

## NATIONAL GMDSS TASK FORCE

### Newsletter and Summary Record of 7 May 2015 Meeting

1. **The Task Force Meeting.** This Newsletter reports on the recent meeting of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) Task Force, a group dedicated to monitoring the success and shortcomings of the GMDSS. The Task Force is also active in current efforts to modernize the GMDSS and monitors related developments in maritime radio and electronic navigation (e-navigation). The Task Force makes recommendations to government authorities to improve safety at sea.

2. **Task Force membership.** Membership is open to individuals associated with commercial vessel operations, recreational vessel interests, training institutions, service agents, manufacturers, and government authorities. Membership is open to any interested person or organization and there is no fee for participation. New members are welcome, to join, send your name, organization (if any), email address, and telephone number (optional) to [gmdss@comcast.net](mailto:gmdss@comcast.net). Members who are unable to attend Task Force meetings are invited to participate by email and to connect with Task Force meetings by webcast or conference call.

3. **The summary record.** This record of the meeting is provided for information and will be posted on the Task Force portion of the Coast Guard web site: [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 7 May 2015 at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis, Maryland during the RTCM Annual Assembly. The documents listed below were distributed and are available on request:

USCG-2005-21869: Final Rule on NOAD-AIS (Summary of changes)  
USCG Federal Register Notice of 20 Jan 2015 Declaring Sea Area A1  
FCC Public Notice DA 15-466 of 16 April 2015 Implementing Sea Area A1  
FCC Public Notice DA 15-423 of 7 April 2015 on PLB with Texting vs. 121.5 homing  
Task Force Notice to Manufacturers on Changing MMSI in DSC Radios  
“Saved by the Beacon” Press Kit from the National Safe Boating Council  
Garrett’s Slide Show: How Emergency Beacons Have/Could Have Aided Survival  
17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District’s Handout on the Benefits of DSC on VHF Radios

4. **The Coast Guard Reports:** The following presentations were made by the persons indicated:

a. **The Coast Guard Report on Task Force Petition to Require Emergency Beacons on Recreational Vessels Offshore.** Wayne Stacey reported that the Office of Boating Safety had largely completed the data analysis and was now moving into the regulatory phase that starts with a request to the Coast Guard’s Marine Safety and Security Council to authorize project origination.

**b. Automatic Identification System (AIS) Expansion Rulemaking:** Jorge Arroyo provided a Fact Sheet showing the changes in AIS Carriage required by the new Rulemaking. The original Rules set in 2003 affected about 4,520 SOLAS and domestic vessels and that has now been expanded to about 10,368. The new additions are mostly Fishing and Passenger vessels. The Rules allow the use of less expensive AIS-B devices on dredges, fishing industry vessels and passenger vessels carrying less than 150 passengers and not operating in VTS areas. The Rules define AIS Aids to Navigation (ATON) and permit their use. In response to a question, Jorge indicated that a requirement to carry AIS did not mean that a watch on VHF channel 13 was required unless the vessel was 65 feet or more in length.

**c. Status of the Rescue 21 Coastal VHF-DSC Network.** Captain Paul Boinay reported on the status of the project with the following highlights regarding Rescue 21 in Alaska:

**1.) DSC Implementation in Alaska.** Implementation of Rescue 21 in Alaska is well along but is not intended to include full coastal coverage. DSC service is being activated at seven of the existing Rescue 21 sites in Alaska and will be activated at the remaining 26 sites as they become operational extending through 2017. The Declaration of SOLAS Sea Area A1, recently announced by the Coast Guard, does not include Alaska.

**2.) Excellent DSC Trifold Published by Coast Guard in Alaska.** Despite being the last segment of the Coast Guard to activate DSC on a limited basis, the Coast Guard's 17<sup>th</sup> District in Juneau has authored an excellent one-page brochure explaining the benefits of DSC and the steps to properly register the radio and connect GPS.

