

NATIONAL GMDSS IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

Newsletter and Summary Record of 19 May 2005 Meeting

1. This summary record is provided for information and will be posted on the Task Force portion of the Coast Guard web site at www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms/ (click GMDSS, then GMDSS Task Force). The summary record is also distributed to all Task Force members to serve as a Newsletter summarizing GMDSS developments.

The GMDSS Task Force met in St. Pete Beach, Florida on Thursday 19 May 2005 during the RTCM Assembly. The documents listed below were distributed and copies are available on request. Some are also posted on websites:

Summary record of Task Force meeting of 6 January 2005
Alert and clarification on manually entered offsets in GPS receivers
Homeland Security Press Release encouraging reporting of suspicious activity
FCC News promoting deployment of broadband communications on vessels
Task Force letter to SUNY Maritime on Cadet GMDSS training
Gordon West Article on VHF Maritime portables for general use
UK Proposal to License ships for life via web with no fee
Electronic Chart Rulemaking - Article from Professional Mariner
AIS Problems encountered – Article from Professional Mariner
NASBLA Draft Model Act re EPIRBs and VHF for all vessels offshore
Gilbert Paper proposing candidate issues for GMDSS Modernization

2. The Summary Record of the 6 January Task Force meeting was approved with a clarification to item 3.f. and a change to item 4.c.5). This erroneously indicated that 65 foot fishing vessels operating in VTS areas needed to fit with AIS. A corrected copy of the Summary Record is posted on the website.

3. **The Coast Guard Reports:** Coast Guard representatives made introductory statements and responded to questions as follows:

a. Cell Phone Use for Emergency Alerting. Capt Steve Sawyer, Coast Guard Chief of Search & Rescue reprised his Paper presented during the RTCM Assembly which noted the widespread use by recreational boaters of cell phones for emergency purposes. The following are highlights of his presentation:

- 1). 25% of recreational boats carry VHF but 60% carry cell phones.
- 2). The vast majority of SAR cases occur within about 10 miles of shore.
- 3). Offshore cell phone coverage is spotty but frequently extends 10 miles.
- 4). The salvage industry reports that 65% of their assistance calls are cellular.
- 5.) In FY 2004, the CG was alerted directly by cell phone in 1965 cases.
- 6). Use of “*CG” to alert Coast Guard is widely available but not universal.
- 7). “911” calls often work but call center operator training is spotty.

- 8). "E911" calls (GPS enhanced) are helpful but not widely available.
- 9). Enhancements such as high mounted antennas and amplifiers extend range
- 10). CG still recommends VHF but must be prepared to react to cell calls.

b. Upgrade of the VHF Coastal Network to DSC for Sea Area A1. There was no new report on the Rescue 21 upgrade but there had been no new developments since the last meeting.

c. Upgrade of MF Coastal Network to DSC for Sea Area A2. Capt. Len Ritter indicated that there have been no new developments in the project to complete an upgrade to MF-DSC. Necessary work has been identified at each site but due to funding limitations completion prior to 2009 can not be projected. Since equipment has already been installed at most stations, a pre-operational watch is being maintained on both 2182 and 2187.5 kHz. It is cautioned however that coverage is uncertain since needed antenna upgrades have not been completed.

d. Current Status of Automatic Identification Systems (AIS). Jorge Arroyo reported that AIS shore installations have been operational in all VTS areas since December 2004 and would be extended to non-VTS navigable waters in the future. AIS has also been installed and is under evaluation on 4 offshore buoys and 4 offshore towers in the Petrocom network in the Gulf of Mexico. A test bed receiver will be deployed on an ORBCOMM satellite hopefully by early 2006 to evaluate AIS monitoring from space. There is currently a "gap" of some 11,000 vessels on which the Coast Guard is mandated to require AIS but which are not required to fit AIS under existing regulations. This "gap" breaks down as follows:

Fishing Vessels	3800	Tank Ships	20
Passenger Vessels	2484	Oil Recovery Vessels	25
Tugs	4215	Freight Ships	67
Offshore Service	283		

The Coast Guard is in the initial stages of rulemaking regarding proposed regulations to address this "gap" as well as enhancing AIS with electronic chart systems as mandated by the Coast Guard and Marine Transportation Act of 2004. A less expensive but less capable Class B AIS is under consideration and will be an alternative in the rulemaking effort. IMO has commissioned a model AIS Training Course, and it is anticipated it will be considered and adopted as part of the future STCW training requirements for appropriate personnel.

