



University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System

Research Vessels Operators Committee

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 22, No. 2
August 1997

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Editor's Note

This will be the last official newsletter before the 1997 meeting. Information about the meeting will be distributed as a separate mailing. Joe Coburn is in the process of putting together meeting packets, which should go in the mail later this month. Remember, if you plan to stay at the Quality Inn in Falmouth, your reservations must be in by 1 September. For reservations call (508) 540-2000 and tell

From the Chair

Well we are rapidly moving towards October and our 1997 RVOC Meeting to be held at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute on 21-23 October. I would appreciate it if you would all take the time to review the enclosed draft agenda and if you have any comments or suggestions please pass them on to Steve Rabalais and myself.

I feel we have a lot of ground to cover in what appears to be less and less time. We are trying to change the structure of the meeting this year with special reports being written and distributed ahead of time. This will permit us to have the bulk of the time associated with these reports devoted to questions. At this time we are still making adjustments to the framing of the topics for the work groups, but there will be less time devoted (at least this year) to Work Groups. A significant portion of the second day

the receptionist that you are with RVOC.

Thanks,
Steve Rabalais

is devoted to communications as it relates to extending the Internet to sea.

One item for the business portion of the meeting, will be to select the host for the RVOC Meeting in the year 1999!

I look forward to seeing all of you at the 1997 RVOC Meeting.

Paul

The Good Olde Days

Some people collect Playboy's, some people collect National Geographic. Not me, I collect old RVOC Newsletters. How many people do you know, that have an almost complete set of this master piece of the literary profession beginning with No. 1, dated: (Well, Jack sort of forgot to put a date on it. For that matter he forgot to put a No. 1 on it too. But, it says right here in the first paragraph, "This is the first newsletter", that's good enough for me ; Date: cir. Winter, Spring or Summer 1985) to the most recent edition, Vol 22, No. 2.

I thought it might be fun to extract a few highlights from past editions for your.... entertainment.

No. 1 - 1985

Editor: Jack Bash

Chair: I believe it was Dolly Dieter

New Equipment

"Several new pieces of equipment are working their way into the oceanographic community and will probably become standards before long. These include INMARSAT commercial satellite communication equipment; Global Positioning Systems (GPS); Amtek Straza Doppler Speed Log and Current Profiling and the new "Smart " winch being developed by R. J. Boudreaux. RVOC members that have experience with any of these new pieces of equipment are encouraged to provide this newsletter with operating experience and potential pit falls."

New Ship Designs

“The University of Texas has gone to preliminary design stage with John Gilbert.
..... The Navy is also looking into a SWATH hull that will eventually end up in
the Academic fleet.” (And still looking !)

No. 2 - September 5, 1985

Officers: Still Jack and Dolly (I assume)

Editor’s Note

“I have not been inundated with articles or materials for the newsletter and its
usefulness should be evaluated at our next meeting.” (The more things change the
more they stay the same.)

RVOC Members (Let’s show a little respect for the old-timers)

Univ. of Hawaii J.W. Coste

Univ. of Alaska E.R. Dieter

Univ. of Wash. K.W. Jeffers

Oregon State K.M. Palfrey

Moss Landing Larry Jones

Mike Prince

Univ. So. Cal. Don Newman

SIO Jim Williams

Univ. Mich Cliff Tetzloff

(retired w/ no replacement), does Linda know this?

Tex. A&M T.K. Treadwell

Dean Letzring

Univ. of Texas Bill Mitchell

Univ. of Miami Ron Hutchinson

Skidaway Lee Knight

Duke Eric Nelson

Johns Hopkins Bruce Cornwall

Univ. of Del. Waddy Owens

LDGO John Dudley

Sam Gerard

URI Jack Bash

WHOI John Donnelly

Dick Edwards

Jonathan Leiby

Harbor Branch Marsh Youngbluth

LUMCON Steve Rabalais

Univ. New Hamp. E.E. Allmendinger
UNOLS Bill Barbee
NSF John McMillan

No. 3 - January 10, 1986

Officers: Jack and Dolly

Life Boat Advances

“John Dudley of LDGO sought and received USCG approval to replace the Conrad’s remaining oar-and-sail propelled “rescue boat” with a rigid inflatable rescue craft.”

No. 8 - January 4, 1988

Editor: ?

Chair: Jack Bash

AGOR 23

“Congratulations to the University of Washington on being selected to operate the new construction (?) Navy AGOR 23.”

R/V Cayuse Transferred to Maine

“Title to R/V Cayuse was transferred to the Maine Maritime Academy by the National Science Foundation on Oct. 1, 1987.”

No. 9 - July 20, 1988

Editor: ?

