

AVOIDING COLLISIONS AT SEA – FROM MULTI-SHIP TO SHIP-TO-SHIP ENCOUNTER

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Abstract

It has been almost 50 years since the 1972 International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea known as COLREGs were introduced, and regular amendments have been taking place accordingly ever since. Many studies and accident reports indicate that the accidents were caused by either human error or are associated with human error as a result of inappropriate human responses. Collisions commonly represent many of these accidents and they often happen in multi-ship encounters. COLREGs are written for ship-to-ship encounters but they are still valid also for their application in multi-ship encounters. Many teachers report that many students and also senior officers may have serious problems on applying COLREGs in multi-ship encounters. This paper discusses the “Divida et Impera” approach of “ACTs plus” Erasmus+ project team to facilitate the application of COLREGs in multi-ship encounters. The “Divida et Impera” approach is based on splitting the multi-ship encounters into several ship-to-ship encounters. Then, usually contrary obligations of a single ship identified in several ship-to-ship encounters are interpreted to finally find give-way vessel(s) and the most appropriate collision avoiding actions. This paper discusses “Divida et Impera” approach on one multi-ship encounter scenario while many other multi-ship encounter scenarios enriched with graphics, videos and quiz may be found at ACTs Plus online platform (advanced.ecolregs.com).

Keywords: COLREGs, collision avoidance, multi-ship encounters