

# **Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary**

**Notice to Owners, Masters, Officers and Seamen of Merchant Ships, Yachts and other Sea-going Vessels. Owners, Skippers and Crews of Fishing Vessels. Pilots. Operators of Vessel Traffic Systems. Nautical Colleges.**

**Coast Radio Stations.**

*This notice Supersedes Merchant Shipping Notice No.M.1018.*

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1. The Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary developed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has recently been extensively revised and the definitive version is annexed to this Notice. This will come into use on 1 January 1987.
2. The main part of the Vocabulary has been divided into four parts, Part I contains General Instructions, Part II is a Glossary of Terms, Part III deals with communications external to the ship and Part IV with on-board communications covering pilot related matters.
3. All those to whom the Notice is addressed are recommended to use the Vocabulary to minimise the possibility of misunderstanding vital information. In this context attention is drawn to the use of Message Markers as set out in Part I of this document.

### **Note**

For ease of reference Parts I and II of the Vocabulary are printed on white paper, Part III on pink paper and Part IV on blue.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
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JANUARY, 1987

# **Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary**

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# INTRODUCTION

This vocabulary has been compiled:

- to assist in the greater safety of navigation and of the conduct of ships.
- to standardize the language used in communication for navigation at sea, in port-approaches, in waterways and harbours.

These phrases are not intended to supplant or contradict the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea or special local rules or recommendations made by IMO concerning ships' routing. Neither are they intended to supersede the International Code of Signals nor to supplant normal radiotelephone practice as set out in the ITU Regulations.

It is not intended that use of the vocabulary shall be mandatory, but rather that through constant repetition in ships and in training establishments ashore, the phrases and terms used will become those normally accepted and commonplace among seamen. Use of the contents of the vocabulary should be made as often as possible in preference to other wording of similar meaning.

In this way it is intended to become an acceptable "language", using the English tongue, for the interchange of intelligence between individuals of all maritime nations on the many and varied occasions when precise meanings and translations are in doubt, increasingly evident under modern conditions at sea.

The typographical conventions used throughout most of this vocabulary are as follows:

() brackets indicate that the part of the message enclosed within the brackets may be added where it is relevant.

/ oblique stroke indicates that the items on either side of the stroke are alternatives.

. . . dots indicate that the relevant information is to be filled in where the dots occur.

# STANDARD MARINE NAVIGATIONAL VOCABULARY

WHEN SPELLING IS NECESSARY, ONLY THE LETTER SPELLING TABLE CONTAINED IN THE INTERNATIONAL CODE OF SIGNALS, CHAPTER X, AND IN THE RADIO REGULATIONS SHOULD BE USED.

## PART 1

### GENERAL

#### 1 Procedure/message markers

When it is necessary to indicate that phrases in this vocabulary are to be used, the following messages may be sent:

“Please use the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary.”

“I will use the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary.”

If necessary, external communication messages may be preceded by the following message markers:

QUESTION	indicates that the following message is of interrogative character
ANSWER	indicates that the following message is the reply to a previous question
REQUEST	indicates that the contents of the following message are asking for action from others with respect to the ship
INFORMATION	indicates that the following message is restricted to observed facts
INTENTION	indicates that the following message informs others about immediate navigational actions intended to be taken
WARNING	indicates that the following message informs other traffic participants about dangers
ADVICE	indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to influence the recipient(s) by a recommendation
INSTRUCTION	indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to influence the recipient(s) by a regulation.



## 2 Standard verbs

Where possible, sentences should be introduced by one of the following verb forms:

### IMPERATIVE

Always to be used when mandatory orders are being given

You must

Do not

Must I?

### INDICATIVE

### NEGATIVE

### INTERROGATIVE

I require

I do not require

Do I require?

I am

I am not

Am I?

You are

You are not

Are you?

I have

I do not have

Do you have?

I can

I cannot

Can I? — *is it possible?*  
Can you? *possible?*

I wish to

I do not wish to

Do you wish to?

I will — *future*

I will not — *future*

You may

You need not

May I? — *permission*

Advise

Advise not

There is

There is not

Is there?  
What is/are?  
Where is/are?  
When is/are?

