



# South African Maritime Safety Authority

**Ref:** SM6/5/2/1

**Date:** 27 September 2016

## Marine Notice No. 32 of 2016

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### **Radio equipment carriage and radio certification requirements for small vessels governed by the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007**

TO ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SAMSA SURVEYORS, SMALL VESSEL SURVEYORS, SMALL VESSEL SKIPPERS AND OPERATORS, AND AFFECTED PARTIES

*Marine Notice No. 4 of 2016 is cancelled*

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#### *Summary*

This Marine Notice serves to clarify the current radio carriage and radio operator certification requirements for vessels governed by the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007.

#### **Interpretation**

In this Marine Notice the definitions indicated have the following meaning;

**ICASA** – Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

**ITU** – International Telecommunications Union

**DSC** - Digital Selective Calling

**MMSI** – Maritime Mobile Service Identity number

**Regulations** – Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007

**Relevant Authority** – Telkom Maritime Services (Coastal Radio infrastructure)

**RT Certificate** – Restricted Radio Telephone (VHF only) operator certificate

**Sea Area A1** – A coastal area within radio telephone coverage of at least one VHF coast radio station providing continuous availability of Digital Selective Calling (DSC) alerting.

**SRC** – Short Range Certificate (radio operator certificate).

**29 Mhz Radio** – Radio operating in the 29 Mhz land mobile frequency band.

## **1. 29 Mhz Radios**

As per the requirements laid out in Marine Notice 6 of 2015 (attached) all vessels that are required to carry radios under the safety requirements of the regulations are to be equipped with a VHF marine radio by their first annual safety survey after 01/01/2016.

For clarity vessels may continue to carry 29 Mhz radios as voluntary fit equipment for inter ship, communications with clubs, licensed launch sites etc.

However these radios are no longer considered as being appropriate to the area of operation to fulfill the safety requirements of the regulations from 01/01/2016 due to the fact that:

- There is no monitoring of these bands by the relevant authority;
- The 29 Mhz band is a land mobile radio band therefore these radios were never meant for use in the maritime environment;
- There is no interoperability with these radios and other shipping.

## **2. Digital Selective Calling (DSC)**

The current regulations do not make provision for the carriage of DSC enabled radio equipment. These regulations have been reviewed internally by SAMSA with a view to introducing DSC carriage to coincide with the implementation of sea area A1 and the eventual switch off of the aural watch keeping of VHF Channel 16 by the relevant authority.

SAMSA will inform the boating public and other concerned parties of the phase in period for the implementation of these requirements.

## **3. Marine Radio Operator Certification.**

The RT certificate remains valid for the purpose for which it was issued i.e. the operation of a voice activated marine VHF radio only and is acceptable for use on vessels equipped with marine VHF radios that have not been DSC enabled.

The SRC is required by operators that are operating DSC enabled marine VHF radios.

Those holding the RT certificate are encouraged to do the conversion course to the SRC at their earliest convenience in order to be ready once the aural watchkeeping on VHF channel 16 is terminated.

Those who are fitting a VHF marine radio for the first time will be required to attend a course at a SAMSA accredited training facility for the issue of the SRC as the RT certificates are no longer offered.

## **4. Licensing**

All marine radio equipment has to be licensed by ICASA.

Before a VHF marine radio may be purchased and/or used a ship station radio license is to be obtained from ICASA. Holders of the SRC certificate will be issued an MMSI number, (nine digit number beginning with 601 which indicates a South African vessel), together with the license.

The MMSI number has to be programmed into the VHF DSC capable radio to enable and use the DSC functions built into the radio.

Those who are in possession of the RT certificate will receive the ship station license on applying but will not be issued the MMSI number, therefore the DSC functions on these radios cannot be enabled.

However, whilst the relevant authority continue to maintain an aural watch on VHF Channel 16 the voice only radio carriage satisfies the safety requirements of the regulations.

## **SUMMARY**

All vessels governed by the Regulations are required to:

- Be equipped with a VHF marine (DSC enabled /or/ voice only) radio by the first safety survey after 01/01/2016
- Radio Operators to be in possession of a SRC for DSC enabled VHF radios /or/ a RT certificate for voice only operated VHF radios.
- The radio equipment is to be licensed by ICASA.

### **NOTE:**

Users of VHF marine radios are advised that the ITU have identified the duplex channels 80,21,81,22,82,23,83,24,84,25,85,26 and 86 for the utilization of digital systems from 01/01/2017.

This will have the potential of causing interference to voice transmissions whilst weather bulletins, navigation warnings etc. are being broadcast by the relevant authority.

No protection against interference to voice transmissions may be claimed after 01/01/2017.

This will however have no effect on the distress, safety and calling of DSC signals on VHF channel 70 or the distress, safety and calling on VHF channel 16.

**27 September 2016**

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# South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM6/5/2/1

Date: 30 March 2015

## Marine Notice No. 6 of 2015

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### Cessation of 29 Mhz SOLAS Distress Watch Keeping by Telkom Maritime Services

TO ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SMALL VESSEL SKIPPERS AND OPERATORS, SMALL VESSEL OWNERS AND AFFECTED PARTIES

*Marine Notice No 4 of 2015 is cancelled*

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#### *Summary*

This Marine Notice outlines the changes to Maritime Radio SOLAS watch keeping by Telkom Maritime Services and the changes in Radio carriage requirements by small vessels ensuing from these changes.

1. The renewal of the Telkom/Department of Transport SOLAS Service Agreement was signed on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014. This is the Agreement whereby Telkom Maritime Services provides SOLAS distress watch keeping and Maritime Safety Information Services.
2. The Agreement shall be fully implemented by 01/01/2016 and South Africa shall declare GMDSS Sea Area A1 along with the existing Sea Area A3.

Sea Area A1 is defined as:

“A coastal area within the radiotelephone coverage of at least one VHF coast station in which continuous DSC alerting is available”.

3. The existing analogue shore based radio equipment will be replaced by digital equipment. For small vessels to interact with the digital equipment once the system is fully operational, a VHF radio with DSC capability is required. This will also ensure interoperability between all vessels.

(Clarity – Telkom Maritime maintain a radio service whereby the entire coast of South Africa from Ponta do Ouro to the Orange River is covered by means of VHF repeater stations monitored and operated from Cape Town Radio.)

4. A DSC distress alert sent on VHF CH 70 has the following advantages over the traditional radiotelephone Mayday call transmitted on VHF CH 16:
  - a. A digital signal travels further than a voice signal – improved range of transmission;
  - b. Distress alert (undesigned) provided with the single press of a button;
  - c. The position is included in the initial distress alert.

5. VHF CH 16 aural watch keeping will be maintained by Telkom Maritime Services until further notice to allow all vessels to make the transition to DSC carriage.
6. 29 MHz and 2182 kHz aural watch-keeping by Telkom will cease with effect from 01/01/2016.
7. Due to the cessation of the SOLAS watch keeping by the South African coast stations on 29 Mhz it will no longer be appropriate for small vessels to carry 29 Mhz radios as a safety option in terms of item 18, Annexure 2 of the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007.

Vessels covered by these regulations shall be equipped with VHF Marine Radios to comply with the safety requirement by their first annual safety survey after 01/01/2016.

8. In summary, vessels may continue to carry 29 Mhz radios as voluntary fit equipment for intership communications, communications with clubs, licensed launch sites etc. however these radios will no longer be appropriate to fulfill the safety requirements of the regulations from 01/01/2016 as Telkom Maritime Radio Services will no longer be watch keeping this band.

**30 March 2015**

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