

Ref. T2/2.07

USE OF "NOT UNDER COMMAND" (NUC) SIGNALS

1 At its forty-first session (18 to 22 September 1995), the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation expressed concern about an increase in the use of NUC lights in circumstances which cannot reasonably be classed as "exceptional", as defined in rule 3(f) of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS), 1972, as amended.

2 In particular, vessels have been reported using NUC lights while drifting off oil terminals awaiting orders. In many cases, vessels have deliberately shut down their main propulsion machinery for no justifiable reason, and have considered themselves to be "vessels not under command" and therefore relieved from their responsibilities as power-driven vessels underway, as set out in rule 18 of COLREGS.

3 A vessel which is underway and stopped, unless actually a "vessel not under command" as defined in the rules, must not use the NUC signal. Such a vessel must continue to exhibit the lights as prescribed in rule 23 of the COLREGS for a power-driven vessel under way. This is particularly important when vessels engaged in fishing or restricted in their ability to manoeuvre, are otherwise forced to take action to avoid collision with a vessel which is the give-way vessel in accordance with rule 16 of COLREGS.

4 Member Governments are urged to remind seafarers that NUC lights and signals should only be exhibited in circumstances as defined in rule 3(f) of the COLREGS. Such contraventions of COLREGS should be reported to the flag State concerned for appropriate action.