

INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS (IR) COMMISSION – CHAIR’S REPORT TO THE WORLD
SAILING BOARD, NOVEMBER 2025

1. The International Regulations Commission provides advice on matters related to the regulation of recreational boats or craft by government actions or otherwise.
2. The Commission was substantially strengthened this year by the addition of five new members to make a total membership of nine, drawn from Finland, Germany, Greece, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, the Netherlands and the UK.
3. Members of the IR Commission monitor regulatory and technical developments in international fora – principally in the various committees and working groups of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and the European Boating Association (EBA). We make interventions and seek wider support from States and other organisations on behalf of World Sailing’s interests, wherever the potential emerges for additional risks or constraints that might affect the activities and/or safety of racing, cruising, sailing and other recreational craft.
4. Over the past year members of the Commission have participated in the following meetings:

International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

- Polar Seminar - January 2025
- Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) 83 - April 2025
- Sub-committee on Navigation, Communications and Search & Rescue (NCSR) 12 - May 2025
- Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) 110 - June 2025
- Sub-committee on the Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC) 11 - September 2025
- MSC Correspondence Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)

International Standards Organisation (ISO)

- Technical Committee 188/Sub Committee 1 regarding Personal Safety Equipment, and TC188/Working Group 9 on small craft dimensions.

European Boating Association (EBA)

- General Assembly and Working Groups attended by expert staff of the UK Royal Yachting Association.

5. Nothing of major significance has emerged since last Conference that would directly affect the construction, equipment or operation of yachts and other sport and leisure craft. However, we have been monitoring some emerging regulatory, technical and safety issues and trends with particular care:

a. Maritime security and piracy, where 2024 saw a modest but welcome 3% decrease in incidents globally compared to 2023, with 146 incidents recorded in total. This was in line with an overall reduction in reported attacks over the past five years, from 229 incidents in 2020. The areas most affected by acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships in 2024 were the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (91 incidents: up by 7%), followed by Indian Ocean (19: up by 280%), West Africa (17: down by 23%), South China Sea (10: down by 29%), Arabian Sea (7: up by 250%), Latin America and the Caribbean (2: down by 89%), There were no reported attacks in East Africa, North Atlantic or the Mediterranean.

b. The WS IR Commission's 2022 report on the incidence of piracy and armed robbery has been updated this year, along with its detailed guidance for yachtsmen on: minimising the risk of capture; how to liaise with and report to regional naval and security authorities; and how to react to actual piracy/armed robbery events. Voyage preparation, threat and risk assessment remain essential when planning any sailing passages in areas of heightened threat, as is the observance of current best management practices (BMP) and reporting protocols. The 2025 update reflects recent changes to the piracy/armed robbery threat profile, together with amendments to reporting procedures.

c. Separate safety concerns continue in the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden where, according to Reuters, Houthi rebels have targeted more than 100 merchant ships travelling through the Red Sea since November 2023, sinking four vessels, seizing two others, taking 36 seafarers hostage and killing at least eight sailors. While these attacks have been aimed at large merchant and naval vessels, the possibility of strikes on, or collateral damage to, recreational vessels cannot be ignored. GPS jamming and other forms of electronic interference have also taken place in the area. Their effects are largely indiscriminate, and small vessel skippers should avoid over-reliance on GPS or other electronic navigation aids in this region.

6. The Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue Sub-committee (NCSR) agreed measures to introduce improved systems for communications, navigation and maritime safety, aimed mainly at Convention-sized ships (>500 Gross Tons), but with relevance also to offshore and oceanic sailors. These include the introduction of NAVDAT (digital navigational data via MF and HF) to replace NAVTEX; VHF Data Exchange (VDES) as a more capable vehicle for communications and AIS data; and new requirements placed on Coastal States for the broadcast of Maritime Safety Information (MSI).

7. On environmental matters, the IMO's Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) is maintaining its close focus on greenhouse gas reduction targets, including via the introduction of technical and economic measures within an agreed 'Net-Zero' framework for addressing carbon and other emissions from vessels. While these measures apply principally to ships of SOLAS Convention size (ie over 500 gross tons), we are staying alert to any potential future implications for much smaller vessels too. Similar circumstances apply to developments in the ballast water management, air pollution prevention, biofouling, marine plastic litter and ship recycling conventions. MEPC 83 also approved proposals for

the establishment of a new Emissions Control Area in the north-eastern Atlantic, and also of two newly designated Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) off Peru.

8. The IR Commission will remain engaged in these topics, both independently and through the EBA, with the main aim of averting the making of regulations that might unnecessarily or disproportionately impact on smaller recreational vessels.

9. We remain alert to the risks to our sailing community presented by autonomous, unmanned or lean-manned surface vessels, with as yet unproven methodologies and technologies for situational awareness and collision avoidance – especially when operating in the vicinity of small, less conspicuous vessels in increasingly congested waters. Such vessels are already a reality, and their numbers are increasing. The Commission will continue to monitor developments under the IMO MASS (Marine Autonomous Surface Ships) Working Groups to represent WS' and other small craft interests in this area. A non-mandatory code for MASS operations is now planned for issuance in May 2026, followed by adoption of a mandatory code in July 2030 for entry into force on 1 January 2032.

