



South African Maritime Safety Authority

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Marine Notice 13 of 2014

Proper Use of Not Under Command Lights and Shapes

TO ALL SHIP OPERATORS, MASTERS, SHIPS' AGENTS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Summary

Following a recent casualty, the improper use of Not Under Command (NUC) signals by fishing vessels stopped and drifting has been identified.

This marine notice clarifies the proper use of NUC signals by all vessels

1. Rule 3(f) of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, Annexed to the Merchant Shipping (Collision and Distress signals) regulations, 2005, defines a vessel not under command as '...a vessel which through some exceptional circumstance is unable to manoeuvre as required by these Rules and is therefore unable to keep out of the way of another vessel.'
2. The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 applies to all vessels in South African waters as per regulation 4(2)(a) of the Merchant Shipping (Collision and Distress signals) regulations, 2005.
3. Rule 27 of the International Collision Regulations describes the signals that must be shown by a vessel NUC.
4. The breakdown of engines or steering gear, the loss of a propeller or rudder, a vessel with her anchor down but not holding, or a sailing vessel becalmed are all considered exceptional circumstances within the scope of the definition.

Adverse weather may at times also be considered an exceptional circumstance, but only if it directly results in a vessel not being able to manoeuvre as required by the Rules. The adverse conditions must be so exceptional, with respect to that particular vessel, so as to render her unable to manoeuvre as required by the Rules. If the adverse weather is such that the vessels ability to manoeuvre is simply affected, this may not be considered an exceptional circumstance.

5. **Any vessel that due to operational requirements, stops the main engine so as to drift, is not considered a vessel NUC. There are no exceptional circumstances present that would prevent the restarting of the main engine. NUC signals may not be displayed under such circumstances.**

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