecasts = **ROUTINE**
- .4 For other natural phenomena warnings, either **VITAL** or **IMPORTANT** may be used.

11.4 National NAVTEX services

The broadcast procedures concerning differing message priorities are the same for both the International and national NAVTEX services.

12 Responsibilities of a NAVTEX coordinator

12.1 The NAVTEX coordinator is responsible for the messages transmitted by each station under their control. This responsibility includes checking that the content of each message is in accordance with the *Joint IMO/IHO/WMO Manual on Maritime Safety Information* and also, that it is relevant to the NAVTEX service area of the transmitting station. Thus, a user may choose to accept messages, as appropriate, either from the single transmitter which serves the sea area around their position or from a number of transmitters. Ideally, the user should select the station within whose coverage area their vessel is currently operating and the station into whose coverage area their vessel will transit next.

12.2 The NAVTEX coordinator must:

- .1 act as the central point of contact on matters relating to NAVTEX transmissions for a given transmitter or number of transmitters;
- .2 be responsible for continuously ensuring quality control for the operation of the NAVTEX transmitting stations under its jurisdiction. This should be achieved with the cooperation of the information providers to ensure that:

- .1 messages are always concise and can be transmitted within the designated 10-minute time slots assigned by the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel;
- .2 **minimum** power is used to achieve satisfactory range performance; and
- .3 the coordinated service is operating satisfactorily;
- .3 assess all requests for NAVTEX messages immediately upon receipt;
- .4 schedule each message for broadcast in accordance with the priority of VITAL, IMPORTANT or ROUTINE;
- .5 monitor the International NAVTEX frequency along with any other national frequency used by the transmitters under their jurisdiction in order to ensure that the messages have been correctly broadcast;
- .6 monitor the International NAVTEX frequency along with any other national frequency used in order to identify vacant transmission periods required for VITAL or IMPORTANT messages;
- .7 pass all information which warrants promulgation outside of their NAVTEX service area directly to the appropriate authority, using the quickest possible means;
- .8 allocate a message identity to each message, including the sequential NAVTEX number;
- .9 ensure that NAVTEX messages which have been cancelled are removed from the broadcast schedule at the same time as the cancellation message is promulgated;
- .10 broadcast in-force bulletins not less than once per week at a regular scheduled time;
- .11 promote and oversee the use of established international standards and practices with respect to the format and protocols associated with NAVTEX messages;
- .12 maintain records of source data relating to NAVTEX messages in accordance with the requirement of the national Administration;
- .13 be aware of the responsibilities of a NAVAREA, sub-area and national coordinator contained in resolution A.706(17), as amended, paying particular attention to the specific guidance for the promulgation of internationally coordinated maritime safety information provided therein;
- .14 be aware of the responsibilities of a METAREA Coordinator contained in resolution A.1051(27), as amended, paying particular attention to the specific guidance for the promulgation of internationally coordinated maritime safety information provided therein; and
- .15 take into account the need for contingency planning.

12.3 Management of the service

Data priority:

Most information broadcast on NAVTEX services relates to either navigational warnings or meteorological information. These types of information often originate from different organizations within a country and it is not until they arrive with the NAVTEX coordinator that an assessment can be made as to whether there is too much information for the relevant broadcast time slot. Each data provider may consider their data to be more important and therefore, require transmission in full. However, the NAVTEX coordinator needs to control the overall volume of data broadcast and may need to refer back to data providers to prioritize their information and reduce the amount of data to be broadcast. Some NAVTEX coordinators utilize digital systems which include software that provides a read-out of predicted transmission times for data held ready for broadcast. This enables the NAVTEX coordinator to anticipate any problems and take action before the scheduled broadcast.

Data to meet purely national requirements should not be broadcast on the International NAVTEX service, but should be migrated to a national NAVTEX service (see section 14).