10. Cargo containers lost overboard from ships and floating on or near the surface continue to present a particular hazard to sailing craft. Many hundreds/low thousands of containers are lost at sea every year. In the ten years 2015-2024, an annual average of 1,274 containers were reported lost overboard, including a total of 576 (representing a welcome reduction since 2023) in the year 2024. Measures are being introduced globally for the mandatory reporting of lost containers from 1 January 2026. Further preventative steps, including the introduction of lashing software, and measures to improve Masters' awareness of risks to container ship stability, are also progressing.

11. Maritime cyber risks are also a current and growing reality, with the potential to jeopardise the safe navigation and operation of craft of all sizes and purposes. The Maritime Safety Committee invited proposals for the development of a new cybersecurity Code to address this challenge.

12. Finally, on ISO Standards relating to small craft, the IR Commission this year contributed to the deliberations of specialist Sub-committees and Working Groups addressing the following Standards (see also the separate IR Commission's ISO report for Conference):

- ISO 12217: Stability and buoyancy assessment and categorization. The ISO Technical Committee 188/Working Group 9 has been undertaking a revision of all three parts of ISO 12217, which specifies requirements and procedures for small craft stability, buoyancy assessment and categorization.
- TC188 WG9 is also undertaking a revision of ISO 12215-5, concerning design pressures, design stresses and scantlings determination for monohulls. This is aimed for publication in August 2028.
- Finally, an ad-hoc group is being established to produce a draft consolidated revision of the ISO 12402 (Personal Flotation Devices) series of standards. The draft will be considered by ISO TC188/SC1 at its plenary session in November 2025.

World Sailing will continue to engage with these developments in international standards.

A fuller report of relevant ISO developments can be found at the Annex.

Sir Alan Massey
Chair, International Regulations Commission

ANNEXE 1 - REPORT ON RELEVANT ISO ACTIVITIES

ISO 12217 Series

A face-to-face meeting of ISO/TC 188/WG9 – *Main dimensions of the craft and identification of the hull* was held on 13 and 14 May 2025 in Helsinki at the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences Pasila campus.

ISO/TC 188/WG9 is undertaking a major revision of ISO 12217 series, small craft — Stability and buoyancy assessment and categorization - following a recommendation to TC 188 to approve the development of one standard for non-sailing boats and one for sailing boats; and to merge part 3 (boats less than 6m LOA) into parts 1 and 2. See TC 188 resolution 2024-04.

The Helsinki meeting was the second arranged to resolve comments on ISO/CD 12217 part 1 and ISO/CD 12217 part 2, following CD registration on 11 Nov 24 and closure of the comment period on 08 Jan 25. At that time, the target date for DIS enquiry registration was set for 04 Dec 25 at the latest.

The ISO 12217 series is probably the most complex standard in the small craft series, and that presents a considerable challenge for the WG. In all, 38 pages of comment were made on both parts in the comment period concerning the correct use coefficients and definitions. and the application of tests, calculations and requirements.

For this reason, there was significant benefit in attendance in person (demonstrated by the number of experts who met face-to-face). This meant those present could be fully engaged in the revision, and it enabled comments to be resolved in discussion across both days, rather than being limited to short, on-line meeting ‘bites’.

Since then, WG 9 has met virtually on 21 and 22 Jul 25, 23 Aug 25, 4 Sep 25, 30 Sep 25 to fine-tune the text to improve clarity and to address outstanding comments concerning companionways, moveable centreboards, wind stiffness tests, offset loading and deck protection. The WG has also reviewed and clarified essential safety equipment language where necessary.

The WG is now preparing for DIS Submission to be registered by no later than 29 Oct 25 which is well within the deadline.

ISO 12215-5

The Revision of ISO 12215:2019 Part 5 concerning design pressures, design stresses and scantlings determination for monohulls was approved under ISO TC188 Resolution 2025-08.

The revision will be undertaken by WG35 under the project leadership of Mr Robert Schofield from ANSI under the 36 month development track. This was confirmed on 24 Sep 25. The

current scope is also confirmed; the project is starting at stage: 20.20 and the projected target dates are:

- Submission of DIS (40.00): 2027-08-30
- Publication: 2028-08-30

P-Members were invited to appoint experts to contribute to the project. WS has exercised its Category A liaison and appointed Johannes Christophers (International Regulations Commission member). Johannes Christophers (International Regulations Commission member) has now been registered as WS representative for future ISO TC188 (WG35) discussions on the revision of ISO12215-5.

