

Marine Notice No. 36 of 2012

Notice to all Shipowners, Fishing Vessel Owners, Shipmasters, Skippers, Fishermen, Yachtsmen, Seafarers, Marine radio and electronic suppliers, and Marine radio course providers.

Operation of the distress alert button on GMDSS equipment

This notice provides guidance for GMDSS marine radio operators on the activation of distress alert buttons.

When a distress situation occurs on board a Ship or Fishing Vessel, the International Telecommunications Union, Radio Regulations (ITU RR, Edition of 2008) stipulate that:

Article 32.9 §7(1) - The transmission of a distress alert or a distress call indicates that a mobile unit or person is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance. (WRC-07).

Radio communications fitted on board Irish Ships and Fishing Vessels with distress button capability such as DSC or GMDSS compliant satellite terminals are fitted with a distress button which initiates an automatic distress alert on maritime mobile distress frequencies. This includes the identification of the vessel and may include its position.

The Maritime Radio Affairs Unit of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport wishes to bring to the attention of GMDSS marine radio operators, the *Guidance on Distress Alerts* contained in the IMO Circular [COMSAR.1/Circ.45](#) (attached at link).

Owners and Operators should ensure that this notice is posted at all VHF, MF, HF, DSC Digital Selective Calling and all GMDSS approved maritime satellite communications equipment.

Further reference documents

- [IMO Assembly Resolutions](#)

IMO Assembly, Resolution A.803(19) - Performance Standards for Shipborne VHF Radio Installations Capable of Voice Communication and Digital Selective Calling;

IMO Assembly, Resolution A.804(19) - Performance Standards for Shipborne MF Radio Installations Capable of Voice Communication and Digital Selective Calling;

IMO Assembly, Resolution A.806(19) - Performance Standards for Shipborne MF/HF Radio Installations Capable of Voice Communication, Narrow-Band Direct-Printing and Digital Selective Calling;

IMO Assembly, Resolution A.807(19) - Performance Standards for Inmarsat-C Ship Earth Stations Capable of Transmitting and Receiving Direct-Printing Communications.

- The following MSC Circulars are available from the [IMO website](#):-
(it is necessary to register with the IMO Website to access these documents)

IMO MSC Circular 68(68), Adoption of amendments to performance standards for shipborne radiocommunication equipment;

IMO MSC Circular 862, Clarifications of certain Requirements in IMO performance standards for GMDSS equipment;

IMO MSC Circular 1208, Promoting and verifying continued familiarization of GMDSS operators on board ships;

IMO COMSAR Circular 32, Harmonization of GMDSS requirements for radio installations on board SOLAS ships.

- The following Statutory Instruments are available from the [Irish Statute Book website](#):-

S.I. No. 544 of 1998 - *Fishing Vessel (Radio Installations) Regulations, 1998*;

S.I. No. 640 of 2007 - *Merchant Shipping (Safety of Fishing Vessels) (15-24 Metres) Regulations 2007*.

For further information in relation to these issues please contact:

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20/07/2012

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:
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For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, tel: +353-(0)1-678 3418.
Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:
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