

MSN 1801 (F)

Serviceability and Maintenance Requirements of Radio Equipment Under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) for Fishing Vessels

Notice to all owners and skippers of fishing vessels, and suppliers of radio equipment to fishing vessels

This Merchant Shipping Notice is an integral part of the Merchant Shipping (Radio) (Fishing Vessels) Regulations 1999.

This notice replaces MSN 1749

Summary

This Notice should be read in conjunction with the Merchant Shipping (Radio) (Fishing Vessels) Regulations 1999 ("the Regulations").

Key Points

- Regulation 17(6) – (8) of the UK Regulations provides for the availability of radio equipment on a "Directive fishing vessel" (as defined in regulation 3(1) of those Regulations) to be ensured in accordance with the requirements of this Notice.
- The Secretary of State can exempt a Directive fishing vessel engaged on a voyage in sea area A3 or A4 from the requirements of this Notice. But the availability of equipment must nonetheless be ensured by the use of at least one of the methods referred to in paragraph 4(a) of this Notice. This is consistent with the requirements of Regulation 14(7) of the Torremolinos Protocol.
- This Notice also sets out the equivalent apparatus which the Secretary of State permits to be fitted or carried in a fishing vessel, in place of some of the apparatus, which the UK Regulations require to be fitted or carried.
- This Notice does not set out any requirements in relation to 'Non-Directive fishing vessels' (as defined in regulation 3 of the UK Regulations). However, owners and skippers are reminded that they are not exempt from the requirements of Regulation 28 of the Regulations.

1. The Merchant Shipping (Radio) (Fishing Vessels) Regulations 1999 came into force on 1 January 2000.

2. The requirements of this notice apply only to 'Directive fishing vessels' as defined in regulation 3 of the Regulations. Regulation 17(6) - (8) sets out the requirements for ensuring the availability of radio equipment on vessels entering the GMDSS.
3. This Notice is not intended to set out the requirements relating to "non-Directive fishing vessels" (as defined in the UK Regulations). However, owners and skippers are reminded that regulations 7 – 9 and Part III of the UK Regulations do impose requirements in relation to such vessels, and that there are penalties for contravention. Such vessels should therefore not depart from port unless their radio equipment is in a satisfactory state to be able to perform all the functional requirements of the GMDSS.

4. Requirements for ensuring availability

- (a) Every Directive fishing vessel shall ensure availability of equipment by using at least one of the following methods -
 - (i) duplication of equipment;
 - (ii) shore-based maintenance; or
 - (iii) at-sea electronic maintenance capability.
- (b) Owners and skippers are reminded that their vessels can be detained under regulation 27(1) of the UK Regulations if they do not comply with the requirements of those Regulations. If the vessel cannot perform all distress and safety communications, it can be detained even if there is a malfunction of the radio equipment and repair facilities are not readily available in the port where the vessel is. Owners and skippers are also reminded that under regulation 8 of the UK Regulations, their vessels must be capable of performing distress and safety communications while at sea. So, irrespective of the method(s) used to ensure the availability of the equipment, a vessel should not depart from any port unless and until the vessel is capable of performing all distress and safety communications.
- (c) Owners and skippers are also reminded of the requirements set out in regulation 17(1) – (5) of the Regulations. To comply with these requirements it is advised that, irrespective of the method(s) used by the vessel, all manufacturers' instruction manuals for each piece of equipment required should be available on board. In case of UK ships these manuals should at least be available in the English language (or in whatever language is understood by the master and crew if they do not understand English). Adequate tools, spare parts and test equipment appropriate to the methods used by the vessel should be provided. The manuals, tools, spare parts and test equipment, as applicable, should be readily accessible.

5. Duplication of equipment ensuring availability

- (a) If the availability is ensured by using duplication, either singly or in combination with another approved method, the following radio installations, in addition to those required by regulations 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 as appropriate, and complying with regulation 7 shall be available on board any Directive fishing vessel engaged on a voyage in-
 - (i) *sea area A1* - a VHF radio installation complying with the requirements of regulation 10(1)(a);
 - (ii) *sea areas A1 and A2* - a VHF radio installation complying with the requirements of regulation 10(1)(a) and an MF radio installation complying with the requirements of regulation 12(1)(a);

