

# Ship Radio Guidance Notes for Licensing



Of168a



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# 1. Introduction

Please note that licence applicants are encouraged to register, apply for and print their Ship Radio or Ship Portable Radio licences via the Ofcom website. This entitles you to a free licence. Licensing amendments can also be notified via the Ofcom website, however, they are not charged for whether done via the website or by post.

- 1.1 These notes are designed to help those applying for a Ship Radio licence or Ship Portable Radio licence. The notes cover the types of equipment that are licensable, specific requirements that the equipment must meet, radio operators certificates, Accounting Authorities, call signs, Maritime Mobile Service Identities and other licensing information that applicants need to be aware of.
- 1.2 If the application form is not fully completed it may be returned to you in order to supply the missing details. If you are uncertain about the information required, please contact the Office of Communications (Ofcom) – See Section 21 for contact details.
- 1.3 Ofcom is responsible for the effective management of the civil radio spectrum in the United Kingdom. Regulation is necessary to ensure that those who use radio equipment can do so without causing or suffering from undue interference.
- 1.4 The regulations governing the use of maritime radio are detailed in the International Radio Regulations, set by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 as amended. It is an offence to install or use any radio equipment on board a UK ship, craft, hovercraft, lightship or any other vessel predominantly moored in UK waters without a radio licence. This includes vessels registered in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. A Ship Radio licence is required even if the transmitting equipment is not in constant use, or if it is used only for distress purposes.

## 2. Ship Radio licence

- 2.1 The Ship Radio licence allows the licensee to install and if the relevant Maritime Radio Operators' Certificate of Competence and Authority to Operate is held, use any combination of maritime radio equipment listed below on a specified vessel.
  - Digital Selective Calling (DSC) equipment associated with the Global Maritime Distress & Safety System (GMDSS);
  - MF, HF, VHF equipment;
  - Satellite communications equipment (Ship Earth Stations);
  - RADAR; Search and Rescue Radar Transponders (SARTs);
  - Low powered, on board maritime UHF communications equipment;
  - UHF On board repeater stations;
  - 121.5/123.1 MHz Aeronautical Search and Rescue equipment;
  - 121.5/243 MHz and 406/121.5 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs), and 1.6 GHz EPIRBs (these are becoming obsolete).
- 2.2 VHF or VHF/DSC portable radios may only be used where these are not intended to be used on multiple vessels under the cover of a Ship Portable Radio Licence, see Section 3.
- 2.3 The Ship Radio licence will comprise of the licence details and the terms.
- 2.4 Licensees will be able to use an unlimited number of declared VHF and UHF handportables on the vessel identified in the licence. None of the equipment covered by this licence, including safety equipment such as maritime EPIRBs and PLBs is licensed for use on land. A Licence will be needed even if EPIRBs/PLBs are the only type of radio equipment carried on board the vessel. VHF/DSC portables are only licensed for use in UK territorial waters.
- 2.5 The equipment is authorised for operation on international maritime frequencies only. Additionally, Channel M (157.850 MHz) and Channel M2 (161.425 MHz) is available for use in United Kingdom territorial waters only. Details of the international maritime VHF frequencies are listed in Section 11. In order for the equipment to be authorised for use, it has to perform in accordance with relevant technical parameters; see Section 4.

## 3. Ship Portable Radio Licence

- 3.1 For licensing purposes, a portable maritime radio is defined as a handheld portable VHF or VHF/DSC radio transceiver with an integral antenna and power supply which is not designed to be permanently installed on a vessel and which will be used on a number of different vessels.
- 3.2 The Ship Portable Radio licence allows the licensee to have ‘available for use’ one VHF portable maritime radio and/or one VHF DSC portable maritime radio. These must have an integral antenna and power supply. Together with the relevant Maritime Radio Operators’ Certificate of Competence and Authority to Operate, the Ship Portable Radio licence allows the use of international maritime radio channels. Within UK territorial waters it also authorises use of the UK Marine channels M (157.850 MHz) and M2 (161.425 MHz).
- 3.3 The Ship Portable Radio licence will additionally cover the use of one Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and/or one Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) operating on 121.5 MHz or 121.5/243 MHz, 406 MHz or 406/121.5 MHz or 1.6 GHz (these are becoming obsolete). Units incorporating 406 MHz beacons (including those 406 MHz beacons which incorporate 121.5 MHz) must be correctly registered with HM Coastguard.
- 3.4 The Ship Portable Radio licence may also include one piece of aeronautical search and rescue radio equipment with frequencies 121.5 and 123.1 MHz.
- 3.5 Applicants should note that the use of VHF/DSC Portable maritime radio equipment under a Ship Portable Radio Licence is only permitted in UK territorial waters.
- 3.6 The Ship Portable Radio Licence will comprise of the licence details and the terms.
- 3.7 None of the equipment covered by this licence is permitted to be used on land.
- 3.8 All equipment covered by this licence must perform in accordance with the relevant performance requirements, as detailed in Section 4.0.

