

IALA RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PORT TRAFFIC SIGNALS THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SYSTEM OF PORT TRAFFIC SIGNALS

It is intended that the rules for Port Traffic Signals shall be followed to control traffic movements in ports and port approaches. However, where no other conflicting rules exist, the appropriate authority may also use them to control traffic in other situations, for example, at locks or moveable bridges. Only lights shall be used.

The basis of the system is that there are:-

- Main messages, which should be displayed through simple signals easy for the mariner to commit to memory.
- Additional information, for example, for ports with a complex layout or complicated traffic situation, which can be displayed through the use of auxiliary signals exhibited together with the main ones, the comprehension of which need the use of nautical documents.

It may be that in some ports only one or two of the main messages or signals will suffice, for example "Vessels shall not proceed", "Vessels may proceed-two way traffic". There may also be cases where the message is needed is "Serious emergency". At ports where signals are used, every vessel must be able to follow a clear and explicit instruction. This means that a signal of some sort must always be displayed. However, in the case of a port where only the "Serious emergency" signal is used, there is no need to display any signal in normal circumstances.

In many situations, messages will not be the same in every direction and the signals will be directional. Some signals, however, may be "all round" when intended for all vessels simultaneously. This can be true for signals 1, 2 and 4.

The "Serious emergency" signal must be flashing. All other signals may be fixed or slow occulting.* Slow occulting will be particularly useful where background glare is a problem. However, in a given location, a mixture of fixed and slow occulting lights must not be used.

In places where both white and yellow lights are displayed as auxiliary signals, great care must be exercised as in certain conditions of visibility it is very difficult for the observer to decide whether a light is white or yellow when the other colour is not displayed simultaneously.

The above considerations led to the formulation of five rules and the development of the signals and messages as follows:-

**Note. Slow occulting is not defined by IALA but Occ 12s-eclipse 3s is suggested as appropriate.*

1. The Main Movement message given by a Port Traffic Signal shall always comprise three lights vertically disposed. No additional light shall be added to the column carrying the main message.
2. Red lights indicate "Do not proceed".
3. Green lights indicate "Proceed, subject to the conditions stipulated".
4. A single yellow light displayed to the left of the column carrying main message No. 2 or 5, at the level of the upper light, may be used to indicate that "Vessels which can safely navigate outside the main channel need not comply with the main message".
5. Signals auxiliary to the main signal may be devised by the appropriate Local Authority. Such signals should employ only white and/or yellow lights and should be displayed to the right of the column carrying the main message.