

SAFETY BULLETIN

Publication of the Recreational Boating Safety Committee

USCG to Discontinue *CG Service

In an effort to improve Search and Rescue Response the Coast Guard has requested all wireless providers in states other than Alaska to remove the specialized keying sequence, *CG, used to reach the Coast Guard for maritime emergency assistance. Mariners are encouraged to invest in a VHF-FM radio as their primary means of distress alerting on the water. Communication via VHF-FM radio provides superior alerting capabilities over cellular phones.

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Education and Practice Saves Life

Reprinted From The Milwaukee Sail and Power Squadron "DeckWatch"

On July 16, 2006, I along with 3 other Milwaukee Sail and Power Squadron Members got to put our USPS course training to practical use. We had gone out on Lake Michigan for the day to watch the annual air show held at the Milwaukee Lake Front. We being Dennis and Janet Brown and Kim and Mike Wiedel in the Brown's 42' Sea Ray "Life's Finest Hour".

The air show ended and as we headed for the marina. A woman's voice came over the radio calling the Coast Guard for help. You could hear the panic in her voice. "There is a swimmer in the water off Bradford Beach" she said. That did not seem like a reason for panic. She continued to explain the swimmer had come from the boat she was on and was unable to swim back to the boat. The Coast Guard after getting more details about her location and boat asked her if she could use the boat she was on to go get the swimmer. She then explained she was unable to start the engine of the boat. She did say the swimmer in the water had a PFD on. Immediately upon hearing this information Dennis altered the course of his boat and increased the speed. It was then that we knew we were going to the rescue.

Mike spotted the man in the water locking his gaze on him and continuously pointing at him in the water. Dennis looked where Mike was indicating and steered the boat in the direction of the person in the water. Mike (also a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary) then got on the radio and told the Coast Guard we had the victim in sight and we're going to attempt the recovery of the person in the water. During this time Janet and I donned PFD's and started preparing the life line to be tossed when Dennis brought the boat within range.

Janet's aim and toss were perfect. One throw brought the life line in range of the victim. I indicated for Dennis to cut the engines and put them in neutral. Janet and I then pulled the victim to the boat with the life line, put the ladder down, and got him safely aboard the swim platform. Even though the air temperature that day was in the 90's the water temperature was only 67 degrees. I then gave the victim towels to dry off and checked to make sure he was OK. Mike was on the radio giving the Coast Guard a play by play of the action and let them know when the man was safely aboard and that he was OK.

See Swimmer on Page 2



Swimmer (From Page 1)

The man told us he had taken his family and friends out on his boat to watch the air show. When the air show ended he decided to cool off by jumping in the lake. He did put a PFD on. Unfortunately the boat was not at anchor and he did not take a line with him so he could be pulled back aboard his vessel. He said the current took him away from the boat and he soon realized he could not make the swim back to the boat. That was when his wife tried to the start the engine on boat to go get him but was unable to get it running.

We then needed to return the man to his boat and waiting family and friends. This procedure was no easy feat, as conditions near shore had a wave height of 3 feet. With 8 fenders and lines at the ready, Dennis expertly maneuvered his vessel along side the victim's boat. We then transferred the man to his craft and remained on scene until he was able to start his engine and head for the marina.

The interesting part of the rescue was that while it was happening none of us told each other what to do. There was no talking except for Mike on the radio with the coast guard until we brought the victim aboard our boat. We all knew what are roles were and what had to be done. How did we know?

See Lessons Page 3

HOW TO SELECT A DSC VHF RADIO

Guidance for those contemplating the purchase of a new radio.

The rapidly developing technology surrounding the new Digital Selective Calling (DSC) features of these radios results in a vegetable soup of acronyms and technological babble for the average boater.

Knowing how these radios work is key to understanding what to look for in a radio. It would be a good idea for anyone contemplating a purchase of one to do some homework. There are a number of articles on the internet that do a good job on the basics.

There are generally two classes radio's sold in the US. fall into. Class D was developed to provide DSC capability for VHF marine radios carried by recreational boaters. In order to get production going in the US a simplified version of class D was developed – designated SC-101.

