



Leaflet

Notices to Skippers

Leaflet Edition 2005

Notices to Skippers

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1. Basis

1.1 Purpose

The International Standard for Notices to Skippers shall boost the use of modern information technology on board of inland navigation vessels and in particular the distribution of notices to skippers by River Information Services. The distribution of Notices to Skippers without regard to borders and language areas is contributing to the increase of economic efficiency and safety in inland navigation. An international standard is necessary to ensure the effective and safe distribution of notices to skippers by River Information Services.

1.2 Terminology

Notices to Skippers means the international standard for the distribution of notices to skippers on inland shipping routes as established by the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR).

Fairway and traffic related message means a notice, which provides information about a fairway section or an object.

Water level related message means a notice, which provides information on the water level, the least sounded depth, the vertical clearance, the barrage status, the discharge, the regime, the predicted water level, the least sounded predicted depth or the predicted discharge.

Ice message means a notice, which provides information on the ice situation.

XML means Extended Markup Language, a subset of SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language, ISO 8879:1986(E) as amended and corrected) for use on the World Wide Web.

1.3 History and goal of standardization

Notices to Skippers are among the most common means of information in inland navigation. Traditionally they have been distributed by VHF, in writing, on notice boards or by fax. Web services have been installed in most countries in the last years. But the existing services are providing the information in the national language only. While this may be acceptable on a river like the Rhine with only three languages, it causes a lot of problems on a European level. A skipper on the Danube for example would have to be able to read notices in German, Slovakian, Hungarian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian language. A standard, which provides automatic translation of the most important safety relevant information was urgently needed therefore.

Due to the enormous variety of Notices and the big differences in the grammar of the languages it was not possible to provide grammatically correct translations of sentences, but only translation of standardized pieces of information (code format, for example: limitation: "overtaking prohibited").

Information on restrictions and delays is not only read by skippers, but is also used in voyage planning applications. A second goal of standardization was the possibility to provide machine readable files, which can be used directly by these applications.

1.4 Features of the international standard for Notices to Skippers

The international standard for Notices to Skippers provides a standardized data format, which can be used for publishing Notices on the internet (pull-services) or for distribution by e-mail (push services).

The content of the messages is encoded in a machine readable XML-file. This file can be used by software applications like voyage planning or Inland ECDIS on board of a vessel or by internet sites. The encoded information can be used directly for calculations, as for example in voyage planning, or be translated to the language of the user and displayed. The reference tables of the standard contain 11 languages and guarantee, that a skipper is able to read the notices to skippers on all the major European waterways.

2. International standard for Notices to Skippers

2.1 Purpose

The standardization of Notices to Skippers shall

- provide automatic translation of the most important content of notices in all the languages of the participating countries,
- provide a harmonized structure of data-sets in all the participating countries to facilitate the integration of notices in voyage-planning systems,
- provide a standard for water level information,
- be compatible with the data-structure of Inland ECDIS to facilitate integration of Notices to Skippers in Inland ECDIS,
- facilitate data-exchange between different countries.

Its purpose is to contribute to safety and efficiency on the inland shipping routes and thus also to protect the environment. In addition Inland ECDIS should simultaneously reduce the workload when navigating the ship as compared to traditional information methods.

2.2 Legal basis

- Resolution of the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine of 28 May 2004: "Notices to Skippers – International Standard" (Resolution 2004-I-17).

2.3 Current edition

The current edition 1.0 from 28 May 2004 is published on the internet under www.ccr-zkr.org. It contains:

- text in English, Dutch, French and German languages,
- reference Tables in 11 languages,
- the XML-scheme,
- examples of implementation.

2.4 Structure of the standard

The standard comprises an annex with

- an edition overview,
- an XML definition showing the structure of the messages,
- the explanation of the tags (structural elements of the messages),
- the explanation of the codes (standardized content of the messages),
- Appendix A: reference tables with the codes and their translation into 11 languages,
- Appendix B: XML-scheme of the messages,
- Appendix C: examples of implementation in different countries.

3. Modes of distribution

Notices to Skippers according to this standard can be provided on the internet (pull services) or distributed by e-mail (push services).

3.1 Pull services

Internet services should provide a possibility to select:

- a specific waterway section or a specific part of a waterway, defined by the river-km of the starting and the end point,
- a time of validity and
- a date of publication of the notice.

Notices can be displayed

- as plain text, which is built from a text mask and standardized elements, in English, Dutch, French or German,
- as tags and values in English, Dutch, French, German, Slovak, Hungarian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Romanian or Russian.

