



MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

PORT MARINE CIRCULAR

NO. 20 OF 2006

14 Nov 06

Shipping Community  
Harbour Craft Community

## **SAFETY OF NAVIGATION IN THE SINGAPORE STRAIT**

1 The Singapore Strait is a narrow and busy waterway where a large number of vessels transit daily. These vessels include bulk carriers, container vessels, ferries, tankers, very large crude carriers (VLCC), barges under tow and fishing vessels. In the interest of navigational safety, shipmasters of vessels navigating in the Singapore Strait are reminded to observe the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Seas (COLREGS) and the “Rules for Vessels Navigating Through The Straits of Malacca and Singapore” adopted by the IMO. A copy of the latter is attached.

2 To enhance navigational safety, the Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) constantly monitors vessel movements in the Singapore Strait and provides traffic information and advice to shipmasters to enable them to appraise the traffic situation. The Singapore VTIS has observed that reducing vessel’s speed is an action not commonly taken and would like to remind shipmasters of the following rules concerning actions on speed of vessels:

### **i) International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972**

Rule 6: Every vessel shall at all times proceed at a safe speed so that she can take proper and effective action to avoid collision and be stopped within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and condition.

In determining a safe speed the following factors shall be among those taken into account:

- (a) By all vessels:
  - (i) the state of visibility;
  - (ii) the traffic density including concentrations of fishing vessels or any other vessels;
  - (iii) the manoeuvrability of the vessel with special reference to stopping distance and turning ability in the prevailing conditions;
  - (iv) at night the presence of background light such as from shore lights or from back scatter of her own lights;
  - (v) the state of wind, sea and current, and the proximity of navigational hazards;
  - (vi) the draught in relation to the available depth of water.

- (b) Additionally, by vessels with operational radar:
- (i) the characteristics, efficiency and limitations of the radar equipment;
  - (ii) any constraints imposed by the radar scale in use;
  - (iii) the effect on radar detection of the sea state, weather and other sources of interference;
  - (iv) the possibility that small vessels, ice and other floating objects may not be detected by radar at an adequate range;
  - (v) the number, location and movement of vessels detected by radar;
  - (vi) the more exact assessment of the visibility that may be possible when radar is used to determine the range of vessels or other objects in the vicinity.

**Rule 8 (e):** If necessary to avoid collision or allow more time to assess the situation, a vessel shall slacken her speed or take all way off by stopping or reversing her means of propulsion.

ii) **Rules for Vessels navigating through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore**

**Rule (7):** VLCCs<sup>1</sup> and deep draught vessels navigating in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore shall, as far as it is safe and practicable, proceed at a speed of not more than 12 knots over the ground in the following areas:

- (a) At One Fathom Bank traffic separation scheme;
- (b) Deep-water routes in the Phillip Channel and in Singapore Strait; and
- (c) Westbound lanes between positions 01°12.51'N, 103°52.15'E and 01°11.59'N, 103°50.21'E and between position 01°11.13'N, 103°49.08'E and 01°08.65'N, 103°44.30'E.

**Rule 8:** All vessels navigating in the routing system of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore shall maintain at all times a safe speed consistent with safe navigation, shall proceed with caution and shall be in a maximum state of manoeuvring readiness.

3 Owners, managers and agents are requested to bring the contents of this circular to the attention of shipmasters and officers.

CHOONG YEW WENG  
for PORT MASTER  
MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE  
TEL: 6325-2464  
FAX: 6325-2454

---

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of these Rules, a tanker of 150,000 dwt and above shall be deemed to be a very large crude carrier (VLCC)

# **RULES FOR VESSELS NAVIGATING THROUGH THE STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE**

## **I Definitions**

For the purpose of these Rules the following definitions shall apply:

- 1 A vessel having a draught of 15 metres or more shall be deemed to be a deep draught vessel.
- 2 A tanker of 150,000 dwt and above shall be deemed to be a very large crude carrier (VLCC).

Note: The above definitions do not prejudice the definition of "vessel constrained by her draught" described in Rule 3 (h) of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972.