**3.) The Alaska Marine Exchange (MXAK) AIS Monitoring Network.** The Task Force continues to watch with interest the continuing development of the MXAK network established to monitor VHF AIS transmissions from ships. The network includes 120 sites plus 6 sites that provide Aids to Navigation service and another 6 sites that will be activated in conjunction with a cooperative research program with the Coast Guard. The Network covers much more of the Alaskan coastline than the Rescue 21 program and transmits weather and Marine Safety Information. The Task Force hopes that in the future the network might be adapted to receive Distress Calls from ships.

**d. Coast Guard Safety Evaluation of Cell Phone Calls to 911.** Tim Strickland reported on behalf of this Research and Development project with the following highlights:

**1) Scope of the Project.** The project was created to examine Distress Calls by cell phone mariners to 911 Operators toward documenting information technology needs to securely auto-route live calls into USCG watch stander units; especially with respect to integrity of position information. The project was begun in recognition that an increasing percentage of near shore distress calls are coming from cell phones (vs. VHF) with embedded position information. Preliminary results seem to indicate that in 80% of cellular calls position data is available, and due to project findings, it is now being reliably forwarded when USCG watch standers ask 911 Operators to divulge their screen's "WPH2 X Y coordinates" audibly - until a auto-routing schema might be pursued by USCG.

**2.) Phase 3 Planning.** Phase 3 is planned for June 2015 in the State of Maine. Maine was selected for that phase since it is the only coastal state that has implemented the Next Generation 911 Network. Phase 3 will utilize test sites along the Maine coast and the test calls will be forwarded from the 911 centers to the Coast Guard Operations System Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Steps required for IT auto-route, processing and dispatch to the RCCs and Sector Command Centers for action are being examined. The Task Force expects a further progress report at the July Meeting.

**3.) Coast Guard Announces New Boating Safety Mobile App. for Boaters.** In a related development, the Coast Guard announced on 16 May in conjunction with Safe Boating Week, a new free Mobile App for boaters available through Apple i-tunes and Google Play. Some of the features of the new “app.” Include:

- Find the latest safety regulations
- Request a vessel safety check
- Check your safety equipment
- [File a float plan](#)
- Navigation Rules
- Find the nearest NOAA weather buoy
- Report a hazard
- Report pollution
- Report suspicious activity
- Request emergency assistance

**c. Status of the Task Force Petition to Upgrade Radio Safety Equipment on Small Passenger Vessels.** Russ Levin reported with the following highlights:

**1.) Moving the Petition Review Ahead.** Russ has been contacting cognizant Offices at Coast Guard Headquarters to determine whether there any problems with the recommendations that needed to be dealt with. During the Task Force meeting, representatives of the Coast Guard, FCC and the Passenger Vessel Association (PVA) met separately to discuss the Petition. One suggestion from that meeting was that the industry could better accept changes if permitted to use existing gear until ready for replacement instead of by a specific date. Russ has also raised the issue at the recent Coast Guard meeting with the FCC

**2.) Motivation for the Petition.** The primary motivation for the timing of the Petition was the Coast Guard decision to discontinue monitoring of 2182 and 2187.5 KHz along the coast. Since small passenger vessels (and other mandatory domestic vessels) operating more than 20 miles offshore are required to watch these 2 MHz frequencies for safety purposes, it is considered more practical to permit them to alternatively watch domestic satellite systems. It is estimated that about 995 small passenger vessels go more than 20 miles offshore.

**3.) Rationale for Dual Petition to both Coast Guard and FCC.** The Petition was sent to both the FCC and the Coast Guard because the two Agencies work together on Safety regulations. In this case the Coast Guard is directly concerned with navigation issues such as AIS, Radar and survival craft radios but will advise the FCC on their position relative to radio

safety equipment such as VHF, MF/HF Radio, domestic satellite services, emergency beacons, emergency power, and Marine Safety Broadcast receivers that are covered in the FCC Rules.

