



# MGN 294 (M+F) Amendment 1

---

---

## Use of GMDSS equipment in general communications

**Notice to all Masters and Officers of Merchant Vessels, Skippers of Fishing Vessels, Telecommunication Authorities and Training Institutions.**

*This notice supersedes MGN 114*

---

---

### Summary

This note draws attention to the intention of circular COMSAR.1/Circ.17 issued by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

### Key Point

It is good practice to make use of GMDSS equipment for general communications in the course of normal operations as an effective test of equipment and an opportunity to enhance operator skills, thereby contributing to a reduction in false alerts.

## 1. Introduction/ Background

- 1.1 The International Maritime Organization (IMO) recommends that GMDSS equipment should be used for routine communications or testing in order to ensure equipment availability and operator competency. This also helps to reduce the false alerts transmitted inadvertently by inexperienced operators.
- 1.2 Use of GMDSS equipment for transmission of general radiocommunications is one of the functional requirements specified by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Chapter IV, Regulation 4. Regular use of GMDSS equipment helps to develop operator competency and ensure equipment availability. If ships use other radiocommunication systems for the bulk of their business communications, a regular programme of sending selected traffic or test messages via GMDSS equipment should be adopted to ensure operator competency and equipment availability and to help reduce the incidence of false alerts. This policy covers all GMDSS equipment such as that rely on Digital Selective Calling (DSC), all recognised GMDSS mobile satellite services and any duplicated communications facilities.



## More Information

Radio Spectrum and Technical Standards Unit  
Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Bay 2/25  
Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
Southampton  
SO15 1EG

Tel: +44 (0) 203 81 72000

e-mail: [navigationsafety@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:navigationsafety@mcga.gov.uk)

Website Address: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency)

General Enquiries: [infoline@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:infoline@mcga.gov.uk)

Published: June 2020

Please note that all addresses and  
telephone numbers are correct at time of publishing

© Crown Copyright 2020

***Safer Lives, Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas***

