



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, MARINE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### MARINE NOTICE No. 19 of 2003

*NOTICE TO ALL SHIPOWNERS, FISHING VESSEL OWNERS, AGENTS, SHIPMASTERS,  
SKIPPERs, FISHERMEN, YACHTSMEN, SEAFARERS AND CHANDLERS*

#### **MARITIME RADIO OPERATING PROCEDURES ON SMALL CRAFT**

Radio Operator personnel on small craft should carefully note the following:

- The international maritime radiotelephony VHF channel for all Distress, Urgency and Safety calls is Channel 16 (156.800 MHz).
- When vessels are at sea, the VHF Transceiver should be set to Ch16 at all times.
- If it is necessary for a vessel to monitor a VHF Channel other than CH16, use should be made of the "Dual Watch" facility on the Transceiver, thus ensuring that a watch is being maintained on VHF CH16 in addition to the second VHF Channel

A Distress Call should always be made on Ch16 and should follow the following format:

#### ***Example***

**"MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY this is NONSUCH NONSUCH NONSUCH**

**Mayday NONSUCH Call Sign EI 1234**

**Position 15 nautical miles south of Mizzen Head (or position in latitude and longitude).  
My vessel is holed and is taking in water. Immediate assistance required. There are 12  
people on board. EPIRB has been deployed. (Give any other information which may be  
of assistance to the Search and Rescue services)"**

The broadcasting of a Distress Call and Distress Message on VHF CH16 should immediately alert the nearest Coast Radio Station **and other vessels in the vicinity.**

The Coast Radio Station should be the first station to acknowledge receipt of a Distress Call and Distress Message, and vessels should not acknowledge receipt until they are satisfied that a Coast Radio Station has received the message. Vessels in the vicinity of the vessel in distress should then acknowledge receipt of the message.

A Distress Acknowledgement by a vessel should take the following form.

#### ***Example***

**"MAYDAY NONSUCH this is PRAVDA Call Sign EI 1432  
Received Mayday"**

As soon as possible, vessels that acknowledge receipt of a Distress Message should transmit the following information:

- Name of vessel
- Position of vessel
- The speed at which it is proceeding towards, and the approximate time it will take to reach, the vessel in distress.

**Small craft that are equipped with VHF Digital Selective Calling (DSC) equipment should note the following:**

When there is a need for a vessel to transmit a Distress Alert by DSC, this can be achieved by pressing the “Distress” and “Send” buttons on the equipment (on most equipment). The transmission of a DSC Distress Alert is always made on VHF CH70 which is reserved for DSC alerting and calling. The equipment is designed to ensure that a DSC Distress Alert or a DSC Call is always transmitted on VHF CH70 and cannot be transmitted on any other VHF Channel.

The transmission of a DSC Distress Alert in the manner described above includes the identification of the vessel in distress, the position of the vessel in latitude and longitude **when the DSC equipment is interfaced with a Position Fixing System such as GPS,** and an indication that the vessel concerned is in a distress situation.

Coast Radio Stations and vessels in the vicinity that are equipped with DSC equipment will receive a DSC Distress Alert, and the Search and Rescue services can immediately instigate search and rescue procedures.

DSC equipment also allows for the formatting of a Distress Alert to include details of the nature of the distress, e.g. “On fire”, “Sinking”, etc. However, in situations where time is of the essence, the method of transmission described above should be employed.

A vessel in distress should broadcast a radiotelephony Distress Message on **VHF CH16** immediately following the transmission of a DSC Distress Alert broadcast.

***REMEMBER ! Coast Radio Stations do not monitor VHF Channels such as the Inter-ship channels CH06, CH08, etc. The International VHF Channel 16 and the International DSC VHF Channel 70 have been specifically set aside to assist you to obtain immediate assistance in Distress, Urgency and Safety situations – use them!***

Director General  
Maritime Safety Directorate  
Department of Communications, Marine  
and Natural Resources  
Dublin 2.

28<sup>th</sup> May 2003

<p>For information in relation to technical specification/type approval of radio equipment contact the Maritime Radio Affairs Unit +353 1 678 2363/2364/2365/2367. For general enquiries please contact the Maritime Safety Division at +353-1-678 2360 Any enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to: Maritime Safety Directorate, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2 Email: <a href="mailto:marine.notices@dcmnr.gov.ie">marine.notices@dcmnr.gov.ie</a> Or visit us at <a href="http://www.dcmnr.ie">www.dcmnr.ie</a></p>
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