Chair: Jack Bash

Title of article from clipping section: “Drug, Alcohol Testing Proposed for U.S. Merchant Seamen.”

Vol. 10 - March 15, 1989

Editor: Bruce Cornwall

Chair: ? (Was it Jim Williams?)

NSF Names Ship Ops Program Manager

“Dolly Dieter has been named by the NSF to fill the position of Ship Operations Program Manager.....”

Video Tapes

“The committee (Safety) discussed the use of video tapes for three purposes: (1) as an indoctrination tape for ship users;” (Eight years later a contract is signed for the production of ship user indoctrination video tape. We are good!)

Vol. 11 - August 18, 1989

Officers: Still Bruce and Jim, I believe.

RVOC Logo

“The logo printed below is being considered for the cover of the RVOC Safety Training Manual.....It might also be used as the “official” RVOC logo for the Newsletter and other RVOC correspondence.”

News from NSF

“Dolly Dieter would like to let all RVOC Operators know that she has finally arrived at the NSF”

I think you get the picture. RVOC has been around for a while. In fact, our first official meeting was in Washington, DC on April 25, 1962. I’ve included a list of our meetings in the clippings section (Misc. XVII.), if you’re interested.

Ship News

ATLANTIS - ATLANTIS is through the canal and on her way to San Diego to begin her first series of dives in the Pacific. She will be in the big ocean for the next one to one and a half years. In the fall, ATLANTIS will take the ROV off THOMPSON for a few dives off the Pacific NW while that ship attempts repairs to a gear in her azimuthing thruster. From the NW, ATLANTIS will go south to Manzanillo for work on the East Pacific Rise. After the first of the year she will return to U.S. waters for her Post Shakedown Availability (PSA). According to Joe all is well with the new vessel and he is quite pleased with the ship’s performance to date.

Free Trial of MarSat Equip.

Craig Van Wagner of Marine Sat/MCN wrote Paul in May of this year with the following offer: "I wanted to offer you the opportunity to experience the new MarineSat system through our Trial Program. We are offering you and any other of your affiliate entities the chance to evaluate the viability of the MarineSat service through a 60 day no obligation trial. We will supply you any selected model of equipment for use on your vessel. After 60 days if you do not want to keep the unit, you can return it to us (no questions asked). All you would pay for is air time used with no monthly service charge. If you decide to keep it, then you would pay us the LOW Marine Sat discounted price." Mr. Van Wagner can be reached at:

MarineSat/MCN
6650 Indiantown Rd.
Suite 120
Jupiter, FL 33458
(1-800-848-9660)

UNOLS Members Join GSR Research Vessel Insurance Program

As you know, we announced the formation of the GSR R/V Insurance Program last fall at the Annual RVOC Conference in St. Petersburg. We outlined our perspective on how best to meet the marine insurance needs of this elite group.

We are pleased to report that since the meeting, Columbia University, Duke University, University of Rhode Island and Texas A&M have partnered with GSR in recognition of the advantages of our Global Research Vessel Insurance Facility.

GSR and its underwriters understand the risks unique to research vessel operations, and the funding and budgetary concerns of universities. To assist UNOLS members in addressing those same internal issues, GSR has responded by developing multi-year insurance policies. In addition to providing a long term stable insurance product, premium savings can be realized on an annual basis for the term of the policy. We offer a comprehensive marine insurance package at competitive prices, and the services of dedicated marine claims professionals available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The GSR program is underwritten by "A"-rated U.S. carriers, and offers the following coverages:

PROTECTION & INDEMNITY

Including divers

Limits up to \$35 million any one accident or occurrence.

HULL FRINGES

Collision, Towers Liability, Sue & Labor, General Average and Salvage

Limits up to \$7.5 million.

HULL & MACHINERY

Limits up to \$17.5 million.

OPEN CARGO

Limits up to \$5 million any one shipment.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Including over side

Limits up to \$1 million per scheduled item.

POLLUTION LIABILITY

Limits up to \$25 million any one accident or occurrence.

OTHER COVERAGES AVAILABLE

Charters/Wharfingers Liability

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Excess limits

Multi-year contracts

GSR is a subsidiary of the Willis Corroon Group, a global insurance broker recognized for its leadership in marine insurance. We are pleased to provide the university and research vessel community with effective solutions to your special marine exposures.

