

ARTICLE 43

Alarm, Distress and Urgency Signals

The alarm signal and the distress signal may only be used by ships in serious and imminent danger which require immediate assistance. In all other cases in which assistance is required, or in which a vessel desires to issue a warning that it may become necessary to send out the alarm signal or the distress signal at a later stage, use must be made of the urgency signal (XXX) established by the International Radiotelegraph Convention, Washington, 1927.

If a ship has sent out the alarm or distress signal and subsequently finds that assistance is no longer required such ship shall immediately notify all stations concerned as provided for by the Radiotelegraph Convention in force.

ARTICLE 44

Speed of Distress Messages

The speed of transmission of messages in connection with cases of distress, urgency or safety, shall not exceed 16 words per minute.

ARTICLE 45

Distress Messages. Procedure

1. The master of a ship on receiving on his ship a wireless distress signal from any other ship, is bound to proceed with all speed to the assistance of the persons in distress, unless he is unable, or in the special circumstances of the case, considers it unreasonable or unnecessary to do so, or unless he is released under the provisions of paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Article.

2. The master of a ship in distress, after consultation, so far as may be possible, with the masters of the ships which answer his call for assistance, has the right to requisition such one or more of those ships as he considers best able to render assistance, and it shall be the duty of the master or masters of the ship or ships requisitioned to comply with the requisition by continuing to proceed with all speed to the assistance of the persons in distress.

3. A master shall be released from the obligation imposed by paragraph 1 of this Article as soon as he is informed by the master of the ship requisitioned, or, where more ships than one are requisitioned, all the masters of the ships requisitioned, that he or they are complying with the requisition.

4. A master shall be released from the obligation imposed by paragraph 1 of this Article, and, if his ship has been requisitioned, from the obligation imposed by paragraph 2 of this Article, if he is informed by a ship which has reached the persons in distress, that assistance is no longer necessary.

5. If a master of a ship, on receiving a wireless distress call from another ship, is unable, or in the special circumstances of the case considers it unreasonable or unnecessary to go to the assistance of that other ship, he must immediately inform the master of that other ship accordingly, and enter in his log-book his reasons for failing to proceed to the assistance of the persons in distress.

6. The provisions of this Article do not prejudice the International Convention for the unification of certain rules with respect to Assistance and Salvage at Sea, signed at Brussels on the 23rd September, 1910, particularly the obligation to render assistance imposed by Article 11 of that Convention.