The marking and identification of fishing vessels

Based on the FAO Standard Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels

**MARKING**

Fishing vessels shall be marked with their IRCS, called the vessel marking,
- this vessel marking, the vessel name or identification mark and the port of registry should be the only vessel identifiers consisting of letters and numbers to be painted on the hull or superstructure
- the numbers 1 and 0 should be avoided in licence or registration numbers to prevent confusion with the letters I and O
- any fishing craft carried onboard another fishing vessel and used for fishing operations should bear the same markings as the vessel they are carried on
- too many identifiers on the hull or superstructure make it challenging to identify the vessel clearly at sea
- a vessel is marked with identifiers that do not match details on the vessel registry or authorised vessel list

**DISPLAY**

The vessel marking should always be prominently displayed on:
- the port and starboard side of the vessel’s hull or superstructure so that the marking can be sighted from another vessel or from the air
- a deck (any horizontal surface, including the top of the wheelhouse) with the top of the writing pointing towards the bow, or if the vessel is undecked on a board which can be seen clearly from the air
- the vessel’s sail, if one exists
- if the vessel markings are ever obscured by an awning or vessel cover, this should also carry the vessel markings
- markings only visible from one angle
- markings not clearly visible from the air

**LEGIBILITY**

The vessel marking should be:
- painted using marine paint
- white on a black background or black on a white background
- always maintained in good condition
- block letters and numbers should be used
- markings not clearly visible due to lack of contrast
- markings not clearly visible due to small or unclear characters
- markings not clearly visible due to fading

**PROPORTIONALITY**

The vessel markings should be:
- proportional in their width to height
- proportional in height to the size of the vessel
- at least 0.3 m in height for all vessels of 5 m length and over for markings on the deck
- placed on the hull/superstructure in the following proportions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length overall (LOA)</th>
<th>Height of letters/numbers should be not less than</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25m and over</td>
<td>1.0 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 ≥ 25m</td>
<td>0.8 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 ≥ 20m</td>
<td>0.6 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 ≥ 15m</td>
<td>0.4 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ≥ 12m</td>
<td>0.3 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5m</td>
<td>0.1 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AB**

The international radio call sign (IRCS) allocated to a fishing vessel should correspond to the flag state of the vessel and match the series provided below:

*For countries with more than 10 series assigned, please check www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/terrestrial/fmd/Pages/call_sign_series.aspx for a full list.*

**PLACE**

The vessel markings should be placed:
- on the vessel’s side or superstructure, as high as possible above the waterline and avoid areas such as the flare of the bow and stern
- where they are not obscured by fishing gear, either when stowed or in use
- away from areas which are prone to damage or discoloration, such as scuppers or outlets
- markings placed too low and obscured by the waterline

**BEST PRACTICE**

Based on the FAO Standard Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels