



Noteworthy Amendments to U.S. Automatic Identification System (AIS) Regulations

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| Cite | Current Requirement | Significant Changes (Source: 73 FR 78295) |
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| 33 CFR 164.46(a)(1) | Per SOLAS Regulation V/19.2.4, all tankers, passenger vessels ≥ 150 gross tonnage, and, other vessels ≥ 300 gross tonnage, on international voyage. | Unchanged, but, adds domestic vessels ≥ 500 gross tonnage, regardless of voyage. |
| 33 CFR 164.46(a)(1) | Self-propelled commercial vessels ≥ 65 ft on international voyage except those in innocent passage or fishing boats & small passenger vessels (<149 passengers for hire). | Unchanged |
| 33 CFR 164.46(a)(2) | The following vessels while navigating a Vessel Traffic Service areas denoted in 33 CFR 161.12(c) must have a type-certified Class A AIS: | Expanded to all U.S. navigable waters & requires a 'properly installed, operational' USCG type-approved Class A or Class B (with caveats) AIS. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial towing vessels ≥ 26 ft & >600 hp, | Unchanged |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-propelled commercial vessels >65 ft except fishing boats & small passenger vessels (<151 passengers), and, | Revokes the exception for fishing boats & small passenger vessels. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passenger vessels certified to carry >150 passengers for hire. | Expanded to commercial vessels carrying ≥ 50 passengers; or >12 passengers for hire and capable of speeds >30 knots. |
| 33 CFR 164.46(b) | Cites & makes applicable Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone requirements regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use by master or pilot (33 CFR §26.05), - English communication (33 CFR §26.07), - frequencies (33 CFR §26.04(a)), and, - maintaining unit in "effective operating condition" (33 CFR §26.06); and, - includes the accurate input & upkeep of AIS data fields. | Adds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dredges & floating plants operating near channels/fairways, and, • Vessels moving or carrying certain dangerous cargoes (i.e. CDC). |
| | | Spells out that 'effective operating conditions' includes the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to reinitialize the AIS (i.e. knowledge of system password), - ability to access AIS information from conning position, - accurate broadcast of an official MMSI, - accurate input & upkeep of all AIS data fields including 'system updates', and, - continual operation of AIS & its associated devices when underway, at anchor, or moored in or near a channel/fairway; except when its use would compromise safety or security (which must be logged & reported to the USCG). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIS text messaging must be conducted in English & solely to exchange or communicate navigation safety information. • AIS is primarily intended for use of the master or person directing the movement of the vessel, who must maintain a periodic watch for AIS information. • Spells out that use of AIS does not relieve the vessel of Navigation Rules duties regarding sound, lights or shapes nor Bridge-to-Bridge radiotelephone requirements. |
| 33 CFR 164.46(c) | Portable AIS are permissible, as long as only one is used for transmitting & it does not affect the proper function of on board navigation & communication equipment. | Unchanged |
| 33 CFR 164.46(d) | AIS Pilot Plug required on vessel over 1,600 gross tons, on international voyage; easily accessible at the conning position & near an AC outlet. | Expanded to include any vessel subject to pilotage (regardless of tonnage) & limits the distance between it & an AC power outlet to no more than 3 feet. |
| 33 CFR 164.55 | Owners of AIS equipped vessels may request a yearly deviation from these rules as set forth in 33 CFR 164.55. | Deviations permissible, but, only on those vessels that operate solely within a very confined area (e.g., less than a one nautical-mile radius, shipyard, fleeting area), or on short & fixed schedules (e.g., a bank-to-bank river ferry service), or that otherwise are not likely to encounter another AIS user. |