

## RESOLUTION 331 (REV.WRC-12)

**Operation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System**

The World Radiocommunication Conference (Geneva, 2012),

*noting*

that all ships subject to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended, are required to be fitted for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS),

*noting further*

- a)* that a number of administrations have taken steps to implement the GMDSS also for classes of vessels not subject to SOLAS, 1974, as amended;
- b)* that an increasing number of vessels not subject to SOLAS, 1974, as amended, are making use of the techniques and frequencies of the GMDSS prescribed in Chapter VII;
- c)* that Chapter VII provides for maintaining interoperability between ships fitted for GMDSS and ships not yet fully equipped for GMDSS;
- d)* that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is of the view that SOLAS ships, while at sea, should be required to keep a listening watch on VHF channel 16, for the foreseeable future, with a view to providing:
  - a distress alerting and communication channel for non-SOLAS ships; and
  - bridge-to-bridge communications;
- e)* that IMO has urged administrations to require all seagoing vessels under national legislation, and encourage all vessels voluntarily carrying VHF radio equipment to be fitted with facilities for transmitting and receiving distress alerts by digital selective calling (DSC) on VHF channel 70;
- f)* that separate provisions in the existing Radio Regulations allow VHF channel 16 and 2 182 kHz to be used for general calling by radiotelephony;
- g)* that several administrations have established Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) systems and require their vessels to keep watch on local VTS channels;
- h)* that ships that are required by SOLAS to carry a radio station have been equipped with DSC, and many vessels subject to national carriage requirements are also being equipped with DSC, but the majority of vessels that carry a radio station on a voluntary basis might not yet have DSC equipment;
- i)* that many administrations have established distress and safety service based on DSC watchkeeping, but the majority of port stations, pilot stations and other operational coast stations might not yet have been equipped with DSC facilities;
- j)* that ships not required by international agreement to carry GMDSS equipment can do so for safety purposes,

*recognizing*

- a) that stations in the maritime mobile service are increasingly making use of the frequencies and techniques of GMDSS;
- b) that there may be a need to maintain existing shore-based distress and safety services for reception of distress, urgency and safety calling by voice on VHF channel 16 for some years after this Conference so that ships whose ability to participate in GMDSS is limited to VHF channel 16 will be able to attract attention and obtain assistance from these services,

*resolves*

- 1 to urge all administrations to assist in enhancing safety at sea by:
- encouraging, where appropriate, establishment of shore-based facilities for GMDSS, either on an individual basis or in cooperation with other relevant parties in the area;
  - encouraging the implementation of GMDSS techniques and frequencies on non-SOLAS vessels including national ships;
  - encouraging all vessels carrying maritime VHF equipment to be fitted with DSC on VHF channel 70 as soon as possible, taking into account the relevant decisions of IMO;
  - encouraging vessels to limit their use of VHF channel 16 and the frequency 2 182 kHz for calling to the minimum necessary, noting the provisions of No. **52.239**;
- 2 that coast stations that form part of shore-based arrangements for reception of distress calling by radiotelephony on VHF channel 16 should maintain an efficient watch on VHF channel 16. Such watch shall be indicated in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations;
- 3 that administrations may release their coast stations from the listening watch on VHF channel 16 in respect of distress, urgency and safety calling by voice, in accordance with relevant decisions of IMO and ITU on aural watch-keeping requirements on channel 16, taking into account the GMDSS radio systems available in the area concerned;

when doing so, administrations should:

- inform IMO of their decisions and submit to IMO details on the area concerned;
- inform the Secretary-General of the necessary details for inclusion in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations,

*resolves further*

that the Secretary-General should ensure that such arrangements and details regarding the area concerned be indicated in relevant maritime publications,

*invites ITU-R*

to monitor the development of and changes to the GMDSS, and to continue to develop techniques and systems relevant for the GMDSS,

*instructs the Secretary-General*

to bring this Resolution to the attention of IMO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA).