**5. The FCC Reports:** Ghassan Khalek reported with the following highlights:

**a. Comments on Docket 14-36, NPRM on changes to Part 80:** The FCC has reviewed the comments received and still plans to make adjustments to the Rules on the following issues:

- 1.) Use of hand held VHF radios ashore within 3 miles of the vessel
- 2.) Recognize the AIS SART.
- 3.) Enable Digital messaging on voice channels.
- 4.) Selected changes to part 80 relating to license transfer.
- 5.) Update Rules to recognize new specifications for SEND devices
- 6.) Clarify rules on radar (awaiting results of RTCM Standard)
- 7.) Require EPIRBs to have integral GNSS
- 8.) Update Rules to recognize new specifications for MSLD devices
- 9.) Recognize use of VHF Handhelds in lieu of Reserve Power in some cases
- 10.) Adopt rules favorable to VHF-DSC handhelds with integrated GPS

**b. Action on the Task Force Petition regarding Small Passenger Vessels.** The FCC issued a Public Notice (Report No. 3006, RM No. 11726) inviting interested persons to file statements opposing or supporting the petition for Rulemaking. The FCC has been in discussion with the Coast Guard and plans to initiate regulatory proceedings as appropriate.

**c. Management of MMSI Numbers:** As noted before, MMSIs for SOLAS vessels seem to be managed with only minor problems. Non-SOLAS vessels and recreational vessels present more of a problem. The FCC and the Coast Guard have entered into Memoranda Of Understandings (MOU)s with several private sector agencies to issue MMSIs to vessels not requiring a Station License. These agencies are obliged to maintain their block of numbers and query the holders periodically to verify that the assignments are still in use. The FCC is still planning to change the system so that previously issued MMSIs can be ‘recycled’ to other users. The advent of AIS devices that use the same MMSI numbers has made MMSI management a more critical issue. Fortunately, the Coast Guard monitoring of AIS transmissions has identified numerous discrepancies that have then been corrected.

**d. End to FCC Waivers for VHF-DSC and Class A VHF for non-SOLAS Vessels.** Ghassan noted that the waiver of VHF-DSC capability for mandatory non-SOLAS vessels provided by the Rules would be ending effective 20 January 2016, the one year anniversary of the Coast Guard’s declaration of Sea Area A1. He also noted that the FCC had been in discussion with the Coast Guard on granting waivers to use Class D VHF Radios in lieu of the Class A VHF Radios required of SOLAS vessels. They plan to incorporate this waiver in the FCC Rules to avoid acting on numerous waiver requests.

**6. Review of Planning for Dissemination of Marine safety Information (MSI).** Tim Rulon moderated this session reviewing the status of MSI planning. Tim Rulon retired shortly after the Task Force meeting and we greatly appreciate his passion and continuing interest in

improving weather and other MSI broadcasting systems over the years. The following are the highlights of the discussions regarding SafetyNET and NAVTEX:

**a. The High Seas SafetyNET Broadcast System by Inmarsat-C.** Chris Janus of NGA made a presentation at the RTCM Assembly followed by a briefing for the Task Force that noted several highlights as follows:

**1.) General SafetyNET Broadcast Standards.** The original 16 NavMet areas were expanded to 21 with the addition of 5 new areas to cover the Arctic. In addition to high seas broadcasts, nations without coastal Navtex services broadcast coastal warnings via SafetyNET. SafetyNET broadcasts should be monitored by originators to ensure accuracy. Broadcasts are in English and can be directed to smaller geographically defined areas. SafetyNET receivers reject broadcast notices already received and the new messages can be printed out or displayed on a screen

**2.) SafetyNET Broadcasts from the U.S.** The U.S. is responsible for NavMet Areas IV (Western North Atlantic) and XII (Eastern North Pacific) and the NGA acts as coordinator for input to scheduled broadcasts that include Weather from NOAA and SAR from the Coast Guard.

