

Recommendation ITU-R M.1171-1

(11/2023)

M Series: Mobile, radiodetermination, amateur and related satellite services

Radiotelephony procedures for routine calls in the maritime mobile service

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Note: This ITU-R Recommendation was approved in English under the procedure detailed in Resolution ITU-R 1.

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RECOMMENDATION ITU-R M.1171-1*

Radiotelephony procedures for routine calls in the maritime mobile service

(1995-2023)

Scope

This Recommendation describes the radiotelephony procedures for routine calls within the maritime mobile service.

Keywords

Routine, calling, GMDSS, radiotelephony, maritime mobile service

Abbreviations/Glossary

RR: Radio Regulations

VHF: Very high frequency

Related ITU Recommendations

ITU-R M.493 – Digital selective-calling system for use in the maritime mobile service

ITU-R M.541 – Operational procedures for the use of digital selective-calling equipment in the maritime mobile service

The ITU Radiocommunication Assembly,

considering

a) that there is a need to describe standard procedures for radiotelephony communication in the maritime mobile service,

recommends

that radiotelephony procedures of routine calls in the maritime mobile service should be performed in accordance with the Annex.

Annex**Section I. Calls by radiotelephony**

1. The provisions of this Section relating to the intervals between calls are not applicable to a station operating under conditions involving distress, urgency or safety.

* This Recommendation should be brought to the attention of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T).

Note by the Secretariat: The references made to the Radio Regulations (RR) in this Recommendation refer to the RR as revised by the World Radiocommunication Conference 1995. These elements of the RR will come into force on 1 June 1998. Where applicable, the equivalent references in the current RR are also provided in square brackets.

2. (1) As a general rule, it rests with the ship station's discretion to establish communication with the coast station. For this purpose the ship station may call the coast station only when it comes within the service area of the latter, that is to say, that area within which, by using an appropriate frequency, the ship station can be heard by the coast station.

(2) However, a coast station having traffic for a ship station may call this station if it has reason to believe that the ship station is keeping watch and is within the service area of the coast station.

3. (1) In addition, each coast station should, so far as practicable, transmit its calls in the form of "traffic lists" consisting of the call signs or other identification in alphabetical order of all ship stations for which it has traffic on hand. These calls should be made at specified times fixed in the coast station transmitting schedule shown in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations and at intervals of not less than two hours and not more than four hours during the working hours of the coast station.

(2) Coast stations should transmit their traffic lists on their normal working frequencies in the appropriate bands. The transmission should be preceded by a general call to all stations.

(3) The general call to all stations announcing the traffic lists may be sent on a calling frequency in the following form:

- "ALL STATIONS" not more than three times;
- the words "THIS IS";
- "... RADIO" not more than three times;
- "LISTEN TO MY TRAFFIC LIST ON ... kHz".

In no case may this preamble be repeated.

(4) However, in the bands between 156 MHz and 174 MHz when the conditions for establishing contact are good, the call described in § 3.(3) above may be replaced by:

- "ALL SHIPS";
- the words "THIS IS";
- a call sign or the geographical name of the place as it appears in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations, followed preferably by the word RADIO or by any other appropriate indication (see RR Nos. **19.73** and **19.74**) twice;
- "LISTEN TO MY TRAFFIC ON ... kHz".

In no case may this preamble be repeated.

(5) The provisions of § 3.(3) are obligatory when 2 182 kHz or 156.8 MHz is used.

(6) The hours at which coast stations transmit their traffic lists and the frequencies and classes of emission which they use for this purpose should be stated in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations, subject to notification to ITU by the administration having jurisdiction over the coast station.

(7) Ship stations should as far as possible listen to the traffic lists transmitted by coast stations. On hearing their call sign or other identification in such a list ship stations must establish communication with appropriate coast stations as soon as they can do so.

(8) When the traffic cannot be sent immediately, the coast station should inform each ship station concerned of the probable time at which working can begin, and also, if necessary, the frequency and class of emission which will be used.

4. When a coast station receives calls from several ship stations at practically the same time, it decides the order in which these stations may transmit their traffic. Its decision should be based on

the order of priority (see RR No. 53.1) of communication that the ship stations have on hand and on the need for allowing each calling station to clear the greatest possible number of communications.

5. (1) When a station called does not reply to a call sent three times at intervals of two minutes, the calling should cease.

(2) However, when a station called does not reply, the call may be repeated at three-minute intervals.

(3) In areas where reliable VHF communication with a called coast station is practicable, the calling ship station may repeat the call as soon as it is ascertained that traffic has been terminated at the coast station.