These new DSC radios use channel 70 for the transmission of digital information. The less expensive models (typically meeting the SC-101 spec.) have one receiver, and operate by scanning between the normal voice channels and channel 70. If your radio is in use (either transmitting or with the receiver squelch open) it will not receive a digital call. The class D radios have two receivers – the second is committed to receive only channel 70. In this way you are much less likely to miss a call, it is of significant advantage to buy a radio that meets the class D spec.

The operation of distress and urgency features of these radios is pretty much standard from one to another. When a distress call is received you get an alarm and have displayed for you the Latitude and Longitude of the distressed vessel.

These radios have directories, just like your cell phone. The size of the directories varies - as few as 10, to as many as 100 entries. Depending on how many boating friends you have – you may want to check this number.

Group calling is one feature that is usefull in a club. This feature, through the use of a group MMSI, allows you to call up all vessels within the group. For example – if you are out cruising for the day and wish to know who else is out there, you select a clear working channel and make a group call (similar to making an individual call). All of the boats in your group will respond on your working channel. Not all radios have this feature, and most have the ability to use only one group MMSI. At least one radio allows three, which is nice if you want to be able to call different groups.

See Guidance page 3

Rescue 21 DSC is operational in the following areas:

Atlantic City, NJ
 Eastern Shore, VA
 Mobile, Al
 St Petersburg, FL
 Seattle, WA
 Port Angeles, WA

BOATERS MUST NOT OPERATE 121.5/243 MHZ EPIRBs AFTER 31 DECEMBER 2006

The Coast Guard reminds all boaters that beginning January 1, 2007, both 121.5 and 243 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) are prohibited from use in both commercial and recreational watercraft. Boaters wishing to have an emergency rescue beacon aboard their vessel must have a digital 406 MHz model.

Guidance (Cont From Page 2)

Keypads and displays vary between radios. Newer models are now coming out with color displays, which enhance operation and understandability.

Make sure the interface between the radio and your GPS will work. There are many combinations here. First look at the manual of your GPS – determine what type of interface it has (typically NMEA 0183 or NMEA 2000, but some of the newer ones are networked. Your manual will give you directions as to how the GPS should be interfaced to a radio). Then make sure the radio you are looking at will match it. Also look for features that work between your radio and GPS (e.g. automatic display of the location of the vessel you’re talking to on a chart-plotter).

If you don’t mind spending a bit of time on your search for the best radio for you, a suggestion is to go on line and download the manuals for the radios you are considering. A read through the manuals will quickly help you understand how user friendly the radios are, and will point out the features in the radios.

INTERCONNECT YOUR VHF AND GPS FOR THE BENEFITS OF DSC.

It’s simple!! Just follow these steps.

Purchase a DSC equipped VHF radio, if you do not already have one. It is easy to spot them. They all have a Button on the front marked “DISTRESS”.

Register for a MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity) number. If you have a Ships Station Radio License issued to you and your vessel by the FCC your MMSI has already been assigned. If you do not know what your Ships Station MMSI number is you can go to the FCC Web site and use the Universal Licensing System (ULS) to find it.If you do not have a Ships Station Radio License issued by the FCC, and you are not required to have one, you can obtain a MMSI number through the BOATUS or West Marine web sites free of charge. This number, which is unique to your vessel, is then programmed into your DSC equipped marine radio.

Read the owners manual for your new DSC equipped radio and GPS

Connect your GPS receiver to your VHF radio.

Lessons (From Page 2)

Many USPS courses explain the procedures we used and yearly the four of us practice this exact rescue scenario using a PFD as the victim. At the time of the practice none of us realize that what we were practicing would someday be called into use.



