

## NATIONAL GMDSS IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

### Newsletter and Summary Record of 5 August 2010 Meeting

**The Summary Record.** This summary record is provided for information and will be posted on the Task Force portion of the Coast Guard web site **Note the new address:** [www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=MaritimeTelecomms](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=MaritimeTelecomms) (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 and other issues in marine telecommunications. The GMDSS Task Force met on 5 August 2010 at the RTCM Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. The documents listed below were distributed and are available on request:

BoatUS News Release of June 2009 offering Free DSC-VHF Radio Checks  
BOATUS News Release on Rescue Alerted by Rental EPIRB  
Draft Coast Guard Notice on Technical Standards for Marine DSC Radios  
Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics for 2009 Noting Rise in Deaths  
DOS News Release on U.S./European Union Collaboration on GNSS Receivers

1. **Summary Record of 20 May 2010 Meeting:** The Summary Record of the 20 May 2010 meeting which had been distributed earlier was noted without change.

2. **The Coast Guard Reports:**

**a. Welcome RDML Robert Day, Chief of Coast Guard Telecommunications.**

Admiral Robert Day was introduced to the members and made extensive remarks summarized as follows:

1.) The admiral noted the newly displayed award presented by the Coast Guard to RTCM during the recent Annual Assembly. RTCM President Bob Markle; in response, presented a plaque commemorating the Coast Guard's status as a founding member of the RTCM. A similar plaque was presented to Ghassan Khalek of the FCC commemorating the Commission's status as founding member. Admiral Day was also very complimentary regarding the work of the RTCM and the GMDSS Task Force.

2.) Admiral Day commented on the changing nature of Coast Guard missions, in particular the massive response to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. The Automatic Identification System (AIS) was particularly helpful in tracking the hundreds of vessels engaged in skimming including hastily retrofitted shrimp boats. The enormous number of public and private players resulted in significant communications congestion.

3.) The admiral also noted the enthusiastic industry response to the Coast Guard's Industry Day with 350 people attending and another 150 participating remotely, the video can be viewed on the TISCOM website. On the other hand, he noted the new budgetary realities facing the Coast Guard and their likely regressive impact on recapitalization of major assets.

**b. Search and Rescue Issues.** Captain Dave McBride introduced his new Deputy, CDR Max Moser and LCDR Mark Turner who recently relieved LCDR Kathy Niles. Dave Edwards reported on the status of the AMVER Program with the following highlights:

1.) There are about 650 U.S. flag vessels being tracked under the Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) program, and since U.S. vessels are required to participate in AMVER, their data is entered automatically into the AMVER database. There are other countries such as Norway which also require their vessels to participate in AMVER, and it could probably be arranged that their LRIT data also be automatically be forwarded to the AMVER database

2.) Voluntary participation in AMVER is growing with some 19,000 vessels registered to participate despite the introduction of IMO's mandatory LRIT program. Although LRIT data is available for Search and Rescue, it is a relatively new development and RCCs tend to go to AMVER as first choice or out of habit.

3.) RCCs typically release an Urgent Marine Safety Broadcast requesting assistance from vessels in the vicinity of a distress but it has been noted that few vessels volunteer, possibly because they may not know whether other vessels are closer. On the other hand, when requested directly by an RCC which has determined that they are in the best position to assist, vessels invariably accept the request and divert to the position of the distress.

**c. Development E-Navigation and AIS/ECDIS Regulations.** Jorge Arroyo reported for the Office of Waterways Management with the following highlights:

1.) The ITU-R meeting agreed to 4 significant revisions to the AIS technical standard (ITU-R M1371-3 now -4) that address AIS SARTS and facilitate the reception of AIS via satellite by the transmission of a new message #27 designed for long range position reports and use on channels other than AIS1 or 2.

2.) The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the AIS test standard (IEC 61993-2) is in final clearance and should hopefully be approved by years' end, This edition corrects many of the deficiencies and nuances encountered with the 1<sup>st</sup> generation AIS units.

3.) IMO's Maritime Safety Committee adopted an amendment to SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 18 imposing an annual AIS inspection requirement, we anticipate its ratification at the next IMO assembly meeting and to come into effect in 2012.

