



South African Maritime Safety Authority

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Date: 30 April 2019

Marine Notice No. 14 of 2019

Open Test Phase for newly established very High Frequency (VHF) Digital Selective Calling (DSC) Maritime Radio Coastal Infrastructure.

TO ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SAMSA SURVEYORS, SHORE BASED RADIO TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, SHIP OWNERS, MASTERS, SHIP'S OFFICERS AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Summary

1. VHF DSC Testing
2. Short Range Certificate (SRC) Requirements
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5. Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) Sea Area A1 - declaration

1. VHF DSC TESTING

An extensive technical audit of the upgraded maritime radio coastal infrastructure took place on-board the M/V SA Agulhas during October 2018. (Refer to Marine Notice 29 of 2018). The audit result was positive, and the audit result was accepted by **the South African Search and Rescue Organization (SASAR) Executive Committee on 4 April 2019.**

The newly established VHF DSC service will be available for testing by Seafarers as a final test phase with effect from **1st MAY 2019**. Seafarers are encouraged to test the system by making TEST or ROUTINE calls to Cape Town Radio / ZSC when sailing in an area within 30 Nautical Miles from shore. Under no circumstances should DISTRESS alerts (Designated or Undesignated) be tested.

If a distress alert is inadvertently/accidentally transmitted, CANCEL the distress alert as follows –

- 1) Reset the equipment immediately;
- 2) Set to channel 16;
- 3) Transmit a broadcast message to ALL STATIONS giving the vessel name, call sign and MMSI and cancel the false distress alert.

NB: Mariners are reminded that no radiocommunications system can guarantee 100 percent coverage or 100 percent availability due to the variances in propagation factors and equipment performance.

2. SHORT RANGE CERTIFICATE (SRC) REQUIREMENTS

Small Vessel Owners wishing to participate in the testing of the VHF DSC maritime radio coastal infrastructure are to be in possession of a SRC which qualifies them to operate a marine VHF radio with DSC.

3. MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE IDENTITY (MMSI) NUMBERS

Small vessel Owners wishing to participate in the testing of the VHF DSC maritime radio coastal infrastructure are to ensure that their VHF DSC radio is programmed with the correct MMSI number as issued by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). The MMSI number appears on the vessel's Frequency Spectrum Licence issued by ICASA. **The MMSI number of Cape Town Radio is 006010001.**

4. GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM (GPS) INPUTS

Small vessel Owners wishing to participate in the testing of the VHF DSC maritime radio coastal infrastructure are to ensure that their VHF DSC radio has an internal GPS or is connected to an external GPS.

NB: If the DSC alert is accompanied by both a properly registered MMSI number and a GPS location, this enhances and expedites search and rescue efforts, especially when a nearby vessel receives a distress call.

5. GMDSS SEA AREA A1 DECLARATION

- a) South Africa is currently declared Sea Area A3 – an area, excluding Sea Area A1 and A2, within the coverage of an Inmarsat geostationary satellite in which continuous alerting is available.
- b) In accordance with Chapter IV, Regulation 2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS), and IMO Resolution A. 801(19), Appendix 3, Sea Area A1 means an area within the radiotelephone coverage of at least one VHF Coast Station in which continuous DSC alerting is available, as may be defined by a Contracting Government, and provides that stations participating in VHF DSC watch-keeping in the GMDSS should provide as complete a coverage of this immediate Sea Area as possible. The area that was successfully tested in South African waters, stretches to 30 Nautical Miles seaward.
- c) South Africa is in the process of declaring Sea Area A1. This process will take time as various Departments have to prepare and publish the declaration.
- d) At the conclusion of this final stage of testing with vessels in the VHF DSC range, a final publication will be made available that declares Sea Area A1, in addition to Sea Area A3, around the South African Coast.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Cape Town Radio / ZSC – 021 551 0700

Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) – 021 938 3300

Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) – 021 551 6800

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