

Bulletin 499 - 12/06 - Emergency Wreck Marking Buoy - UK

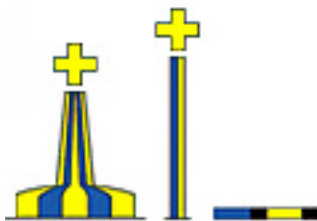
Trinity House, the General Lighthouse Authority (GLA) for England, Wales the Channel Islands and Gibraltar, has launched a new buoy to be used in the initial stages of an incident.

It is considered that there is a need for the new buoy because of limitations with the present IALA Maritime Buoyage System when providing initial marking of new dangers. The wreck of the Tricolor in the Dover Straits in 2002 brought into sharp focus the effective responses required to quickly and effectively mark new dangers and prevent collisions.

Currently, new dangers are generally marked by cardinal or lateral buoys, but a number of Authorities also deploy isolated danger marks. Recent groundings and collisions have indicated a need for a revision of how new dangers are to be marked, especially in an emergency.

The volume of traffic, background lighting and proliferation of Aids to Navigation (AtoN) around the UK may make the deployment of cardinal or lateral marks difficult for mariners to identify quickly a new danger in the initial stages of an incident. The emergency wreck-marking buoy is designed to provide high visual and radio/radar recognition. It is intended that the wreck marking buoys should be maintained in position until:

- The wreck is well known and has been promulgated in nautical publications
- The wreck has been fully surveyed and exact details such as position and least depth above the wreck are known
- A permanent form of marking of the wreck has been carried out.



What does it look like?

The buoy has the following characteristics:

- Pillar or spar buoy, with size dependant on location
- Coloured in equal number and dimensions of blue and yellow vertical stripes (minimum of 4 stripes and maximum of 8 stripes)
- Fitted with an alternating blue and yellow flashing light with a nominal range of 4 nautical miles (the range may be altered depending on local conditions) and the blue and yellow 1 second flashes are alternated with an interval of 0.5 seconds
 $B1.0s + 0.5s + Y1.0s + 0.5s = 3.0s$
- If multiple buoys are deployed then the lights will be synchronised
- Consideration should be given to the use of a racon Morse Code "D" and/or AIS transponder
- The top mark, if fitted, is to be a standing/upright yellow cross

Recently one was deployed over the wreck of FV Pamela in Carmarthen Bay, Wales.

Source of information: Trinity House
www.trinityhouse.co.uk