



**Transport Malta**

**PORTS AND YACHTING DIRECTORATE**

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**Ref: TM/PYD/04/2022**

Notice to: Owners and Operators of Passenger Ships and Domestic Passenger Vessels  
Masters and Crew of Passenger Ships and Domestic Passenger Vessels  
Marine Terminals and Marine Facilities

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**Fitting of Automatic Identification System (AIS) Equipment on Passenger Ships  
and Domestic Passenger Vessels**

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The Authority for Transport in Malta would like to notify Owners, Operators, Masters and Crew of passenger ships<sup>1</sup> and domestic passenger vessels<sup>2</sup> that with effect from 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023, such passenger ships and vessels will be required to be fitted with Automatic Identification System (AIS) equipment (CLASS A), unless already fitted.

The purpose of this requirement is to assist the Authority's Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) in monitoring and coordinating the movements of maritime traffic to enhance the safety of navigation, and the security and the efficiency of marine operations and shipping movements; and is in line with provisions prescribed in the Commercial Vessels Regulations (S.L. 499.23). The fitting of AIS will also assist in the obligations emanating from Directive 98/41/EC, as amended<sup>3</sup>.

The AIS equipment required to be fitted must be capable of transmitting and receiving AIS signals. Once fitted, the AIS equipment and transponder must remain switched on and operational at all times. AIS may only be switched off in exceptional circumstances where the Master considers this to be necessary in the interest of safety or security of his vessel.

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<sup>1</sup> "passenger ship" shall mean a ship or a high-speed craft which carries more than 12 passengers. "High-speed craft" shall mean a high-speed craft as defined in Regulation 1 of Chapter X of the 1974 SOLAS Convention.

<sup>2</sup> "domestic passenger vessel" means a passenger ship used in any trade, business or calling or operating for hire or reward within the ports, internal waters and territorial waters of Malta.

<sup>3</sup> Council Directive 98/41/EC of 18 June 1998 on the registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships operating to or from ports of the Member States of the Community.



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As a minimum, the AIS equipment should transmit the name, call sign, official number, MMSI number (where applicable), speed, course, position, vessel type and dimensions and the number of persons<sup>4</sup> on board.

Compliance with this requirement is mandatory as from the date indicated above. Non-compliance will entail the prohibition of navigation, without prejudice to other applicable penalties and legal proceedings.

Port Notice 08/2021 is hereby being revoked.

Capt David Bugeja  
Chief Officer and Harbour Master

29 March 2022

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<sup>4</sup> “persons” shall mean all people on board irrespective of age.