

Meeting. A public meeting will be held on July 23, 2003 in Washington, DC at the Grand Hyatt Washington, DC, 1000 H Street, NW., Washington, DC 20001.

Availability. You may inspect the material incorporated by reference at room 1409, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street SW., Washington, DC 20593-0001 between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is 202-267-6277. Copies of the material are available as indicated in the "Incorporation by Reference" section of this preamble.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this interim rule, contact Mr. Jorge Arroyo, Office of Vessel Traffic Management (G-MWV), Coast Guard by telephone 202-267-1103, toll-free telephone 1-800-842-8740 ext. 7-1103, or electronic mail msregs@comdt.uscg.mil. For questions on viewing or submitting material to the docket, call Ms. Dorothy Beard, Chief, Dockets, Department of Transportation, at 202-366-5149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Due to the short timeframe given to implement these National Maritime Transportation Security initiatives, as directed by the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) of 2002 (MTSA, Pub. L. 107-295, 116 STAT. 2064), and to ensure all comments are in the public venue for these important rulemakings, we are not accepting comments containing protected information for these interim rules. We request you submit comments, as explained in the Request for Comments section below, and discuss your concerns or support in a manner that is not security sensitive. We also request that you not submit proprietary information as part of your comment.

The Docket Management Facility maintains the public docket for this rulemaking. Comments and material received from the public, as well as documents mentioned in this preamble as being available in the docket, will be available for inspection or copying at room PL-401 on the Plaza level of the Nassif Building, 400 Seventh Street SW., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You may also find this docket on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Electronic forms of all comments received into any of our dockets can be searched by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor unit, etc.) and is open to the public without

restriction. You may also review the Department of Transportation's complete Privacy Act Statement published in the **Federal Register** on April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477-78), or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov/>.

Request for Comments

We encourage you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting comments and related material. Your comments will be considered for the final rule we plan to issue before November 25, 2003, to replace this interim rule. If you choose to comment on this rulemaking, please include your name and address, identify the specific docket number for this interim rule (USCG-2003-14757), indicate the specific heading of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. If you have comments on another rule please submit those comments in a separate letter to the docket for that rulemaking. You may submit your comments and material by mail, hand delivery, fax, or electronic means to the Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES**; but please submit your comments and material by only one means. If you submit them by mail or hand delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit them by mail and would like to know that they reached the Facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and material received during the comment period, and we may amend this rule and the final rule that replaces it in view of them.

Note, matters pertaining to AIS licensing, equipment certification, and frequencies are subject to Federal Communications Commission regulations and are not addressed in this rule, see FCC Public Notice DA 02-1362 in the docket for further information.

Public Meeting

We will hold a public meeting on July 23, 2003, in Washington, DC at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, at the address listed under **ADDRESSES**. The meeting will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to discuss this Automatic Identification System (AIS) rulemaking in addition to the other five maritime security rulemakings, found elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**. In addition, you may submit a request for other public meetings to the Docket Management Facility at the address under **ADDRESSES** explaining why another one would be beneficial. If we determine that other meetings would aid this rulemaking, we will hold them

at a time and place announced by a later notice in the **Federal Register**.

Regulatory Information

We did not publish a notice of proposed rulemaking for this rulemaking and are making this interim rule effective upon publication. Section 102(d)(1) of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA, Public Law 107-295, 116 Stat. 2064) requires the publication of an interim rule as soon as practicable without regard to the provisions of chapter 5 of title 5, U.S. Code (Administrative Procedure Act). The Coast Guard finds that harmonization of U.S. regulations with maritime security measures adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in December 2002, and the need to institute measures for the protection of U.S. maritime security as soon as practicable, furnish good cause for this interim rule to take effect immediately under both the Administrative Procedure Act and section 808 of the Congressional Review Act.

Recently Enacted Legislation

The provisions set forth in this rulemaking and the associated regulatory assessment take into account: (1) The recently enacted MTSA, which requires an AIS on most commercial vessels on all navigable waters, and (2) the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, (SOLAS) amendments from the December 2002 International Maritime Organization (IMO) Diplomatic Conference. This rule will amend AIS standards to those adopted by the IMO and SOLAS and defined in the International Telecommunication Union Radiocommunication Bureau (ITU-R) Recommendation ITU-R M.1371-1 and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) IEC 61993-2.

The recent SOLAS AIS amendments accelerate the implementation schedule, as discussed below under "Background and Purpose-Acceleration of SOLAS AIS Implementation." Copies of the MTSA and the SOLAS AIS amendments are available in the docket as indicated under **ADDRESSES**.

Public Meetings for Rulemakings Related to Vessel Traffic Service

The Coast Guard held a public meeting on October 28, 1998, in New Orleans, Louisiana. The meeting was announced in a notice published in the **Federal Register** on September 18, 1998 (63 FR 49939). This meeting gave the Coast Guard the opportunity to discuss the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) concept on the Lower Mississippi River and the envisioned use of automatic