

**Resolution A.765(18)**

*Adopted on 4 November 1993  
(Agenda item 11)*

**GUIDELINES ON THE SAFETY OF TOWED SHIPS AND OTHER  
FLOATING OBJECTS, INCLUDING INSTALLATIONS,  
STRUCTURES AND PLATFORMS AT SEA**

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,

NOTING that the towage of ships and other floating objects, including installations, structures and platforms, is common practice,

NOTING ALSO that circumstances have arisen in which tows have presented a potential danger to navigation and the environment,

RECOGNIZING the need for guidance to minimize the danger to navigation resulting from towed ships and other floating objects, including installations, structures and platforms, which have broken adrift from the towing ship, have grounded or are out of control,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendation made by the Maritime Safety Committee at its sixty-first session,

1. ADOPTS the Guidelines on the Safety of Towed Ships and Other Floating Objects, Including Installations, Structures and Platforms at Sea, set out in the annex to the present resolution;
2. RECOMMENDS that Governments take into account the Guidelines when making decisions regarding the safe towage of ships and other floating objects, including installations, structures and platforms.

Annex

**GUIDELINES ON THE SAFETY OF TOWED SHIPS AND OTHER  
FLOATING OBJECTS, INCLUDING INSTALLATIONS,  
STRUCTURES AND PLATFORMS AT SEA**

**PLANNING**

**1** The route to be followed should be planned in advance, taking into account such factors as the anticipated weather, tidal streams and currents, the size, shape, windage and displacement of the tow and any navigational hazards to be avoided. Weather routeing advice should be used where available. Careful consideration is to be given to the number, size and effective bollard pull of the towing ship or ships to be employed.

**2** There should be a contingency plan to cover the onset of adverse weather, particularly in respect to arrangements for heaving to or taking shelter.

3 Where the towing operation falls under the jurisdiction of an approving authority, any certificate issued should specify the intended general route and indicate any special conditions, also noting the responsibility and authority of the master/person in command of tug and tow to deviate from the proposed route should circumstances warrant this measure.

## **PREPARATION**

4 Tows should exhibit the navigation lights, shapes and, if manned, make the sound signals required by the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended. Due consideration should be given to the reliability of the lights and sound signals and their ability to function for the duration of the voyage. When practicable, a duplicate system of lights should be provided.

5 Prior to sailing, the watertight integrity of the tow should be confirmed by an inspection of the closing arrangements for all hatches, valves, airpipes, and other openings through which water might enter the towed unit and affect its stability. It should also be confirmed that any watertight doors or other closing arrangements within the hull are securely closed and that any portable closing plates are in place.

6 The securing arrangements and weather protection for the cargo, equipment and stores carried on the tow should be carefully examined to ensure that they are adequate for the voyage.

7 When appropriate, the rudder should be secured in the amidships position and measures taken to prevent the propeller shaft from turning.

8 The tow should be at a suitable draught and suitably trimmed for the intended voyage.

9 The tow should have adequate intact stability in all the loaded and ballast conditions expected during the voyage.

10 The tow should be equipped with an anchor, suitable for holding the tow in severe weather conditions, that is securely attached to a chain cable or wire and is arranged for release in an emergency either by persons on the tow or boarding the tow for this purpose, unless rendered impractical due to the design or condition of the towed unit.

11 Life-saving appliances in the form of lifejackets and lifebuoys should be provided whenever personnel are likely to be on board the tow even if only for short periods. When personnel are expected to remain on board for longer periods of time, liferafts should also be provided. Whenever the tow is continually manned, the riding-crew should be provided with adequate supplies of food and water, cooking and sanitary facilities, radio equipment, including means of communication with the towing ship, distress signals, life-saving and fire-fighting appliances.

12 Boarding facilities should be rigged on each side of the tow so that personnel from the towing ship can board at any time.

13 Every towed unit, whether manned or not, should be provided with a certificate confirming its fitness to be towed.

14 To reduce the risk of pollution, the amount of oil carried on the tow should be limited to what is required for the safety of the tow and/or towing ship and for their normal operations, provided no risk to the environment will result from the removal of oil from the towed unit.

## **TOWING ARRANGEMENTS**

15 The towing arrangements and procedures should be such as to reduce to a minimum any danger to personnel during the towing operation.

16 The towing arrangements should be suitable for the particular tow and of adequate strength.

17 The design and arrangement of towing fittings should take into account both normal and emergency conditions.

**18** Sufficient spare equipment to completely re-make the towing arrangements should be available, unless impractical.

**19** Secondary or emergency towing arrangements should be fitted on board the tow so as to be readily recoverable by the towing ship in the event of a failure of the main towing system or ancillary equipment.

## **THE TOW**

**20** The towing operation should be in the charge of a competent towing master. Other towing personnel should be suitably experienced and sufficient in number.

**21** The tow should not proceed to sea until a satisfactory inspection of the towing ship as well as the towage, closing and stowage arrangements of the tow has been carried out by the towing/tug master and, when considered to be necessary, by another competent person.

**22** In special cases, where particular circumstances or factors signify an increased risk to the tow, or where the risk cannot be evaluated on the basis of seafaring and nautical knowledge and experience alone, the owner or towing/tug master should apply for survey in accordance with the guidelines of a competent organization or authority as appropriate.

**23** In the special cases referred to in 22, coastal State authorities should be informed in advance of a tow and, after departure, coast radio stations or coastguard should be kept informed of the progress.

## **TOWAGE AND OPERATING MANUALS**

**24** For the towage of ships and other floating objects, including installations, structures and platforms, special towage requirements, of which due account should be taken, should be laid down in the towage and/or operating manuals of such units (as appropriate), copies of which should be given to the towing master and tug master(s).

## **IN AN EMERGENCY**

**25** Should the tow present a direct danger to navigation, offshore structures or coastlines through breaking adrift or for some other cause, the master of the towing ship is bound by SOLAS V/2 to communicate the information by all the means at his disposal to ships in the vicinity, and also to the competent authorities at the first point on the coast with which he can communicate.

**26** In all cases, the arrangements for recovering the tow, should it break adrift, are to be made in accordance with good seamanship, bearing in mind the seasonal weather conditions and area of operation.