



MAGNETIC COMPASSES

Technical Notice SLS.13

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters,
Owners' Representatives and Recognised Organisations*

Reference SOLAS 74, as amended, Chapter V Regulation 19 and, HSC Codes 1994 and 2000 Chapter 13 Paragraph 13.2

Magnetic compasses should be periodically adjusted by a certified compass adjuster at intervals not exceeding three years.

Notwithstanding the above, each magnetic compass should be adjusted by a certified compass adjuster when:

- it is first installed
- the satisfactory operation of the compass is questionable;
- the ship/craft undergoes structural repairs or alterations that could effect its permanent and induced magnetism;
- electrical or magnetic equipment in the vicinity of the compass is added, removed or altered;
- the recorded deviations are excessive
- the compass shows physical defects
- records of compass deviations have not been maintained

If a certified compass adjuster is unavailable and the Master deems that adjustment of the magnetic compass is essential, then adjustment may be carried out by a person holding a Certificate of Competence issued in terms of Regulation II/2 of the STCW Convention 1978, as amended. The magnetic compass must then be re-adjusted by a certified compass adjuster at the first available opportunity.

Repairs required on magnetic compasses shall be carried out by a compass manufacturer, when same is readily available. Alternatively, repairs may be carried out by either:

- a service provided authorised by a SOLAS Contracting Government; or
- a service provider nominated by the Company. The Company is responsible for assessing and selecting the service provider and therefore appropriate procedures relating thereto must be established; or
- a service provider proposed by the vessel's Recognized Organization;

All repair work shall be carried out in accordance with international standards for magnetic compasses and a certificate to this effect is to be issued to the vessel by the compass manufacturer/service provider that carried out the works.

A compass deviation book shall be available for the purpose of recording deviations, details of any adjustments and repairs carried out. Compass errors should be determined at least once every watch.

The Owner/Operator and the Master are responsible for ensuring that compasses on board their ships are maintained in good working order.

Merchant Shipping Directorate

6 December 2012