12.4 Balancing the volume of data to be broadcast throughout the daily transmission cycle

12.4.1 For many categories of messages there is no option with regard to when they should be transmitted. However, in order to minimize the risk of over-running the allocated 10-minute time slot, it is possible to balance the overall length of transmissions by broadcasting NAVAREA warnings at different times from weather forecasts and the in-force bulletin. An example of how this may be managed is given below for a station with a B₁ transmitter identification character C:

Time slot	Content
0020–0030	coastal warnings NAVAREA warnings
0420–0430	coastal warnings in-force bulletin
0820–0830	coastal warnings weather forecasts
1220–1230	coastal warnings NAVAREA warnings

Time slot	Content
1620–1630	coastal warnings ice reports
2020–2030	coastal warnings weather forecasts

13 Best practice for those using the service

13.1 In order to ensure that all necessary maritime safety information has been received, it is recommended that the NAVTEX receiver be switched on at least 12 hours before sailing, or preferably left on at all times.

13.2 Logging

13.2.1 The reception of navigational warnings or meteorological information on NAVTEX does not need to be noted in the radio log; the NAVTEX printout (or the non-volatile message memory) satisfies the requirements of SOLAS regulation IV/17.

14 Mutual interference between NAVTEX stations

14.1 The two principal causes of interference are:

- .1 transmission overruns; and
- .2 excessive power output.

14.2 Although NAVTEX continues to be generally reliable and an effective medium for the promulgation of maritime safety information, the worldwide infrastructure continues to expand and the volume of information that each Administration disseminates through the International NAVTEX service continues to increase. There is a danger that in some geographical areas, without firm management, both the system and system users may become overloaded with information on the single frequency used. This is of particular importance when handling messages of VITAL priority.

14.3 Many stations are filling their allotted 10-minute time slots and an increasing number are over-running. Instances of interference with neighbouring stations, as a result of overrunning the time allocation, are also increasing. Where adjacent stations have transmitter identification characters which follow alphabetically (i.e. adjacent time slots), if the first station overruns, it may mask the phasing signal of the second station such that, to the user, it seems as if the second station is off the air. Maritime safety information from the second station, although broadcast, may not be received by the system users. Overrun is usually caused by one or more of the following which must be avoided preferably by controlling the volume of data broadcast:

- .1 a significant increase in safety-critical activity such as cable laying. Navigational warnings promulgating such activity often include numerous waypoints which are listed by latitude and longitude;

- .2 meteorological information provided in a manner which is not concise and easily assimilated by the system user or for a much wider area than is covered by the NAVTEX station; and
- .3 additional information provided for non-SOLAS system users, e.g. longer range weather forecasts for fishing and recreational vessels.

See also paragraph 7.3.

14.4 As the GMDSS spreads to non-SOLAS mariners, their requirements for information are often different from the SOLAS ships and may be determined at a national level. SOLAS ships trading internationally usually pass through the area of coverage of a NAVTEX transmitter in a day; for them a 24-hour weather forecast usually suffices. However, fishing vessels and recreational vessels often remain in the same vicinity for several days and may require much longer range forecasts which take up more transmission time.

14.5 In order to keep the quantity of information that is broadcast on 518 kHz to manageable levels and to reduce avoidable interference on this frequency, Administrations must:

- .1 monitor the volume of data broadcast and, together with adjacent Administrations, actively manage the system to ensure that interference caused by overrunning allocated time slots is eliminated; and
- .2 transmit non-English language broadcasts for SOLAS ships and broadcasts of information provided specifically for non-SOLAS ships on 490 kHz or 4 209.5 kHz as required. B₁ characters for these frequencies will be allocated by the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel, on request.