e. Future developments in Long Range Identification & Tracking (LRIT). George Molessa noted that LRIT will be a major topic at the upcoming IMO COMSAR Subcommittee meeting in March 2006. The United States is leading an International Correspondence Group drafting a major paper for consideration at that meeting. The U.S. is conducting cooperative trials with vessels under Marshall Islands registry. AIS is being considered for LRIT applications but many concerns have been raised regarding data

privacy. Current proposals under consideration at IMO include specifying functional requirements and letting vessels equip with any system which can meet those requirements. This is the approach adopted for Ship Security Alerting Systems (SSAS). Progress on LRIT within the IMO has been slow which prompts consideration of unilateral action by the U.S. to achieve early partial implementation by working directly with cooperative governments. However, the U.S. prefers a global international solution and will continue to pursue that objective.

f. IMO/COMSAR 9 Meeting in London 7-11 February 2005. Captain Len Ritter outlined the principal decisions taken at the COMSAR 9 conference and invited interested parties to attend the SOLAS Working Group meeting that afternoon which would review the preparatory work for the COMSAR 10 Conference in March 2006.

g. Broadband Transmissions over Power Lines, Potential Interference. Ed Brady reviewed the potential for important marine radio operations to receive interference from recently authorized Broadband communications over Power Lines (BPL). The Coast Guard worked with NTIA to ensure that GMDSS and other maritime operations were protected from BPL. The final FCC Rule requires that new applications near maritime areas be coordinated with the Coast Guard and there are numerous restrictions including protection for GMDSS operations in prospective Sea Area A2.

h. DASS – Next Generation of Satellite EPIRB Processing. LCDR Jay Dell provided a briefing on the Defense Alerting Satellite System (DASS) which is under development to improve the accuracy and processing speed of EPIRB alerts. The concept places Sarsat repeaters on up to 30 GPS satellites and has the potential to improve accuracy to 10 meters and reduce processing time to 5 minutes. The target date for the Proof of Concept phase is 2011-2012 and the target date for Initial Operating Capability is 2013-2014.

4. The FCC Reports: FCC representatives made introductory statements and responded to questions as follows:

a. Status of Part 80 Rule Making Proceedings. Ghassan Khalek provided a summary of recently completed and still pending regulatory proceedings. Among the maritime actions still pending are the following:

- 1). WT 00-48 There are still some incomplete issues
- 2). A decision on emergency power for small pass. vessels under 100 tons
- 3). Whether to issue Operator Licenses for life
- 4). Whether to certify and regulate SSAS equipment
- 5). WT 04-257 Use of maritime frequencies on land for AMTS
- 6). WT 04-344 Finalize spectrum requirements for AIS

b. Carryover Issue: Can Recreational Vessels keep existing no-fee MMSI when applying for a Station License? This issue has been raised by vessels having a BOATUS issued MMSI but desiring to get an FCC Station License in compliance with

the Rule that requires the Station License for international voyages. Ghassan Khalek acknowledged that the Universal Licensing System (ULS) would not accept an existing MMSI not issued by the FCC and insisted on assigning a new MMSI. He explained the very complicated system and the cost to reprogram the system. The proponents of the change pointed out that the current system was wasteful of MMSI numbers and caused additional expense to the boat owner to have the MMSI number changed in the equipment. In the spirit of the FCC mandated “transportable numbers for cell phones policy” they asked the FCC to modify the ULS to accept the existing MMSI numbers. Ghassan indicated that he would look into the matter further.

c. UK Proposal to Issue Ship Station Licenses for Life of the Vessel. There is a UK proposal to issue these licenses for the life of the ship, presumably as long as there was no change of ownership of the vessel. The licenses would be issued over the internet without fee or via mail with a small administrative fee if the Company lacked internet access. Ghassan was asked to look at the proposal for possible implementation in the U.S.

5. The GMDSS Modernization Initiative. RADM Ed Gilbert provided a status report on the Task Force’s new initiative concerning GMDSS modernization. The latest version of a paper identifying the issues was distributed for information and discussion. The list includes both modernization issues and domestic implementation issues. An ad hoc group is working by email to prioritize the list and refine recommendations on selected items which would be presented to the Task Force for decision at the August meeting. It was agreed that those recommendations would be distributed to members by email in advance of the meeting.

7. The RTCM Report: RTCM President, Bob Markle announced that the next RTCM Assembly would be held at the Hyatt Hotel in Newport Beach, California May 7-12, 2006.

