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MSC.1/Circ.1260/Rev.1
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UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF COLREG 1972, AS AMENDED

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-fourth session (7 to 16 May 2008), with a view to providing more specific guidance for certain rules, which are open to different interpretations contained in IMO instruments, approved the unified interpretations of COLREG 1972, as amended, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation.

2 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-third session (14 to 23 May 2014), reviewed and approved a revised unified interpretation of annex I, section 9(b) – Horizontal sectors of COLREG 1972, as amended, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation at its fifty-ninth session (2 to 6 September 2013), as set out in the annex.

3 Member Governments are invited to use the annexed unified interpretations with respect to Rule 27(b)(i) and annex I, section 3(b) as guidance when applying relevant provisions of COLREGs to vessels constructed on or after 1 January 2009, whilst the revised unified interpretation with respect to annex I, section 9(b) be used as guidance to vessels constructed on or after 1 July 2015 and to bring the unified interpretations to the attention of all parties concerned.

4 This circular revokes MSC.1/Circ.1260 and MSC.1/Circ.1260/Corr.1.

ANNEX

UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF COLREG 1972, AS AMENDED

Rule 27(b)(i) – Vessels not under command or restricted in their ability to manoeuvre

"Not under command" (NUC) all-round red lights (Rule 27(a)(i)) may be used as part of the "Restricted Ability to Manoeuvre" (RAM) lights provided the vertical and horizontal distances required by COLREG 1972 are complied with and the electrical system is arranged so that the all-round white light (RAM) may be switched on independently from the two all-round red lights (NUC).

Annex I, section 3(b) – Horizontal positioning and spacing of lights

The term "near the side" is interpreted as being a distance of not more than 10 per cent of the breadth of the vessel inboard from the side, up to a maximum of 1 metre. Where the application of above requirement is impractical (e.g. small ships with superstructure of reduced width), exemption may be given on the basis of the flag State Administration's acceptance.

Annex I, section 9(b) – Horizontal sectors

1 In order to comply with the one (1) mile requirement in 9(b)(ii), the screening of each all-round light shall be as follows:

$$\theta_2 \leq 360 - \theta_1$$

where

θ_1 : Screened angle of one all-round light

θ_2 : Screened angle of the other all-round light

2 Screenings details and the arrangement of obstacles are to be considered when carrying out the drawing approval process.