We are delighted to be working with those universities who have joined us, and are pleased to report discussions with other UNOLS members. We invite all UNOLS/RVOC members to contact us for a quotation, either through your insurance agent or broker, or your local Willis Corroon office, as follows:

New York:
Richard J. Haverlin, Jr.
Global Special Risks, Inc.
Wall Street Plaza
New York, NY 10005
(212) 820-7635 - phone
(212) 809-1220 - fax

Houston:
Jim Hughes
Global Special Risks, Inc.
5847 San Felipe, Ste. 3100
Houston, TX 77057
(713) 952-2774 - phone
(713) 952-3978 - fax

New Orleans:
Mike Garin
Global Special Risks, Inc.
One Lakeway Ctr., Ste. 450
Metairie, LA 70009
(504) 828-7874 - phone
(504) 828-6069 - fax

1997 RVOC Meeting

The following is the tentative agenda for the 1997 RVOC meeting scheduled for October 21-23, 1997 at the Wood Hole Oceanographic Institute. Please notify Paul Ljunggren or Steve Rabalais with revisions or comments.

0800 Tuesday, 21 October 1997
WHOI

0800 REGISTRATION AND COFFEE
Spouses will meet at 0900

0830 WELCOMING REMARKS

- Marine Superintendent
- Director
- Paul Ljunggren, Chairman, RVOC
- Steve Rabalais, Vice-Chair, RVOC

0900 OLD BUSINESS

- Minutes of the 1996 Meeting
- Post Cruise Evaluations
- Van Study, Final Review
- Medical Standards/Job Descriptions
- Primer on Small Research Vessels
- Safety Video for Scientists
- Size Limit on UNOLS Vessels, UNOLS Committee
- New Contract for UNOLS Fleet Inspections

0930 NEW BUSINESS

PLEASE CONTACT PAUL OR STEVE WITH YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW BUSINESS ITEMS.

1000-1020 BREAK

1020 COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

- UNOLS, Jack Bash & UNOLS Chair, Dr. Ken Johnson (MLML)
- Safety Committee, Tom Smith
- RVTECH, Tim Askew
- FIC & AICC, Joe Coburn

1100 AGENCY REPORTS

- National Science Foundation - Dolly Dieter
- Office of Naval Research - Sujata Millick
- Naval Oceanographic Office - CDR Jim Trees
- NOAA - CDR Elizabeth White
- USCG - CDR George Dupre
- U.S. State Department - Tom Cocke
- Others

1145 LUNCH

1300 SPECIAL REPORTS

NOTE- RATHER THAN HAVE THE AGENDA OVERWHELMED WITH SPECIAL REPORTS, I HAVE OUTLINED SOME POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION. PLEASE SUBMIT A WRITE-UP OF YOUR SPECIAL REPORT AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE MEETING. I WANT TO INSURE THAT THE TIME SPENT ON SPECIAL REPORTS DOES NOT GET OUT OF HAND. ANY REPORTS NOT PRESENTED AT THE MEETING WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE APPENDICES OF THE MINUTES. I WOULD ALSO NOTE THAT IN SOME INSTANCES, FOR SOME PERSONS, PART OF THE JUSTIFICATION FOR ATTENDING THIS MEETING MAY BE THE FACT THAT THEY WILL BE MAKING A PRESENTATION WHICH WOULD NORMALLY BE INCLUDED AS A SPECIAL REPORT; PLEASE ADVISE US OF THIS. PAUL

- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
- Representatives from other countries:
 - SAACLANT - Chris Gobey
 - NERC - Ken Robertson
 - Canadian Coast Guard - Dale Gibb and Mark Cusack
 - Instituto de Fomento Pesquero - Enrique Aranda
 - Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico - Dr. Emilsson
 - Other Countries
- MSC- Special Missions - Jim McDiarmid
- Great Lakes Research Vessel Workshop - Linda Goad
- Research vessel updates; new construction, operations, engineering:
 - R/V ATLANTIS - Joe Coburn
 - R/V REVELLE - Tom Atlhouse
 - R/V THOMPSON - Robert Hinton
 - Skidaway Institute R/V replacement update - Steve Carignan
 - UCONN R/V replacement update - Larry Burch
 - MBARI SWATH update - Mark Vandenburg
 - RSMAS Catamaran - David Powell
 - Any other operators with special reports
- Report On Regulatory Issues - George Ireland

1500-1515 BREAK

1515 INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

- Report by Dennis Nixon on liability and insurance issues

0830 Wednesday, 22 October 1997
WHOI

0830 NSF SHIP INSPECTION PROGRAM

- Jamestown Marine

0900 MARITIME HEALTH ISSUES

- Report by Dr. Ray Jarris on medical support issues

1000 BREAK

1015 WORKSHOP

MARINE COMMUNICATION

- Status of the current systems for extending the Internet to sea, what is available now and what are its capabilities. Future trends, where will communications be in the next decade, will reliability, and capabilities increase and costs decrease, how soon will this take place and what can we do to plan for the future and help guarantee that trends develop to our benefit. (Approx two hours) Rex Buddenberg

