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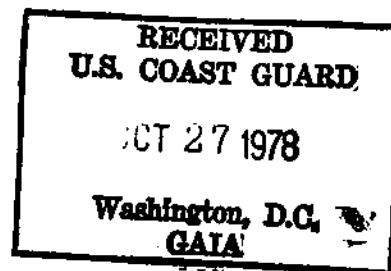
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Ref: T2/6.01

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9-11/Don  
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SN/Circ. 91  
9 October 1978



GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF VHF AT SEA

1. Further to SN/Circ.86 of 23 November 1977, the Maritime Safety Committee at its thirty-ninth session approved a final text of the "Guidance on the use of VHF at sea" which is attached hereto.
2. At the request of the Committee this guidance on the proper use of VHF for navigational purposes is brought to the attention of all Member Governments.
3. Governments are invited to communicate the text to all concerned.

## GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF VHF AT SEA

## 1. VHF COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUE

Golden rule: listen and think before transmitting.

(a) Listening

Listen before commencing to transmit. In this way the irritating practice of transmitting on a channel which is already in use will be avoided. By exercising some patience it can be verified that the channel is not being used.

(b) Thinking

Thinking before transmitting is necessary to avoid unnecessary breaks in communication while the person transmitting decides what to say. The radiocommunication channels are much too busy to waste valuable time and the person kept waiting may have a very important message to transmit. If necessary make written notes before commencing transmission.

(c) Discipline

Needless and superfluous transmission on VHF is another demand on an already fully loaded communication system. During port approach and port navigation all unnecessary demand on the operating personnel must be avoided. In addition the Radio Regulations forbid unnecessary communications.

(d) Talking

Repetition of words and phrases should be avoided unless the receiving station asks for repetition.

(e) Power reduction

Where a choice exists, use the lowest power of the transmitter which gives satisfactory communication.

(f) Control

The ship must follow the instructions of the shore station, which will indicate the channel to change to for further communication or perhaps to stop transmitting. The shore station may be receiving a

~~distress or safety~~ message from a ship out of your range and your transmission may be causing interference.

When calling another ship, the ship called should name the channel to be used for further communication and wait for acknowledgement before changing.

(g) Distress messages

If you hear distress traffic in progress, do not transmit. However, should you be in a position to assist, inform the coastal station or station in control of distress radio communications at the first opportunity.

(h) Choosing a channel

When trying to establish contact in poor conditions, do not occupy a channel unnecessarily - try another.

(i) Changing channel

Announce the intention to change to another channel. If already in communication wait for an acknowledgement before changing.

(j) Spelling

When spelling is necessary (e.g. for descriptive names, call signs and words which can be misunderstood) only the letter spelling table contained in the International Code of Signals and in the Radio Regulations should be used.

(k) Addressing

Use the words "I" and "You" prudently, but always use them to indicate to whom you refer.

Example: Seaship, Seaship, this is Port Radar, Port Radar, do you have a pilot?

Port Radar, this is Seaship, I do not have a pilot.

(l) Watchkeeping

Ships shall maintain VHF watch on Channel 16 in accordance with the Radio Regulations, No.1367 and Regulation 8, Chapter IV of the 1974 Safety Convention.

## 2. PROCEDURE

(a) Calling

- (i) Although Channel 16 - in addition to being a distress and safety frequency - is a calling frequency, do not call on Channel 16 if a working frequency is known to be watched. Call on the working frequency if possible.
- (ii) When calling a shore station or another ship, say the name of the station or ship called (twice, if considered necessary in heavy radio traffic conditions) followed by the phrase THIS IS and your own ship's name, to ascertain reception and recognition. To expedite contact add the channel in use.

Example: Port City, Port City this is Seastar, Seastar on Channel 14.

- (iii) In all cases the call may be followed by:

"Channel ...".

(b) Exchange of messages

- (i) When communicating with a ship whose name is unknown but whose position is known, that position may be used. In this case the call is addressed to all ships.

Example: All ships, all ships, this is Pastoria, Pastoria. Ship approaching number four buoy I am passing Belinda Bank Light.

- (ii) Where a message is received and only acknowledgement of receipt is needed, say "received". Where a message is received and it is desired to confirm that the information in it is correct and/or understood, say "Received. Understood", and repeat the substance of the message if considered necessary.

Example: Message: Your Berth will be clear at 0830.

Reply: Received. Understood.

Berth clear at 0830.

- (iii) When the call is complete, and subsequently during exchange of messages, a station may invite reply by saying: "Over".
- (iv) Where it is appropriate, the following message may be sent: "Please use/I will use, the standard marine vocabulary". Where language difficulties exist which cannot be resolved by use of the vocabulary, the International Code of Signals may be used.

The appropriate message is then: "Please use/I will use, the International Code of Signals".

The word INTERCO should precede International Code (see also Chapter VII of the International Code of Signals).

- (v) Where a message contains instructions or advice and this is to be acted upon, repeat the substance of the message stating the action to be taken.

Example: Message: Advise you pass astern of me.

Reply: I will pass astern of you.

- (vi) Where a message is not properly heard, say: "Say again".
- (vii) Where a message is heard but not understood, say: "Message not understood".
- (viii) If it is necessary to change to a different channel, say: "Change to Channel ..."  
Await acknowledgement before carrying out the change.

(c) End of communication

The end of communication is indicated by each station adding at the end of its last reply: "Out".

3. STANDARD MESSAGES

- (a) Most communications between ship and shore authorities are exchanges of information. Where the requirements of the shore authority are known, it is possible to give this information in the form of standard messages. This will reduce the time necessary to exchange this information.

(b) Obviously not all circumstances are covered by the standard messages but the principle is similar to that which produced the Standard Vocabulary and further information given should follow the style and guidance of the Vocabulary.