4.) There were no new developments in the continuing rulemaking process regarding carriage of Electronic Chart Display Systems (ECDIS) to report at this time. This is primarily due to the fact that the standards for the display feature have not been completed. RTCM has completed work on a ECS standard that defines 3 different classes

of ECS, however, does not fully address the portrayal of AIS; additional work on this is anticipated.

5.) Subsequent to the meeting, the Coast Guard's Navigation Center issued an alert reminding vessels with AIS to confirm that their unit is operating on the proper channel. The standard default frequency is 161.975 MHz (AIS1 or channel 87B). The alternate frequency is 162.025 MHz (AIS2 or channel 88B). The owners manual should enable verification that your unit is set to the proper channel.

**d. Status of Fishing Vessel Safety Rule Making.** Jack Kemerer reported with the following highlights:

1.) The Coast Guard's last change to Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations was in 1991. By 2003 various pressures including NTSB recommendations and reviews of casualty data prompted a new round of proposed Rule Making to address various deficiencies identified. Among the target issues selected were vessel stability, immersions suits, life rafts, and crew training. Since 2003 two public hearings have been held and the next draft of the proposed regulations is currently under review by the Department of Homeland Security with review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to follow.

2.) Although Radio Safety features were not a specific target of the proposed rule making, the GMDSS Task Force filed comments on 11 December 2008 strongly advocating the updating of radio safety provisions for Fishing Vessels and their survival craft. These recommendations were subsequently endorsed by the Coast Guard's National Fishing Vessel Safety Advisory Committee. The Task Force recommendations can be viewed on our website.

3.) The U.S. fishing vessel population includes about 20,000 federally documented vessels and about 50,000 state registered vessels. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has a proposed Fishing Vessel Convention which was adopted by a Conference in Torremolinos but which has yet to come into force. In the interim, IMO has published a series of recommended Standards for fishing vessels or various classes but these have not been adopted as mandatory for U.S fishing vessels. Should the Torremolinas Convention even come into force, the Coast Guard would need further legislative authority to enforce the provisions.

4.) The Coast Guard Authorization Bill now in Conference has provisions which would affect fishing vessels such as changes in the Boundary Line, requirements for survival craft rather than floats, additional crew training, and mandatory safety examinations twice in five years.

5.) In response to a question as to whether commercial fishing was getting any safer, Mr. Kemerer noted that in a typical year 60 fishing vessels are lost with about 40 fatalities. So far this year 25 vessels have been lost with 15 fatalities. More and more, the regional Fishing Management Councils have opted for a season based on an

allowable total tonnage of catch rather than a limited window of opportunity which can be risky for fishing vessels if they are obliged to fish in tight window and bad weather develops.

6.) In response to an observation that fishing vessels are resisting requirements that they be required to carry both AIS required by the Coast Guard and Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) required by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), it was noted that there are now dual boxes available which can perform both AIS and VMS functions, we will try to provide more information on this dual capability at the next meeting. In the past, the Task Force has opposed the VMS standards as inadequate to meet the Coast Guard's minimum safety requirements; future standards for VMS need to be worked out jointly by the Coast Guard and the NMFS.

**e. Status Report on Rescue 21 VHF-DSC for Sea Area A1.** Gene Lockhart provided an update for the Rescue 21 Program. The following are highlights:

1.) Rescue 21 is daily making a difference in Search and Rescue response participating in some 19,000 cases. The system availability has been excellent, even in the Gulf of Mexico during the response to the oil spill. One of the best features of the new Rescue 21 upgrade is the highly accurate direction finding capability which is proving to be a big assist in locating distress calls from vessels without DSC and from DSC capable vessels without a connected navigation receiver. The D/F has also enabled prompt resolution of several hoax calls.

2.) The east and Gulf coasts are largely completed except for some gaps in the Cape Hatteras which is getting a new 525 foot tower and the Corpus Christi Sector which need to be filled.

