

Coding of swell in ship weather reports

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The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) recently proposed changes on the coding of swell in order to differentiate between swell not observed (no data) and no swell (calm sea) in ship weather reports as well as to reduce the number of groups of data transmitted to save communication costs.

The changes are summarized below:

1. When swell is 'not determined' (equivalent to no observation attempted), the code previously used was 3//// 4////. The new recommendation is to omit the "3" and "4" groups in the report altogether.
2. When there is 'no swell', the code previously used was 30000 40000. The new recommendation is to code 30000 only and omit the "4" group in the report. The reason is that by inference, if the "3" group is reported as 30000 then the "4" group must be 40000, in which case they provide no useful additional information.

Ship weather observers are welcome to contact our Port Meteorological Officer should there be any difficulties in coding ship weather reports.