(c) For the most common situations standard messages are given in the following examples. These items should always be transmitted in the order given in the Table.

TABLE OF STANDARD MESSAGES

Standard Messages	Items		Type of Message																	Complement of Message					
	Address	Nationality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	ETA (pilot or area)	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		17	18	19	20	
Contacting Message	X		X																	X					
Arrival Message (see note 1)	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	4	
ETA Message/ETD Message	X	X	X	X								X												4	
Pilot Request Message	X		X									X	X											9	requests pilot
Radar Identification Message	X		X	X	X																			11	
Dangerous Cargo Message (see note 2)	X		X												X	X									
Way Point Message	X		X	X	X															X				7.18	
Anchoring Message	X		X	X	X																			3	is anchored
Clearance Message	X		X	X	X							X							X						requests clearance
Change channel Message	X		X																		X				
Incident Message (see note 3)	X		X	X	X																			2	I am sinking on fire in collision afground leaking oil/chemicals not under command

- Note 1:** often sent by radiotelegraphy or radiotelephony.
- Note 2:** all ships carrying dangerous goods should give prior advice to the Port Authority at least 48 hours before entry into the port area or where this is not practicable (e.g. short sea traffic) as early as possible prior to entry into the port area.
- Note 3:** in the case of a Distress, Urgency or Safety Message, the corresponding prefix Mayday, Pan or Securité, has to be used.

Examples of Standard Messages

Messages	Items
<p>First Contact Message (See note)</p>	<p><u>Port City Port City, this is Seaship, this is Seaship, on channel 14, over.</u> (addressee) (sender) (sender) (VHF channel)</p>
<p>Arrival Message</p>	<p><u>Port City, this is United Country ship Seaship,</u> (addressee) (nationality) (sender) <u>call sign Alpha Bravo Charlie Delta, from Lake Town,</u> (call sign) (last port) <u>to harbour No. 2, ETA 1400, I require a river pilot,</u> (destination) (ETA) (pilot details) <u>My length is 150 metres, my draught is 9 metres, I am carrying dangerous cargo,</u> (RTT/length) (draught) <u>300 tons IMDG Class 4.1, in No. 4 hold, my forecandle is damaged and my radar is not working, My Agent is Cargo Services Company, over.</u> (cargo) (stowage) (malfunctions) (agent)</p>
<p>ETA Message</p>	<p><u>Pilot station, this is Island Republic ship Seaship,</u> (addressee) (nationality) (sender) <u>Call sign Mike Oscar Pappa Delta,</u> (call sign) <u>My ETA pilot station 0600, over.</u> (ETA)</p>
<p>Pilot Request Message</p>	<p><u>Port City, this is Seaship, I am bound for North Harbour, ETA 0600,</u> (addressee) (sender) (destination) (ETA) <u>I require a pilot, over.</u>  Note: Call on working channel. Only use channel 16 when working channel not known</p>



<p>Radar Identification Message</p>	<p>Radar Station, <u>this is Seaship, my position is 090 degrees two miles from lighthouse,</u> (addressee) (sender) (position)</p> <p>Course <u>300 speed 20 knots, over.</u> (course/speed)</p>
<p>Dangerous Cargo Message</p>	<p>Port City, <u>this is Seaship, I am carrying 100 tons CHLOROBENZENE, IMDG Class 5.3, UN No.1134,</u> (addressee) (sender) (dangerous cargo)</p> <p>in Centre tank No <u>7, etc, etc, over.</u> (stowage)</p>
<p>Way Point Message</p>	<p>Port City, <u>this is Seaship, I am at Way Point No. 1,</u> (addressee) (sender) (position)</p> <p><u>my ETA Way Point No. 2 at 1600, over.</u> (ETA next Way Point)</p>
<p>Anchoring Message</p>	<p>Port City, <u>this is Seaship, I am anchored in position 200 degrees one mile from breakwater, over.</u> (addressee) (sender) (position)</p>
<p>Clearance Message</p>	<p>Port City, <u>this is Seaship, I am berthed at Harbour Quay, bound for the Roads, via South Channel,</u> (addressee) (sender) (position) (destination) (intended route)</p> <p>I request clearance, over.</p>
<p>Change of channel message (See note)</p>	<p>Port City, <u>this is Seaship, change to channel 10, over.</u> (addressee) (sender) (VHF channel)</p> <p>Note: Await acknowledgement before changing.</p>

<p>Incident Message (Distress)</p>	<p><u>MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY</u>, this is <u>Seaship, Seaship, Seaship</u>, (prefix 3 x) (sender 3 x) <u>My position is 180 degrees one mile from buoy number 10,</u> (position) I am sinking, I require immediate assistance, over</p>
<p>(Urgency)</p>	<p><u>PAN PAN, PAN PAN, PAN PAN</u>, this is <u>Seaship, Seaship, Seaship</u>, (prefix 3 x) (sender 3 x) <u>My position is 180 degrees one mile from buoy number 10,</u> (position) I have been in collision and am in no immediate danger, over.</p>
<p>(Safety)</p>	<p><u>SECURITE, SECURITE, SECURITE</u>, this is <u>Seaship, Seaship, Seaship</u>, (prefix 3 x) (sender 3 x) <u>My position is 180 degrees one mile from buoy number 10,</u> (position) My engines are broken down and I am anchoring in the northbound traffic lane. Request ships keep clear, over.</p>
<p>(Minor incident)</p>	<p>Other minor incidents may occur within harbour limits when it is desirable to notify the harbour office as follows: <u>Port City, this is Seaship, My position is 180 degrees one mile from buoy number 10,</u> (addressee) (sender) (position) I have lost my anchor and buoyed it in position two miles East of Head Point.</p>