PREVENTING MARINE POLLUTION IN ANTARCTIC WATERS

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At XXV ATCM, ASOC tabled IP76 Improving Awareness of Protocol Obligations Amongst Antarctic Yacht Operators. That paper suggested that means needed to be found to provide clear, unambiguous advice to yacht operators about their obligations under the Protocol. In the discussion at XXV ATCM, COMNAP advised that one member had produced a relevant navigational note (paragraph 112, XXV ATCM Final Report).

ASOC is grateful to COMNAP for subsequently identifying this as Marine Notice 10/2000 produced by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority – Prevention of pollution from ships operating in waters south of 60 south latitude.

Although this Notice relates only to the avoidance of marine pollution – and ASOC’s XXV ATCM IP 76 was directed to improving awareness of, and hence compliance with, the wider set of Protocol obligations – it appears to provide a useful model for Parties.

Accordingly, ASOC provides here a draft Notice to Mariners – Preventing Marine Pollution in Antarctica, based on that Australian model.
This notice is to advise ship owners and operators that, as of ___________, Annex IV of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty will be applied to all waters south of 60° south latitude. Titled “Prevention of Marine Pollution,” Annex IV includes restrictions on discharges of sewage, noxious chemicals, garbage and oil, as well as ship retention and reception facilities.

Garbage cannot be disposed of at sea, with the exception of food scraps ground to no more than 25mm. Disposal of allowable food scraps must be done no less than 12nm from the nearest land or ice shelf.

Discharge of oil or oily mixtures is limited to the MARPOL 73/78 convention limits. Dirty ballast, sludge, and all other oily mixtures and residues may not be discharged in the area. Noxious of chemical substances cannot be discharged in any amount potentially harmful to the marine environment.

Ships certified to carry more than ten passengers must refrain from dumping untreated sewage within 12 nm of land or ice shelves. Outside of this 12 nm perimeter, discharge must take place at a moderate rate, while the vessel is moving at a speed of not less than 4 knots.

The Environmental Protocol provides certain exemptions in cases of emergency relating to the safety of a crew or vessel, or the saving of life at sea.

Vessels preparing for Antarctic operations must ensure that a tank (or tanks) with enough capacity to hold oily wastes and noxious chemicals for the duration of operations in the Antarctic Treaty Area. Such wastes and garbage should be disposed of after leaving the area at an appropriate reception facility.

These requirements take effect immediately. For more detailed information, mariners should consult the text of the Environmental Protocol.