3.) The west coast is also filling in nicely but there are gaps to be filled in on such environmentally sensitive areas as San Clemente Island, Big Sur. And Lake Tahoe where planners are working on their 20<sup>th</sup> proposed tower location. Hawaii is also proving to be environmentally sensitive as Rescue 21 has to compete with cell phone operators and other government agencies for space on existing towers.

4.) The Great Lakes timeline is the end of FY2012 and needs 18 new towers for completion. Plans for the Rescue 21 sites in Alaska and the Western Rivers are proceeding but at risk due to budgetary uncertainties and the need for tall towers to get above the tree canopy.

5.) There is still a feeling that take up of DSC by recreational vessels has been slow, even by users who have a DSC capable radio. We need better publicity of the benefits to activating DSC and continued help from the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadrons in their boating courses and safety inspections.

**f. Status of MF-DSC Coastal Network Upgrade to DSC for Sea Area A2.** Joe Hersey reported as follows:

1.) Joe provided an update on MF Voice planning with an acknowledgement that the study results had validated retention of MF coastal operations. There may be limited funding available to 'shore up' a few weak spots but the longer term upgrades will likely be further constrained by new budget realities. Even though the Coast Guard will maintain current MF-DSC capability and the watch on 2182 kHz and enhance both where possible, there are no current plans to declare Sea Area A2 operational. The Coast Guard does not plan to equip small cutters for MF operations but will retain the capability on cruising cutters.

2.) On a related issue, Joe reminded the group that the FCC Rules provide for a phase out of the special VHF-DSC rules known as the RTCM SC 101 standard. It is a reduced capability radio authorized to facilitate introduction of DSC but is being withdrawn now that prices of the more capable international standard radios have been coming down. The FCC Order issued in August 2006 prohibits manufacturer, import and sale of fixed mount VHF-DSC radios in the U.S. which do not conform to the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) 62238 standard after 25 March 2011. Continued use of existing SC 101 fixed mount radios is grandfathered and continued sale of SC 101 portables is permitted until 25 March 2015

3.) Joe also reminded the group of the Coast Guard's earlier Safety Alert warning mariners that the receipt of alerts on channel 70 would automatically shift the VHF radio to channel 16 and that that feature should be disabled when in a situation where to watch needs to be maintained on the bridge-to-bridge channel or a VTS sector channel. Use of the more capable Class D radios should minimize this automatic channel switching problem, enable automatic test calls, and provide GNSS interconnection alarms. Use of these higher performing radios should also improve detection of distress alerts, reduce the false alarm rate, and reduce the incessant alarming attributed to the inferior radios. . The GMDSS Task Force has long advocated use of the international Class D standard in preference to the less capable SC 101 standard.

**g. Working Group Preparations for IMO Meetings.** Russ Levin reported on the upcoming IMO/ITU Panel of Experts meeting planned for September 2010 and the Comsar 15 meeting in London March 2011 as follows:

1). Documents are due early September for the Joint experts meeting. The agenda includes GMDSS Modernization and a proposed U.S. input paper will present the conclusions of the GMDSS Modernization Workshop at the RTCM Assembly on 20 May 2010. The Workshop Conclusions document is posted on the Task Force website.

2). The Comsar 15 meeting in London March 7-11 2011 will also treat GMDSS Modernization along with the usual Communications and Search and Rescue agenda items. The U.S. SOLAS Working Group has scheduled 3 preparatory meeting at the RTCM Headquarters on 17 November 2010, 15 December 2010, and 16 February 2011. A separate Working Group has been authorized for the GMDSS Modernization issue at the March 2011 meeting in London.

3). Bob Markle noted that a new IMO Safety of Navigation standard for watch alarms on SOLAS vessels comes into effect at the end of 2011, The new requirements for Bridge Navigational Watch Alarm Systems (BNWAS) on SOLAS ships comes into effect starting 1 July 2011, with a retrofit schedule that goes through 1 July 2014.