**3.) Future Planning for High Seas MSI Broadcasting.** The SafetyNET system throughput seems adequate for current MSI volume. Broadcast format is standardized to be machine readable and capable of display on electronic charts. Several governments have balked at the prospect of having to pay for MSI broadcasts on both Inmarsat and Iridium if the latter is accepted as a GMDSS provider. Since more and more ships are outfitting for Internet access at sea, it is likely that they will be able to meet their requirement to copy MSI by “pulling” it from the data bases established for this purpose.

**b. The Coastal NAVTEX Broadcast System on 518 kHz by Administrations.** Tim Rulon and others commented on the NAVTEX system with the following highlights:

**1.) General NAVTEX Standards.** NAVTEX broadcasts covering coastal areas are made by participating governments on 518 KHz in the English language. If broadcasts are also desired in national languages, they are made on 490 KHz. In theory, broadcasts should be on relatively low power from multiple sites to minimize interference with adjacent broadcasts. Time slots for routine broadcasts are assigned to minimize interference but emergency broadcasts can be made at any time. NAVTEX receivers reject broadcast notices already received and the new messages can be printed out or displayed on a screen. Broadcast format is standardized to be machine readable and capable of display on electronic charts etc.

**2.) NAVTEX Broadcasts in the U.S** The Coast Guard makes the NAVTEX broadcasts in the U.S. from multiple locations. NOAA supplies the tailored weather broadcasts that are part of each scheduled twice-daily broadcast. There are several problems with the way NAVTEX had been implemented in the U.S. such as use of excessive power at relatively few stations that often cause interference to neighboring broadcasts. There are also a few coastal segments in the U.S. which lack NAVTEX coverage

**3.) Future Planning for Coastal MSI Broadcasting.** It is clear that the low throughput of the NAVTEX system is an impediment to future planning since broadcasts routinely exceed the time slots assigned. The proposed NAVDAT system which would broadcast on 500 kHz at a much higher data rate would solve this problem but it remains to be seen whether NAVDAT will be accepted as part of GMDSS, and if accepted, whether it will be implemented by coastal administrations. While coastal MSI can also be extracted from data bases by ships, governments will probably still need to make local broadcasts to satisfy the needs of non-SOLAS vessels.

**7. Reports and Issues, Recreational Vessel Group:** George Hallenbeck led the discussion on Recreational Vessels with the following highlights:

**a. Update from the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC).** Yalda Moslehian, Communications Director of NSBC, described their new “Saved by the Beacon,” Campaign to promote voluntary carriage of emergency beacons by recreational vessels. The Campaign has its own website and aims to modify the behavior of recreational boaters to ensure they understand the importance of the 406 MHz beacons and how to use them correctly in emergency. The Campaign launched at the Miami Boat Show in February cohosted by NSBC Member ACR Electronics. 406 MHz beacons have saved over 35,000 lives over the years. The Coast Guard recently released the 2014 statistics on boating casualties in the U.S. and the total lives lost, 610, were down slightly from 2013. As usual, most of the fatalities were attributed to failure to wear lifejackets and excessive use of alcohol. The campaign introduces EPIRBs and PLBs and compares their benefits to other commonly used mariner’s communications devices such as VHF radios, GPS trackers and cell phones. Yalda also distributed Campaign Press Kits noting that National Safe Boating Week begins 15 May.

**b. Gordy Garrett’s Power Point Presentation of Survival Principles and Selected SAR Cases.** Gordy continues to do a fantastic job of tracking SAR cases for the Task Force and his work will prove very beneficial to the NSBC Campaign. His presentation began with a recounting of the four principles of survival: Distress Alerting to SAR authorities; Position Indicating; Active Signaling for on-scene locating; and Survival Awaiting Rescue through flotation and protective clothing. Gordy’s selected SAR cases included both successful outcomes and outright failures. Several Task Force members in attendance asked for copies of the slides for use in promoting safety on the water. The PowerPoint slides are also available by email to any Task Force member on request to Jack Fuechsel at [gmdss@comcast.net](mailto:gmdss@comcast.net).