- Seonet - In conjunction with a marine communications workshop we plan to have a presentation on JOI's recently funded proposal to provide five Inmarsat B installations on R/Vs. (Approx one hour) Andy Maffei, Ellen Kappel

1200 LUNCH

1330?- CONTINUATION MARINE COMMUNICATIONS TOPIC

1430 BREAK

1445 WORK GROUPS

Possible Topics:

Identification and standardization of ancillary costs incurred by operators and passed on to PIs. For example; E- mail, how people charge, what is charged in terms of satellite communications, what level of E-mail support is provided as part of ship operations etc., and the larger topic of ancillary charges (for crane service, copier charges, fax costs, agent fees incurred for the incoming or off-going science party,

shipping charges incurred for science equipment etc, etc, etc.) and what the oncoming PI can expect to be billed.

- Medical standards workshop - Follow-on to last year's work group.
- Tech./Operator workshop - Invite reps. from RVTEC to discuss their needs and what operators should do to increase the technical viability of their platforms.

0830 Thursday, 23 October 1997

WHOI

0830 REPORTS FROM WORKSHOP GROUPS AND OTHER UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1000 ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Marine Superintendents will select and discuss topics of mutual interest.

Please submit a list of items that you would like to discuss. Other items will be developed during the course of the meeting.

Some items already suggested:

- Update/comments on marine insurance program.
- GMDSS progress
- Fleet description book for scientists outlining services and charges. Distribution to Program officers NOAA, NSF, ONR, etc.
- Change in meeting schedule, start future meetings with a brief session Sunday afternoon.
- Post cruise evaluations.
- Documentation of research vessels
- NSF Cooperative Agreement
- Shipboard Scientific Support Equipment Proposals. What type of equipment has been requested and what has been approved.
- Skyphone experience and usage.

1200 LUNCH

1300 CONTINUE ROUND TABLE

1400 BUSINESS MEETING

- Assignments to committees, panels and work groups
- Review of action items pending
- Suggestions for the 1998 Agenda and meeting format
- Vote on host for 1999 meeting.

1500 ADJOURN

Notes and Clippings

Regulatory (UNOLS office has hardcopies of II. through VII.)

I. [GMDSS Information](#)

- II. The future in Marine Radio Communications
- IV. IMO Considers Mandatory Liability Insurance Treaty
- V. SOLAS '74 and Reg. Tonnage
- VI. Radiofax Charts Available on E- Mail
- VII. IMO Revised Raster Chart Standards
- VIII. Employment Verifications

New Products (UNOLS office has hardcopies of I. through IV.)

- I. Vessel Data File software
- II. Hand Held Global E-Mail Messenger
- III. Inmarsat Satellite EPIRB
- IV. The Future of on-Board Power

Misc. (UNOLS office has hardcopies of I through XVII.)

- I. MTS Rope Committee News
- II. Mapping Wreckage of Flt. 800
- III. New SWATH Design
- IV. GLONASS Issues
- V. New Vessel Design "Penguin"
- VI. Making Bad Habits Work
- VII. Rope Technology Workshop
- VIII. New Generation of Lift Boats
- IX. Insurance
- X. Arresting a Ship
- XI. Traction Winch in Deep Water

- XI. Firefighting Schools
- XII. Raster vs. Vector Technology
- XIII. Ship Repairs
- XIV. Marine Injury Claims Clarified
- XV. Surviving Extreme Water Emergencies
- XVI. Communication Providers
- XVII. RVOC Meetings

GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS)

National GMDSS Implementation Task Force

Exec. Director: Capt. Jack Fuechsel, USCG (Ret)

7425 Elgar Street; Springfield, VA 22151

phone: 703-941-1935/Fax6154

e-mail: jack.fuechsel@comsat.com

Memo To: New 'Ship Operator' members of Commercial Vessel Task Group 5 March 1997

Subj: GMDSS Implementation Task Force

Welcome to the U.S. National GMDSS Task Force sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard! I am serving as Executive Director under contract to the Coast Guard. You have recently been added to our mailing list for the Commercial Vessel Task Group. I am enclosing several background documents for your information:

The Task Force Terms of Reference

A GMDSS Information Bulletin for Small Commercial Vessels

A Coast Guard Information Sheet on access to GMDSS Information via Internet

A copy of the summary record of the last Commercial Vessel meeting

It is our intention to send copies of the summary records of Task Group meetings to the mailing list in order to keep you advised of developments. While we do not plan to distribute all documents to the mailing list automatically, any which are available will be identified in the summary record and may be requested individually. We are also looking for feedback on GMDSS problems you have identified and recommendations regarding the Task Force program. We will add other names to the mailing list on request. We often like to use internet delivery where available so please give us your e-mail address if you haven't already done so.