## 4. Radio equipment conformity requirements

- 4.1 Equipment built to Merchant Shipping Standards: Any radio, radar or navigation equipment Type Approved under the European Marine Equipment Directive has been entirely acceptable for use on all UK vessels since 1 Jan 1999 and will continue to be acceptable for the foreseeable future. Such equipment bears the Wheel Mark.
- 4.2 Equipment Conforming to the Requirements of the European Radio Equipment and Telecommunications Terminal Equipment (R&TTE) Directive: Since 8 April 2000, all new maritime radio and radar equipment (apart from equipment with a Wheel Mark) has had to comply with the R&TTE Directive before being placed on the market. Such equipment may also be licensed for use on voluntary fit craft in the UK, provided it meets the relevant UK Radio Interface Requirement.
- 4.3 Such equipment must bear the **CE Mark**, the identification number of a Notified Body (where one has been consulted by the manufacturer as part of the conformity assessment procedure), and where appropriate, the Alert Symbol (which signifies that there may be restrictions on how the equipment may be used or that the equipment may not necessarily be put into service in all EU States).

The equipment will have been issued with:

- a) A copy of the Declaration of Conformity to the requirements of the R&TTE Directive (or a simplified Statement of Compliance and information on where the formal Declaration of Conformity may be found).
  - b) **Information on its intended use, including the countries of the EU in which it is intended for the equipment to be used.** Equipment, which additionally meets the requirements of any of the European Standards (ETS or EN) or International standards (IEC) is recommended.
- 4.4 **Equipment previously approved under national type approval arrangements:** it has remained permissible to sell equipment Type Approved prior to 8 April 2000 and some may still have been on the market

when the R&TTE Directive came into fully into force on 8 April 2001. This equipment will have been Type Approved to one or more of the applicable standards and customers are advised to confirm this with the supplier. Nationally Type Approved equipment may continue to be licensed and installed on vessels but, since 8 April 2001, further supplies of such equipment may not be transferred from manufacturers or importers to retailers.

- 4.5 **UK Radio Interface Requirements applicable to maritime radio equipment for voluntary fit craft under the R&TTE Directive:** Radio Interface Requirements are high level descriptions of how the spectrum should be used. They typically consist of the requirements related to intentional transmissions in allocated frequency bands. They do not prescribe technical interpretations of the essential requirements of the R&TTE Directive. The documents and a comprehensive list are available on the Ofcom website: [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

## 5. Vessel call signs

- 5.1 A call sign is allocated to the vessel when first issued with a Ship Radio Licence. It uniquely identifies the vessel within the International Maritime Mobile Service. The call sign remains with the vessel for the duration of its life regardless of changes of ownership or even vessel name. However, the call sign is surrendered if the vessel ceases to be classed as a UK vessel, is destroyed or is unlicensed for a period of two or more years. Therefore every effort should be made to ensure that the call sign remains with the vessel.
- 5.2 Call signs cannot be transferred between vessels.
- 5.3 T-numbers (UK based call signs) are issued with Ship Portable Radio licences, as these radios are not intended for use on one vessel only.

## 6. Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) numbers

- 6.1 A Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number uniquely identifies a vessel and is only issued to vessels fitted with Digital Selective Calling (DSC) and/or (Satellite) Ship Earth Station (SES) equipment. The UK administration does not normally issue MMSI numbers to EPIRBs/PLBs.
- 6.2 In order to use SES equipment, arrangements must be made with an Inmarsat Point of Service Activation Entity see Section 18 of these Guidance Notes. An MMSI number is required before the equipment can be commissioned.
- 6.3 If an MMSI has already been issued for use with DSC equipment and subsequently a satellite earth station terminal is installed, if a new MMSI is required, the DSC equipment may need to be re-programmed. MMSIs issued (as described above) are free of charge as part of a Ship Radio Licence.
- 6.4 Ofcom notifies the ITU of all vessel MMSI numbers issued by the UK, however it does not notify Portable MMSI numbers. MMSIs are also made available to HM Coastguard to assist in Search and Rescue operations.
- 6.5 With the advent of VHF/DSC portable radios in 2001 Ofcom has set aside a unique block of MMSI numbers which will be allocated only to this equipment. This enables HM Coastguard to differentiate between alerts sent from fixed and portable VHF/DSC radio equipment. However, such equipment is no longer being produced in the UK and consequently Ofcom only envisages licensing equipment that is only currently on the market.
- 6.6 Portable VHF/DSC radios must on no account be programmed with the vessel MMSI numbers. HM Coastguard needs to be able to differentiate between the types of equipment sending a DSC alert, as it is possible for the DSC alert from a transportable radio to come from any vessel. The resulting search on the database for vessel details may provide incorrect information that could jeopardise a Search and Rescue operation. The first four digits of a 'portable' MMSI will generally be 2359.