**8. Reports and Issues of the Service Agents and Manufacturers Group:** Ralph Sponar had asked to step down as leader of this group after many years of outstanding service. Hugh Lupo of New England Marine Electronics has been designated to replace Ralph as Leader of this Group and designated liaison to the NMEA. The Task Force is indebted to Ralph Sponar for years of faithful service and many accomplishments such as the Check Lists for vessel inspections. The following issues were discussed briefly:

**a. Standardized Inspection Checklists.** The Group has worked with the Coast Guard, the FCC, and Classification Society inspectors to update checklists for mandatory inspections of

selected vessel types. At this point all of the checklists have been completed and posted on the NMEA website. Once the FCC has accepted the additional checklists and posted them, they will be linked to the Task Force website. The following, repeated from the last Newsletter, are Internet addresses for Inspection Check Lists and NOAA Registration forms:

3 FCC forms: <http://www.transition.fcc.gov/eb/shipinsp/>

4 NMEA FCC forms: [www.nmea.org/content/vessel\\_inspect/fcc\\_forms.asp](http://www.nmea.org/content/vessel_inspect/fcc_forms.asp)

3 NMEA Voluntary: [www.nmea.org/content/vessel\\_inspect/voluntary\\_vessel.asp](http://www.nmea.org/content/vessel_inspect/voluntary_vessel.asp)

4 NOAA Registrations: [www.nmea.org/content/vessel\\_inspect/noaa\\_forms.asp](http://www.nmea.org/content/vessel_inspect/noaa_forms.asp)

**b. Continuing Issue – Relaxing the “3 Strikes Rule.”** It is now clear that almost everyone agrees that the rule limiting to three the number of ‘tries’ to enter MMSI numbers in VHF-DSC radios is proving counter productive. The Coast Guard and FCC discussed the issue and had no objection to providing a ‘work around’ to ease the “three strikes” rule. Joe Hersey’s draft Notice to Manufacturers was adopted by the Task Force in January encouraging manufacturers to adopt simpler procedures for resetting MMSI numbers with the hope that owners would be more serious about keeping their MMSI registrations current. Both the RTCM and the NMEA have released versions of the Notice on their own Letterhead.

**c. SARLink Introduced by ACR Electronics in an earlier RTCM Session.** Paul Steward of ACR made a presentation on this new Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) combining a PLB with Iridium Satellite Service. The obvious benefit of this type of PLB is its ability to support two-way communications in addition to providing the Distress Alert. The Iridium functionality in the PLB enables voice and data transmissions as well as tracking.

**d. The NMEA Activity Report.** Steve Spitzer of NMEA and Lee Luft of the Coast Guard R&D Center made a presentation at the RTCM Assembly on the progress of the NMEA Networks. Steve reprised their report briefly for the Task Force indicating that the digital interface standards were still evolving. A new edition of NMEA 2000 has been published. Steve also encouraged attendance at the NMEA Annual Conference and Expo to be held at the Baltimore Inner Harbor Sheraton Hotel 29 September through 1 October 2015.

**9. Reports and Issues, Commercial Vessel Task Group.** The Task Force invited Rich Beattie to assume leadership of this Group following the retirement of Nino Martini. The following issues were discussed briefly:

**a. Changes to Task Force Earlier Recommendations for Fishing Vessels and Towing Vessels.** A pending issue is the need for updating earlier Task Force recommendations on Carriage Requirements for other mandatory Non-SOLAS Vessels as a result of the Coast Guard discontinuing 2 MHz watches ashore. The Task Force will be upgrading its earlier recommendations regarding Fishing Vessels, Towing Vessels and other mandatory non-SOLAS vessels needing to go farther than 20 miles offshore. The main upgrades recommended will be patterned after those in the Petition for Small Passenger Vessels and in most cases will probably

be to provide relief from maintaining watches on 2 MHz channels and offer alternative watch on domestic satellite systems.