Note: See section 1 — Message markers.

## 3 Responses

Where the answer to a question is in the affirmative, say:

“yes . . .” — followed by the appropriate phrase in full.

Where the answer to a question is in the negative, say:

“no . . .” — followed by the appropriate phrase in full.

Where the information is not immediately available but soon will be, say:

“Stand by”.

Where the information cannot be obtained, say:

“No information”.

Where a message is not properly heard, say:

“Say again”.

Where a message is not understood, say:

“Message not understood”.

#### **4 Distress/urgency/safety messages**

MAYDAY (repeated three times)	is to be used to announce a distress message
PAN PAN (repeated three times)	is to be used to announce an urgency message
SECURITE (repeated three times)	is to be used to announce a safety message

#### **5 Miscellaneous phrases**

- 5.1 What is your name (and call sign)?
- 5.2 How do you read me?
- 5.3 I read you . . . with signal strength . . .
  - (bad/1) (1/barely perceptible)
  - (poor/2) (2/weak)
  - (fair/3) (3/fairly good)
  - (good/4) (4/good)
  - (excellent/5). (5/very good).
- 5.4 Stand by on channel . . .
- 5.5 Change to channel . . .
- 5.6 I cannot read you.  
(Pass your message through vessel . . .).  
(Advise try channel . . .).
- 5.7 I cannot understand you.  
Please use the . . .  
(Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary).  
(International Code of Signals).
- 5.8 I am passing a message for vessel . . .
- 5.9 Correction . . .

- 5.10 I am ready to receive your message.
- 5.11 I am not ready to receive your message.
- 5.12 I do not have channel . . . Please use channel . . .

## 6 Repetition

If any parts of the message are considered sufficiently important to need safeguarding, use the word “repeat”.

*Examples:* “You will load 163 repeat 163 tons bunkers.”  
“Do not repeat not overtake.”

## 7 Position

When latitude and longitude are used, these shall be expressed in degrees and minutes (and decimals of a minute if necessary), north or south of the Equator and east or west of Greenwich.

When the position is related to a mark, the mark shall be a well-defined charted object. The bearing shall be in the 360 degree notation from true north and shall be that of the position FROM the mark.

*Examples:* “There are salvage operations in position 15 degrees 34 minutes north 61 degrees 29 minutes west.”

“Your position is 137 degrees from Barr Head lighthouse distance two decimal four miles.”

## 8 Courses

Always to be expressed in 360 degree notation from north (true north unless otherwise stated). Whether this is to TO or FROM a mark can be stated.

## 9 Bearings

The bearing of the mark or vessel concerned, is the bearing in the 360 degree notation from north (true north unless otherwise stated), except in the case of relative bearings. Bearings may be either FROM the mark or FROM the vessel.

*Examples:* “The pilot boat is bearing 215° from you.”

“Your bearing is 127° from the signal station.”

*Note:* Vessels reporting their position should always quote their bearing FROM the mark, as described in paragraph 7.

## **Relative bearings**

Relative bearings can be expressed in degrees relative to the vessel's head or bow. More frequently this is in relation to the port or starboard bow.

*Example:* "The buoy is 030° on your port bow."

Relative D/F bearings are more commonly expressed in the 360 degree notation.

## **10 Distances**

Preferably to be expressed in nautical miles or cables (tenths of a mile) otherwise in kilometres or metres, the unit always to be stated.

## **11 Speed**

To be expressed in knots:

- (a) without further notation meaning speed through the water; or
- (b) "ground speed" meaning speed over the ground.

## **12 Numbers**

Numbers are to be spoken: "One-five-zero" for 150. "Two point five" for 2.5.

## **13 Geographical names**

Place names used should be those on the chart or Sailing Directions in use. Should these not be understood, latitude and longitude should be given.

## **14 Time**

Times should be expressed in the 24 hour notation indicating whether UTC, zone time or local shore time is being used.

*Note:* In cases not covered by the above phraseology normal radiotelephone practice will prevail.

