



Technical Circular

No.: 010/2023

Date: 15th May 2023

Subject: Liberia – Guidance on the Continued Validity of VHF Radiocommunications Equipment Installed and Used on Ships and Other Vessels.

1. The ITU World Radio Communication Conferences in 2012, 2015 and 2019 made extensive changes to appendix 18 of the Radio Regulation (RR). While these changes do not affect the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), they do affect the use of other frequencies used for VHF meteorological, navigational and urgent marine information broadcasts, port operations and Vessel Traffic Service (VTS).
2. According to the Performance standards for shipborne VHF radio installations capable of communication and digital selective calling (resolution A.803 (19), as amended), VHF radio communication equipment should comply with the Radio Regulations.
3. In view of above, the International Maritime Organization issued circular MSC.1/Circ.1460 (Rev.3) providing that:

“To ensure GMDSS communication capability and the availability of appropriate GMDSS radio communication equipment, and without prejudice to the arrangements contained in appendix 18 of the RR, VHF radio communication equipment should be updated so that following the **first radio survey after 1 January 2024**, at the earliest, it meets the arrangements which will be in force by then”.

4. In this regard, Liberian Administration vide Marine Advisory 11/2023 has provided following guidance/ requirements on the continued validity of VHF Radiocommunications equipment installed and used on ships:

i. Frequencies and channeling arrangements for the VHF bands:

- a. The above changes in Radio Regulation (RR) do not affect the designated VHF channels used for navigation safety, distress communications, and ship to ship VHF communications. The channels designated for use of the aforementioned communications are Channels 6, 13, 15,16, 17, and 70. These channels remain unchanged.
- b. The changes to the VHF frequencies do not affect the AIS VHF channels (AIS1 and AIS2).



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. While we have taken utmost care to be as factual as possible, readers/ users are advised to verify the exact text and content of the Regulation from the original source/ issuing Authority.

- c. Some coast stations may change their operating channel designations or frequencies as a result of changes to the RR, but the timing of any change is a local matter.
 - d. A small number of 4-digit channel numbers are now explicitly stated in the RR. Radio operators should be aware of these new channels and the corresponding older 2-digit channel designations. Existing 2-digit, international, simplex channels are unchanged.
 - e. Where a frequency is supported by equipment in accordance with the RR, but the channel indication is no longer correct, **a cross reference table should be displayed at the operating station(s).**
- ii. While existing VHF radios will continue to work for safety, distress, and ship to ship communications, however, many PSC authorities and Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) may change over to the new VHF frequency on 01 January 2024 for communicating with ships and other vessels within their regions. **To ensure proper communications with PSC authorities and/or communications with VTS, vessel owners/operators should have on board at least two VHF radios capable of communicating on the new frequencies.**
 - iii. Prior to any passage, the Radio Operator / Master should review radio channel / frequency requirements for the vessel's area of operation, ensuring the radiocommunication equipment has the required capability. Radio operators should refer to ITU List IV – List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations or optionally the Admiralty List of Radio Stations (ALRS) to ensure that the on-board equipment is capable of operating on the frequencies necessary for the vessel's area of operation, e.g. to communicate with ports and coast stations.
5. Ship Owners, managers and masters of Liberian flagged ships are advised to be guided by above.

Encl.:

1. Liberian Marine Advisory No.11/2023
2. MSC.1/Circ. 1460/Rev.3.

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26 April 2023

Marine Advisory: 11/2023

Subject: Guidance on the Continued Validity of VHF Radiocommunications Equipment Installed and Used on Ships and Other Vessels

Reference: (a) [MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.3](#)
(b) [Resolution A.803\(19\) as amended](#)
(c) [MSC.1/Circ.1389](#)

To: Shipowners/Operators/Masters:

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Advisory is to inform shipowners, operators and Masters onboard Liberian flag vessels of IMO and ITU regulatory changes that affect maritime radiocommunication equipment and to provide guidance to ensure compatibility between VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on vessels and on shore, and the revised frequencies and channeling arrangements for the maritime VHF bands.

