



M5/5

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
Chief Directorate Shipping
Private Bag X193
PRETORIA
0001

18 December 1995

MARINE NOTICE NO 40 OF 1995

TO ALL SKIPPERS AND OWNERS OF FISHING VESSELS, THE CHIEFS OF RSC'S AND THE MRCC AND CHIEF COASTAL RADIO OFFICERS

THE USE OF CELLULAR PHONES IN REPORTING DISTRESS SITUATIONS

1. The South African Search and Rescue Organization (SASAR) notes with growing concern the use (and increasing use) of cellular phones in the reporting of distress situations.
2. A distress signal made on radio telephone (the "Mayday" signal) on VHF Channel 16 or on 2181 KHz on MF is a public broadcast message and can be received simultaneously by a number of persons listening on that frequency.
3. Without denying the usefulness of the cellular phone it must be acknowledged that a call on that instrument can reach only one receiver at a time, whereas a radio "Mayday" message will elicit a quicker and wider response. Furthermore, the telephone subscriber who receives the call is not always sure what to do with it. The radio operator receiving the "Mayday" call is trained to respond to the call.
4. This Notice is not banning the use of cellular phones in making distress calls. It merely draws attention to the fact that a radio call on an international distress frequency, has a far better chance of eliciting the proper response. If you have nothing except your cellular phone to make a distress signal, then use it.
5. It is suggested that you program the phone with the 24 hour phone number(s) of the nearest Portnet Port Captain's office. They are the rescue sub-centres of the SASAR organization and it is to them that all distress calls (even NSRI call-outs) are directed.


for **DIRECTOR-GENERAL: TRANSPORT**

13/M5-5(6)