## PART II

### GLOSSARY

#### 1 General

Air draught	Height of highest point of vessel's structure above waterline, e.g. radar, funnel, cranes, masthead.
Anchor position	Place where a specific vessel is anchored or is to anchor.
Calling-in-point (C.I.P.)	(see way point).
"Correction"	An error has been made in this transmission, the corrected version is . . .
Dragging (of anchor)	An anchor moving over the sea bottom involuntarily because it is no longer preventing the movement of the vessel.
Dredging anchor	Vessel moving, under control, with anchor moving along the sea bottom.
Draught	Depth from waterline to vessel's bottom, maximum/deepest unless otherwise specified.
Established	Brought into service, placed in position.
ETA	Estimated time of arrival.
ETD	Estimated time of departure.
Fairway	Navigable part of waterway.
Fairway speed	Mandatory speed in a fairway.
Foul (anchor)	Anchor has its own cable twisted around it or has fouled an obstruction.
Foul (propeller)	A line, wire, net, etc. is wound round the propeller.
Hampered vessel	A vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre by the nature of her work.

Icing	Formation of ice on vessels.
Inoperative	Not functioning.
Mark	General term for a navigational mark, e.g. buoy, structure or topographical feature which may be used to fix a vessel's position.
Offshore installation	Any offshore structure (e.g. a drilling rig, production platform, etc.) which may present a hazard to navigation.
Receiving point	A mark or place at which a vessel comes under obligatory entry, transit, or escort procedure (such as for port entry, canal transit or ice-breaker escort).
Reporting point	(see way point).
Vessel crossing	A vessel proceeding across a fairway/traffic lane/route.
Vessel inward	A vessel which is proceeding from sea to harbour or dock.
Vessel leaving	A vessel which is in the process of leaving a berth or anchorage. (When she has entered the navigable fairway she will be referred to as an outward, inward, crossing or turning vessel.)
Vessel outward	A vessel which is proceeding from harbour or anchorage to seawards.
Vessel turning	A vessel making LARGE alteration in course, such as to stem the tide when anchoring, or to enter, or proceed, after leaving a berth, or dock.
Way point	A mark or place at which a vessel is required to report to establish its position. (Also known as reporting point or calling-in-point.)

