

THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE MARKING AND IDENTIFICATION OF FISHING VESSELS

FOREWORD

The need for an international standard system for the marking and identification of fishing vessels was included in the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development approved by the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference. An Expert Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Vessels convened by the Government of Canada, in collaboration with FAO, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, March 1985, elaborated the basis for a standard system.

A review of the report of this Expert Consultation by the Sixteenth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries resulted in a further Expert Consultation on the Technical Specifications for the Marking of Fishing Vessels convened in Rome, June 1986.

The Specifications contained herein were endorsed by the Eighteenth Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, April 1989, for adoption by States on a voluntary basis as a standard system to identify fishing vessels operating, or likely to operate, in waters of States other than those of the flag State. The Director-General of FAO has informed the Secretary-Generals of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) of the adoption of these Standard Specifications as an aid to fisheries management and safety at sea.

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Purpose and scope

1.1.1 As an aid to fisheries management and safety at sea, fishing vessels should be appropriately marked for their identification on the basis of the International Telecommunication Union Radio Call Signs (IRCS) system.

1.1.2 For the purpose of these Standard Specifications, the use of the word "vessel" refers to any vessel intending to fish or engaged in fishing or ancillary activities, operating, or likely to operate, in waters of States other than those of the flag State.

1.2 Definitions

For the purpose of these Specifications:

- i) the word "vessel" also includes a boat, skiff or craft (excluding aircraft) carried on board another vessel and required for fishing operations;
- ii) a deck is any surface lying in the horizontal plane, including the top of the wheelhouse;
- iii) a radio station is one that is assigned an International Telecommunication Union Radio Call Sign.

1.3 Basis for the Standard Specifications

The basis for the Standard Specifications, the IRCS system, meets the following requirements:

- i) the use of an established international system from which the identity and nationality of

vessels can be readily determined, irrespective of size and tonnage, and for which a register is maintained;

- ii) it is without prejudice to international conventions, national or bilateral practices;
- iii) implementation and maintenance will be at minimum cost to governments and vessel owners; and
- iv) it facilitates search and rescue operations.

2. BASIC SYSTEM AND APPLICATION

2.1 Basic system

2.1.1 The Standard Specifications are based on:

- i) the International Telecommunication Union's system for the allocation of call signs to countries for ship stations; and
- ii) generally accepted design standards for lettering and numbering.

2.1.2 Vessels shall be marked with their International Telecommunication Union Radio Call Signs (IRCS).

2.1.3 Except as provided for in paragraph 2.2.6 below, vessels to which an IRCS has not been assigned shall be marked with the characters allocated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to the flag State (see pages 25 to 28) and followed by, as appropriate, the licence or registration number assigned by the flag State. In such cases, a hyphen shall be placed between the nationality identification characters and the licence or registration number identifying the vessel.

2.1.4 In order to avoid confusion with the letters I and O, it is recommended that the numbers 1 and 0, which are specifically excluded from the ITU call signs, be avoided by national authorities when allocating licence or registration numbers.

2.1.5 Apart from the vessel's name or identification mark and the port of registry as required by international practice or national legislation, the marking system as specified shall, in order to avoid confusion, be the only other vessel identification mark consisting of letters and numbers to be painted on the hull or superstructure.

2.2 Application

2.2.1 The markings shall be prominently displayed at all times:

- i) on the vessel's side or superstructure, port and starboard; fixtures inclined at an angle to the vessel's side or superstructure would be considered as suitable provided that the angle of inclination would not prevent sighting of the sign from another vessel or from the air;
- ii) on a deck, except as provided for in paragraph 2.2.4 below. Should an awning or other temporary cover be placed so as to obscure the mark on a deck, the awning or cover shall also be marked. These marks should be placed athwartships with the top of the numbers or letters towards the bow.

2.2.2 Marks should be placed as high as possible above the waterline on both sides. Such parts of the hull as the flare of the bow and the stern shall be avoided.

2.2.3 The marks shall:

- i) be so placed that they are not obscured by the fishing gear whether it is stowed or in use;
- ii) be clear of flow from scuppers or overboard discharges including areas which might be prone to damage or discolouration from the catch of certain types of species; and
- iii) not extend below the waterline.

2.2.4 Undecked vessels shall not be required to display the markings on a horizontal surface. However, owners should be encouraged, where practical, to fit a board on which the markings may be clearly seen from the air.

2.2.5 Vessels fitted with sails may display the markings on the sail in addition to the hull.

2.2.6 Boats, skiffs and craft carried by the vessel for fishing operations shall bear the same mark as the vessel concerned.

2.2.7 Examples of the placement of marks are set out in pages 47 to 69.

3. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

3.1 Specifications of letters and numbers

3.1.1 Block lettering and numbering shall be used throughout.

3.1.2 The width of the letters and numbers shall be in proportion to the height as set out in pages 29 to 46.

3.1.3 The height (h) of the letters and numbers shall be in proportion to the size of the vessel in accordance with the following:

- a) for marks to be placed on the hull, superstructure and/or inclined surfaces:

<u>Length of vessel overall (LOA) in meters (m)</u>	<u>Height of letters and numbers in meters (m) to be not less than</u>
25 m and over	1.0 m
20 m but less than 25 m	0.8 m
15 m but less than 20 m	0.6 m
12 m but less than 15 m	0.4 m
5 m but less than 12 m	0.3 m
Under 5 m	0.1 m

- b) for marks to be placed on deck: the height shall not be less than 0.3 m for all classes of vessels of 5 m and over.

3.1.4 The length of the hyphen shall be half the height of the letters and numbers.

3.1.5 The width of the stroke for all letters, numbers and the hyphen shall be $\frac{h}{6}$.

3.1.6 Spacing:

- i) the space between letters and/or numbers shall not exceed $\frac{h}{4}$ nor be less than $\frac{h}{6}$;
- ii) the space between adjacent letters having sloping sides shall not exceed $\frac{h}{8}$ nor be less than $\frac{h}{10}$, for example A V.

3.2 Painting

3.2.1 The marks shall be:

- i) white on a black background; or
- ii) black on a white background.

3.2.2 The background shall extend to provide a border around the mark of not less than $\frac{h}{6}$.

3.2.3 Good quality marine paints to be used throughout.

3.2.4 The use of retro-reflective or heat-generating substances shall be accepted, provided that the mark meets the requirements of these Standard Specifications.

3.2.5 The marks and the background shall be maintained in good condition at all times.

4. REGISTRATION OF MARKS

4.1 The International Telecommunication Union maintains and updates a worldwide register of International Radio Call Signs that contains details of the nationality of the vessel and its name.

4.2 In addition to maintaining a separate register of its vessels to which IRCS have been assigned, the flag State shall also maintain a record of vessels to which it has given a nationality identifier (allocated by the ITU) followed by the hyphen and licence/registration number; such records should include details of the vessels and owners.