**h. GMDSS Modernization.** RADM Gilbert (Ret.) noted the previous comments on GMDSS Modernization and consideration at two upcoming meetings. He reminded the group that the ITU Conference in 2012 sets the agenda for consideration by the ITU Conference in 2016 and its important that E-Navigation and GMDSS Modernization issues be approved for consideration in 2016. He also reported on the recent Conference of the International Maritime Satellite Organization (IMSO) which provides government supervision of maritime satellite systems providing safety services under the GMDSS. The Thuraya satellite system has announced its intent to apply for regional status as a GMDSS provider in areas where they can meet the requirements for 99.9% reliability and service restoration within one hour of an outage.

**3. The FCC Reports:** Ghassan Khalek reported for the FCC, the following are highlights of his report:

**a. Further Part 80 Rule Making.** Further Part 80 Rule Making. A new FCC Report and Order was released in June, The rules have not yet been published in the Federal Register, and until they are, no effective date is established. The rules do the following:

- Prohibit the certification, manufacture, importation, sale, installation, or continued use of INMARSAT-E emergency position indicating radiobeacons (EPIRBs).
- Conclude that VHF-DSC handheld radiotelephones should include integrated Global Positioning System (GPS) capability, but defer adopting such a requirement until RTCM completes work on GPS performance standards for handheld radios
- Require that any small passenger vessel that does not have a reserve power supply carry at least one VHF handheld marine radio transceiver
- Decline at this time to provide additional spectrum for ship station facsimile communications or to permit the transmission of data on maritime voice channels. Footnote 46 indicates that the commission will consider RTCM's petition to permit VHF-FM Digital Small Message Services in accordance with RTCM 12301.1 in a separate proceeding .
- Eliminate the limits on the number of frequencies that can be assigned to a private coast station or marine utility station.
- Revise the Part 80 rules to incorporate by reference the latest IEC standards for radar

and other equipment. Note that this revision removes the RTCM radar standards from FCC regulations. (The RTCM radar standards remain for now in U.S. Coast Guard regulations affecting towing vessels.)

- Clarify that vessels subject to Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) requirements are required to test their radiotelephone equipment on a daily basis. The meeting was also reminded that the FCC has published rules that phase out SC-101 radios. (see Para 2.f.2.) above)

**b. Task Force Petition to Authorize Use of Marine Handheld Radios ashore in Maritime Areas.** In June 2009, the FCC published the Task Force Petition requesting authority to use VHF handheld radios ashore in maritime areas allowing 30 days for comment. The public comment period ended with no responses either pro or con. This item was not included in the new Part 80 Rulemaking but will be part of a new Rulemaking to include additionally the following two items.

**c. RTCM Petition to Authorize Small Message Data Services on VHF Frequencies.** The RTCM petitioned the FCC to accept its recommendations for a small message service on VHF frequencies using data techniques. The Petition was published by the FCC and Public Comment closed 15 October 2009. There were 28 comments, all favorable. This item was also not included in the new Part 80 rulemaking (para 3.a.) but will be part of the new Rulemaking mentioned in b. above.

**d. FCC Response to the NTSB Recommendation that FCC (and USCG) Require GPIRBs on Vessels Currently Required to Carry EPIRBs.** The National Transportation Safety Board recently recommended that the FCC require GPS enhanced EPIRBs commonly known as GPIRBs on vessels required by regulation to carry EPIRBs. This recommendation also applies to the Coast Guard for vessels which they regulate. The recommendation was made since early alerting in Distress cases gives survivors a better chance of being rescued and GPIRBs provide a location immediately on reception without waiting for position to be determined by doppler techniques. The FCC plans to include this issue in the next Rulemaking along with items b and c above.

**e. Task Force Petition Urging Improved MMSI Management.** The FCC denied the Task Force petition earlier but now hopes to implement many of the Task Force recommendations by creating a new database rather than as part of an upgrade of the Universal Licensing System (ULS) as reported earlier. No date was suggested for the new database. The FCC also reported that an additional block of MMSI numbers had been issued to Sea Tow and that new FCC MMSI assignments were not being received by the Coast Guard regularly for incorporation in the MISLE database.

**f. FCC Decision of the Riverside, California Petition to Use Marine VHF Channels for Land Mobile Applications.** The FCC has still not announced a decision in this case.

