Abstract :

When we analyze the 1972 COLREG's and we evaluate the possible introduction of autonomous vessels, it seems clear that the actual version of the COLREG needs to be adapted for vessels having no officers on their bridge. Some rules will thus need to be modified or amended.

Using a survey answered by deck officers, research made and discussions with port pilot's, each rule is deeply analyzed and changes/interpretations are made in order to allow the introduction of autonomous ships.

Those changes mainly consist of the interpretation of the notion of sight, look-out and good seamanship for autonomous vessels and the addition and definition of certain values that will be used by autonomous systems.

Following this research, it appears that some modifications and/or interpretations of the rules will be necessary in order to allow autonomous vessels to be used amongst the actual merchant fleet. The introduction of autonomous will however be gradual in the time to allow the different changes to be properly implemented and tested as well as to develop the technologies that will eventually be used by tomorrow's autonomous ships.