One new issue has recently been identified for vessels above 300 tons which operate exclusively in the immediate coastal zone (identified as GMDSS sea area A1 - within range of the Coast Guard's shore VHF-FM network when upgraded for Digital Selective Calling). Treaty vessels will be required by 1 February 1999 to have at least two mates who hold the FCC's GMDSS Operator Certificate. A year or two later, under other treaty provisions, all mates will require this certification. The Task Group will undertake to clarify whether this requirement can be modified for vessels which operate in sea area A1 exclusively.

Sincerely,
Jack

NATIONAL GMDSS IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

DATE/TIME: Thursday 1 May at 7:30 am (1 hour) and Friday 2 May at 9:00 am (half day)

LOCATION: RTCM 1997 Assembly at Tradewinds Hotel, St. Petersburg Beach, FL

CONVENER: Capt. Jack Fuechsel, USCG (Ret)

FOR INFO: Jack Fuechsel at 703-941-1935 or e-mail: jack.fuechsel@comsat.com

AGENDA

1. Distribute documents:

- Summary record of Task Force meeting 18 February 1997
- Index of Task Force Documents on Coast Guard GMDSS Web Site
- New Coast Guard GMDSS brochure
- AMVER/SEAS Brochures form Comsat/NOAA

2. Review Summary Record of 18 February 1997 Task Force meeting

3. Reports from specialized Task Groups:

- Training Task Group - Chris Krusa (met 22 April 1997)
- Recreational Vessel Task Group - Kristen Lewis (met 7 March 1997)
- Commercial Vessel Task Group - Joe Cox (met 23 April 1997)
- Service Agents & Manufacturers Task Group - Lud Rubinsky (met 8 Nov 1996)
- MSI Dissemination (RTCM SC-107) - Pete Doherty (met 20 February 1997)

4. Report of GMDSS issues at IMO-COMSAR 2 (27 January 1997) - Joe Hersey

5. Report on 5th International GMDSS Conference - Jack Fuechsel

6. Coast Guard Report on GMDSS Implementation Activities - Joe Hersey

7. FCC Report on GMDSS Implementation Activities - Roger Noel and George Dillon

8. Discussion of possible special GMDSS rules for vessels in Sea Area A1

9. Recommended Port State GMDSS Inspection Program - Jack Fuechsel

10. Note Task Force Documents on GMDSS Bulletin Board and Internet Web Site

I 1. Review status of Task Force Continuing Work List Items (see reverse)

12. Other Business

13. Set next meeting date

NATIONAL GMDSS IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

3 March 1997

GMDSS TASK FORCE CONTINUING WORK LIST

1. Monitor resolution of Coast Guard and FCC roles in GMDSS implementation
2. Monitor FCC Order on GMDSS Implementation per Telecommunications Act
3. Monitor FCC NPRM on Licensing of ship stations by 'rule'
4. Monitor procedure for assignment of DSC/MMSI numbers if FCC licensing dropped
5. Monitor FCC NPRM on privatization of ship inspections
6. Monitor FCC pending Marine Improvement Rule Making (docket 92257)
7. Recommend a Port State GMDSS inspection program to the Coast Guard
8. Monitor GMDSS issues raised by IMO Circulars/Resolutions for dissemination in the U.S.
9. Monitor USCG NPRM to implement STCW changes affecting GMDSS Operators
- IO. Monitor Navy planning to fit selected GMDSS equipment on warships
- I 1. Monitor USCG GMDSS Bulletin Board and update Task Force portion
12. Support SOLAS Working Group planning for COMSAR meetings as requested
13. Maintain GMDSS implementation liaison with other Administrations as requested
14. Monitor and update GMDSS Information Bulletin for Small Commercial Vessels
15. Prepare GMDSS Information Bulletin for Recreational Vessels
16. Consider special GMDSS rules for vessels operating in Sea Area A1

NATIONAL GMDSS IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background: The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) now being implemented by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has changed the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention to provide a major upgrade of maritime safety communications procedures and equipment. This upgrade will affect not only SOLAS Convention ships, those over 300 tons, but all users of marine radio services. The GMDSS transition period is scheduled to end in February 1999 and many implementation actions are incomplete. The U.S.

Coast Guard
and other cognizant government agencies have therefore sponsored a National
GMDSS
Implementation Task Force to facilitate the transition and recommend further action.