**g. Interpretation of FCC Rule Requiring VHF Radio on Vessels Carrying EPIRBs.** It has been noted that the FCC Rules require that vessels carrying EPIRBs also have VHF Radio (Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) are not affected). It was unclear what impact this Rule has on the Hawaiian Law requiring vessels going a mile offshore to carry VHF radio or an EPIRB. Similarly it is not clear whether the rule applies to the BOATUS Rental EPIRB program or to Personal Locator Beacons (PLB), Further information will be sought for the next meeting.

**h. New Issue Regarding Certification of Qualified U.S. GMDSS Inspectors to IMO for Information of Foreign Port State Inspectors.** A new issue was raised in that some U.S. vessels undergoing Port State Inspections in a foreign country have encountered difficulty because the U.S. does not furnish the IMO with a list of qualified GMDSS inspectors as required by the IMO. This is complicated by the fact that the FCC does not conduct the U.S. inspections by government inspectors but delegates the function to any or the 2499 holders of the GMDSS Maintainers License. Many of the U.S. flag inspections are done by qualified representatives of the Classification Societies. This issue will be revisited at the next meeting

**5. The RTCM Report:** RTCM President Bob Markle reported on the status of Special Committees of interest to the Task Force are as follows:

**a. RTCM SC 101/110 on Incorporating GPS in VHF Handhelds.** The combined Special Committee continues to work on recommended specifications for a VHF DSC handheld with integral GPS and the continuing work of SC 110 on EPIRB specifications. Their next meetings were held 18-20 August.

**b. RTCM SC-119 on Maritime Survivor Locating Devices.** This Committee is being reactivated in order to consider man overboard strobe lights and AIS applications.

**c. RTCM SC-121 on Automatic Identification Systems (AIS).** This Committee continues work on AIS messaging and has a Working Group addressing AIS applications in port areas. The Committee met again on 17 August.

**d. RTCM SC-123 on Data over VHF Channels.** As reported earlier, RTCM has petitioned the FCC to adopt RTCM Standard 12301.1 for transmitting data on VHF channels. The comment period closed with all comments favorable to the proposal. Early approval action by the FCC was expected but is still pending. The Committee is expanding its work to include data messaging on MF and HF channels. The Committee met again on 19 August.

**e. RTCM SC-127 on Enhanced Loran.** This Committee continues to meet and work on specifications for a combined Loran/GPS receiver despite the recent termination of Loran service in the U.S. The U.K. organization Trinity House has taken the lead in advocating Enhanced Loran

**f. RTCM SC-128 on Satellite Emergency Notification Devices.** This Committee was chartered at the request of the Coast Guard to develop performance standards for new systems such as SPOT which are being advertised for emergency or life saving applications with the goal of enhancing reliability and consumer protection. A working group of the National Search and Rescue Committee has been working with this RTCM Special Committee. The Committee met again on 17 August.

**g. RTCM Invited to Take Over Work of the “ProTECTS Alliance”.** The ProTECTS Alliance (Promotion of Two way Emergency Communications and Tracking Systems) is a group started by the Iridium Satellite Corp. to promote the responsible use of satellite technology for emergency services. The Alliance has recently invited RTCM to take over sponsorship of the Group. The RTCM Board of Directors approved the proposal at its meeting on 19 August.

**h. Other RTCM Announcements of Interest.** The 2011 RTCM Assembly including a Task Force meeting will be held at the Tradewinds Hotel in St. Pete Beach, Florida May 15-20, 2011.

**6. Reports and Issues: The Recreational Vessel Group Report.** David Kennedy of BOATUS reported for Chairman Chuck Husick who was unable to attend. The following are highlights:

**a. BOATUS News Release of June 2009 Offering Free VHF-DSC Radio Checks.** BOATUS has established a special MMSI Number, 0-338-04000, which may be used by boaters in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic Coast from Alabama to New Jersey for complimentary radio checks to assure proper operation of the radio. BOATUS suggests a call by phone to your local BOATUS franchise to determine the channel the local operator uses for radio traffic so that you can place the radio check call on that channel using the universal MMSI Number, 0-338-04000.

