



Technical Circular

No.: 023/2023

Date: 30th August 2023

Subject: IMO Circular, MSC.1/Circ. 1460/ Rev.4 Reg. Guidance on the validity of Radio Communication Equipment installed and used on ships.

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 voice communication and digital selective calling (Resolution MSC. 511 (105)), VHF radio communication equipment should comply with the Radio Regulations.
3. Further, IMO Circular, MSC.1/Circ. 1389 on 'Guidance on procedures for updating shipborne navigation and communication equipment' provides that application software and firmware of navigation and radio communication equipment be kept updated to meet changes in IMO and ITU regulatory requirements.
4. In this regard, the International Maritime Organization has issued circular MSC.1/Circ.1460 (Rev.4) on 'Guidance on the validity of radio communication equipment installed and used on ships' 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 2028**, at the earliest, it meets the arrangements which will be in force by then”.
5. Ship Owners and managers are advised to take note of above and accordingly liaise with the VHF radio communication equipment manufacturer to arrange for timely up gradation of the equipment on their ships.
6. 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 before 01 January 2028 for communicating with ships and other vessels within their regions.



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7. Accordingly, to ensure proper communications with PSC authorities and/or communications with VTS, prior to any passage, the Radio Operator / Masters are advised to review radio channel / frequency requirements for the vessel's area of operation, ensuring the radio communication equipment has the required capability.
- 8. This Technical Circular supersedes and revokes earlier Technical Circular No. 017/2022, dated 09 March 2022.**

Enclosure:

1. MSC.1/Circ. 1460/Rev.4.

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MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.4
30 June 2023

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

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 107th session (31 May to 9 June 2023), approved the guidance set out in the following paragraphs, taking into account concerns over the availability of VHF radiocommunication equipment compatible with the frequencies and channelling arrangements set out in Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations (RR) – Edition 2020. This guidance recognizes that incompatibility may exist between VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on ships and on shore, and the revised frequencies and channelling arrangements in Appendix 18 of the RR.

2 This circular replaces MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.3, which indicated the need for updating existing VHF radiocommunication equipment following the first radio survey after 1 January 2024.

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 voice communication and digital selective calling* (resolution MSC.511(105)), 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 following the first radio survey after 1 January 2028, at the earliest, so that it meets the arrangements that 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.