BRIDGE NAVIGATION WATCH AND ALARM SYSTEM

A bridge navigation watch and alarm system (BNWAS) launched by Martek Marine with a full suite of type approvals from major classification societies enables shipowners to fit the IMO-mandated equipment without delay, it was reported by Martek at the end of July.

The Navgard system offers a relatively low cost and effective means of avoiding operational navigational accidents, it is claimed, and can also double as a bridge security system in port. A BNWAS is designed to monitor bridge activity and detect any operator disability that could lead to shipping accidents. The system monitors the awareness of the Officer of the Watch (OOW) and automatically alerts the master or another qualified OOW if, for any reason, the OOW becomes incapable of performing duties through an accident, sickness or security breach (such as piracy and/or hijacking).

This is accomplished by a series of indications and alarms (visual and audible) to alert, first, the OOW and then, if there is no response, the Master or another qualified OOW. In addition, the BNWAS may provide the OOW with a means of calling for immediate assistance if required. A BNWAS should be operational whenever the ship’s heading or track control system is engaged, unless inhibited by the Master.

Forthcoming new amendments to SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 19, mandate BNWAS installations in over 100,000 ships. Such a system will be mandatory for all new ships on delivery, while existing tonnage is required to retrofit the equipment at the first survey.

BIMCO has advised its members to consider fitting systems at drydockings before the mandatory implementation date, and not to wait until annual surveys within the compliance window. The agreement of the ship’s flag administration is required to postpone retrofitting beyond this date.

Fully complying with the relevant IMO resolutions on BNWAS equipment regarding performance, installation and ergonomic criteria, Martek Marine’s Navgard system is claimed to provide movement and physical touch notification of watchkeeper presence.
Furthermore, type approvals have been gained from Lloyd’s Register, ABS, DNV, Bureau Veritas, RINA, the Russian Register, China Register and Indian Register.