**b. Promoting MMSI Registrations and GPS Connections.** The Task Force continues to pursue a public awareness campaign seeking ways to encourage MMSI registrations, GPS connections to the DSC radio, and advocating that boats going a mile or more offshore be equipped with VHF radios or EPIRB/PLB. As noted in Para 3.e.5.) above, the Task Force is relying on increased publicity and the boating safety courses and safety inspections conducted by the Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadrons to assist in educating boaters about the enhanced safety features of VHF-DSC.

**c. BOATUS News Release of July 2010 on Saving of 3 Lives by Rental EPIRB.** The release reminded readers of the safety benefits of taking a rental EPIRB on vessels which do not carry one routinely. In this case a 32 foot catamaran was making an offshore passage from Crescent City, California to Alameda, California and made a last minute decision to take a rental EPIRB. The 3 persons on board owe their lives to this decision as the EPIRB was activated minutes before the boat capsized in heavy seas. The EPIRB alert was the only notification received by the Coast Guard which rescued the 3 person crew by helicopter with the assistance of its rescue swimmer. The BOATUS

Foundation's EPIRB rental program is funded by voluntary contributions of BOATUS members and 65 lives have been saved since 1996. Vessels not normally cruising offshore can rent this valuable lifesaving appliance for \$65.00 per week.

**d. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety 2009 Boating Statistics.** The Coast Guard reported 736 deaths, 3,358 injuries, and \$36 million in property damage for 2009. The fatality rate increased from 5.6 deaths per 100,000 registered boats in 2008 to 5.8 in 2009. 86% of the fatalities occurred on boats where the operator had not taken a boating safety course. Alcohol consumption was a leading factor in 16% of the deaths. Nearly 75% of the 736 deaths were due to drowning and 84% of those were not wearing life jackets. The benefits of wearing life jackets and taking boating safety courses are apparent.

**e. Clarification Sought in Acceptability of Carrying Rules of the Road on Board via Electronic Media.** Coast Guard Rules require vessels over 12 meters in length to carry on board a copy of the Rules of the Road. This has traditionally been assumed to mean a paper copy but now that computers and other electronic media are becoming commonplace, the question was raised as to whether the electronic versions satisfied the requirement. This question was posed to Joe Carro of the Office of Boating Safety who acknowledged that some boarding officers were accepting electronic versions, especially in the case of Light Lists and others which are no longer published in paper format. However, there had not yet been official guidance to field inspectors on Rules of the Road and other documents still available in paper format. He offered to follow the issue and provide clarification at a future meeting.

## **7. Reports and Issues: the GMDSS Service Agents & Manufacturers Group.**

Ralph Sponar's Group is following several initiatives through an ad hoc group working with NMEA representatives as follows:

**a. Better Definition of "Qualified" Technical Support.** The FCC Rules relating to Class B AIS call for installation by a qualified technician and NMEA has formed an ad hoc group to better define 'qualified'. Recent progress indicates that the NMEA's CMET certification will likely be accepted by the FCC as qualifying for the AIS installation and perhaps other requirements such as conducting GMDSS inspections and the newly required AIS inspections. The next step is a Petition to the FCC.

**b. Standard Color Coding for GPS/Radio hookups.** The NMEA ad hoc group recommendation for a standard color coding has been approved for inclusion in the NMEA 0183 standard. The NMEA will then recommend this revised standard to manufacturers of both GPS receivers and the various marine equipments to which the navigation receivers should be connected. The revised five page standard will also be posted on the Task Force website along with a two page discussion document on wiring and installation using the NMEA 0183 guidelines.

**c. Recommendation that GMDSS Equipment Accept USB Interface Connections.** The NMEA ad hoc group will also examine this proposal but any

recommended solution will have to be submitted to IMO which manages the functional requirements for GMDSS equipment. In the past there has been reluctance on the part of IMO to permit use of the computers dedicated to GMDSS equipment for any other purpose.