## 7. Selective calling (Selcall) numbers

- 7.1 A Selcall number is a code which when programmed into a radio receiver will ensure that the receiver will respond only to calls addressed to it.
- 7.2 This system is becoming obsolete and Ofcom does not envisage licensing any new Selcall numbers unless specifically requested.

## 8. Term of licence and payment of licence fees for the Ship Radio licence and the Ship Portable Radio licence

- 8.1 Licence applicants are encouraged to apply via the Ofcom website – See Sections 1 and 21.
- 8.2 Licences applied for and granted via the Ofcom website will be free.
- 8.3 A fee of £20 will be charged for each Ship Radio licence and each Ship Portable Radio licence that is not applied for and downloaded from the Ofcom website.
- 8.4 A discount is no longer granted for charities as free licences are available via the Ofcom website.
- 8.5 Licences shall continue in force unless revoked by Ofcom or surrendered by the licensee.
- 8.6 The licensee must notify Ofcom of all changes to their Licence details when such changes occur and must provide confirmation to Ofcom that all their Licence details are correct, at least once every ten (10) years.
- 8.7 Licensing amendments can also be notified via the Ofcom website and are not charged for whether done via the website or by post.
- 8.8 Warning: it is an offence to use or install maritime radio equipment other than in accordance with the terms of a licence issued by Ofcom.
- 8.9 Refunds will only be made where there has been an overpayment, duplicate payment or when a licence application has been unsuccessful.

Please note that licence fees may vary from time-to-time and are set by Ofcom, with the approval of Parliament.

- 8.10 The current list of payment methods and fees can be found in the Ship Radio licence and the Ship Portable Radio licence application forms.

## 9. Other licensing information

### Registration

- 9.1 A vessel does not need to be registered with an official body before an application for a Ship Radio licence is made. Under normal circumstances, Ofcom is not able to licence vessels registered in countries other than the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands. Vessels transferring away from the UK Flag to other Flag states must surrender their UK licence.
- 9.2 When a vessel needs to be registered to comply with the Merchant Shipping (Registration) Act 1993, details may be obtained from The Registrar General, Maritime and Coastguard Agency. See Section 21 for contact details.
- 9.3 All changes to the Ship Radio licence or Ship Portable Radio licence details, e.g. change of owner's address, radio equipment etc. must be notified to Ofcom in writing using the appropriate form Of 347. There is no charge for registering amendments.
- 9.4 The Ship Radio licence must be kept with the radio equipment especially if the vessel is taken abroad. Foreign licensing administrations may confiscate the radio equipment or even detain the vessel, where a valid Ship Radio licence cannot be produced on demand.
- 9.5 Company applications – Whilst Ofcom is able to accept applications where a company is named as the licensee, a named contact must also be specified, and will be the first point of contact with Ofcom. If the company box is ticked, the applicant is declaring that the licensee is a limited company, and a company registration number must be supplied. If the company is not a limited company then another appropriate box should be ticked.

## 10. Maritime Mobile Access and Retrieval System (MARS) database

- 10.1 The ITU requires Ofcom to collect information about vessels being licensed and what equipment is being used. This information is held on the ITU's Maritime Mobile Access and Retrieval System (MARS) database which is supplied for the use of Search and Rescue organisations worldwide.
- 10.2 Section 3 of the (application) form asks for information such as the gross tonnage of a vessel, its type and how many people it can carry. Ofcom is obliged to supply this information to the ITU and so if it is not completed in full on the application form Ofcom will be unable to issue a licence and the application form will be returned to the applicant.
- 10.3 Additional information which the ITU records on its MARS database is collected in Section 7 of the (application) form. This information is not mandatory and a licence can be issued even if it is not supplied. It is anticipated that much of this information is only relevant to larger passenger carrying vessels which routinely sail out of UK territorial waters.
- 10.4 The national telex number and Selcall number should be supplied where these have been issued to the vessel. Please note that the Selcall system is becoming obsolete and new numbers should be requested only if needed.
- 10.5 Both the General Classification and Individual Classification fields are for codes that identify the type of vessel. A full list of these codes is given in Section 20 of these Guidance Notes.
- 10.6 The nature of service includes the classification as regards the type of international correspondence service maintained by the station, indicated by the following codes:
  - CO – a station open to official correspondence exclusively
  - CP – a station open to public correspondence
  - CR – a station open to limited public correspondence
  - CV – a station open exclusively to correspondence of a private agency
  - OT – a station open exclusively to operational traffic of the service concerned