## **II General Provisions**

- 1 Deep draught vessels and VLCCs shall allow for an under keel clearance of at least 3.5 metres at all times during the entire passage through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and shall also take all necessary safety precautions, when navigating through the traffic separation schemes.
- 2 Masters of deep draught vessels and VLCCs shall have particular regard to navigational constraints when planning their passage through the Straits.
- 3 All deep draught vessels and VLCCs navigating within the traffic separation schemes are recommended to use the pilotage service of the respective countries when they become available.
- 4 Vessels shall take into account the precautionary areas where crossing traffic may be encountered and be in a maximum state of manoeuvring readiness in these areas.

## **III Rules**

### **Rule 1**

Eastbound deep draught vessels shall use the designated deep-water routes.

### **Rule 2**

Eastbound deep draught vessels navigating in the deep-water routes in Phillip Channel and Singapore Strait shall as far as practicable, avoid overtaking.

### **Rule 3**

All vessels navigating within the traffic separation scheme shall proceed in the appropriate traffic lane in the general direction of traffic flow for that lane and maintain as steady a course as possible, consistent with safe navigation.

#### Rule 4

All vessels having defects affecting operational safety shall take appropriate measures to overcome these defects before entering the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.

#### Rule 5

In the event of an emergency or breakdown of a vessel in the traffic lane, the vessel shall, as far as practicable and safe, leave the lane by pulling out to the starboard side.

#### Rule 6

(a) Vessels proceeding in the westbound lane of the traffic separation scheme "In the Singapore Strait" when approaching Raffles Lighthouse shall proceed with caution, taking note of the local warning system, and, compliance with Rule 18(d) of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, avoid impeding the safe passage of a vessel constrained by her draught which is exhibiting the signals required by Rule 28 and which is obliged to cross the westbound lane of the scheme in order to approach the single point mooring facility (in approximate position 01°11.42'N, 103°47.40'E, from Phillip Channel).

(b) Vessels proceeding in the traffic separation schemes when approaching any of the precautionary areas shall proceed with caution, taking note of the local warning system, and, in compliance with Rule 18 (d) of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, avoid impeding the safe passage of a vessel constrained by her draught which is exhibiting the signals required by Rule 28 and which is obliged to cross that precautionary area.

(c) Information relating to the movement of ships constrained by their draught as referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) above will be given by radio broadcasts. The particulars of such broadcasts are promulgated by Notices to Mariners. All vessels navigating in the area of the traffic separation scheme should monitor these radio broadcasts and take account of the information received.

#### Rule 7

VLCCs and deep draught vessels navigating in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore shall, as far as it is safe and practicable, proceed at a speed of not more than 12 knots over the ground in the following areas:

(a) At One Fathom Bank traffic separation scheme;

(b) Deep-water routes in the Phillip Channel and in Singapore Strait; and

(c) Westbound lanes between positions 01°12.51'N, 103°52.15'E and 01°11.59'N, 103°50.21'E and between position 01°11.13'N, 103°49.08'E and 01°08.65'N, 103°44.30'E.

#### Rule 8

All vessels navigating in the routing system of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore shall maintain at all times a safe speed consistent with safe navigation, shall proceed with caution, and shall be in a maximum state of manoeuvring readiness.

#### Rule 9

(a) Vessels which are fitted with VHF radio communication are to participate in the ship reporting system adopted by the Organization.

(b) VLCCs and deep draught vessels navigating in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore are advised to broadcast, eight hours before entering the traffic separation schemes, navigational information giving name, deadweight tonnage, draught, speed and times of passing One Fathom Bank Lighthouse, Raffles Lighthouse and Horsburgh Lighthouse. Difficult and unwieldy tows are also advised to broadcast similar information.

#### Rule 10

All vessels navigating in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore are requested to report by radio to the nearest shore authority any damage to or malfunction of the aids to navigation in the Straits, or any aids out of position in the Straits.

#### Rule 11

Flag States, owners and operators should ensure that their vessels are adequately equipped in accordance with the appropriate international conventions /recommendations.

### **IV Warning**

Mariners are warned that local traffic could be unaware of the internationally agreed regulations and practices of seafarers and may be encountered in or near the traffic separation schemes, and should take any precautions which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen or by the special circumstances of the case.

The above set of rules was adopted by the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the Maritime Safety Committee, IMO in May 1998 and implemented on 1 Dec 1998.

Source: SN/Circ. 198

Dated: 26 May 1998

Note: The coordinates in WGS 84 datum.