**8. Reports and Issues: the Commercial Vessel Group.** No issues of interest to the Commercial Vessel Group were raised at the meeting but on 20 August, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) announced that they planned to host a Forum on Fishing Vessel Safety on October 13-14 2010. The NTSB concern is based on the fact that in 2009, commercial fishing had the highest fatality rate of all U.S. occupations. The Task Force's December 2008 recommendations to the Coast Guard on Fishing Vessel Safety, while not likely to prevent accidents, should help to improve the survival rate. These recommendations were passed to the NTSB for use in connection with their Forum.

**9. Reports and Issues: the GMDSS Training Group:** An issue was raised that some of the questions on the Test for the GMDSS Maintainer License appeared to be out of date. After the meeting I contacted Andy Anderson who agreed that it needed work. He plans to start this in the fall with the ad hoc group that has updated the pools in the past. Anyone desiring to work with the ad hoc group should contact Andy at [owen\\_anderson@comcast.net](mailto:owen_anderson@comcast.net).

**10. Other Business and the Next Meeting of the GMDSS Task Force:** The next Task Force meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday morning 29 September 2010 at the Sheraton Hotel in Seattle, Washington during the NMEA Annual Meeting. The follow-on meeting will be held at the RTCM Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia on Thursday morning 6 January 2011.

**Special USA/Canada Meeting in the Seattle area on 28 September.** In conjunction with the Seattle Task Force meeting on Wednesday 29 September, the Task Force will sponsor a special meeting the day before at the Farmhouse Restaurant in Mt. Vernon, Washington for the convenience of Canadian visitors. This special meeting will concentrate on issues of interest to local mariners. Task Force members are also invited to attend the special meeting. Anyone planning to attend should email Jack Fuechsel at [gmdss@comcast.net](mailto:gmdss@comcast.net) to assure adequate space and receipt of future agenda updates.

### **GMDSS TASK FORCE CONTINUING WORK LIST**

5 August 2010

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. Advocate Canadian coordination to extend GMDSS services to the Great Lakes (TF)
8. Review GMDSS concepts and make modernization recommendations (TF)

9. Advocate voluntary carriage of VHF or EPIRB/PLBs by all vessels offshore (TF)
10. Advocate overhaul of FCC policy and practice on MMSI assignments (TF)
11. Monitor non-GMDSS systems: AIS, LRIT, SSAS, VDR, VMS, & E-Navigation (TF)
12. Recommend updates for Coast Guard NVIC on GMDSS Requirements (TF)
13. Recommend means to facilitate Distress Alerts by Cell Phone & Internet (TF)
14. Advocate intership calling on HF GMDSS channels (CV)
15. Review Safety Radio and VMS Requirements for Small Fishing Vessels (CV)
16. Recommend training programs for non-mandatory users of GMDSS systems (RV)
17. Encourage GMDSS handbooks and Internet and video training aids (RV)
18. Encourage voluntary users of VHF-DSC Register for MMSI and connect GPS (RV)
19. Advocate FCC let R/Vs keep existing MMSI when applying for Station Lic. (RV)
20. Encourage Mfgs. to upgrade GMDSS explanations in equipment manuals (SA)
21. Monitor guidelines for GMDSS equipment maintenance & maintainer standards (SA)
22. Recommend proper interconnection of GPS receivers with DSC Radios (SA)
23. Advocate better FCC & USCG management of annual GMDSS inspections (SA)
24. Maintain GMDSS Question Pools for FCC and Coast Guard Examinations (TR)

Key to cognizant groups:      (TF) Task Force  
  (CV) Commercial Vessel Task Group  
  (RV) Recreational Vessel Task Group  
  (SA) Service Agents and Manufacturers Task Group  
  (TR) Training Task Group

Attachment: Draft Agenda for Task Force Meeting 29 September 2010 at the Sheraton Hotel in Seattle, Washington during the NMEA Annual Meeting.

**Please refer questions and proposals to Captain Jack Fuechsel at 703-527-0484 or [gmdss@comcast.net](mailto:gmdss@comcast.net). If you have an Internet server with spam filters, please authorize receipt of messages from [gmdss@comcast.net](mailto:gmdss@comcast.net)**

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