

RESOLUTION A.672(16)

*Adopted on 19 October 1989
Agenda item 10*

**GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR THE REMOVAL OF OFFSHORE
INSTALLATIONS AND STRUCTURES ON THE CONTINENTAL
SHELF AND IN THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE**

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 15(j) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to regulations and guidelines concerning maritime safety and the prevention and control of marine pollution,

BEARING IN MIND article 60 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982, which prescribes that any installations or structures which are abandoned or disused shall be removed to ensure safety of navigation, taking into account any generally accepted international standards established in this regard by the competent international organization, and that such removal shall also have due regard to fishing, protection of the marine environment and the rights and duties of other States,

BEARING IN MIND ALSO that the International Maritime Organization is the competent Organization to deal with this subject,

HAVING CONSIDERED the draft guidelines and standards approved by the Maritime Safety Committee at its fifty-seventh session which were developed in co-operation with the Marine Environment Protection Committee,

1. ADOPTS the Guidelines and Standards for the Removal of Offshore Installations and Structures on the Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone set out in the Annex to the present resolution;
2. RECOMMENDS that Member Governments take into account the aforesaid Guidelines and Standards when making decisions regarding the removal of abandoned or disused installations or structures.

ANNEX

**GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR THE REMOVAL OF OFFSHORE
INSTALLATIONS AND STRUCTURES ON THE CONTINENTAL
SHELF AND IN THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE**

1 GENERAL REMOVAL REQUIREMENT

1.1 Abandoned or disused offshore installations or structures on any continental shelf or in any exclusive economic zone are required to be removed, except where non-removal or partial removal is consistent with the following guidelines and standards.

1.2 The coastal State having jurisdiction over the installation or structure should ensure that it is removed in whole or in part in conformity with these guidelines and standards once it is no longer serving the primary purpose for which it was originally designed and installed, or serving a subsequent new use, or where no other reasonable justification cited in these guidelines and standards exists for allowing the installation or structure or parts thereof to remain on the sea-bed. Such removal should be performed as soon as reasonably practicable after abandonment or permanent disuse of such installation or structure.

1.3 Notification of such non-removal or partial removal should be forwarded to the Organization.

1.4 Nothing in these guidelines and standards is intended to preclude a coastal State from imposing more stringent removal requirements for existing or future installations or structures on its continental shelf or in its exclusive economic zone.

2 GUIDELINES

2.1 The decision to allow an offshore installation, structure, or parts thereof, to remain on the sea-bed should be based, in particular, on a case-by-case evaluation, by the coastal State with jurisdiction over the installation or structure, of the following matters:

- .1 any potential effect on the safety of surface or subsurface navigation, or of other uses of the sea;
- .2 the rate of deterioration of the material and its present and possible future effect on the marine environment;
- .3 the potential effect on the marine environment, including living resources;
- .4 the risk that the material will shift from its position at some future time;
- .5 the costs, technical feasibility, and risks of injury to personnel associated with removal of the installation or structure; and
- .6 the determination of a new use or other reasonable justification for allowing the installation or structure or parts thereof to remain on the sea-bed.

2.2 The determination of any potential effect on safety of surface or subsurface navigation or of other uses of the sea should be based on: the number, type and draught of vessels expected to transit the area in the foreseeable future; the cargoes being carried in the area; the tide, current, general hydrographic conditions and potentially extreme climatic conditions; the proximity of designated or customary sea lanes and port access routes; the aids to navigation in the vicinity; the location of commercial fishing areas; the width of the available navigable fairway; and whether the area is an approach to or in straits used for international navigation or routes used for international navigation through archipelagic waters.

2.3 The determination of any potential effect on the marine environment should be based upon scientific evidence taking into account: the effect on water quality; geological and hydrographic characteristics; the presence of endangered or threatened species; existing habitat types; local fishery resources; and the potential for pollution or contamination of the site by residual products from, or deterioration of, the offshore installation or structure.

2.4 The process for allowing an offshore installation or structure, or parts thereof, to remain on the sea-bed should also include the following actions by the coastal State with jurisdiction over the installation or structure: specific official authorization identifying the conditions under which an installation or structure, or parts thereof, will be allowed to remain on the sea-bed; the drawing up of a specific plan, adopted by the coastal State, to monitor the accumulation and deterioration of material left on the sea-bed to ensure there is no subsequent adverse impact on navigation, other uses of the sea or the marine environment; advance notice to mariners as to the specific position, dimensions, surveyed depth and markings of any installations or structures not entirely removed from the sea-bed; and advance notice to appropriate hydrographic services to allow for timely revision of nautical charts.