Notices to skippers

river-km from:	<input type="text" value="Slow akische Grenze"/>	<input type="text" value="1872.700"/>
to:	<input type="text" value="Deutsche Grenze"/>	<input type="text" value="2223.150"/>
notice valid in:	<input type="text" value="Österreich (AT)"/>	





At the moment only notices from Austria are available. Several other countries are currently working on the implementation of compatible services, the integration of these notices is at the planning stage.

period of validity: (from, DD.MM.YYYY)	<input type="text" value="03"/>	<input type="text" value="02"/>	<input type="text" value="2005"/>
period of validity: (until, DD.MM.YYYY)	<input type="text" value="03"/>	<input type="text" value="03"/>	<input type="text" value="2005"/>
from date of publication: (DD.MM.YYYY)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

type of message:

- waterway related messages
- water level related messages
- ice messages

text format

full text    

codeformat

<input type="button" value="submit query"/>	<input type="button" value="clear form"/>
---------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------

Figure 1, example of a selection tool for display on the internet

Notices can be provided for download

- as plain text,
- as tags and values or
- as a machine readable XML file with minimum volume, which can be translated to the language of the user by a receiving application (specific software for Notices to Skippers) using the reference tables or used by an application like voyage planning for further calculations.

3.2 Push services

Notices according to this standard can be distributed by e-mail (as subscription)





- as plain text,
- as tags and values or
- as a machine readable XML file with minimum volume, which can be translated to the language of the user by a receiving application (specific software for Notices to Skippers) using the reference tables or used by an application like voyage planning for further calculations.

Subscribe to e-mail service:

email:*

name:*

company:

text format:* full text    

codeformat

XML (machine readable version)¹

messages:* waterway related messages
 water level related messages
 ice messages

unsubscribe e-mail service:

email:*

Fields with * are mandatory

¹This format serves the automatic input of notices into software applications such as BICS or Inland ECDIS applications

Figure 2, example of a subscription form for e-mail services

3.3 International data exchange between authorities

Data exchange between the authorities is recommended. All the authorities using this standard can integrate Notices of other authorities and countries in their own services. The participating parties (authorities) can agree the procedure of transmitting the XML messages by push or pull services directly.

4. Content of the Notices to Skippers

Notices to Skippers are messages with navigation information for inland skippers about a geographical object or a waterway section.

