

## NOTICE TO MARINERS – MF/HF DSC GUIDELINES

The U.S. Coast Guard urgently requests your cooperation in managing and reducing the increasing number of GMDSS MF/HF DSC false distress calls and unnecessary relays. Each DSC distress alert and distress relay received by the USCG is handled as a real distress call. The excessive transmission of those alerts is adversely affecting the workload of rescue coordination center watchstanders, and is causing continuing sounding of alarms on both ship and coast radio stations.

### IF YOU RECEIVE A DSC DISTRESS ALERT:

- (1) DO NOT relay a distress alert known to have been acknowledged unless you have personally determined that further help to the ship in distress is necessary.
- (2) DO wait 3 minutes for an acknowledgement from a coast station before sending a relay of a received distress call. If the call remains unacknowledged or unrelayed, and there is no distress traffic on the associated radiotelephone frequency, relay the call to the nearest coast station and attempt to contact the distressed vessel by radiotelephone. DSC calls addressed to MMSI 003669999 will be received by all DSC-equipped USCG coast stations within radio range. Once contact with the coast station is made, explain the situation by radiotelephone.
- (3) DO NOT relay a distress alert to all ships, unless a known distress situation requires such a relay.

Certain DSC radios permit relays of both distress acknowledgements and relays or they may transpose the MMSI of the ship in distress when constructing a relay. DO NOT routinely relay these messages, and be certain the MMSI in your relay matches the MMSI of the ship in distress before transmitting.

In addition, if your radio is not connected to a navigation receiver, delete old position information stored in the radio.

Mariners who transmit a false DSC distress alert are required to immediately cancel the alert. ITU regulations allow administrations to take appropriate steps against any ship or mariner who fails to cancel an inadvertently transmitted distress alert.

### IF YOU INADVERTENTLY TRANSMIT A DSC DISTRESS ALERT:

- (1) Reset the equipment immediately,
- (2) Tune for radiotelephony on the associated distress and safety frequency in each band in which a false distress alert was transmitted, and
- (3) Transmit a broadcast message to “All Stations” giving the ship’s name, call sign, time the alert was transmitted and MMSI, and cancel the false alert on the distress and safety frequency in each band in which the false distress alert was transmitted.

We also urge operators to be GMDSS certified before using HF DSC equipment.

Please post these guidelines near the your normal radio operating position.