3 STANDARDS

The following standards should be taken into account when a decision is made regarding the removal of an offshore installation or structure.

3.1 All abandoned or disused installations or structures standing in less than 75 m of water and weighing less than 4,000 tonnes in air, excluding the deck and superstructure, should be entirely removed.

3.2 All abandoned or disused installations or structures emplaced on the sea-bed on or after 1 January 1998, standing in less than 100 m of water and weighing less than 4,000 tonnes in air, excluding the deck and superstructure, should be entirely removed.

3.3 Removal should be performed in such a way as to cause no significant adverse effects upon navigation or the marine environment. Installations should continue to be marked in accordance with IALA recommendations prior to the completion of any partial or complete removal that may be required. Details of the position and dimensions of any installations remaining after the removal operations should be promptly passed to the relevant national authorities and to one of the world charting hydrographic authorities. The means of removal or partial removal should not cause a significant adverse effect on living resources of the marine environment, especially threatened and endangered species.

3.4 The coastal State may determine that the installation or structure may be left wholly or partially in place where:

- .1 an existing installation or structure, including one referred to in paragraphs 3.1 or 3.2, or a part thereof, will serve a new use if permitted to remain wholly or partially in place on the sea-bed (such as enhancement of a living resource); or
- .2 an existing installation or structure, other than one referred to in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2, or part thereof, can be left there without causing unjustifiable interference with other uses of the sea.

3.5 Notwithstanding the requirements of paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2, where entire removal is not technically feasible or would involve extreme cost, or an unacceptable risk to personnel or the marine environment, the coastal State may determine that it need not be entirely removed.

3.6 Any abandoned or disused installation or structure, or part thereof, which projects above the surface of the sea should be adequately maintained to prevent structural failure. In cases of partial removal referred to in paragraphs 3.4.2 or 3.5, an unobstructed water column sufficient to ensure safety of navigation, but not less than 55 m, should be provided above any partially removed installation or structure which does not project above the surface of the sea.

3.7 Installations or structures which no longer serve the primary purpose for which they were originally designed or installed and are located in approaches to or in straits used for international navigation or routes used for international navigation through archipelagic waters, in customary deep-draught sea lanes, or in, or immediately adjacent to, routing systems which have been adopted by the Organization should be entirely removed and should not be subject to any exceptions.

3.8 The coastal State should ensure that the position, surveyed depth and dimensions of material from any installation or structure which has not been entirely removed from the sea-bed are indicated on nautical charts and that any remains are, where necessary, properly marked with aids to navigation. The coastal State should also ensure that advance notice of at least 120 days is issued to advise mariners and appropriate hydrographic services of the change in the status of the installation or structure.

3.9 Prior to giving consent to the partial removal of any installation or structure, the coastal State should satisfy itself that any remaining materials will remain on location on the sea-bed and not move under the influence of waves, tides, currents, storms or other foreseeable natural causes so as to cause a hazard to navigation.

3.10 The coastal State should identify the party responsible* for maintaining the aids to navigation, if they are deemed necessary to mark the position of any obstruction to navigation, and for monitoring the condition of remaining material. The coastal State should also ensure that the responsible party* conducts periodic monitoring, as necessary, to ensure continued compliance with these guidelines and standards.

3.11 The coastal State should ensure that legal title to installations and structures which have not been entirely removed from the sea-bed is unambiguous and that responsibility for maintenance and the financial ability to assume liability for future damages are clearly established.

3.12 Where living resources can be enhanced by the placement on the sea-bed of material from removed installations or structures (e.g. to create an artificial reef), such material should be located well away from customary traffic lanes, taking into account these guidelines and standards and other relevant standards for the maintenance of maritime safety.

3.13 On or after 1 January 1998, no installation or structure should be placed on any continental shelf or in any exclusive economic zone unless the design and construction of the installation or structure is such that entire removal upon abandonment or permanent disuse would be feasible.

3.14 Unless otherwise stated, these standards should be applied to existing as well as future installations or structures.

* The phrase "party responsible" refers to any juridical or physical person identified by the coastal State for a purpose mentioned in the above paragraph 3.10.