10.7 Services available refers to the specific services provided by a station open to public correspondence. The services available are indicated by one or more of the following codes:

- C – radiotelephone calls
- D – radiotelex calls
- O – OBS messages (voluntary observing Ship)
- P – facsimile communications
- R – radiotelegrams

10.8 Hours of service refers to the availability of the public correspondence services offered by a vessel. This should be indicated by one of the following codes:

- H24 – continuous service throughout the twenty four hours
- H16 – 16 hour service provided by a ship station of the second category
- H8 – 8 hour service provided by a ship station of the third category
- HX – intermittent service throughout the twenty four hours, or station having no specific working hours (generally applicable to pleasure craft)
- HJ – day service
- HN – night service

# 11. International maritime VHF frequencies table

Table 1: Use of International Maritime Mobile VHF Channels

| Channel designators | Notes | Transmitting frequencies (MHz) |                | Intership   | Port operation and ship movement |               | Public correspondence |
|---------------------|-------|--------------------------------|----------------|---|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
|                     |       | Ship stations                  | Coast stations |   | Single frequency                 | Two frequency |                       |
| 60                  |       | 156.025                        | 160.625        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 01                  |       | 156.050                        | 160.650        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 61                  |       | 156.075                        | 160.675        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 02                  |       | 156.100                        | 160.700        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 62                  |       | 156.125                        | 160.725        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 03                  |       | 156.150                        | 160.750        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 63                  |       | 156.175                        | 160.775        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 04                  |       | 156.200                        | 160.800        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 64                  |       | 156.225                        | 160.825        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 05                  |       | 156.250                        | 160.850        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 65                  |       | 156.275                        | 160.875        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 06                  | 1     | 156.300                        |                | ✓   |                                  |               |                       |
| 66                  |       | 156.325                        | 160.925        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 07                  |       | 156.350                        | 160.950        |   |                                  | ✓             | ✓                     |
| 67                  |       | 156.375                        | 156.375        | ✓   | ✓                                |               | HMCG SAR              |
| 08                  |       | 156.400                        |                | ✓   |                                  |               |                       |
| 68                  |       | 156.425                        | 156.425        |   | ✓                                |               |                       |
| 09                  |       | 156.450                        | 156.450        | ✓   | ✓                                |               |                       |
| 69                  |       | 156.475                        | 156.475        | ✓   | ✓                                |               |                       |
| 10                  | 5     | 156.500                        | 156.500        | ✓   | ✓                                |               | Oil pollution         |
| 70                  | 6     | 156.525                        | 156.525        | Digital selective calling for distress, safety and calling only |                                  |               |                       |
| 11                  |       | 156.550                        | 156.550        |   | ✓                                |               |                       |
| 71                  |       | 156.575                        | 156.575        |   | ✓                                |               |                       |
| 12                  |       | 156.600                        | 156.600        |   | ✓                                |               |                       |
| 72                  |       | 156.625                        |                | ✓   |                                  |               |                       |
| 13                  | 7     | 156.650                        | 156.650        | ✓   | ✓                                |               |                       |
| 73                  | 5     | 156.675                        | 156.675        | ✓   | ✓                                |               | HMCG SAR              |
| 14                  |       | 156.700                        | 156.700        |   | ✓                                |               |                       |

| Channel designators | Notes | Transmitting frequencies (MHz) |                | Intership                    | Port operation and ship movement |                     | Public correspondence |
|---------------------|-------|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
|                     |       | Ship stations                  | Coast stations |                              | Single frequency                 | Two frequency       |                       |
| 74                  |       | 156.725                        | 156.725        |                              | ✓                                |                     |                       |
| 15                  | 2     | 156.750                        | 156.750        | ✓                            | ✓                                | Also on-board comms |                       |
| 75                  | 4     | 156.775                        |                |                              |                                  |                     |                       |
| 16                  |       | 156.800                        | 156.800        | Distress, safety and calling |                                  |                     |                       |
| 76                  | 4     | 156.825                        |                |                              | ✓                                |                     |                       |
| 17                  | 2     | 156.850                        | 160.850        | ✓                            | ✓                                | Also on-board comms |                       |
| 77                  |       | 156.875                        |                | ✓                            |                                  |                     |                       |
| 18                  |       | 156.900                        | 161.500        |                              | ✓                                | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 78                  |       | 156.925                        | 161.525        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 19                  |       | 156.950                        | 161.550        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 79                  |       | 156.975                        | 161.575        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 20                  |       | 157.000                        | 161.600        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 80                  |       | 157.025                        | 161.625        | Also Marinas etc UK only     |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 21                  |       | 157.050                        | 161.650        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 81                  |       | 157.075                        | 161.675        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 22                  |       | 157.100                        | 161.700        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 82                  |       | 157.125                        | 161.725        |                              | ✓                                | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 23                  |       | 157.150                        | 161.750        |                              |                                  | HMCG SAR/MSI        |                       |
| 83                  |       | 157.175                        | 161.775        |                              | ✓                                | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 24                  |       | 157.200                        | 161.800        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 84                  |       | 157.225                        | 161.825        |                              | ✓                                | HMCG SAR/MSI        |                       |
| 25                  |       | 157.250                        | 161.850        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 85                  |       | 157.275                        | 161.875        |                              | ✓                                | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 26                  |       | 157.300                        | 161.900        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 86                  |       | 157.325                        | 161.925        |                              | ✓                                | HMCG SAR/MSI        |                       |
| 27                  |       | 157.350                        | 161.950        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 87                  |       | 157.375                        |                |                              | ✓                                |                     |                       |
| 28                  |       | 157.400                        | 162.000        |                              |                                  | ✓                   | ✓                     |
| 88                  |       | 157.425                        |                |                              | ✓                                |                     |                       |
| AIS 1               | 3     | 161.975                        | 161.975        |                              |                                  |                     |                       |
| AIS 2               | 3     | 162.025                        | 162.025        |                              |                                  |                     |                       |