**b. New Issue Regarding Input to the IEC/TC80 Group on the Integrated Communication System (ICS).** Joe Hersey introduced proposed comments he and Dave Blevins had drafted as a U.S. submission to the IEC on the ICS Standard. The IEC Project Team met at RTCM in February. The revised Standard will hopefully become part of a modernized GMDSS. The Task Force concurred with the draft proposals, the main points of which were the following:

- 1.) Integrating GMDSS with AIS, at least for identifying and locating ships in distress
- 2.) Displaying distress alerts, maritime safety information (e.g. SafetyNET and NAVTEX), AIS safety-related messages and application specific messages (in accordance with 61174 Ed4 ECDIS and 62288 Ed2 navigation displays)
- 3.) GMDSS Human-machine interface based upon ITU RR Articles 32 & 33.
- 4.) Implementing MSC.1/Circ.1389 Guidance on procedures for updating shipborne navigation and communication equipment as done in the ECDIS case
- 5.) Establishing means for automatically contacting the maritime RCC responsible for the area in which the ship is operating (similar to cell e911), rather than requiring the MRCC associated with a satellite earth station pass the alert on to the proper MRCC.
- 6.) Cybersecurity measures

**10. Reports and Issues: Training Task Group.** Kurt Anderson reported on his Group's activity that includes reopening review of the Question Pools for GMDSS Operator exams. Some of the issues being watched are the role of SITOR which is rarely used but accounts for about 8% of the questions, display of Navtex and SafetyNET Marine Safety Information (MSI) on various integrated display devices and Inmarsat-C which appears destined to become the only GMDSS qualified Inmarsat system once Inmarsat-B is terminated at the end of 2016. The Training Group will also look at the Restricted GMDSS Operator Exam but Kurt notes that very few such licenses have been issued so far and they are watching whether the declaration of Sea Area A1 will stimulate more demand for Restricted Licenses.

**11. GMDSS Modernization.** Bob Markle, chairman of the International GMDSS Modernization Correspondence Group provided the following report:

**a. Framework and Progress to Date.** Bob explained the Modernization framework that included a High Level Review of major issues followed by a Detailed Review. The schedule for the project has been extended for one year. The Correspondence Group will prepare a final draft of the Detailed Review that will go to the IMO/ITU Experts Group meeting in October of this year and then to the NCSR-3 in March 2016. The Correspondence Group prepares the input for these reviews and it seems safe to say that there are few dramatic changes in prospect except for

the pending application of Iridium to become a GMDSS service provider. In general, most of the review activity has taken place in the Experts Group because the newly merged NCSR group has a huge agenda for a one-week meeting.

**a. Modernization Decisions Tentatively Agreed.** Earlier reviews have accepted the functional requirements with only minor adjustment and have endorsed the changes proposed to Chapter IV of SOLAS. The Sea Area A3 definition (and consequently the meaning of Sea Area A4) will be changed to account for entry of satellite systems other than Inmarsat for GMDSS service

**b. Modernization Issues still to be decided.** There are still a number of issues of concern that should be dealt with and may be included in the Detailed Review. The following is a partial list:

- 1.) The need for higher data speeds to accommodate e-Nav and MSI
- 2.) The dwindling number of HF Coast Stations still available for service
- 3.) Are all functional requirements needed for non-SOLAS vessels?
- 4.) Incorporate functional requirements for Man Overboard devices
- 5.) Should PLB's (or another kind of device) be required for/or packaged with survival craft?
- 6.) Interoperability among shore facilities in the GMDSS
- 7.) Include the new NAVDAT service? (MSI broadcast on 500 kHz)
- 8.) Include the new VHF Digital Exchange Service (VDES)?
- 9.) Role of AIS in GMDSS, if any?
- 10.) Government's reluctance to pay for duplicate satellite broadcasting of MSI?
- 11.) The role of text messaging in GMDSS, if any?

