



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON REQUEST THAT THE COMMISSION COLLECT FULL MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE IDENTITY DATA SET RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

Comment Date: January 27, 2003

Reply Comment Date: February 11, 2003

On September 19, 2002 the National GMDSS Implementation Task Force (Task Force)¹ submitted a request to the Commission to expand its Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) database to incorporate additional data fields in accordance with the recommendation in International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.887(21). The Task Force suggests that the change be implemented by revising the Commission's application forms to require submission of the expanded data when applying for a station license and when renewing such licenses.

By way of background, an MMSI is a unique nine-digit number assigned to commercial and recreational U.S. vessels participating in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).² Vessel owners must obtain an MMSI prior to using a digital selective calling (DSC) radio.³ The Commission has entered into agreements with private entities authorizing them to distribute MMSIs to vessels that are no longer required⁴ to obtain an individual license, but licensed vessels continue to receive MMSIs from the Commission through the licensing process.⁵ The Commission collects from applicants only that information which is necessary for the Commission's licensing processes, but the private entities that issue MMSI collect additional information, as recommended by the IMO. Specifically, the IMO

¹ The National GMDSS Implementation Task Force is chartered by the United States Coast Guard to supplement government functions in expediting the implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System introduced by the International Maritime Organization.

² FCC Seeks Comment Regarding Revision of Procedures for Assigning Maritime Mobile Service Identities, *Public Notice*, 13 FCC Rcd 9177, 9177 (1997).

³ *Id.*

⁴ In 1996, the Commission eliminated the licensing requirement for vessels that are not required by law to carry a radio and do not make international voyages or communication. See Amendment of Parts 80 and 87 of the Commission's Rules to Permit Operation of Certain Domestic Ship and Aircraft Radio Stations Without Individual Licenses, *Report and Order*, WT Docket No. 96-82, 11 FCC Rcd 14849 (1996). Such vessels will be referred to herein as "exempt" vessels.

⁵ Commission Announces Revision Of Procedures For Assigning Maritime Mobile Service Identities, *Public Notice*, 16 FCC Rcd 918, 918-19 (2001).

recommends collection of the following data for each vessel (items that the Commission currently does **not** collect from applicants are indicated with an asterisk):

1. ship name;
2. Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI);
3. call sign;
4. * EPIRB Identification Code (if applicable) and its homing frequency;
5. country;
6. ship identification number (IMO number or national registration number);
7. brief ship description;
8. * name, address, telephone and telefax number of emergency contact person ashore;
9. * alternative 24-hour emergency telephone number (alternative contact ashore);
10. * capacity for persons on board (passengers and crew);
11. * radio installation (Inmarsat-A,B,C,D, VHF DSC, etc.) for ship and survival craft;
12. identification number for all radio systems available;
13. * type and number of survival craft; and
14. date of last modification of database record.

The Task Force argues that search and rescue operations could be significantly improved if the Commission's database contained this additional information. It believes that the additional data fields are needed because the efficiency and ease of use of the new GMDSS radio system has resulted in a substantial increase in advertent transmission of false alerts, particularly by vessels using the system voluntarily whose operators are not required to be trained or licensed. The U.S. Coast Guard utilizes the information available from numerous data bases including the Commission's MMSI database to enhance response to GMDSS distress alerts, including the prevention of unnecessary launching of search and rescue assets. The Task Force maintains that the validation process is severely impeded without access to the additional data fields, as the information contained in those fields is essential for search and rescue.

Interested parties may file comments on this Request on or before January 27, 2003. Parties interested in submitting reply comments must do so on or before February 11, 2003. All submissions should reference this *Public Notice*, including the DA number, and should be filed with the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., TW-325, Washington, D.C. 20554.⁶ A copy of each filing should be sent to 1) Qualex International (Qualex), Portals II, 445 Twelfth St., S.W., Room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554; 2) Ghassan Khalek, Federal Communications Commission, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Policy and Rules Branch, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room 4-C421, Washington, D.C. 20554; and 3) Maria Ringold, Federal Communications Commission, Consumer Information Branch, Reference Information Center, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room CY-B529, Washington, D.C. 20554.

Copies of the proposal and all responses to this Public Notice will be available for inspection and copying during regular business hours in the Reference Information Center (RIC) of the Consumer Information Branch, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth St., S.W., Room CY-A257. Washington, D.C. 20554. Copies may also be obtained from Qualex. For further information regarding the public reference file, please contact Maria Ringold, Chief, Wireless Branch, RIC, (202) 418-1350.

⁶ The address for FCC locations should be used only for documents filed by United States Postal Service first class mail, Express Mail, and Priority Mail. Hand-delivered or messenger-delivered documents for the Commission's Secretary are accepted only by the Commission's contractor, Vistrionix, Inc., at 236 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Suite 110, Washington, D.C. 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building. Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail or Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743. All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

For further information, contact Mr. Ghassan Khalek of the Policy and Rules Branch, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau at (202) 418-0680, TTY (202) 418-7233, or via email to gkhalek@fcc.gov.

By the Chief, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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