(4) In the case of a communication between a station of the maritime mobile service and an aircraft station, calling may be renewed after an interval of five minutes.

(5) Before renewing the call, the calling station should ascertain that the station called is not in communication with another station.

(6) If there is no reason to believe that harmful interference will be caused to other communications in progress, the provisions of § 5.(4) above are not applicable. In such cases the call, sent three times at intervals of two minutes, may be repeated after an interval of not less than three minutes.

(7) However, before renewing the call, the calling station should ascertain that further calling is unlikely to cause interference to other communications in progress and that the station called is not in communication with another station.

(8) Ship stations should not radiate a carrier wave between calls.

6. When the name of the operating agency controlling a ship station is not given in the List of Ship Stations and Maritime Mobile Service Identity Assignments or are no longer in agreement with the particulars given therein, it is the duty of the ship station to provide as a matter of regular procedure, to the coast station to which it transmits traffic, all the necessary information in this respect.

7. (1) The coast station may ask the ship station to provide it with the following information:

- a) position and, whenever possible, course and speed;
- b) next port of call.

(2) The information referred to in § 7.(1) above should be provided by ship stations, whenever this seems appropriate, without prior request from the coast station. The provision of this information is authorized only by the master or the person responsible for the ship.

Section II. Method of calling, reply to calls and signals preparatory to traffic when using calling methods other than digital selective calling

A. Method of calling

8. (1) The call consists of:

- the call sign or other identification of the station called, not more than three times;
- the words “THIS IS”;

- the call sign or other identification of the calling station, not more than three times (see RR Nos. **19.73** and **19.74**).

(2) However, in the bands between 156 MHz and 174 MHz when the conditions for establishing communication are good, the call described in § 8.(1) above may be replaced by:

- the call sign of the station called, once;
- the words “THIS IS”;
- the call sign or other identification of the calling station, twice.

(3) When calling a VHF coast station operating on more than one channel, a ship station calling on a working channel should include the number of that designator in the call.

(4) When communication is established, the call sign or other identification may thereafter be transmitted once only.

(5) When the coast station and ship station are fitted with equipment for digital selective calling they should follow procedure for routine calls. The ship station should call the coast station by speech in the manner given in § 8.(1).

9. Calls for internal communications on board ship should consist of:

a) From the master station:

- the name of the ship followed by a single letter (ALFA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, etc.) indicating the sub-station not more than three times;
- the words “THIS IS”;
- the name of the ship followed by the word “CONTROL”;

b) From the sub-station:

- the name of the ship followed by the word “CONTROL” not more than three times;
- the words “THIS IS”;
- the name of the ship followed by a single letter (ALFA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, etc.) indicating the sub-station.

*B. Frequency to be used for calling
and for preparatory signals*

B1. Bands between 1 605 kHz and 4 000 kHz

10. (1) A radiotelephone ship station calling a coast station should use for the call, in order of preference:

- a)* a working frequency on which the coast station is keeping watch;
- b)* the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz;
- c)* in Regions 1 and 3 and in Greenland, the carrier frequency 2 191 kHz (assigned frequency 2 192.4 kHz) when a carrier frequency of 2 182 kHz is being used for distress;
- d)* in Region 2 except for Greenland, the carrier frequency 2 191 kHz as a supplementary calling frequency in those areas of heavy usage of 2 182 kHz.

(2) A ship station calling another ship station should use for the call:

- a)* the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz;
- b)* an intership frequency, whenever and wherever traffic density is high and prior arrangements can be made.

(3) Subject to the provisions of § 10.(6), coast stations should, in accordance with the requirements of their own country, call ship stations of their own nationality either on a working frequency or, when calls to individual ships are made, on the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz.

(4) However, a ship station which keeps watch simultaneously on the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz and a working frequency should be called on the working frequency.

(5) As a general rule, coast stations should call radiotelephone ship stations of another nationality on the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz.

(6) Coast stations may call ship stations by digital selective calling in accordance with Recommendation ITU-R M.541.

B2. Bands between 4 000 kHz and 27 500 kHz

11. (1) A ship station calling a coast station by radiotelephony should use either one of the calling frequencies mentioned in RR No. **52.221** or the working frequency associated with that of the coast station, in accordance with RR Appendix **17**, Part B Section I.

(2) A coast station calling a ship station by radiotelephony should use one of the calling frequencies mentioned in RR No. **52.222**, one of its working frequencies shown in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations, or the carrier frequency 4 125 kHz or 6 215 kHz, in accordance with the provisions of RR Nos. **52.221.2** and **52.221.3**.