- (iii) *sea areas A1, A2 and A3* - a VHF radio installation complying with the requirements of regulation 10(1)(a) and either an MF/HF radio installation complying with the requirements of regulation 13(1) ALTERNATIVE B(a) and being able to comply fully with the watch requirements of regulation 15(1)(c); or an INMARSAT Ship Earth Station (SES) complying with the requirements of regulation 13(1) ALTERNATIVE A(a). The MF/HF installation or INMARSAT SES installed for the purposes of duplication shall also comply with regulation 13(2);
 - (iv) *sea areas A1, A2, A3 and A4* - a VHF radio installation complying with the requirements of regulation 10(1)(a) and an MF/HF radio installation complying with the requirements of regulation 13(1) ALTERNATIVE B(a) and being able to comply fully with the watch requirements of regulation 15(1)(c). For vessels operating in sea area A4 only occasionally and having originally installed an MF/HF radio installation, the additional MF/HF radio installation may be substituted by an INMARSAT SES complying with the requirements of regulation 13(1) ALTERNATIVE A(a). The MF/HF radio installation or INMARSAT SES installed for duplication shall also comply with regulation 13(2).
- (b) The additional radio installations specified in paragraph 5a) above shall each be connected to a separate antenna and be installed and ready for immediate operation.
- (c) It must be made possible to connect the additional radio installations specified in paragraph 5a) above ('the duplicated equipment') to the reserve source or sources of energy required by regulation 16(2), in addition to the radio installation specified in that regulation ('the basic equipment'). The capacity of the reserve source or sources of energy should be sufficient to operate the particular installation (that is, the 'basic equipment' or the 'duplicated equipment') with the highest power consumption, for the appropriate minimum period specified in regulation 16(4)(a) or (b). However, the arrangement for the reserve source or sources of energy must be such that a single fault in this arrangement cannot affect both the basic and the duplicated equipment. If the reserve source of energy is a battery the charging arrangements must be duplicated. Alternatively, a suitable alarm system must be installed to indicate a failure in the charging arrangement and provision must be made to connect the equipment direct to a suitable alternative supply.

6. Shore-based maintenance for ensuring availability

If availability is ensured by using shore-based maintenance or a combination of methods which include shore-based maintenance, an arrangement acceptable to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency must be established to ensure adequate support of the vessel for the maintenance and repair of its radio installations. Acceptable arrangements are -

- (i) a signed declaration from the owner or his Representative setting out the arrangements with a company or companies covering the trading area of the vessel to provide maintenance and repair facilities on a call-out basis;
- (ii) provision of facilities at the main base of vessel engaged on a regular trading pattern.

Note: Records of Equipment must include an indication of the type of arrangements for shore-based maintenance.

7. At-sea electronic maintenance capability for ensuring availability

- (a) If availability is ensured by using at-sea electronic maintenance capability or a combination of methods which includes at-sea electronic maintenance capability, adequate additional technical documentation, tools, test equipment and spare parts must be carried on board in order to enable the maintainer to perform tests and localise and repair faults in the radio equipment.

The extent of this additional technical documentation, tools, measuring equipment and spare parts to be carried on board should be consistent with the equipment installed. An indication of such approval must be entered in the Record of Equipment.

- (b) The person designated to perform functions for at-sea electronic maintenance must hold an appropriate certificate as specified by the Radio Regulations or have equivalent at-sea electronic maintenance qualifications.
- (c) In the case of United Kingdom vessels, for the purpose of the Regulations an officer or crew member shall be deemed qualified to carry out radio maintenance if he or she holds -
 - (i) a Radio Maintenance Certificate granted by the Secretary of State, or
 - (ii) a certificate recognised by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency as being equivalent to the certificate in paragraph (i) above.

8. Acceptable Equivalents

Regulation 6 of the UK Regulations provides for the Secretary of State to permit apparatus to be fitted or carried instead of a particular apparatus required by the Regulations, if he is satisfied (by a trial of the apparatus or by some other means) that the other apparatus is at least as effective as that required by the Regulations. The Secretary of State is satisfied that the following apparatus is at least as effective as that required by the Regulations, and accordingly permits it to be fitted or carried instead of that required by the UK Regulations.

- (a) Any INMARSAT SES equipment providing the enhanced group calling (EGC) capability may be fitted or carried, to fulfil the basic requirements of regulation 10(e) for EGC reception.
- (b) Any INMARSAT SES or any MF/HF radio installation fitted or carried for the purposes of duplication may also satisfy the basic requirements of regulations 12(1)(c), 13(1) ALTERNATIVE A(d) and 13(1) ALTERNATIVE B(c) for another radio service to initiate the transmission of ship-to-shore distress alerts.
- (c) Any INMARSAT SES or any MF/HF radio installation may be fitted or carried for the purposes of duplication irrespective of whether the basic radio installation complies with regulation 13(1) ALTERNATIVE A(a) or regulation 11(1) ALTERNATIVE B(a).

More Information

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