

intends to carry out this mandate completely; however, at this early stage of AIS deployment, the Coast Guard deems it important to fully require an AIS, particularly in congested waters, where it has the capability to manage the AIS VHF data link. An AIS permits shore-side base stations to perform various functions to manage the AIS data link, such as changing operating frequencies, power outputs, and reporting rates, should the network require it. This action may be necessary to ensure safe navigation. The Coast Guard anticipates having these facilities in most of our major waterways; however, until then it intends to proceed on a rollout plan by waterway. In a notice and request for comments published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**, the Coast Guard is seeking comments on expansion of AIS implementation to vessels not on

international voyages outside VTS and VMRS areas.

Acceleration of SOLAS AIS Implementation

The December 2000 Amendments to SOLAS provided for a phased-in AIS carriage schedule under chapter V, regulation 19.2.4 that started July 1, 2002, and extended to July 1, 2008, depending on ship type and tonnage. After September 11, 2001, and in an effort to improve safety, security and maritime domain awareness worldwide, the United States initiated action through IMO to accelerate this implementation schedule.

In November 2001, the IMO Assembly, on the recommendation of the United States and numerous other nations, adopted resolution A.924(22) with the goals of enhancing maritime security. This resolution instructed the Organization to develop appropriate measures to improve maritime security.

Based upon a recommendation by the United States, the Assembly also agreed to convene an international conference in December 2002 to formally adopt whatever measures were developed.

In February 2002, an Intersessional Working Group of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) met and recommended that the AIS carriage timeline be accelerated, in addition to several other security-related initiatives, which are discussed in separate interim rules published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**.

In May 2002, the Maritime Safety Committee met and accepted amendments to SOLAS related to the accelerated AIS implementation (including several phase-in options), for consideration at a December 2002 Diplomatic Conference. The Diplomatic Conference convened in December 2002 and adopted the phased-in AIS carriage schedule as described in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1.—SOLAS AIS SCHEDULE (CHAPTER V, REGULATION 19.2.4) FOR VESSELS ON INTERNATIONAL VOYAGES

Constructed	Type of vessel	Implementation date
On or after July 1, 2002	All	July 1, 2002.
Before July 1, 2002	Passenger ships (carrying 12 or more passengers)	July 1, 2003.
	Tankers	First survey for safety equipment on or after July 1, 2003
	Ships, other than passenger ships and tankers, greater than or equal to 50,000 gross tonnage.	July 1, 2004.
	Ships, other than passenger ships and tankers, greater than or equal to 300, but less than 50,000 gross tonnage.	First safety equipment survey after July 1, 2004, or by December 31, 2004, whichever occurs earlier.

This interim rule implements this revised SOLAS schedule, as it concerns vessels on international voyage, and through a separate notice titled "Automatic Identification System; Expansion of Carriage Requirements for U.S. Waters" [USCG–2003–14878], published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**, we seek comments regarding vessels solely engaged in domestic voyages and not transiting a VMRS.

The Coast Guard received some unfavorable comments regarding AIS carriage (see USCG–1998–4399–3 at <http://dms.dot.gov>) in the VTS Lower Mississippi River rulemaking docket (USCG–1998–4399). There were also AIS comments made during the Public Meetings on Maritime Security, discussed in the preamble to the interim rule titled "Implementation of National Maritime Security Initiatives," published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**. The Coast Guard is of the strong opinion that an AIS should be installed not only on SOLAS vessels, but also on most commercial vessels as soon as possible, particularly in vessel traffic monitoring areas, such as VTS

and VMRS areas. Thus, the Coast Guard is requiring AIS carriage for non-SOLAS vessels while navigating these areas. There is a general discussion of comments on AIS carriage included in the preamble for the interim rule titled "Implementation of National Maritime Security Initiatives," published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**.

Automatic Identification System (AIS)

The AIS integrates a number of technologies to enhance the safe and efficient navigation of ships, protection of the environment, operation of VTS, and maritime domain awareness. AIS does this by providing ship-to-ship information for collision avoidance, and ship-to-shore information about a ship and its cargo for traffic management and increased maritime awareness. Included in these technologies are Global Navigation Satellite System, frequency agile digital very high frequency transceivers, self-organizing communications protocols, and an architecture that allows input from and output to other shipborne navigational equipment (for example, input from rate

of turn indicator and heading sensor; output to radar or electronic chart display systems). Data from these technologies can be tailored to the mariner's needs and desires. The automated operation of the AIS and the reduction of voice interactions should enhance mariners' ability to navigate. More than 5 million voice reports a year will be eliminated in existing VTS areas alone by using AIS.

The AIS transmits and receives vessel information in near real-time from other ships and rebroadcasts from shore stations, such as—

(1) *Static Information*—Vessel call sign, name, IMO identification number, dimensions, type;

(2) *Voyage-Related Information*—Draft, cargo type, destination, and estimated time of arrival; and

(3) *Dynamic Information*—Time in Universal Time Coordinated, latitude/longitude position, course over ground, speed over ground, heading, rate of turn, navigational status.

The AIS provides mariners with accurate navigation information. In addition, shore stations will be able to