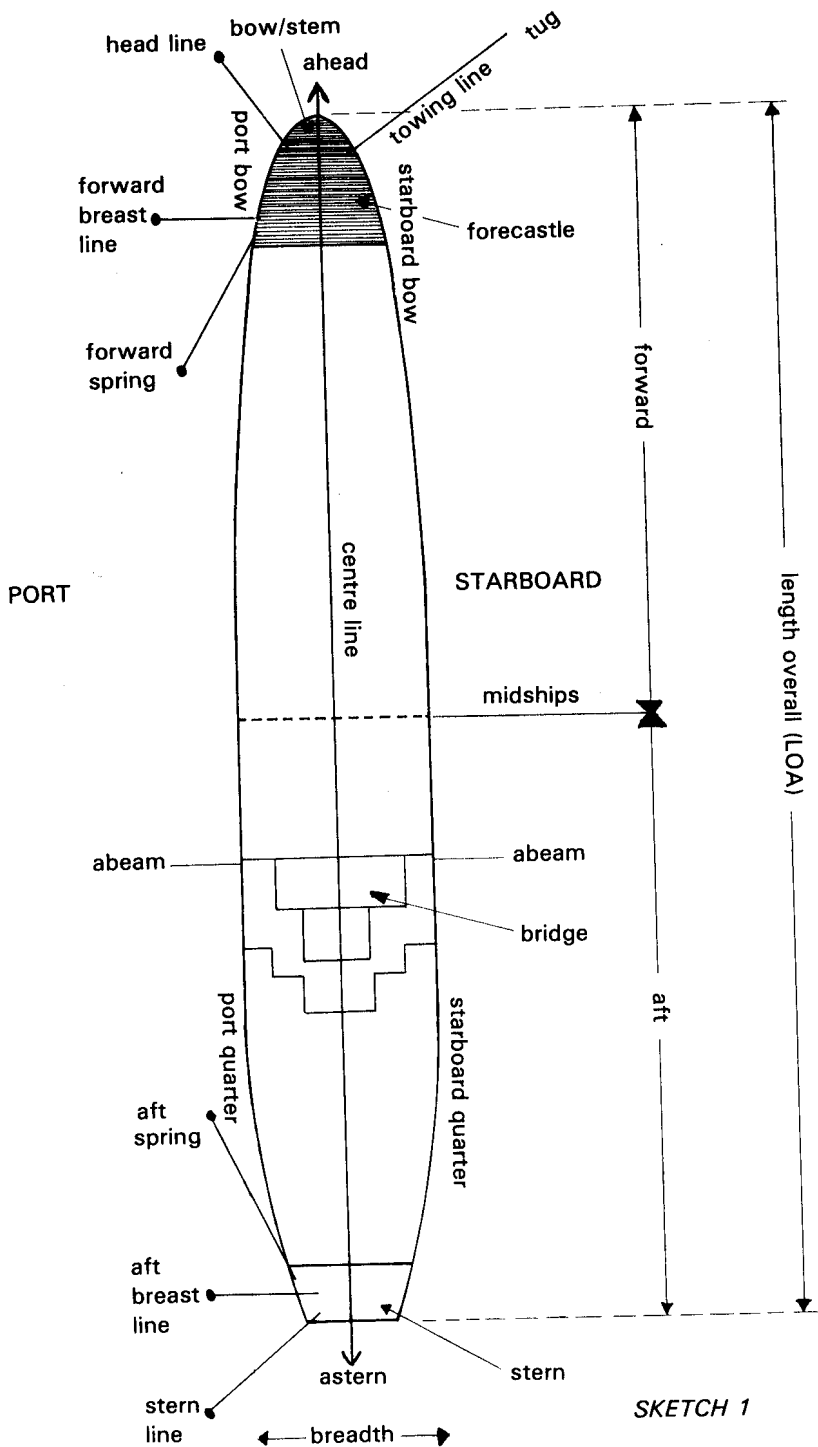
## 2 Terms used in ships' routing

Attention is drawn to the following terms which are regularly used in communications regarding ships' routing and are defined in the General Provisions on Ships' Routing\*:

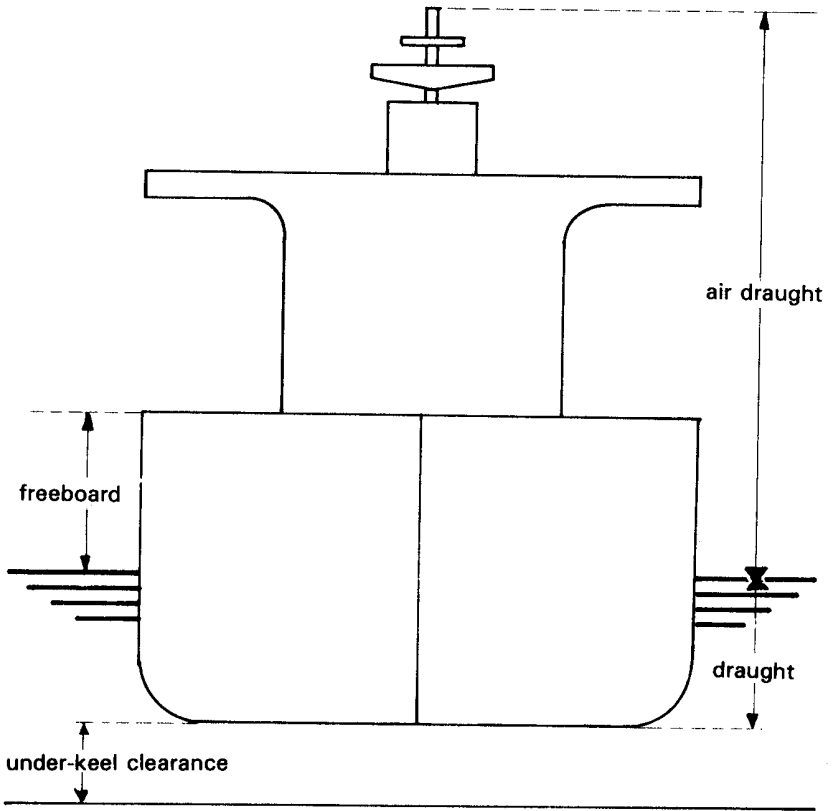
- Routing system
- Traffic separation scheme
- Separation zone or line
- Traffic lane
- Roundabout
- Inshore traffic zone
- Two-way-route
- Recommended track
- Deep water route
- Precautionary area
- Area to be avoided
- Established direction of traffic flow
- Recommended direction of traffic flow