**12. The RTCM Report:** RTCM President Bob Markle provided the following updates on the continuing work of the RTCM Special Committees. The following are highlights:

**a. RTCM SC-101 on GPS in VHF-DSC Handhelds.** The Committee has completed an edition of its standard on GPS in VHF-DSC handhelds. Incorporation in the FCC regulations is awaited.

**b. RTCM SC-104 on Differential Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS).** This Committee is working on incorporating new differential GNSS messages to accommodate new

global and regional systems such as the Chinese BeiDou System (BDS) and the Japanese QZSS System into its standards that were originally developed for GPS. The group met in Tampa in September and considered promulgation of differential corrections by AIS broadcast and Internet broadcast.

**c. RTCM SC-109 on Electronic Charting Technology.** The Committee is working on a new version of the standard and plans to include provisions for Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) functionality in Electronic Charting Systems. The Committee is expected to publish the latest version shortly.

**d. RTCM SC-110 on Emergency Beacons.** Current work is on beacons that will be optimized for the new Second Generation MEOSAR Satellite System. Existing beacons will also work with the new satellite system. A new standard is being developed to allow homing on both 121.5 and AIS in the same EPIRB. A new PLB standard has been approved which includes integral GNSS. This is not expected to be a problem since virtually all PLBs on the market already include GNSS receivers. The Committee met again during the RTCM Assembly.

**e. RTCM SC-112 on Marine Radar Standards.** This Committee is developing language for this and other standards to require the use of “NMEA Network” messages, worded in such a way that NMEA OneNet can be used when it is ready along with NMEA 2000 and NMEA 0183. The Committee met again during the RTCM Assembly and a revised standard is expected to be out for vote soon.

**f. RTCM SC-119 on Maritime Survivor Locating Devices (MSLD).** This Committee amended the man overboard standard to accept either closed or open loop networks. The Committee voted approval prior to the RTCM Assembly and the amendment is now published. The group was advised that Australia has accepted the RTCM MSLD Standard.

**g. RTCM SC-121 on Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and Digital Messaging.** This Committee has completed the standard that establishes the process for developing Application Specific Messages (ASM). The new standard is expected to be out for Committee vote soon.

**h. RTCM SC-123 on Digital Small Messaging Services on Maritime Frequencies.** In response to an RTCM petition, the FCC has proposed to adopt RTCM Standard 12301.1 for transmitting data on VHF channels. The Committee may expand its work to include data messaging on MF and HF channels as well as Encrypted AIS (EAIS).

**i. RTCM SC-127 on E-Loran.** This Committee is developing an eLoran standard in connection with the eLoran demonstration project taking place in the United Kingdom under the General Lighthouse Authorities. The RTCM and the GMDSS Task Force commented on the DOT Notice seeking comments on e-Loran as a back up for GPS that closed on 22 May.

**j. RTCM SC-128 on Satellite Emergency Notification Devices (SEND).** This Committee was chartered at the request of the Coast Guard to develop performance standards for emergency notification systems using private satellite systems such as SPOT. The Committee

has completed and approved a clarifying amendment to this standard. The FCC initially declined to include the revised standard in its Rules, but RTCM has asked for reconsideration.

**k. RTCM SC-129 on Portrayal of Nav-Related Information on Shipboard Displays.**

This Committee has completed a first draft of the portrayal standard but the issues are very complex. Additional input will likely be required from SC-112.

**l. RTCM SC-130 on Electro-Optical Imaging Systems (EOIS).** The work of this Committee deals primarily with night vision systems but the Committee work has been suspended pending industry resources to support it.