8. The Recreational Vessel Group Report:

a. DSC Tutorial: The Task Force has been following the development of a DSC tutorial by the BOAT U.S. Foundation under a Coast Guard grant. The program is being developed by Chuck Husick and is expected to be available for Beta testing by members soon.

b. NASBLA Draft Model Act on VHF and/or EPIRBs for all Vessels Going More than 1 Mile Offshore: Following up on a recommendation from the Boating Safety Advisory Committee, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) has drafted a Model Act which they will recommend to all coastal states. The draft Act is patterned after a Hawaiian Law which requires that all vessels going more than 1 mile offshore carry VHF Radio or an EPIRB. In reviewing the draft, the Task Force concurred but will recommend that the NASBLA draft accept a Marine Personal Locator Beacon as the equivalent of an EPIRB.

c. BOATUS MMSI Report: Elaine Dickinson reported by email that BOATUS has issued 22,537 MMSI registrations to date. They have also re-registered 6 boaters who dropped their FCC Station License but kept their FCC issued MMSI as recently agreed by the FCC. BOATUS has begun a program of emailing groups of 500 registrants at a time to remind them that they must keep their registration updated. This is producing quite a few questions and requests for clarification but pays dividends in keeping the database up to date.

d. Canadian Regional MMSI Directory: Peter Ryan reported on the requirement for Restricted VHF Operator Licenses in Canada and mentioned that a regional directory of MMSI numbers had been compiled containing only the MMSI number and the vessel's name. This touched off a debate as to whether this was an invasion of privacy. While the FCC maintained that they could not release such information, others saw no problem if private sector organizations created such a directory assuming that boaters could elect to have an 'unlisted' MMSI number.

9. The Report of the GMDSS Training Group: There were no training issues other than the report that the IMO has commissioned a model training course for AIS. The Task Force will monitor development of this new initiative.

10. The Report of the GMDSS Commercial Vessel Group: Issues of interest to the Commercial Vessel Group were covered in the government reports above.

11. The Report of the GMDSS Service Agents & Manufacturers Group:

a. Manually Entered Position Offsets in Certain GPS Receivers: Members received copies of a Coast Guard Safety Alert warning of degradation of position information from certain receivers if manual offsets had been introduced. The manufacturer's clarification and corrective action notice was also distributed.

b. UK Requirements for Companies Offering Shore-based GMDSS Maintenance: After the meeting, it was learned that the UK Maritime and Coast Guard Agency has issued Marine Guidance Note MGN 2992 (M+F) detailing guidance for Companies providing shore-based GMDSS maintenance. The Guidance has been issued in response to IMO Resolution A. 702(17) and may be viewed on the website <http://www.mcga.gov.uk>.

12. The Next Meeting of the GMDSS Task Force: The Task Force agreed to meet next in Washington DC on Thursday morning 11 August 2005. The follow-on meeting will be on Friday morning 14 October 2005 during the NMEA Annual Meeting in Naples, Florida.

GMDSS TASK FORCE CONTINUING WORK LIST

19 May 2005

1. Monitor FCC continuing action to update GMDSS Rules (TF)

2. Recommend actions to reduce false alerts in GMDSS systems (TF)
3. Monitor Coast Guard Port State GMDSS inspection program (TF)
4. Monitor MSI broadcasting programs for compliance with GMDSS Standards (TF)
5. Review GMDSS Internet Web Sites and update Task Force portion of USCG site (TF)
6. Support SOLAS Working Group planning for IMO COMSAR meetings (TF)
7. Disseminate GMDSS Information Bulletins and IMO GMDSS Documents (TF)
8. Advocate Canadian coordination to extend GMDSS services to the Great Lakes (TF)
9. Review GMDSS concepts and make modernization recommendations (TF)
10. Recommend Coastal states require VHF or EPIRBs for all vessels offshore (TF)
11. Review GMDSS publications and recommend updates to keep the data current (TR)
12. Encourage AMVER & VOS participation to supplement GMDSS (CV)
13. Publicize availability of NAVTEX receivers without printers for all vessels (CV)
14. Advocate intership calling on HF GMDSS channels (CV)
15. Encourage Mfgs. to upgrade GMDSS explanations in equipment manuals (SA)
16. Recommend to FCC clarifications to their List of Approved GMDSS Equipment (SA)
17. Monitor guidelines for GMDSS equipment maint. and maintainer standards (SA)
18. Recommend proper interconnection of GPS receivers with DSC Radios (SA)
19. Recommend training programs for non-mandatory users of GMDSS systems (RV)
20. Encourage GMDSS handbooks and Internet and video training aids (RV)
21. Recommend Class 'D' VHF-DSC as superior to RTCM SC-101 format (RV)

Key to cognizant groups:

- (TF) Task Force
- (TR) Training Task Group
- (CV) Commercial Vessel Task Group
- (SA) Service Agents and Manufacturers Task Group
- (RV) Recreational Vessel Task Group

Please refer questions and proposals to Captain Jack Fuechsel at 703-941-1935 or gmdsstf@cox.net

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