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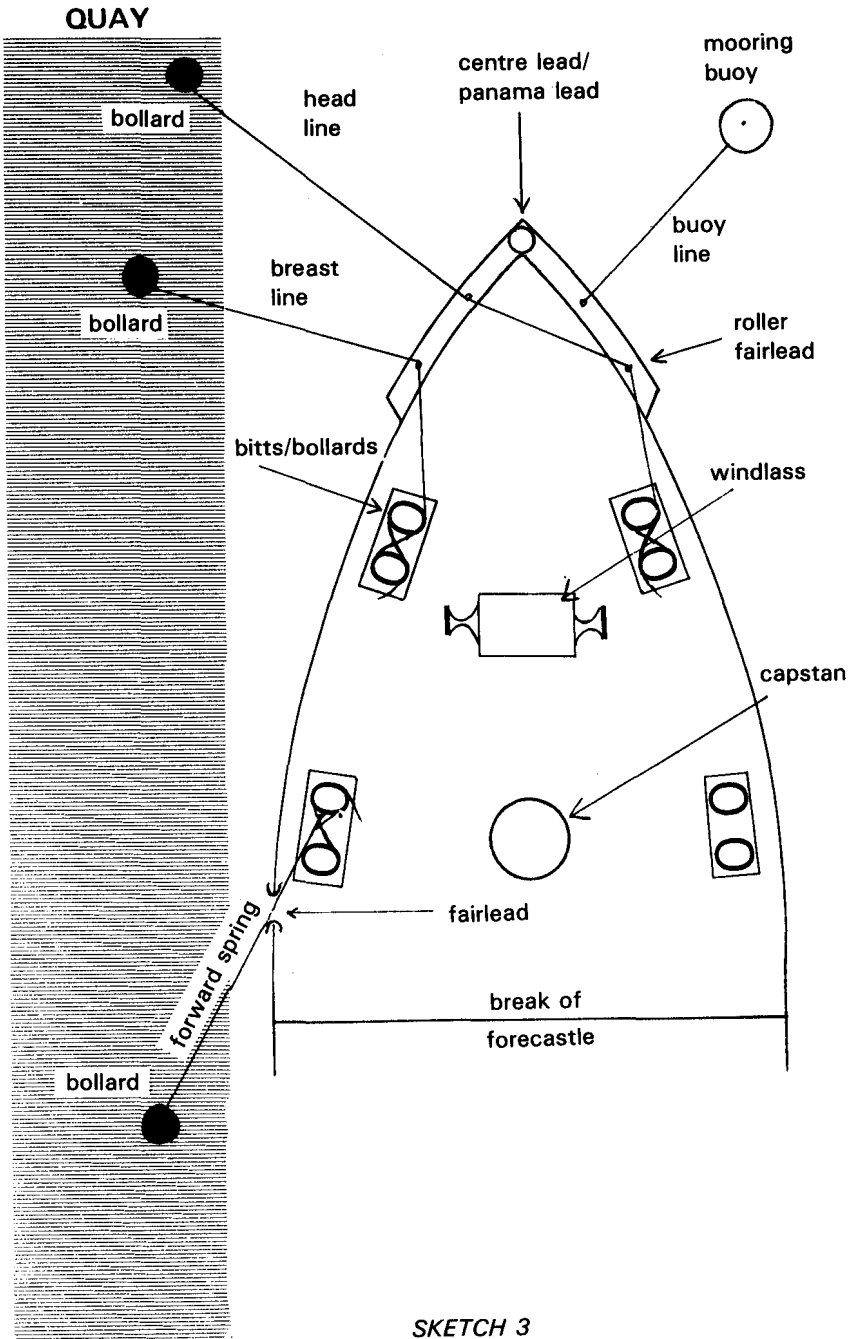
\* Assembly resolution A.572(14).