**Notes to Table 1**

1. Channel 06 may also be used for communications between ship stations and aircraft engaged in co-ordinated search and rescue operations. Ship stations must avoid harmful interference to such communications on Channel 06, as well as to communications between aircraft stations, ice breakers and assisted ships during ice seasons.
2. Channels 15 and 17 may also be used for onboard communications, provided that the effective radiated power does not exceed 1 Watt.
3. Channels AIS 1 and AIS 2 are used for an automatic ship identification/surveillance system, capable of operating worldwide on the high seas, unless other frequencies are designated on a regional basis for this purpose.
4. Channels 75 and 76 should be used for navigation-related communication only. All precautions should be taken to avoid harmful interference to Channel 16, e.g. by limiting power to 1 Watt or by means of geographical location.
5. These channels (10 or 73 depending on location) are also used by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to broadcast Marine Safety Information in the UK only.
6. Channel 70 must be used exclusively for Digital Selective Calling for distress, safety and calling.
7. Channel 13 is designated for use on a worldwide basis as a navigation safety communication channel, primarily for inter-ship navigation safety communications.

## 12. Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs)

- 12.1 Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) are self contained battery operated radio transmitters, the purpose of which is to facilitate search and rescue operations. EPIRBs and PLBs are intended for marine use only and should not be used on land.
- 12.2 There are several types of EPIRBs and PLBs in use in the United Kingdom; those that operate on the aeronautical distress frequencies 121.5 MHz or 121.5 MHz and 243 MHz and more sophisticated models operating on 406 MHz/121.5 MHz and 1.6 GHz (these are becoming obsolete). These latter two have a unique identification code, which identifies the vessel to which it has been registered.

- 12.3 It is vital that all EPIRBs and PLBs using the frequency band 406 MHz are registered with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The details provide the rescue co-ordination centres with information needed to assist a search and rescue operation. Failure to register an EPIRB will seriously degrade its usefulness to the search and rescue services in the event of an emergency and could even put lives at risk.

#### **406 MHz EPIRBs and PLBs**

- 12.4 The details provided in Section 4 of the Ship Radio Licence application form will be sent to the MCA EPIRB Registry. After having applied for a Ship Radio Licence, should you acquire, or transfer a 406 MHz EPIRB or PLB to another owner and/or vessel, the MCA EPIRB Registry must be notified. In addition, Ofcom must be advised via the Ofcom website or in writing using the appropriate form Of347 available from Ofcom. See Section 21. There is no charge for registering amendments.

#### **1.6 GHz EPIRBs**

- 12.5 1.6 GHz EPIRBs (these are becoming obsolete) must be registered with the Inmarsat Customer Activation Group (CAG), Telephone 020 7728 1372, fax 020 7728 1142. After having applied for a Ship Radio Licence, should you acquire, or transfer a 1.6 GHz EPIRB to another owner and/or vessel, Inmarsat CAG must be notified. In addition, Ofcom must be notified via the Ofcom website or in writing.
- 12.6 An information sheet (Of19a) concerning the safe handling of EPIRBs is available free of charge from the Ofcom Contact Centre. See Section 21.

## **13. Maritime Radio Operator's certificate**

- 13.1 Whilst it is not necessary to hold a Certificate of Competence in order to obtain a Ship Radio Licence or a Ship Portable Radio Licence, a maritime radio may be operated only by or under the direct personal supervision of a holder of the appropriate Certificate of Competence and Authority to Operate (normally granted by the Secretary of State. This is to maintain operational standards and ensure knowledge of current distress, emergency

and safety procedures. The certificate holder is required to produce these documents when requested to do so by a person authorised by Ofcom.