Tasks:

1. Provide a forum for interested parties to consider all aspects of GMDSS implementation in the U. S. and recommend action to appropriate authorities including the U. S. SOLAS Radio communications, Search and Rescue Working Group on U. S. positions on INFO issues.
2. Institute a public relations program to inform all sectors of the maritime community on the impacts and benefits of GMDSS implementation and solicit feedback on GMDSS problems.
3. Maintain an overview of GMDSS training to encourage well trained GMDSS operators on compulsory vessels, indoctrinate operators of non-compulsory vessels with an appropriate level of voluntary GMDSS information, and advocate programs to minimize false alerts in order to improve the effectiveness of Search and Rescue operations..
4. Establish liaison with equipment manufacturers and Service Agents to facilitate equipping of U. S. SOLAS vessels to meet GMDSS standards and provide advice to non-compulsory vessels desiring to use GMDSS systems on a voluntary basis.
5. Monitor implementation of GMDSS shore networks, vessel outfitting, and updating of official publications describing GMDSS facilities and procedures.

Adopted 11 Jan 1996

Exec. Dir: Capt Jack Fuechsel, USCG (Ret)
7425 Elgar Street; Springfield, VA 22151 ,
phone: 703-941-1935/Fax6154
e-mail: jack.fuechsel@comsat.com

**GMDSS INFORMATION BULLETIN
FOR SMALL COMMERCIAL VESSELS LESS THAN 300 TONS**

This information bulletin provides a brief overview of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) and its effects on small commercial vessels.

Small United States commercial vessels including cargo ships, tow boats and fishing vessels less than 300 gross tons are not required to carry radio equipment necessary to comply with the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. Such vessels may be required by other laws including the Bridge-to-Bridge Act, the Communications Act or Coast Guard regulations to carry radio equipment and may operate in the same port areas or coastal waters as GMDSS equipped vessels. After full implementation of the GMDSS on February 1, 1999, non GMDSS equipped vessels may experience difficulty in establishing communications with vessels complying with the GMDSS. These difficulties are associated with the differences between the automated equipment required in the GMDSS and the non-automated equipment typically carried on small commercial vessels.

GMDSS Background

Upon entry into full force on February 1, 1999, the GMDSS, for vessels to which it is applicable, will use new communications technology for distress alerts, automates systems which previously required a continuous live listening watch, and generally improves the reliability and effectiveness of the distress and safety system. One feature of the GMDSS replaces the traditional method of establishing communications by voice calling with an automated method, applicable to Medium Frequency (MF), High Frequency (HF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) radios, called Digital Selective Calling (DSC).

Effective February 1, 1999, the GMDSS is mandatory for all U.S. passenger-ships carrying more than 12 passengers operated on international voyages and all ships of 300 or more gross tons operated in the open sea. Until then, commercial vessels required to carry radio equipment must be able to transmit and receive voice communications on applicable radio frequencies.

Digital Selective Calling (DSC)

DSC uses digital codes on designated calling channels to send distress calls and to establish communications between ships, ship to shore and shore to ship. Once communications are established, communications continue by voice or other methods. GMDSS compliant ships will not be required to maintain a continuous voice watch on Channel 16 after February 1, 1999. However, when in waters subject to the Bridge-to-Bridge Act, all ships will continue to be

required to monitor Channel 13 VHF or Channel 67 (as appropriate) and these channels, while restricted to safety communications, can be utilized to establish initial communications for that purpose. It is essential to keep in mind that a GMDSS compliant vessel, except when subject to the Bridge-to-Bridge Act will not be required to maintain a voice listening watch on any frequency and considerable difficulty may be experienced in establishing communications between a GMDSS and GMDSS equipped vessel.

Other Considerations

Other elements of the GMDSS include the INMARSAT A, B, and C maritime satellite systems; the coastal NAVTEX and INMARSAT SafetyNet broadcast systems which provide weather and maritime safety information; Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) used for distress alerting and locating; and radar transponders (SARTs) for life rafts which are used in the location of survivors.

Most small commercial vessels and other vessels voluntarily equipped with radio are permitted to use any GMDSS equipment without any mandated GMDSS related training. Vessels required to be GMDSS equipped are also required to have qualified personnel who hold a GMDSS Operator's Certificate.

GMDSS, like any new system, is experiencing some problems as it is implemented. These problems are primarily attributed to operator error. It is anticipated that as the maritime community gains experience with GMDSS, that associated problems will decrease. It is expected that the GMDSS, when fully implemented, will enhance the safety of all mariners and enable faster response by rescue authorities. It is recommended that mariners voluntarily install GMDSS equipment suitable to their operational areas.