**m. RTCM SC-131 on Multi System Shipborne Navigation Receivers.** This new Special Committee has been approved by the RTCM Board to develop a standard incorporating space based and terrestrial navigation systems, and to possibly include inertial systems as well. The standard will include provisions for resistance to interference, spoofing, and jamming. In cooperation with IALA, RTCM has been developing an IMO performance standard and will begin work on an IEC technical standard. The Committee met during the RTCM Assembly.

**n. RTCM SC-132 on Visual Emergency Signaling Devices.** This new Committee was chartered at the request of the Coast Guard to review devices that might be used to replace flares on vessels. In addition to safety factors, it has been reported that in 87% of reported flare sightings, no distressed vessel was found. The U.S. Coast Guard Research and Development Center is studying the most effective light characteristics for this purpose.

**o. RTCM Workshop on Updating the FCC Rules.** Following the Main Task Force meeting a Workshop was convened to start the process of updating an earlier Coast Guard effort to compile extensive revisions to the FCC Rules to bring them up to date and make them easier to understand. For various reasons the earlier update was never sent to the FCC officially. The RTCM has now undertaken to sponsor the earlier effort and Joe Hersey has agreed to chair the group. Copies of the earlier effort were made available to the volunteer group that attended the afternoon session and the work will continue by email. The Task Force is fully supporting the effort and most members of the Working Group are also Task Force members. Anyone desiring to be added to the group should contact Jack Fuechsel at [gmdss@comcast.net](mailto:gmdss@comcast.net).

**13. Next Meeting of the GMDSS Task Force:** The next Task Force meeting will be held at the RTCM Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia on Thursday morning 23 July 2015. The follow-on meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 September 2015 at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland during the International Conference and Expo of the National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA).

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

7 May 2015

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 NAVCOMSAR meetings (TF)
7. Advocate Canadian coordination to extend GMDSS services to the Great Lakes (TF)
8. Advocate voluntary carriage of VHF and EPIRB/PLBs by all vessels offshore (TF)
9. Advocate overhaul of FCC policy and practice on MMSI assignments (TF)
10. Monitor non-GMDSS systems: AIS, LRIT, SSAS, VDR, VMS, & E-Navigation (TF)
11. Recommend updates for Coast Guard NVIC on GMDSS Requirements (TF)
12. Recommend means to facilitate Distress Alerts by Cell Phone & Internet (TF)
13. Advocate GNSS for U.S. EPIRB and PLB Standards (TF)
14. Advocate mandatory Distress Beacons on R/V more than 3 miles offshore (TF)
15. Advocate use of the Alaska AIS Monitor Network for VHF Distress Guard (TF)
16. Review GMDSS concepts and make modernization recommendations (MOD)
17. Advocate intership calling on HF GMDSS channels (CV)
18. Recommend Safety Radio and VMS Requirements for Small Fishing Vessels (CV)
19. Recommend Safety Radio & Navigation Requirements for Towing Vessels (CV)
20. Recommend Safety Radio & Nav. Outfit for Small Passenger Vessels (CV)
21. Advocate applications for new MF/HF Digital Communications Service (CV)
22. Advocate voluntary training programs for users of GMDSS systems (RV)
23. Encourage GMDSS handbooks and Internet and video training aids (RV)
24. Encourage users of VHF-DSC to Register for MMSI and connect GPS (RV)
25. Advocate FCC let R/Vs retain existing MMSI when applying for Station Lic. (RV)
26. Encourage Mfgs. to upgrade GMDSS explanations in equipment manuals (SA)
27. Recommend proper interconnection of GPS receivers with DSC Radios (SA)
28. Advocate better FCC & USCG management of annual GMDSS inspections (SA)
29. Maintain Inspection Guidelines and Check Lists for selected vessel types (SA)
30. Recommend Certification Path For GMDSS Maintainer (SA) and (TR)
31. Maintain GMDSS Question Pools for FCC and Coast Guard Examinations (TR)
32. Advocate 5 Year USCG Recertification Training of GMDSS Operators (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
- (MOD) Modernization Task Group

**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)**

(File: TFSR-81.doc)