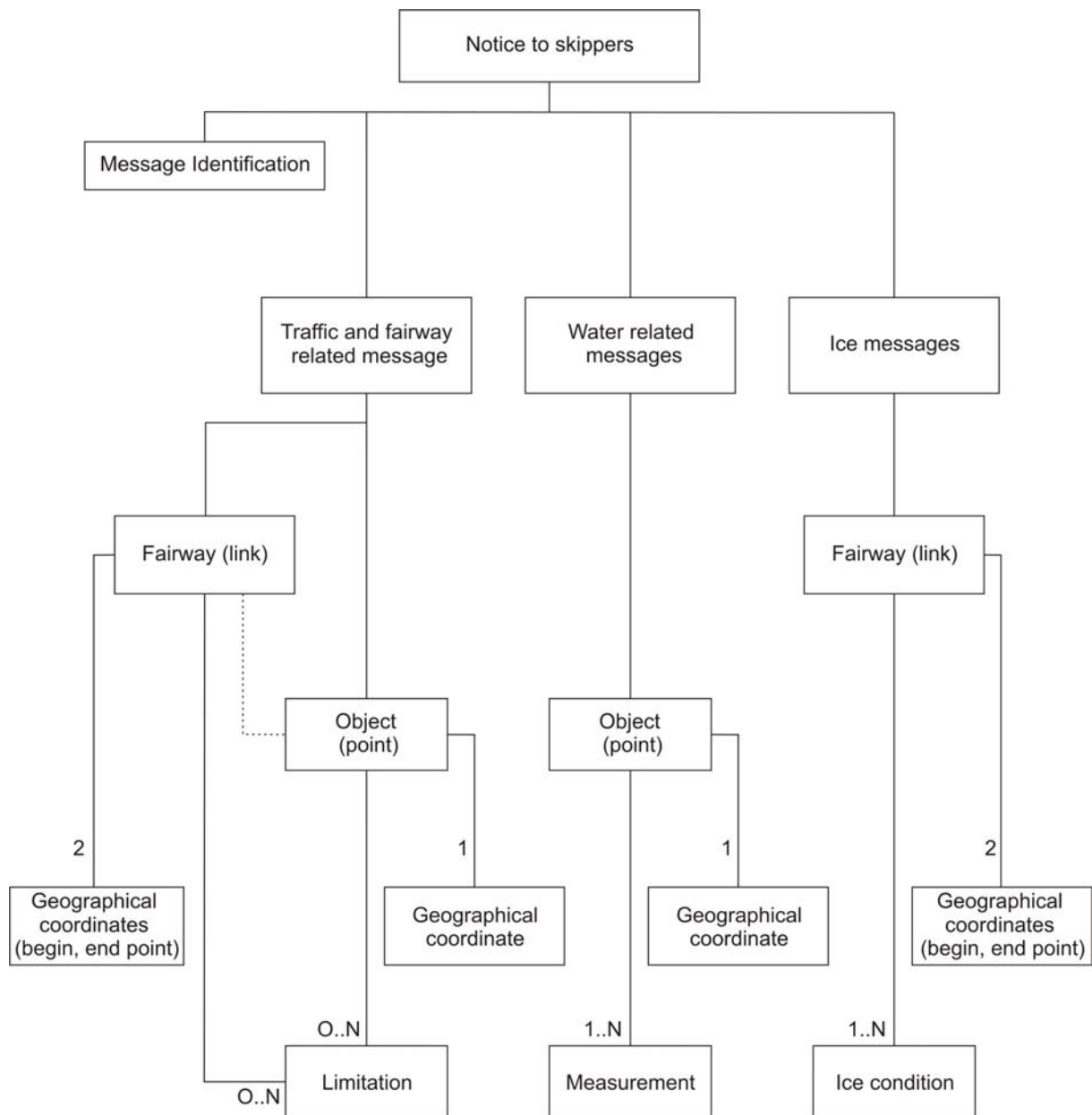


Figure 3, message structure

A standardized Notice to Skippers in XML-format contains therefore 4 different sections:

- identification,
- fairway and traffic related messages,
- water level related messages,
- ice messages.

In one Notice to Skippers generally only two sections will be filled in: the identification section and at least one of the sections: fairway and traffic related, water level related or ice message.

4.1 Explanation of the subject codes of fairway and traffic related messages

Blockage	<p>In case no form of navigation is possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• through all the lock chambers of a lock,• through all the passages of a bridge,• passing a specified point on the fairway,• on a specified section of the fairway.
Partial obstruction	<p>In case limited navigation is possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• through one or more lock chambers of a lock, leaving at least one open,• through one or more passages of a bridge, leaving at least one open,• passing a specified point on the fairway, leaving a part of the fairway open.
Delay	<p>In case an obstruction occurs, limited in time, at a bridge, lock or on a section, between a specified start and end date.</p> <p><i>For example: Delay of at most 2 hours on November 13 between 08:00 and 17:00.</i></p> <p><i>Encoded:</i></p> <p><i>Date_start: 20021113</i></p> <p><i>Date_end: 20021113</i></p> <p><i>time_start: 0800</i></p> <p><i>time_end: 1700</i></p> <p><i>limitation_code: Delay</i></p> <p><i>Position_code: all</i></p> <p><i>value: 2</i></p>
No service	<p>In case a movable bridge is not operated during a specified period. This period should lie within the normal operating hours. This period should lie within the normal operating hours.</p> <p>No service of a lock is an Obstruction or Delay.</p> <p>No service of a movable bridge means that passing under the bridge still is possible. Otherwise it is an Obstruction.</p>
Change service	<p>In case a modification in the normal operating hours occurs at a lock or bridge.</p> <p>A limitation in the operating hours of a lock usually implies an obstruction</p> <p>For example if a lock normally is operated between 06:00 and 20:00, and the operating hours are now limited to between 10:00 and 14:00, then this will result in an obstruction between 06:00 and 10:00 and another obstruction between 14:00 and 20:00.</p> <p>A limitation in the operating hours of a bridge usually implies "No Service".</p>

Vessel length	In case somewhere a smaller maximum length for passing vessels is allowed / possible. Usually this occurs at a lock (half lock chamber).
Clearance width	In case somewhere a smaller maximum width for passing vessels is available. This occurs during work on a lock / bridge. This subject is also used if the available width of the fairway is less, even if this has no influence on the maximum available width of the waterway.
Vessel air draught	In case somewhere a smaller maximum height for passing vessels is allowed.
Clearance height	This occurs also if the vertical clearance is locally decreased by for example painting equipment.
Vessel draught	In case somewhere a smaller maximum draught for passing vessels is allowed.
Available depth	In case the least sounded depth is modified. This has no impact on the maximum draught.
No mooring	In case somewhere on the fairway mooring is not allowed.
Change of marks	In case a change occurs in the fairway marks used for navigational purposes, such as buoys, beacons, sectorlights, notice marks, etc.
Work	Other activities on or near the fairway which do not fall within the mentioned subjects.
Dredging	Dredging activities for which none of the other mentioned subjects are valid.
Military exercising	Military exercises for which none of the other mentioned subjects are valid.
Event	Events (rowing competitions, fireworks etc.) where none of the other mentioned subjects are valid.
Announcement	All other notices where none of the other (structured) subjects are valid.
Notice withdrawn	The message has to be published as a serial number of the original message.