- 13.2 The minimum Certificate of Competence that is required for use of a ship radio is the Short Range Certificate. This certificate covers use of both standard VHF and VHF/DSC equipment under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System in sea area A1. Please note that other relevant certificates may be required for vessels where radio fit is compulsory and may also depend on the sea areas of operation. Further guidance may be obtained from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. See Section 21.

## 14. United Kingdom telephone calls

- 14.1 In June 1999 British Telecom ceased providing many commercial maritime services through its coast stations due to a substantial decline in demand.
- 14.2 These services included the provision of link calls made from a vessel to the UK public telephone network. There are currently no plans for another organisation to provide this service.
- 14.3 The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has assumed responsibility for providing maritime safety information and medical link calls previously provided by BT coast stations.

## 15. Foreign calls

- 15.1 In order to make a call using a foreign coast station, the licensee must have first entered into a contract with a Maritime Radio Accounting Authority (MRAA) and be able to quote the relevant Accounting Authority Identification Code (AAIC) to the coast station operator.
- 15.2 Coast stations will usually hold a copy of the ITU list of ship stations. This may give details of the MRAA that the vessel is using as its agent for billing purposes. In turn, that MRAA will invoice the licensee, for any call charges incurred. The ship station details will be sent to the ITU for inclusion in

their list of ship stations when applying for, or amending a licence. Information supplied by the Maritime Radio Accounting Authorities will be used to update information against the relevant ship station.

- 15.3 Information on MRAAs is available from the Ofcom information sheet Of19a entitled Ship Radio Information.

## 16. Visual Signal Letters (VSL)

- 16.1 VSLs are flags or combination of flags used before radio as a means of identification and communication. A vessel that previously has used VSLs may retain them as its call sign upon application. Where this is required, a formal written application must be made, and included with the application form.

## 17. Use of amateur radio stations on board UK licensed ships

- 17.1 The establishment and use of amateur radio stations on board United Kingdom licensed ships is permitted under the Amateur Radio Licence, granted by Ofcom. On board a vessel, the licensee shall:
- a) install, use or make changes to the station only with the written permission of the vessel's master;
  - b) observe radio silence when required by the vessel's master.
- 17.2 The full terms, provisions and limitations with which the licensee shall comply with are available from Ofcom. See Section 21.
- 17.3 It is important to ensure that radio is used correctly. At sea, lives may depend upon this. Consequently, there are severe penalties for not keeping within the law and these include fines, imprisonment and the forfeiture of anything used in connection with the offence. Those convicted of such offences may, in addition, face the revocation of their licence and the suspension of their Authority to operate.

## 18. Inmarsat Point of Service Activation

### (PSA) entities

18.1 Details of PSAs are available by contacting Inmarsat's Customer Services Department. See Section 21.

## 19. Maritime (radio) accounting authorities and contact details

19.1 The following is a list of relevant Maritime radio accounting authorities. Please note that the list is being continually updated and the details should be checked with the relevant MRAA.

19.2 It is your responsibility to set up an account with the relevant Maritime Radio Accounting Authority if you intend using radio equipment for public telecommunication calls through Coast or Coast earth stations. You also need to ensure that the Maritime Radio Accounting Authority is entitled to act on behalf of UK licensed vessels. Contact details of MRAAs are given below but please note that the list is being continually updated and the details should be checked with the relevant MRAA.

**The following list is subject to change. (Please telephone Ofcom to check the latest information)**

A-N-D Group plc –  
(*GB01, GB05 & GB15*)  
Tanners Bank  
North Shields  
Tyne & Wear NE30 1HJ  
Tel: 0191 258 1635  
Fax: 0191 296 4484

International Marine  
Radio Company Ltd – (*GB03*)  
Morley House  
Badminton Court  
Church Street  
Amersham, Bucks HP7 ODA  
Tel: 01494 434000  
Fax: 01494 431993

**F T Everard & Sons Ltd – (GB17)**

c/o Ships Electronic Services Ltd  
Waterside Court  
Neptune Close  
Rochester Kent, ME2 4NZ  
Tel: 01634 295500  
Fax: 01634 295536  
Note: Commercial vessels only

**James Fisher Tankerships Ltd – (GB18)**

c/o Ships Electronic Services Ltd  
Waterside Court  
Neptune Close  
Rochester  
Kent ME2 4NZ  
Tel: 01634 295500  
Fax: 01634 295536  
Note: Commercial vessels only