Background

The ITU World Radiocommunication Conferences in 2012, 2015 and 2019 made extensive changes to appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations (RR). While these changes do not affect the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), they do affect the use of other frequencies used for VHF meteorological, navigational and urgent marine information broadcasts, port operations and Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). According to the *Performance standards for shipborne VHF radio installations capable of communication and digital selective calling* ([reference \(b\)](#)), VHF radiocommunication equipment should comply with the RR.

Requirements and Alternatives

Frequencies and channeling arrangements for the VHF bands:

1. The changes do not affect the designated VHF channels used for navigation safety, distress communications, and ship to ship VHF communications. The channels designated for use of the aforementioned communications are Channels 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 70. These channels remain unchanged.
2. The changes to the VHF frequencies do not affect the AIS VHF channels (AIS1 and AIS2).
3. Some coast stations may change their operating channel designations or frequencies as a result of changes to the RR, but the timing of any change is a local matter.
4. A small number of 4-digit channel numbers are now explicitly stated in the RR. Radio operators should be aware of these new channels and the corresponding older 2-digit channel designations. Existing 2-digit, international, simplex channels are unchanged.

5. Where a frequency is supported by equipment in accordance with the RR, but the channel indication is no longer correct, a cross reference table should be displayed at the operating station(s).

As noted above existing VHF radios will continue to work for safety, distress, and ship to ship communications. However, many PSC authorities and Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) may change over to the new VHF frequency on 01 January 2024 for communicating with ships and other vessels within their regions. To ensure proper communications with PSC authorities and/or communications with VTS, vessel owners/operators should have on board at least two VHF radios capable of communicating on the new frequencies.

Prior to any passage the Radio Operator / Master should review radio channel / frequency requirements for the ship's/vessel's area of operation, ensuring the radiocommunication equipment has the required capability. Radio operators should refer to ITU List IV – List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations or optionally the Admiralty List of Radio Stations (ALRS) to ensure that the on-board equipment is capable of operating on the frequencies necessary for the ship/vessel's area of operation, e.g. to communicate with ports and coast stations. Please note that carriage on board of the ALRS is not mandatory for Liberian flagged vessels.

Questions regarding this guidance should be referred to RegsandStandards@liscr.com or telephone +1-703-790-3434.

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MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.3
18 October 2021

GUIDANCE ON THE VALIDITY OF RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT INSTALLED AND USED ON SHIPS

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 104th session (4 to 8 October 2021), approved this circular, taking into account the recommendation of the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue at its eighth session (19 to 23 April 2021). The guidance in this circular recognizes that incompatibility may exist between VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on ships and on shore, and the revised frequencies and channelling arrangements for the maritime VHF bands as contained in appendix 18 to the ITU Radio Regulations (RR) – Edition 2020.

2 This circular replaces MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.2, which addressed both MF/HF radiocommunication equipment that is capable of operating narrow band direct-printing (NBDP) and VHF radiocommunication equipment. Since NBDP radiocommunication equipment will no longer be required under forthcoming amendments to SOLAS chapter IV, that equipment is not addressed in this circular.

3 The ITU World Radiocommunication Conferences in 2012, 2015 and 2019 made extensive changes to appendix 18 of the RR. While these changes do not affect the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), they do affect the use of other frequencies used for VHF meteorological, navigational and urgent marine information broadcasts, port operations and Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). According to the *Performance standards for shipborne VHF radio installations capable of communication and digital selective calling* (resolution A.803(19), as amended), VHF radiocommunication equipment should comply with the RR.

4 The *Guidance on procedures for updating shipborne navigation and communication equipment* (MSC.1/Circ.1389) notes that updates to application software and firmware to meet changes in IMO and ITU regulatory requirements are needed.

5 To ensure GMDSS communication capability and the availability of appropriate GMDSS radiocommunication equipment, and without prejudice to the arrangements contained in appendix 18 of the RR, VHF radiocommunication equipment should be updated so that following the first radio survey after 1 January 2024, at the earliest, it meets the arrangements which will be in force by then.

6 Member States are invited to bring this information to the attention of the appropriate national authorities and all other parties concerned.