

**GIBRALTAR MARITIME ADMINISTRATION**  
(Ministry of Maritime Affairs)



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## Shipping Guidance Notice – 050

### Ship's Standard Magnetic Compass

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To: Ship Owners, Operators, Masters, Officers and Classification Societies

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References: **SOLAS Chapter V, Reg 19**  
**IMO Res A 382 (X) as amended**

All ships shall have a properly adjusted standard magnetic compass, or other means, independent of any power supply, to determine the ship's heading and display the reading at the main steering position.

There are no requirements for Gibraltar Registered vessels to adjust their magnetic compass at fixed intervals not exceeding two years.

However, there is a requirement that each magnetic compass shall be swung and adjusted by a competent, qualified compass adjustor when:

1. The compass is first installed
2. The compass becomes unreliable
3. The vessel undergoes structural repairs or alterations that could affect its permanent and induced magnetism
4. Electrical or magnetic equipment close to the compass is removed or altered
5. A period of two years has elapsed since the last adjustment and a record of compass deviations has not been maintained
6. The recorded deviations are excessive. Deviations greater than 5 degrees should be considered excessive.
7. The compass shows physical damage or defects.

The performance of the magnetic standard compass should be determined by frequent observations to confirm compass deviation on various headings. The observations should be recorded in the compass deviation book. The error of the standard compass should be determined at least once a watch and, when possible, after every major course alteration.

Richard Montado  
Maritime Administrator

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