DSC Resources:

Rescue21 Info:

www.uscg.mil/rescue21/home/index.htm

www.uscgboating.org/safety/GMDSS_brochure.pdf

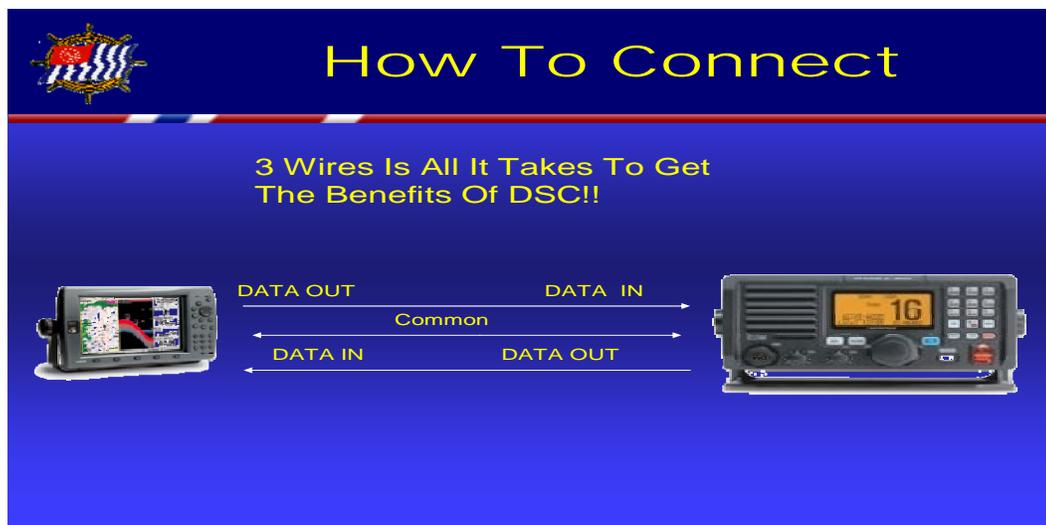
www.gmdss.com.au/dsc.htm

MMSI Numbers:

www.boatus.com
www.fcc.gov/uls

Equipment:

www.icomamerica.com
www.standardhorizon.com
www.garman.com
www.raymarine.com



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*"The Vessel Safety
Check (VSC) is a free
public service provided
by the Coast Guard Auxil-
iary and U.S. Power
Squadrons."*



**The USPS® Safety
Bulletin is Available
On-Line from the
RBSC Website:
[www.usps.org/
national/safety](http://www.usps.org/national/safety)**

THE NATIONAL SAFE BOATING CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY

In the northern states we are in the middle of our "Hard Water" Season and those in the south are enjoying the warm winter weather. Now is the time to start planning for your squadrons National Safe Boating Campaign

The National Safe Boating Council has done an excellent job providing ideas and resources to make your promotion of Safe boating easier at any time of the year.

Every Squadron Safety Officer is required to report on the activities and results of their safety efforts by filing a

report with their District Safety Chairman before **1 October**. The Squadron Safety Officer's Report form can be found on the RBSC web site at: www.usps.org/national/safety/RBSafetyOfficerReport.pdf.

For the past three years we have achieved 100% participation from all squadrons in USPS.

When you file your SSO (Squadron Safety Officer's) report, please also file the online report with the National Safe Boating Council to help them in their efforts to improve the tools that they provide. Remember we are

part of the same safe boating team.

Go to the website www.safeboatingcouncil.org.



USCG Warns of Difficulties with CO2 cylinders

The U.S. Coast Guard has been made aware of a potential problem when installing CO₂ cylinders that have bayonet tips in inflatable personal flotation devices

Some Mustang, Protexion, and Stearns/SOSPenders PFDs using Halkey-Roberts' inflators can indicate a green "Ready" status when the CO₂ cylinder is not properly installed. This false positive green indication occurs when the cylinder-

bayonet assembly is inserted in the inflator, not turned, and the cylinder is not ejected.

Updated cylinder installation instructions are on the home pages of manufacturers' websites and at the Coast Guard website listed below. Review and follow the instructions. Check your device to ensure that the inserted CO₂ cylinder-bayonet has been fully turned clockwise prior to

use.

Manufactures Websites:
www.mustangsurvival.com
www.nautilusbyprotexion.com
www.stearnsinc.com

US Coast Guard Recall Info:
[/www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/
mse4/recall.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mse4/recall.htm)

The U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety publishes the "Waypoints" newsletter to build upon the contributions made throughout the Operation Boat Smart Campaign. Visit www.uscgboating.org/waypoints/waypoints_index.htm