**Yacht Electronic Services (UK) Ltd – (GB20)**

2 Mill Row  
Bexley  
Kent DA5 1LA  
Tel: 01322 556633  
Fax: 01332 556634

**GEC-Marconi Communications Systems Ltd – (GB08/GB06)**

Marconi Marine Division  
Marconi House  
New Street,  
Chelmsford  
Essex CM1 1PL  
Tel: 01245 353221  
Fax: 01245 358776

**Nera Satellite Services – (GB11)**

20 Imperial Way  
Croydon  
Surrey CR0 4RR  
Tel: 020 8686 5701  
Fax: 020 8680 8206

**Helexco Co Ltd – (GB13)**

31 High Street  
Colliers Wood  
London SW19 2JE  
Tel: 020 8542 4916  
Fax: 020 8540 8047

**Telecom Italia S.P.A – (IU02)**

Viale Parco dei Medici  
9 Corpo Al Piano  
00148 Rome, Italy  
Tel: +39 9 368 80100  
Fax: +39 6 368 2431  
Email: andrea.vitali@telecomitalia.it

**Campagnia Generale Telemar – (IU03)**

Viale Tiziano, 19  
I-00196 Roma  
Italy  
Tel: +39 6 322 1800  
Fax: +39 6 324 0148

**Marlink – (BE02)**

80 Avg Henrinckxlaan  
B-1180 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 371 7111  
Fax: +32 2 371 7125  
N.B. The associated AAIC codes are shown in italics, alongside the company name.

## 20. Symbols which designate classes of ships

### General classifications

|    |                         |
|----|-------------------------|
| FV | Ship of a fishing fleet |
| GV | Official service ship   |
| MM | Merchant ship           |
| NF | River vessel            |
| NS | Naval ship              |
| PL | Pleasure ship           |
| SV | Rescue vessel           |
| XX | Unspecified             |

### Individual classifications

|     |                     |
|-----|---------------------|
| ACV | Air-cushion vehicle |
| AUX | Auxiliary ship      |
| AVI | Despatch vessel     |
| BAR | Lighter             |
| BLK | Bulk carrier        |
| BLN | Whaler              |
| BLS | Buoy ship           |
| BTA | Factory ship        |
| CA  | Cargo ship          |
| CAB | Coaster             |
| CBL | Cable ship          |
| CGT | Coast-guard         |
| CHA | Barge               |
| CHR | Trawler             |
| CIM | Cement carrier      |
| CIT | Tanker              |
| COA | Collier             |
| CON | Container ship      |

|     |                           |
|-----|---------------------------|
| COR | Corvette                  |
| CRO | Cruiser                   |
| CTR | Cutter                    |
| DES | Destroyer                 |
| DIV | Ship used by divers       |
| DMN | Minesweeper               |
| DOU | Customs launch            |
| DRG | Dredger                   |
| DRY | Dry cargo                 |
| DUN | Ketch                     |
| ECO | Training ship             |
| ESC | Escort ship               |
| EXP | Research ship/Survey ship |
| FBT | Ferry                     |
| FPS | Fast patrol ship          |
| FRG | Reefer                    |
| FRM | Weather ship              |
| FRT | Frigate                   |
| FRU | Fruit carrier             |
| GEN | General cargo             |
| GOL | Schooner                  |
| GRC | Grain carrier             |
| GRF | Floating Crane            |
| GS  | Warship                   |
| HOP | Hospital ship             |
| HYD | Hydrographic ship         |
| ICE | Ice breaker               |
| ICN | Waste incinerator         |
| INS | Inspection ship           |

|     |  |     |                        |
|-----|--|-----|------------------------|
| LAN | Lobster ship                           | SEC | Stand-by safety vessel |
| LOU | Lugger                                 | SLO | Sloop                  |
| MOR | Banker                                 | SMN | Submarine              |
| MOU | Mine layer                             | SRV | Patrol ship            |
| MTB | Motor boat                             | THO | Tunny ship             |
| NET | Pollution and surface clearance vessel | TPG | Liquefied gas carrier  |
| NVP | Naviplane                              | TPO | Ore carrier            |
| OBO | Ore-bulk-oil carrier                   | TPS | Solvent carrier        |
| OIL | Oil tanker                             | TPT | Transport              |
| OSC | Oceanographic ship                     | TPW | Forest-product carrier |
| OSV | Ocean-station vessel                   | TRA | Tramp                  |
| PA  | Passenger ship                         | TUG | Pusher/Tug             |
| PAQ | Liner                                  | TVH | Vehicle carrier        |
| PBE | Livestock carrier                      | VDO | Launch                 |
| PCH | Barge carrier                          | VDT | Hydrofoil              |
| PER | Drilling unit                          | VLR | Sailing ship           |
| PH  | Fishing vessel                         | XXX | Unspecified            |
| PHA | Lightship                              | YAT | Yacht                  |
| PHR | Lighthouse tender                      |     |                        |
| PHS | Fishing guard                          |     |                        |
| PLE | Platform                               |     |                        |
| PLT | Pilot tender                           |     |                        |
| PMP | Firefloat                              |     |                        |
| PMX | Cargo and passenger                    |     |                        |
| PON | Pontoon                                |     |                        |
| PTA | Aircraft carrier                       |     |                        |
| PTH | Helicopter carrier                     |     |                        |
| RAM | Salvage ship                           |     |                        |
| RAV | Supply vessel                          |     |                        |
| ROC | Rock breaker                           |     |                        |
| ROU | RoRo ship                              |     |                        |
| SAU | Rescue vessel                          |     |                        |

