

## Fiona Cain in The Robotics Law Journal: New Ships, Old Rules: Updating IMO Rules to Cover Autonomous Ships

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**PRACTICES** Shipping Dispute Resolution, Ship Sale and Purchase, Autonomous Transportation, Ship Construction and Conversion, Shipping

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Autonomous cars have already been built and are being tested, and while autonomous ships are not as far advanced, the technology is rapidly developing and the first-generation autonomous vessels have been designed. Regulations dealing with safety standards for autonomous cars are being developed at a national level, with legislation currently before the UK Parliament. However, because of the global nature of shipping, the rules for autonomous ships are being developed internationally by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The IMO is a United Nations' specialist agency and the global authority responsible for creating and maintaining an international regulatory framework for shipping and the marine environment. In May 2018, it agreed on a plan to review and update existing international rules to take account of autonomous ships – or, as the IMO calls them, “Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships” (MASS).

This article considers the implications of this announcement and the most likely changes to the IMO rules to allow for the widespread use of MASS. ...

Excerpted from *The Robotics Law Journal*. To read the full article, click [here](#).