



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

August 3, 2017
Washington, DC

Safety Alert 08-17

Know your high seas comms equipment and how to use them. You just might save your own life when in trouble offshore!

Recent inquiries by Coast Guard Marine Inspectors indicate that a large number of vessel operators and ship masters continue to rely on outdated high seas communications frequencies when communicating with the United States Coast Guard. This Safety Alert reminds all mariners of the appropriate use of Single Side Band High Frequency (SSB-HF) radios when attempting to contact the Coast Guard outside the normal range of Very High Frequency-Frequency Modulation (VHF-FM) marine radios. It is important to note that the Coast Guard [discontinued](#) monitoring the SSB-HF frequency of 2182 KHz over four years ago; nevertheless, many mariners continue to attempt to contact the Coast Guard using this frequency. Also, many mariners attempt to contact the Coast Guard using their EPIRBs, cell phones, SAT phones, and even NOAA weather electronics. Each of these communications devices has its own limitations and specific functional capabilities.



Above: Example of Single Side Band High Frequency Radio

SSB-HF communications offer a greater transmission range when other options are not available. SSB-HF radios equipped with digital selective calling (DSC) are capable of triggering an alert at Coast Guard Communications Command and are an especially reliable means for initiating communications with the Coast Guard during distress situations.

The Coast Guard keeps watch on the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) SSB-HF frequencies 4125, 6215, 8291 and 12,290 kHz in place of the old international radiotelephone distress frequency 2182 kHz. More detailed information on the SSB-HF and HF DSC frequencies on which the Coast Guard keeps watch for distress and safety purposes are listed here: <https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=cgcommsCall>. Questions or comments concerning Coast Guard HF distress, safety and broadcast services may be sent to the Coast Guard Communications Command at COM-DG-M-CWOWatchstanders@uscg.mil.

This safety alert is provided for informational purpose only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. Developed by Marine Inspection SME Sector Mobile and the Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis. Questions or comments regarding this Safety Alert may be sent to HQS-PF-flidr-CG-INV@uscg.mil.