

NORTH P&I CLUB PUBLISHES NEW BRIDGE GUIDE ON HOW TO AVOID COLLISIONS

22 JANUARY 2013

The 'A' rated 170 million GT North P&I Club has just published a new loss prevention guide for watchkeepers on how to avoid collisions at sea. Designed specifically for use on ship's bridges, it focuses on what the Club considers to be the most important 'rules of the road' in the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (COLREGS).

In his foreword to *Collisions: How to Avoid Them*, the Hon Mr Justice Nigel Teare, Admiralty Judge at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, says, 'Despite all the impressive electronic assistance designed to enable deck officers to avoid collisions, collisions still occur. The answer is, and always has been since radar was first introduced, that the rules of navigation set out in the COLREGS must still be applied by deck officers.'

'This short and compact guide therefore has a vital and necessary role. It reminds mariners of the basics of the COLREGS and that they must be kept well in mind and obeyed notwithstanding the profusion of equipment on the modern bridge. That equipment does not avoid collision - it is merely an aid to collision avoidance. What avoids collisions is compliance with the COLREGS,' says Teare.

The guide focuses on the 12 regulations North considers are most often misinterpreted and applied. These are: responsibility, look-outs, safe speed, risk of collision, action to avoid collisions, traffic separation schemes, overtaking, head-on situations, crossing situations, action by give-way vessels, action by stand-on vessels and conduct of vessels in restricted visibility.

According to the Club's head of loss prevention Tony Baker, 'We believe these rules are the key to collision avoidance as we see them breached time and time again when collisions occur. The guide demonstrates how these rules fit together and how the interpreting and applying each of them can be influenced, sometimes wrongly, by the vast mass of information now available from electronic aids to navigation.'

The guide also includes illustrated case studies of recent major collisions, plus fold-out charts for plotting developing situations. 'The case studies and the questions they ask are intended to be the starting point for wide-ranging discussions on all aspects of collision avoidance by bridge teams,' says Baker.

Copies of the guide are being circulated to all North's Members and entered ships. Non-Members can buy them, along with all of North's other loss-prevention publications, from marine bookshops or directly from the Club's distributor Anchorage Press, <http://www.anchoragepress.co.uk/>.

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