For More Information

This Information Bulletin was approved on 8 October 1996 by the National GMDSS Implementation Task Force, a U.S. Coast Guard sponsored group established to coordinate implementation problems, recommend their resolution, and assist in disseminating GMDSS information. The Task Force is soliciting feedback on problems encountered and invites responses from all concerned. Address responses to Captain Jack Fuechsel, Task Force Executive Director, 7425 Elgar Street, Springfield, VA 2215 1; phone (703) 941-1935; fax (703) 941-6154; or E-mail jack.fuechsel@comsat.com.

GMDSS IMPLEMENTATION COMMERCIAL VESSEL TASK GROUP

Summary Record of 13 February 1997 Meeting

1. The meeting was convened at 9:30 a.m. by Chairman Joe Cox. The following documents

were distributed for information and are available on request:

- Summary Record of 21 November 1996 Commercial Task Group meeting
- Summary Record of 9 December 1996 Task Force Meeting
- Letter to the Coast Guard with Task Force training recommendations

2. The Agenda was adopted and The Task Group Summary Record of the 21 November meeting was noted. Jack Fuechsel summarized the 9 December Task Force meeting.

3. The Coast Guard reported that DSC installations were now operational on NE/BF at Boston (MMSI 003 66999 1), Portsmouth (003 669996), Miami (003 669997), and New Orleans (003669994) and on MF at Charleston (003669907). The Coast Guard expects to have cutters converted for GMDSS by 1 February 1999 but some of the rescue boats may not have been converted until after that date.

4. The Coast Guard and others attending the IMO COMSAR 2 meeting in London recently reported on actions taken. Highlights included:

An agreement not to relax the 1 February 1999 GMDSS implementation but to prepare a circular advising ships and administrations to continue the channel 16 VHF voice watch (but not the 2182 NE watch) temporarily beyond 1999.

An agreement that new or changed GMDSS performance standards would have a 3 year phase-in period before becoming effective. Examples are the new requirement for annual testing of EPIRBs and a requirement that existing electronic navigation receivers be connected to GMDSS equipment capable of automatically sending a distress alert including position. These will become effective in 2002.

5. It was noted that two member groups with vessels larger than 300 tons were operating exclusively in sea area A1 and had applied for assistance in developing special considerations for complying with GMDSS requirements. While the equipment requirements do not seem burdensome, the companies would like to avoid the expense of training all mates as GMDSS

operators. Both the Training and Commercial Vessel Groups have agreed to examine this issue and the FCC has indicated an intent to open the issue for public response.

6. Jack Fuechsel reported that he had called 17 additional operators of U.S. flag ships which had not responded to the Task Group's GMDSS questionnaire and placed them on the Task Group mailing list. This accounted for an additional 170 ships and brought the total U.S. flag ships to 340. Most of the operators were well aware of their GMDSS responsibilities and indicated no problem in meeting the 1 February 1999 date for full GMDSS implementation.

7. The Comsat and NOAA representatives reported on the special meeting 17 December regarding the SEAS-AMVER program and problems with the server and landline connections. It appears that all problems are well on the way to resolution. The status of promotional literature reviewed at the 17 December meeting was also discussed. Al Labbe will coordinate final edits and final versions can hopefully be put up on appropriate web sites and also printed in time for distribution at the RTCM Assembly 27 April 1997.

8. There had been no further progress on the initiative to review safety requirements for vessels on the Great Lakes but the Chairman indicated that he would get contact names for the Lake Carriers Association and their Canadian counterparts who would be invited to participate in such a review.

9. The continuing work list for the Task Group was reviewed and edited:

- a. Monitor the progress of GMDSS outfitting of SOLAS vessels - Jack Fuechsel
- b. Encourage GMDSS outfitting & training for non-compulsory commercial vessels.
- c. Recommend special GMDSS considerations for sea area A1 - Richard Swanson
- d. Promulgate guidance on regulation of false alarms - Jack Fuechsel
- e. Encourage AMVER and Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) participation - Chris Noe
- f. Consider recommending selected Great Lakes GMDSS services - Joe Cox
- g. Recommend radio log keeping requirements under GMDSS - Richard Bragg
- h. Develop Information Bulletin on tonnage interpretations for GMDSS - USCG Expert

10. Under other business, it was noted that the current SOLAS Chapter V requires a Radio

Direction Finder (RDF) primarily for direction finding on 500 KHz but also for use as a navigation device. It is a Coast Guard interpretation that when ships become GMDSS compliant they no longer need to carry the RDF. With regard to the Commercial Vessel Mailing List, it was noted that in addition to the 17 new operators of U.S. flag ships, the NWS Port Meteorological Officers (PMO) were being added. New listings for Coast Guard RCCs and Communications Stations are currently being compiled and will also be added to the mailing list.