SKETCH 2





## PART III

# PHRASE VOCABULARY FOR EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

## CHAPTER A — DANGERS TO NAVIGATION, WARNINGS, ASSISTANCE

### 1 Warnings

- 1.1 You are running into danger.
  - (Shallow water ahead of you)
  - (Submerged wreck ahead of you)
  - (Risk of collision imminent)
  - (Fog bank ahead of you)
  - (Bridge will not open)
  - (.....).
- 1.2 Dangerous obstruction/wreck reported at ...
- 1.3 Unknown object(s) in position . . .
- 1.4 Floating ice in position . . .
  - (Considered hazardous to navigation).
- 1.5 Mine(s) reported in position . . .
- 1.6 Navigation is closed (prohibited) in area . . .
- 1.7 There has been a collision in position . . .
  - (keep clear)
  - (stand by to give assistance).
- 1.8 It is dangerous to . . .
  - (stop)
  - (remain in present position)
  - (alter course to starboard)
  - (alter course to port)
  - (approach close to my vessel)
  - (.....).
- 1.9 Vessel . . . is aground in position . . .
- 1.10 Vessel . . . is on fire in position . . .
- 1.11 Large vessel leaving. Keep clear of approach channel.
- 1.12 Go to emergency anchorage.
- 1.13 Your navigation lights are not visible.

- 1.14 You are running aground.
- 1.15 Keep clear . . .  
 (I am jettisoning dangerous cargo)  
 (vessel is leaking inflammable cargo in position . . .)  
 (vessel is leaking noxious cargo in position . . .)  
 (vessel is leaking poisonous cargo in position . . .)  
 (you are crossing my nets)  
 (I have a long tow)  
 (you are heading towards my tow)  
 (you are heading towards a towing line)  
 (.....).

**2 Assistance**

- 2.1 I need help . . .  
 (I am sinking)  
 (I am on fire)  
 (I have been in collision)  
 (I am aground)  
 (.....).
- 2.2 I am on fire and have dangerous cargo on board.
- 2.3 I am on fire . . .  
 (in the engine-room)  
 (in the hold)  
 (in the cargo tanks)  
 (in the accommodation)  
 (in the living spaces)  
 (.....).
- 2.4 I have lost a man overboard (at . . .). Help with search and rescue.
- 2.5 What is your position?  
 What is the position of the vessel in distress?
- 2.6 What assistance is required?
- 2.7 I require . . .  
 (a lifeboat)  
 (a helicopter)  
 (medical assistance \*)  
 (fire-fighting assistance)  
 (a tug)  
 (tugs)  
 (.....).

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\* *Note:* Further messages should be made using the Medical Section of the International Code of Signals.

- 2.8 I am coming to your assistance.
- 2.9 I expect to reach you at ...hours.
- 2.10 Send a ...  
(boat)  
(raft).
- 2.11 I am sending a boat to you.  
I am sending a raft to you.
- 2.12 Make a lee for . . .  
(my vessel)  
(the boat)  
(the raft).
- 2.13 I will make a lee for . . .  
(your vessel)  
(the boat)  
(the raft).
- 2.14 I cannot send a . . .  
(boat)  
(raft).
- 2.15 I will attempt rescue by breeches-buoy.
- 2.16 Is it safe to fire a rocket?
- 2.17 It is safe to fire a rocket.  
It is not safe to fire a rocket.
- 2.18 Take command of search and rescue.
- 2.19 I am in command of search and rescue.  
Vessel . . . is in command of search and rescue.
- 2.20 Assistance is not required. You may proceed.  
Assistance is no longer required. You may proceed.
- 2.21 You must keep radio silence in this area unless you have messages about the casualty.

