

# Canada Weekly

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## Safer navigation with new international buoyage system

A new international buoyage system will be introduced on Canadian waters later this year, reports Peter Magwood in *Transpo 83*, Vol. 6/1. For the first time, mariners of any nationality will be able to navigate safely and without confusion.

The new system, similar to the current Canadian one, was developed in the late 1970s by member countries of the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities (IALA). It's a vast improvement over the hodge-podge of more than 30 different buoyage systems in use throughout the world until recently.

In Canada, all the familiar shapes and most of the familiar colours, will remain. The colour changes include: port-hand buoys (those on the left side of the channel) to green from black, and fair-

way buoys (marking safe water or the middle of a channel) to red and white from black and white. A new green-and-red bifurcation buoy will be introduced to mark points where a channel divides. Also, cardinal buoys will become part of the Canadian system. Cardinal buoys indicate the same side on which to pass a danger, and draw attention to features in the channel, such as a bend, junction or the end of a shoal.

Buoys and channel markers have been used since the earliest times of marine commerce. They were helpful, however, only as long as their meaning was clearly understood.

Uncertainty began when individual shipping nations developed channel and danger marking systems more or less as they saw fit. Buoys of the same shape



The paint cans are already out at the Coast Guard base at Prescott, Ontario. Eventually, 6 000 of Canada's 14 000 buoys will be painted in new colours.



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