If for one single message more subjects are possible, then the limitation with the greatest impact on shipping traffic is selected.

4.2 Explanation of the ice condition codes in ice messages

The thickness indicated in column 2 of the ice_condition_code gives information on average thickness only. The description has to be used to select the code for a specific situation.

5. Implementation of Notices to Skippers

5.1 Austria

The Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, Supreme Shipping Authority, is providing Notices to Skippers according to this standard on the website www.doris.bmvit.gv.at.

The Notices can be displayed in German, English, French and Dutch plain text and as tags and values in the eleven languages of the standard.

The website offers the possibility to subscribe for an e-mail service. The e-mail service provides the Notices in machine readable XML-format, too.

Competent authorities of other countries and private companies are allowed to include the Notices in their own services.

At the moment the website is only providing fairway and traffic related messages and ice messages. Water related messages will be included as a second step.

5.2 Belgium

Walloon Waterways

The General Management of Waterways already issues notices to skippers and the journal for inland waterways transport which provide pieces of information of general purpose and about regimes, weirs, limitations, ...

These data are directly sent to concerned services by means of mail, fax, e-mail, are broadcasted on radio and television and published on the website.

The current publishing of this information as well as its content will be adapted to the International Standard for Notices to Skippers and distributed on the web server or by e-mail. The opportunity of developing a specific RIS server will be studied during the implementation of the RIS directive.

The studies and software developments will start in 2005 and the new Walloon Notices to Skippers should be tested by the end of the same year.

5.3 France

VNF is providing Notices to Skippers according this standard on the website www.vnf.fr. The Notices to Skippers project has begun in June 2003.

This concerns geographical information and up-to-date information such as restrictions (changes of water level ...) and blockage of navigation.

This information can be retrieved per location, section and waterways.

Today, it is possible to receive this information via e-mail and fax. From the end of 2005 they are available via SMS and e-mail with attached XML-file.

5.4 Germany

The Federal Waterways and Shipping Administration will provide Notices to Skippers according to this standard on the website www.elwis.de.

The necessary development from the old module „Nachrichten für die Binnenschifffahrt (NfB)“ to a new module was started in autumn 2004.

The website also offers the possibility to subscribe for the ELWIS-Abo-service. This service will provide fairway and traffic related messages, water related messages and ice messages via e-mail and SMS also as e-mails with attached XML-file of these notices.

Competent authorities of other countries and private companies are allowed to include the notices into their own service.

5.5 The Netherlands

Static and dynamic information about the Dutch fairways will be available at one central point, the River Information Services server Netherlands. This concerns geographical information (ENCs) and up-to-date information such as water related messages, notices to skippers, ice messages and weather forecast.

This information can be retrieved per fairway, route, corridor or country. The RIS server Netherlands is operational since March 2005. The address is www.risserver.nl.

The Information Centre for Inland Waters already provides notices to skippers, water related messages and ice messages in accordance with the standard by secured ftp.

For a free ftp account send an email to infocentrum@riza.rws.minvenw.nl, the Information Centre for Inland Waters, part of RWS RIZA. In the near future, the opening of an account will be possible via the RIS server.

5.6 Slovakia

The process of implementation of Notices to Skippers in Slovakia started in the beginning of 2005 within the COMPRIS project. Currently the development (analysis) of the NtS application is under way.

5.7 Switzerland

Switzerland is evaluating the implementation of the standard at the moment. Talks with the neighbouring countries about the implementation are necessary due to its geographical position. These talks have started now. First results are to be expected at the end of 2005.

Notices to skippers are published on the internet under www.portofbasel.ch and www.elwis.de at the moment.

Contact addresses of competent waterway authorities

Austria:

Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie, Oberste Schifffahrtsbehörde,
Radetzkystrasse 2, 1030 Wien,
Bernd Birkhuber, Tel.: +43 (0)171 1625902, Fax: +43 (0)171 1625999,
E-Mail: bernd.birkhuber@bmvit.gv.at

Belgium:

Flanders:

nv De Scheepvaart, Havenstraat 44, 3500 Hasselt,
ir Johan Torfs, Tel.: +32 496 578511, E-mail: j.torfs@descheepvaart.be

Wallonia:

Ministère de l'Équipement et des Transports, Direction générale des Voies hydrauliques, Direction de
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Pascal Moens, Tel.: +32 817 73029, Fax: +32 817 73799, e-mail: pmoens@met.wallonie.be
Gianni Ferrara, Tel.: +32 817 73020, Fax: +32 817 73799, e-mail: gferrara@met.wallonie.be

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