



# WORKSHOP

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**IMO**

# SEA SPEAK

- Navigational and safety communications from ship-to-shore and vice versa, from ship-to-ship, and on board ship must be
- precise;
- simple and unambiguous so as to avoid confusion and error; and
- there is a need to standardize the language used.

- This is of particular importance in the light of the increasing number of internationally trading vessels with crews speaking many different languages, since problems of communication may cause misunderstandings leading to dangers to the vessel, the people on board and the environment.

- In 1973, the Maritime Safety Committee agreed, at its twenty-seventh session, that where language difficulties arise a common language should be used for navigational purposes, and that language should be English.

- In consequence the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary (SMNV) was developed, adopted in 1977 and amended in 1985.

- In 1992, the Maritime Safety Committee agreed, at its sixtieth session, to instruct:
- the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation to develop a more comprehensive standardized safety language than SMNV 1985, taking into account the changing conditions in modern seafaring and covering all major safety-related verbal communications.

- At its sixty-eighth session in 1997, the Maritime Safety Committee adopted the Draft IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) developed by the NAV Sub-Committee.
- The draft IMO SMCP, following international trials, was amended at the forty-sixth session of this Sub-Committee, and was given final consideration by the Maritime Safety Committee at its seventy-fourth session in the light of remarks received by the Organization.

- The IMO SMCP was adopted by the Assembly in November 2001 as resolution A.918(22).
- Under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as revised 1995, the ability to use and understand the IMO SMCP is required for the certification of officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more.

## Position of the IMO SMCP in maritime practice

- The IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) has been compiled:
- to assist in the greater safety of navigation and of the conduct of the ship,
- to standardize the language used in communication for navigation at sea, in port approaches, waterways and harbours, and on board vessels with multilingual crews, and



## Position of the IMO SMCP in maritime practice

- to assist maritime training institutions in meeting the objectives mentioned above.
- The IMO SMCP are not intended to supplant or contradict the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 or special local rules or recommendations made by IMO concerning ships' routing, neither are they intended to supersede the International Code of Signals, and their use in ship's external communications has to be in strict compliance with the relevant radiotelephone procedures as set out in the ITU Radio Regulations.

## Position of the IMO SMCP in maritime practice

- The IMO SMCP, as a collection of individual phrases, should not be regarded as any kind of technical manual providing operational instructions.

## Position of the IMO SMCP in maritime practice

- Use of the IMO SMCP should be made as often as possible in preference to other wording of similar meaning; as a minimum requirement, users should adhere as closely as possible to them in relevant situations. In this way they are intended to become an acceptable safety language, using English for the verbal interchange of intelligence among individuals of all maritime nations on the many and varied occasions when precise meanings and translations are in doubt, as is increasingly evident under modern conditions at sea.

## Organization of the IMO SMCP

- The IMO SMCP is divided into:
- External Communication Phrases;
- On-board Communication Phrases as far as its application is concerned; and
- into Part A and Part B as to its status within the framework of STCW 1978, as revised.

## Organization of the IMO SMCP

- Part A covers phrases applicable in external communications, and may be regarded as the replacement of the Standard Marine Navigational Vocabulary 1985, which is required to be used and understood under the STCW Code, 1995, Table A-II/I.
- This part is enriched by essential phrases concerning ship handling and safety of navigation to be used in on-board communications, particularly when the Pilot is on the bridge (SOLAS regulation V/14(4))

## Organization of the IMO SMCP

- Part B calls attention to other on-board standard safety-related phrases which, supplementary to Part A may also be regarded as useful for maritime English instruction.

## Position of the IMO SMCP in Maritime Education and Training

- The IMO SMCP is not intended to provide a comprehensive maritime English syllabus.
- However, Part A in particular should be an indispensable part of any curriculum which is designed to meet the corresponding requirements of the STCW Convention 1978 as revised.
- Part B offers a rich choice of situations covered by phrases well suited to meet the communication requirements of the STCW Convention 1978 as revised, which mariners are implicitly expected to satisfy.

## Position of the IMO SMCP in Maritime Education and Training

- The IMO SMCP should be taught and learned selectively according to users' specific needs, rather than in its entirety.
- The respective instruction should be based on practice in the maritime environment, and should be implemented through appropriate modern language teaching methods.



## Basic communicative features

- The IMO SMCP builds on a basic knowledge of the English language and was drafted intentionally in a simplified version of maritime English in order to reduce grammatical, lexical and idiomatic varieties to a tolerable minimum, using standardized structures for the sake of its function aspects, i.e. reducing misunderstanding in safety-related verbal communications, thereby endeavouring to reflect present maritime English language usage on board vessels and in ship-to-shore/ship-to-ship communications.

## Basic communicative features

- Phrases offered for use in emergency and other situations developing under considerable pressure of time or psychological stress, as well as in navigational warnings, a block language is applied which uses sparingly or omits the function words *the, a/an, is/are*, as done in seafaring practice.
- Users, however, may be flexible in this respect.



QUESTIONS ?