*Note:* Further messages should be made using the International Code of Signals and/or the Merchant Ship Search and Rescue Manual (MERSAR).

## CHAPTER B — GENERAL

### 3 Anchoring

- 3.1 I am at anchor (at . . .).
- 3.2 I am heaving up anchor.
- 3.3 My anchor is clear of the bottom.
- 3.4 You may anchor . . .  
(at . . . hours)  
(in . . . position)  
(until pilot arrives)  
(until tug(s) arrive(s))  
(until there is sufficient depth of water)  
(.....).
- You must anchor . . .  
(at . . . hours)  
(in . . . position)  
(until pilot arrives)  
(until tug(s) arrive(s))  
(until there is sufficient water)  
(.....).
- 3.5 Do not anchor (in position . . .).
- 3.6 Anchoring is prohibited.
- 3.7 I will anchor (at . . .).
- 3.8 Vessel . . . is at anchor (at . . .).
- 3.9 Are you dragging anchor?  
Are you dredging anchor?
- 3.10 My anchor is dragging.  
Your anchor is dragging.
- 3.11 Do not dredge anchor.
- 3.12 You must heave up anchor.
- 3.13 You must shorten your cable to . . . shackles.
- 3.14 My anchor is foul.
- 3.15 You are obstructing . . .  
(the fairway)  
(other traffic).

- 3.16 You must anchor in a different position . . .
- 3.17 You must anchor clear of the fairway.
- 3.18 What is the anchor position for me?
- 3.19 You are at anchor in the wrong position.
- 3.20 I have slipped my anchor (and cable) (and buoyed it) in position . . .  
 .  
 I have lost my anchor (and cable) (and buoyed it) in position . . .

#### **4 Arrival, berthing and departure**

- 4.1 Where do you come from?  
 What was your last port of call?  
 From what direction are you approaching?
- 4.2 What is your ETA (at . . .)?
- 4.3 What is your ETD (from . . .)?
- 4.4 My ETA (at . . .) is . . . hours.  
 My ETD (from . . .) is . . . hours.
- 4.5 Do not pass receiving point . . . until . . . hours.
- 4.6 What is your destination?
- 4.7 My destination is . . .
- 4.8 What are my berthing instructions?  
 What are my docking instructions?
- 4.9 Your berth is clear (at . . . hours).  
 Your berth will be clear (at . . . hours).
- 4.10 You will berth at . . .  
 You will dock at . . .
- 4.11 May I enter?
- 4.12 You may enter (at . . .hours).
- 4.13 May I proceed?
- 4.14 You may proceed (at . . . hours).
- 4.15 Is there any other traffic?
- 4.16 There is a vessel turning at . . .  
 There is a vessel manoeuvring at . . .



- 4.17 Vessel . . . will turn at . . .
- 4.18 Vessel . . . will leave . . . at . . . hours.
- 4.19 Vessel . . . is leaving . . .
- 4.20 Vessel . . . has left . . .
- 4.21 Vessel . . . has entered the fairway at . . .
- 4.22 Your orders are to . . .  
Your orders are changed to . . .
- 4.23 Vessel . . . inward in position . . .  
Vessel . . . outward in position . . .
- 4.24 Are you underway?
- 4.25 I am underway.
- 4.26 I am ready to get underway.
- 4.27 I am not ready to get underway.
- 4.28 You must get underway.
- 4.29 I am making way through the water.
- 4.30 I have steerage way.  
I do not have steerage way.
- 4.31 Vessel in position (make fast).
- 4.32 Move ahead ( . . . feet/metres).  
Move astern ( . . . feet/metres).

## 5 Course

- 5.1 What is your course?
- 5.2 My course is . . .
- 5.3 Your course is correct.
- 5.4 What course do you advise?
- 5.5 Advise you make course . . .
- 5.6 Advise you keep your present course.
- 5.7 You are steering a dangerous course . . . — *to be followed by indication of danger or advice for further action.*
- 5.8 I am keeping my present course.
- 5.9 I cannot keep my present course.