## 21. Contacts for further information

### **Ofcom Contacts**

To obtain guidance on on-line/web related applications for Ship Radio and Ship Portable Radio licences, contact:

#### **Ofcom Licensing Centre**

PO Box 56373

London

SE1 9SZ

Tel: 020 7981 3131

Fax: 020 7981 3333

Email: [licensingcentre@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:licensingcentre@ofcom.org.uk)

Textphone: 020 7981 3043 – Please note that this number only works with special equipment used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Website: [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

For information and advice on a range of topics related to maritime radio, including EPIRBs, MRAAs (including the current UK lists of MRAAs) the use of maritime radio equipment (including the relevant UK Radio Interface Requirements), Coastal station radio and navigational aids licences, and amateur radio licence terms, please contact:

#### **Ofcom Licensing Centre**

PO Box 56373

London

SE1 9SZ

Tel: 020 7981 3131

Fax: 020 7981 3333

Textphone: 020 7981 3043 – Please note that this number only works with special equipment used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Email: [licensingcentre@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:licensingcentre@ofcom.org.uk)

The Ofcom Licensing Centre can also assist with general enquiries about radio use.

Information leaflets and other Ofcom publications are available free of charge on our website ([www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)).

Printouts can also be ordered from the Ofcom Licensing Centre.

### Other contacts

For information about the international Radio Regulations, contact:

#### International Telecommunication Union

Place des Nations

CH 1211

Geneva 20

Switzerland

Website: [www.itu.int](http://www.itu.int)

For information on the Short Range Certificate for maritime radio operators, contact:

#### Royal Yachting Association

RYA House

Romsey Road

Eastleigh

Hampshire SO50 9YA

Tel: 02380 627400

Fax: 02380 627143

Website: [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk)

For information on other maritime radio operator's certificates, contact:

#### Association of Marine Electronic and Radio Colleges (AMERC)

Postal address for courier deliveries only

AMERC NAC

c/o Wray Castele Ltd

Bridge Mills

Stramongate

Kendal

LA9 4UB

United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1539 742742

Fax: +44 (0) 1539 742743

Website: [www.amerc.ac.uk/maritime.html](http://www.amerc.ac.uk/maritime.html)

For information about the GMDSS, or if you are uncertain about the approval of maritime radio equipment, contact:

**Maritime and Coastguard Agency**

Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
Southampton  
SO15 1EG

Tel: 02380 329100

Tel: 0870 6006505

Fax: 02380 329252

Website: [www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)

To find out about the EPIRB Registry or to report an accidentally activated EPIRB, contact:

**The EPIRB Registry**

Falmouth MRCC  
Pendennis Point  
Castle Drive  
Falmouth

Cornwall TR11 4WZ

Tel: + 44 (0)1326 211569

Fax: + 44 (0)1326 319264

E-mail: [epirb@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:epirb@mcga.gov.uk)

Contact details for maritime satellite systems For information on Inmarsat systems you can contact:

**Inmarsat Customer Services Centre on:**

Tel: +44 (0)20 7728 1777

Fax: +44 (0)20 7728 1142

E-mail: [customer\\_care@inmarsat.com](mailto:customer_care@inmarsat.com)

Mail: 99 City Road, London, EC1Y 1AX.

Website: [www.inmarsat.com](http://www.inmarsat.com)

For information on Cospas-Sarsat systems you can contact:

**Cospas-Sarsat**

700 de la Gauchetiäre West  
Suite 2450, Montreal (Quebec) H3B 5M2  
Canada

Email: [mail@cospas-sarsat.int](mailto:mail@cospas-sarsat.int)

Tel: +1 514 954 6761

Website: [www.cospas-sarsat.org/MainPages/indexEnglish.htm](http://www.cospas-sarsat.org/MainPages/indexEnglish.htm)



Riverside House  
2a Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HA  
Switchboard +44 (0)20 7981 3000  
Facsimile +44 (0)20 7981 3333  
[www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)