

Frequently Asked Questions

Am I covered by this rule?

You are covered by this rule if you are an existing Automatic Identification System user or own or operate a commercial US or foreign vessel meeting the applicability provisions in Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 164.46.

Generally, vessels covered by this rule include:

- Commercial self-propelled vessels of 65 feet or more in length or, for towing vessels, 26 feet or more in length.
- Passenger vessels certificated to carry more than 150 passengers.
- Vessels that move or carry hazardous cargo.
- Vessels that engage in dredging in or near a commercial channel.

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March 2, 2015; newly covered vessels must be equipped with AIS by March 2016.

	Small Entity Compliance Guide
If you have questions on this rule, please contact:	
The Coast Guard Office of Navigation Systems	
Phone: 202.372.1563 Email: cgnav@uscg.mil	



Small Entity Compliance Guide

AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM Rule



33 CFR
Parts 161, 164, 165
United States Coast Guard

The Basics

The Coast Guard has developed regulations that require owners or operators of certain vessels to install and use Automatic Identification Systems (AIS). The regulations apply to both US-flag and foreign-flag vessels.

These regulations are part of [international and domestic efforts](#) to enhance the safety and security of maritime transportation.

The AIS rule is issued under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA), as part of a comprehensive regulatory framework for the security of vessels, ports, and facilities located on or adjacent to US waters. AIS is also required internationally by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

AIS increases situational awareness in US ports by providing vessel identity and location information to maritime interests and other vessels equipped with AIS.

An earlier final rule, which covered only vessels on international voyages or that participated in a vessel traffic service, has been in place since [November 21, 2003](#).

This Compliance Guide, issued under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Act of 1996, provides a plain-language overview of the final rule. [Please refer to the final rule for more detailed information.](#)

What does AIS do?

AIS enhances the mariner's situational awareness. It provides identity to previously unknown radar and visual targets. It also provides a means to share dynamic navigational data, position course, speed, destinations and ETAs. Lastly, it enhances maritime domain awareness, especially regarding vessels coming from abroad, and extends the awareness of Federal authorities that receive and share AIS data.

How much will AIS cost?



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The Coast Guard estimates that the cost per vessel will be \$3,200 for a Class A device, and \$700 for a Class B device, with recurring operations and maintenance costs of \$250 per device.

Are there alternatives to this rule for small businesses?

No. However, the rule allows for the use of AIS Class B devices on certain vessels, such as fishing and small passenger vessels that operate outside US Vessel Traffic Service Areas. Class B devices are compatible with other AIS stations, but operate at a lower power and reporting interval than Class A devices. This makes Class B devices considerably less expensive than Class A devices.

Is the Coast Guard considering requiring AIS for non-commercial vessels?



No. However, the Coast Guard encourages the voluntary use of AIS because of the benefits it provides to the user and other AIS-equipped vessels

How to Find this Rule

The Automatic Identification System (AIS) regulations can be found in Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations (33 CFR 164.46), copies of which are available through your local library or at www.naven.uscg.gov or www.gpo.gov/ecfr

To view a copy of the AIS rule, as well as the rulemaking record and regulatory



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analysis, visit the AIS docket online at www.regulations.gov, and search using docket number "USCG-2005-21869."

For additional information on AIS, visit the US Coast Guard's Navigation Center website at www.navcen.uscg.gov.