User certification is a Marine Radio Operators Certificate to accept GPS input and provide accurate position information specific to a vessel for emergency/distress use. They are configured where a DSC VHF set is fitted as these sets are coded to the Communications Management Authority (ACMA), particularly VHF sets should be registered with the Australian radio bases in NSW.

Transmission and reception is more reliable and clear. With the introduction of DSC (Digital Selective Calling) for VHF (Very High Frequency), the channels used are:

- **91 (27.91)** Calling and working.
- **90 (27.90)** Calling and working.
- **88 (27.88)** Distress, safety and calling.
- **86 (27.86)** Distress, safety and calling (Supp. to ch 88).
- **80 (27.80)** Coast/ship. Movement of vessels, safety.
- **74 (156.725)** Coast/ship, safety and movement.
- **73 (156.875)** Coast/ship, safety and movement.
- **72 (156.625)** Ship stations, port operations.
- **70 (156.000)** Distress, safety and calling.
- **68 (155.88)</div>

**MF/HF (Medium Frequency/High Frequency)**: Used primarily for long-range transmissions, high power demand and is expensive. Requires ship station registration and operator MF/HF subject to atmospheric and electrical interference.

- **4123** Distress, safety and calling.
- **2182** Distress, safety and calling.
- **16 (156.600)** Distress, safety and calling.
- **67 (156.575)** Distress, safety and calling (Supp. to ch 16).
- **20 (Repeat) Coast/ship. Movement of vessels, safety.
- **22 (Repeat) Coast/ship. Movement of vessels, safety.
- **70 (Repeat)** In contact with ACMA.
- **70 DSC Distress, Urgency Alert** should be on a channel 16.
- **72 (156.625)** Ship stations, port operations.
- **73 (156.875)** Coast/ship calling and working.
- **74 (156.725)** Coast/ship, safety and movement.
- **77 (156.875)** Ship/ship commercial fishing and pleasure vessels.
- **80 (Repeat) Coast/ship. Movement of vessels, safety.
- **81 (Repeat) Coast/ship. Movement of vessels, safety.
- **82 (Repeat) Coast/ship. Movement of vessels, safety.
- **83 (Repeat) Coast/ship. Movement of vessels, safety.

Your principal safety tool

The marine radio is perhaps the most important piece of equipment on board your vessel. Radio transmissions can be heard by anyone who is monitoring the calling frequency (including nearby vessels) which could be critical in a life-threatening situation. You will also hear weather forecasts and warnings, navigation hazards as issued by the Volunteer Marine Radio Base and distress transmissions from vessels.

The use of mobile phones is discouraged due to their unreliability at sea and the “one-to-one” nature of the transmission. Your mobile phone is of no use to call a nearby vessel unless you know their phone number and a “000” call will be answered by an Emergency Call Centre that can be in another state, not just locally.

**Serviceability of your radio**

When setting out to sea, always call your local Volunteer Marine Radio Base to establish if your radio is transmitting and receiving on both the calling and working channels. Your radio is your link to rescue agencies and other vessels, but it is of little use if it does not function effectively. A simple radio check with your local radio base will establish your radio’s performance.

**Offshore Voyage Tracking**

Volunteer Marine Radio bases offer the recreational mariner a free marine safety service of Offshore Tracking for coastal passages. For those who choose to use the service, it is the skipper’s responsibility to log on with the volunteer base, establish an Offshore Tracking Sheet (OTS) with agreed Reporting Points and maintain a reporting schedule for the voyage.

There are two classes of volunteer radio bases: MBIB (Marine Radio Bases) which operate at service hours and SARC (Search and Rescue Coordination Centre) which operates 24/7 and maintains a round-the-clock radio listening watch. All Reporting Points during a voyage must be SARC. Departure and destination points can be MBIB. There is a list of NSW SARC and MBIB in the brochure.

The originating volunteer base sends the OTS to the first Reporting Point to assist the skipper’s scheduled Position Report at the agreed time with latitude, longitude and ETA for the next Reporting Point. The OTS is then sent from Reporting Point to Reporting Point, until the voyage is completed.

The skipper is obliged to notify the SARC of any changes to the voyage plan. If a vessel fails to make a scheduled Position Report, the volunteers are obliged to contact the vessel concerned and if unsuccessful, to initiate Search and Rescue procedures for that vessel and its crew.

Detailed SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for Offshore Tracking are available at www.marinerescuensw.com.au

What is Marine Rescue NSW?

Marine Rescue NSW is the name of the State’s new, unified volunteer marine rescue organisation announced in July 2009. There will be a transition period for the change to Marine Rescue NSW by bases of the three existing organisations: Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association, Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and VRA Marine. With so many bases involved this will take a number of months. Bases will operate under their present name as local unit until the change is completed.

**Local Safety Watch**

All volunteer radio bases (SARC and MBIB) offer a local safety watch (log-on) for vessels leaving and returning to the same port, for example, for a day’s offshore fishing. This service is essentially the same as for Offshore Tracking; however details are not forwarded to another base as with OTS.

In the event of a mishap, the log-on safety watch goes searches a destination or last known position of the vessel provided that the skipper advises changes of position during the time at sea. Information gathered in the log-on also includes your berth/lifting ramp and home contact details so a check can be made if the vessel has returned and the skipper has simply forgotten to log-off.

Remember: A 406 EPIRB is required for all vessels when two nautical miles or more offshore. Recent incidents have dramatically demonstrated the efficiency and life-saving value of these essential boating safety devices.

Safety Partner

NSW MARITIME

info@marinerescuensw.com.au
www.marinerescuensw.com.au

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