11. The Task Group agreed to meet again at RTCM on Wednesday 23 April at 1997 at 9:30.

GMDSS IMPLEMENTATION COMMERCIAL VESSEL TASK GROUP

Summary Record of 23 April 1997 Meeting

I. The meeting was convened at 930 a.m. by Chairman Joe Cox. The Following documents were distributed for information and are available on request:

Summary Record of 13 February 1997 Commercial Task Group meeting

Summary Record of 18 February 1997 Task Force Meeting

Letter from Fish Meal & Oil Assoc. requesting Sea Area A1 relief

Draft GMDSS Information Bulletin for Recreational Vessels, 11 April 1997

List of publications required on board GMDSS ships

Draft outline of a Port State Inspection Program 17 April 1997

2. The Agenda was adopted and The Task Group Summary Record of the 13 February and his participation meeting was noted. Jack Fuechsel summarized the 8 February Task Force meeting and his participation in the recent International GMDSS Conference in Plymouth, U.K.

3. The Coast Guard reported that consideration was being given to making the VHF network upgrades in two phases, separating the DSC distress upgrade from the features being planned for Coast Guard command and control.

4. Mr. Swanson reported for the FCC and introduced two documents, a list of publications required on GMDSS ships and a 'strawman' outline of a special GMDSS operator certification

limited to Sea Area A1 or perhaps to Areas A1 and A2. There was favorable comment on the proposal which had also been submitted to the GMDSS Training group meeting 22 April. Since the group had just received the document, it will be considered again at the next meeting.

5. The letter from the Fish Meal & Oil Association on behalf of the Menhaden fishery asked for relief from GMDSS requirements for vessels larger than 300 tons operating exclusively in sea area A1. This group and other similar vessels such as dredges would like to avoid the expense of training all mates as GMDSS operators. There was substantial agreement that an A1 GMDSS Operator's License with reduced training requirements would be appropriate. In general, the A1 equipment requirements did not seem burdensome but a waiver should be considered which would not require VHF with DSC until some period after the Coast Guard shore network is completed. Both the Training and Commercial Vessel Groups are considering this issue and the FCC has indicated an intent to open it for public response.

6. Comsat and NOAA provided an update on the SEAS/AMVER program which is proceeding according to plans. The new brochures advertising the program were still not ready for release however. NOAA identified a new problem in that manufacturers of Inmarsat-C ship earth stations are permitted under the latest Inmarsat standards to produce terminals without either a floppy disc drive or an RS-232 port. This effectively prohibits use of the special software which NOAA is offering to enable ships to participate in the SEAS weather observing program and the AMVER ship reporting program easily and without cost to the ship. SEAS and AMVER are not GMDSS programs but both are strongly recommended by IMO because of their contributions to maritime safety. The group agreed that this issue should be referred to the Service Agents and Manufacturers group and that the Task Force should be asked to bring the problem to the attention of Japan Radio Co. and other manufacturers who offer such a terminal.

7. The group also considered an issue regarding the use of GMDSS Safety systems for ships business communications. This is clearly permitted and in fact encouraged to assure operational status of the equipment. Some masters, however, are reported to be reserving the equipment for emergency use only and do not permit routine use. The Task Force will be requested to issue statements in appropriate documents discouraging this approach and encouraging use of GMDSS equipment for routine ship's communications.

8. The draft document on Part State Inspection was distributed but will be reviewed again the next meeting to allow ample time for review. It is also being considered by the training group, The draft Information Bulletin for Recreational Vessels was

distributed for information but was not discussed in detail.

9. Members of the Riverboat Gaming Maritime Association have been added to the mailing list for this group under the assumption that they would be required to outfit for GMDSS Sea Area A1. It develops that most will NOT be affected, however, since the FCC GMDSS rules apply to vessels over 300 tons which operate in the open sea. Sorry for confusing the issue!

10. The continuing work list for the Task Group was reviewed without change:

- a. Monitor the progress of GMDSS outfitting of SOLAS vessels - Jack Fuechsel
- b. Encourage GMDSS outfitting & training for non-compulsory commercial vessels.
- c. Recommend special GMDSS considerations for sea area A1 - Richard Swanson
- d. Promulgate guidance on mitigation of false alarms - Jack Fuechsel
- e. Encourage AMVER and Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) participation - Chris Noe
- f. Consider recommending selected Great Lakes GMDSS services - Joe Cox
- g. Recommend radio log keeping requirements under GMDSS - Richard Bragg
- h. Develop information bulletin on tonnage interpretations for GMDSS - USCG Expert.

11. The Task Group agreed to meet again at DOT-HQ on Monday 23 June at 1997 at 9:30.