14.6 Excessive power output also causes interference between stations with the same B₁ transmitter identification character/time slot, but located in different regions. This has particularly been identified at night, as the number of operational NAVTEX stations increases. Occasionally, this can be caused by atmospheric conditions, but is generally caused by excessive power output from one of the stations. It is recommended that Administrations restrict the power output from their transmitters to that required to cover the designated NAVTEX service area, particularly at night, in order to avoid interference. Experience indicates that the required range of 250 to 400 nautical miles will normally be attained by transmitted power of no more than 1 kW during daylight **with a minimum of 60% reduction during night conditions.**

14.7 When interference is detected, particularly when it affects the service to system users, the matter should be addressed immediately. When the interference is with adjacent stations, attempts should be made to resolve the problem locally. Advice may also be sought from the NAVAREA coordinator. In addition, the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel should be alerted to the problem. When the interference is from a station with the same B₁ character in a different area, the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel should be contacted and they will initiate any necessary investigation/action.

15 Notification of NAVTEX services

15.1 National Administrations should ensure that mariners are informed of the establishment of, and/or changes to, NAVTEX services by inclusion of full details in notices to mariners and lists of radio signals. In addition, full details should be forwarded to the appropriate NAVAREA coordinator, METAREA coordinator and:

<p>International Maritime Organization 4 Albert Embankment London SE1 7SR United Kingdom Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Telefax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210 Email: ncsr@imo.org and navtex.panel@UKHO.gov.uk (in subject line add: for Chair, IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel)</p>	<p>International Telecommunication Union Radiocommunication Bureau Place des Nations 1211 Genève 20 Switzerland Telephone: +41 22 7305560 Telefax: +41 22 7305785 Email: brmail@itu.int</p>
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APPENDIX 1

IMO NAVTEX COORDINATING PANEL

Terms of reference

1 Terms of reference

- .1 advise Administrations planning to implement a NAVTEX service on the frequencies 518 kHz, 490 kHz or 4 209.5 kHz, on the operational aspects of the system. In particular, advise on the optimum number of stations, the allocation of transmission identifying characters (B₁) and broadcast message criteria;
- .2 coordinate with Administrations over the operational aspects of NAVTEX in the planning stages in order to prevent mutual interference owing to the number of stations, transmitter power, or transmission identifying character assignment;
- .3 remain aware of system problems which arise, through reports from sea and correspondence with operational NAVTEX coordinators;
- .4 when problems are identified, liaise with appropriate Administrations involved, NAVAREA coordinators, METAREA coordinators, the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), and IHO or WMO, as appropriate, to recommend solutions or mitigating measures and, when agreed, coordinate their implementation; and
- .5 prepare documentation supporting the system for the NCSR Sub-Committee including those that are needed by Administrations to guide their operations, and those needed to inform the user of the service (mariner, shipowner and operator).

2 Contact addresses

The NAVTEX Coordinating Panel can be contacted at the following addresses:

The Chair
IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611
Telefax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210
Email: ncsr@imo.org; and navtex.panel@UKHO.gov.uk
(in subject line add: for Chair, IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel)

3 Panel membership and participation

3.1 The IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel is open to membership by all Member States and also includes one member nominated by each of the following international organizations:

- .1 International Maritime Organization (IMO);
- .2 World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
- .3 International Hydrographic Organization (IHO); and
- .4 International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO).

3.2 The following may be represented as observers on the Panel:

- .1 IHO World-Wide Navigational Warning Service Sub-Committee;
- .2 IMO Enhanced Group Call Coordinating Panel; and
- .3 WMO Services Commission (SERCOM).

3.3 The work of the Panel is conducted mainly by correspondence. Meetings, when appropriate, are announced in advance and normally scheduled to be held in the margins of other IMO or IHO meetings.

APPENDIX 2

PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING THE NAVTEX MANUAL

1 Proposals for amendment or enhancement of the NAVTEX Manual should be submitted to the Maritime Safety Committee through the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR).

2 Amendments to this Manual should normally be approved at intervals of approximately two years or at such longer periods as may be determined by the Maritime Safety Committee. Amendments approved by the Maritime Safety Committee will be notified to all concerned and will be implemented on 1 January of the following year, or at another date as decided by the Committee.

3 The agreement of the International Hydrographic Organization and World Meteorological Organization, and the active participation of other bodies, should be sought according to the nature of the proposed amendments.
