



# Technical Circular

No.: 026/2016

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016

**To Whomsoever it may concern**

**Subject: United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Alert Reg Auto-Pilot Induced Casualties**

- Over reliance on auto-pilot and poor comprehension of its efficiency and limitation has resulted in several accidents at sea.
- The use of auto-pilot is not recommended when navigating in areas with high traffic density, narrow channels and traffic separation schemes and other restricted waters. The auto-pilot may not be efficient enough to turn the vessel spontaneously while navigating in such areas demanding swift alterations and manoeuvres to avoid collision or close quarter situations.
- United States Coast Guard has issued a Marine Safety Alert 10-16 (copy attached) which addresses the safe navigation of vessels while operating with an auto-pilot.
- The Code of Federal Regulations, 46 CFR contains the regulations governing the use of auto-pilots and reads as follows:
- **Use of Auto-pilot** – When the automatic pilot is used in areas of high traffic density, conditions of restricted visibility, or any other hazardous navigational situations, the master shall ensure that:
  - It is possible to immediately establish manual control of the vessel's steering;
  - A competent person is ready at all times to take over steering control; and
  - The changeover from automatic to manual control of the vessel's steering and the reverse is made by, or under the supervision of, the master or officer of the watch.
- The USCG strongly recommends that vessel owners/ operators and masters to ensure that:
  - The navigating staff is fully aware of "Use of Auto-Pilot" regulations found in the vessel's respective subchapter in 46 Code of Federal Regulations.



. This Technical Circular and the material contained in it is provided only for the purpose of supplying current information to the reader and not as an advice to be relied upon by any person.

. While we have taken utmost care to be as factual as possible, readers/ users are advised to verify the exact text and content of the Regulation from the original source/ issuing Authority.

- Conduct periodic training to ensure that crews are properly versed in the operations and limitations of the auto-pilot system.
  - Develop and prominently post written procedures on how to switch from auto-pilot to manual control in the vicinity of the auto-pilot system.
  - Review company policies and evaluate setting operational limitations on the use of auto-pilot with regard to areas of high traffic density, conditions of restricted visibility, or any other hazardous navigational situations.
- Ship Owners / operators and masters are advised to be guided by the attached USCG Marine Safety Alert.

**Enclosure:**

1. USCG Marine Safety Alert 10-16 Reg “Avoid Auto-Pilot Induced Casualties”.

---

Whilst the utmost care has been taken in the compilation of the Technical Information, neither Indian Register of Shipping, its affiliates and subsidiaries if any, nor any of its directors, officers, employees or agents assume any responsibility and shall not be liable to any person for any loss, damage or expense caused in any manner whatsoever by reliance on the information in this document.