



Bulletin 27 - 12/97 - Traffic Separation Zone Infringements - Ushant (France)

Many traffic separation zones around the world are monitored on a 24 hr basis. Masters trying to take shortcuts should bear this in mind.

The Ushant Traffic Separation Zone is one such zone which the master of one of our member's vessels has recently found to his dismay.

In this incident, a short coastal trip, it would appear the master was trying to shave a few miles off the sea passage and was steaming through a prohibited area. Unfortunately this was observed by the local French radar surveillance station and recorded. The vessel was traced to the next port, unfortunately for the master this was a French port and the authorities have recently been taking a very inflexible position on this type of infringement. The master was required to present himself before the Board of Trade and explain why he was navigating in the inshore traffic zone. The master's explanation was that he had "drifted." The authorities were not convinced and it was decided the master should be brought before a maritime court.

Nearly 2 years after the incident the court case was heard. The master was found guilty and ordered personally to pay a fine of FFr 50,000 (approx US\$ 10,000) and was given a 6 months suspended **JAIL** sentence.

"Drifting" in Traffic Separation Zones is not recommended. Besides being dangerous, it is expensive, time consuming and inconvenient. It is also clearly taken as a serious breach of law with the possibility, in some areas, of custodial sentences for those responsible.

Whilst fines are to be expected, custodial sentences are something new, please bear this in mind when notified of this type of claim in the above area.

Source of information: Anonymous through Janette Clacy D4