ISO 12402 Series

A resolution to consolidate the ISO 12402 Series was taken at the ISO/TC 188/SC1 plenary meeting in London, April 2025 and was approved on 25 Sep 25. It is worth noting that the US did not support the consolidation of ISO 12402. The US has a binational series of standards (ANSI/CAN/UL 12402 series) based on ISO 12402. The US believes that these binational standards, and its goal of harmonization with the ISO standard, would be negatively impacted if the parts are consolidated.

The resulting Preliminary Work Instruction (PWI) is the result of the work of an Ad Hoc Group (AHG) to consolidate the ISO 12402 standard series. The objective is to bring together the parts of the standard in the following way:

- ISO PWI 12402-1: consolidates ISO 12402-2, ISO 12402-3, ISO 12402-4, ISO 12402-5, ISO 12402-6, and ISO 12402-8
- ISO 12402-7: Materials and components
- ISO 12402-9: Test methods

ISO PWI 12402-1 is based on the latest versions of the current PWIs under development by the committee. All parts had been revised and shared via ISO Documents.

However, ISO 12402-7 and ISO 12402-9 have not been modified by the AHG; their content remains unchanged. Only ISO 12402-1 has been adjusted as the consolidated version, but the adjustments are of an editorial nature and do not introduce any technical changes.

ISO PWI 12402-1 transposes the requirements set out for Offshore Sailing Lifejackets in ISO 12402-6 precisely. In addition, ISO PWI 12402-1 incorporates all the changes that we proposed for PFDs for use in high-speed water sports including foiling craft, personal water craft and water skiing that may require impact protection. The relevant paragraph is:

X.8.5.2.2 Impact protection

Where PFDs are designated for impact protection, the PFD shall provide a minimum level of impact protection with a mean value of ≤ 9 kN and a single strike of ≤ 12 kN and shall be tested according to EN 1621- 1:2012, EN 1621-2:2014 or EN 1621-3:2018. The impact performance value shall be marked on the PFD and included in the user information supplied by the manufacturer. Removable protectors are not allowed.

The requirements set out in EN 1621, which comprises the following parts, need some thought as follows:

- BS EN 1621-1:2012
Motorcyclists' protective clothing against mechanical impact. Motorcyclists' limb joint impact protectors. Requirements and test methods
- BS EN 1621-2:2014
Motorcyclists' protective clothing against mechanical impact. Motorcyclists' back protectors. Requirements and test methods
- BS EN 1621-3:2018
Motorcyclists' protective clothing against mechanical impact. Motorcyclists' chest protectors. Requirements and test methods

Point 1: It is debateable whether the PFDs, either Buoyancy Aids or Lifejackets, need limb/joint (shoulder, elbow, hip, knee, forearm, leg) impact protectors. In any case the transmitted force levels are far higher than those for front and back protection. ***It would be useful to hear what the committees/experts of World Sailing think.***

Point 2: The impact attenuation/protection requirements set out in the clause concerning impact protection in ISO PWI 12402-1 above is far higher than that set out in the EN1621 Series, which only requires the transmitted force for impact attenuation to be an average of 18kN, with no value in testing exceeding 24kN. In this respect the lower the number, the greater the degree of protection - which may mean something so bulky that it would be impractical for sailors to wear. ***The Int Regs Commission view is that if the numbers in EN 1621 are suitable for motorcyclists, they are also suitable for sailors. Again, it would be useful to hear from other committees/experts.***

A Joint Meeting_of_ISO_TC188-SC1 and CEN-TC162-WG6 is to take place at DIN in Berlin from 24 to 28 November 2025 to take the consolidation forward, and Stuart Carruthers will represent WS.

ISO/DIS 12401 Small craft — Deck safety harness and safety line — Safety requirements and test methods.

This ISO is of interest to WS because of the on-going discussion concerning the length of tethers. EN ISO 12401, which was supposed to advance to the DIS stage, was cancelled due to the expired deadline. However, the group is still actively working on it. This resolution aims to reactivate the revision directly at the DIS stage. The scope of the standard has not changed, but clause 4.1 has been reworded (new text in Italics) to read:

4.1 General

The original effective maximum length of a safety line, measured with a measuring tape between the attachment points, under a load of 10 kg, shall not exceed 2 m including the length of the hooks. *The measurement shall be made from the inside of the hook (s).*

Where the safety line incorporates more than two hooks or loops, the length of 2m shall not be exceeded in any combination of hook or loop attachment.

Note: If a safety line has a breakout indicator that expands the length after being subject to load, the maximum length of 2 m might be exceeded after the breakout indicator being on the load.

Design of the safety line and its attachments to the wearer shall preclude accidental incorrect attachment resulting in more than 2 m between the strong point on the craft and the strong point on the deck safety harness

The project is to be completed in 24 months. The DIS document is the latest draft with all the agreed changes from the last CD consultation.

Target Dates:

DIS submission: 2025-05

International Standard published: 2027-03

The Project Leader is Mr. Bernhardt Benjamin, Dipl.-Wirtsch-Inf. Who is chair of ISO TC188/SC1.

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