(3) The provisions of § 11.(1) and § 11.(2) do not apply to communications between ship stations and coast stations using the simplex frequencies specified in RR Appendix **17**, Part B, Section I.

B3. Bands between 156 MHz and 174 MHz

12. (1) In the bands between 156 MHz and 174 MHz, intership and coast station to ship calling should, as a general rule, be made on 156.8 MHz. However, coast station to ship calling may be conducted on a working channel or on a two-frequency calling channel which has been implemented in accordance with RR No. **52.236**. Except for distress, urgency or safety communications, when 156.8 MHz should be used, ship to coast station calling should, whenever possible, be made on a working channel or on a two-frequency calling channel which has been implemented in accordance with RR No. **52.236**. Ships wishing to participate in a port operations service or ship movement service should call on a port operations or ship movement working frequency, indicated in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations.

(2) When 156.8 MHz is being used for distress, urgency or safety communications, a ship station desiring to participate in the port operations service may establish contact on 156.6 MHz, or another port operations frequency indicated in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations.

B4. Procedure for calling a station providing pilot service

13. A radiotelephone ship station calling a pilot station providing pilot service should use the frequencies or channels assigned for the pilot station, in order of preference:

- a) an appropriate channel in the bands between 156 MHz and 174 MHz;
- b) a working frequency in the bands between 1 605 kHz and 4 000 kHz;
- c) the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz, and then only to determine the working frequency to be used.

C. Form of reply to calls

14. The reply to calls consists of:
- the call sign or other identification of the calling station, not more than three times;
 - the words “THIS IS”;
 - the call sign or other identification of the station called (see RR Nos. **19.73** and **19.74**), not more than three times.

D. Frequency for reply

D1. Bands between 1 605 kHz and 4 000 kHz

15. (1) When a ship station is called on the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz, it should reply on the same carrier frequency unless another frequency is indicated by the calling station.
- (2) When a ship station is called by digital selective calling it should reply on a frequency on which the coast station keeps watch.
- (3) When a ship station is called on a working frequency by a coast station of the same nationality, it should reply on the working frequency normally associated with the frequency used by the coast station for the call.
- (4) When calling a coast station or another ship station, a ship station should indicate the frequency on which a reply is required if this frequency is not the normal one associated with the frequency used for the call.
- (5) A ship station which frequently exchanges traffic with a coast station of another nationality may use the same procedure for reply as ships of the nationality of the coast station.
- (6) As a general rule a coast station should reply:
- a) on the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz to calls made on the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz, unless another frequency is indicated by the calling station;
 - b) on a working frequency to calls made on a working frequency;
 - c) on a working frequency to calls made in Regions 1 and 3 and in Greenland on the carrier frequency 2 191 kHz (assigned frequency 2 192.4 kHz).

D2. Bands between 4 000 kHz
and 27 500 kHz

16. (1) A ship station called by a coast station should reply either on one of the calling frequencies mentioned in RR No. **52.221** or on the working frequency associated with that of the coast station, in accordance with RR Appendix **17**, Part B, Section I.
- (2) A coast station called by a ship station should reply on one of the calling frequencies mentioned in RR No. **52.222**, or on one of its working frequencies shown in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations.
- (3) When a station is called on the carrier frequency 4 125 kHz it should reply on the same frequency unless another frequency is indicated for that purpose by the calling station.
- (4) When a station is called on the carrier frequency 6 215 kHz it should reply on the same frequency unless another frequency is indicated for that purpose by the calling station.

(5) The provisions of § 16.(1) and § 16.(2) do not apply to communication between ship stations and coast stations using the simplex frequencies specified in RR Appendix 17, Part B, Section I.

D3. Bands between 156 MHz and 174 MHz

17. When a station is called on 156.8 MHz it should reply on the same frequency unless another frequency is indicated by the calling station.

E. Indication of the frequency to be used for traffic

E1. Bands between 1 605 kHz and 4 000 kHz

18. If communication is established on the carrier frequency 2 182 kHz, coast and ship stations should transfer to working frequencies for the exchange of traffic.

E2. Bands between 4 000 kHz
and 27 500 kHz

19. After a ship station has established communication with a coast station, or another ship station, on the calling frequency of the band chosen, traffic should be exchanged on their respective working frequencies.

E3. Bands between 156 MHz and 174 MHz

20. (1) Whenever communication has been established between a coast station in the public correspondence service and a ship station either on 156.8 MHz or on a two-frequency calling channel (see RR No. **52.237**), the stations should transfer to one of their normal pairs of working frequencies for the exchange of traffic. The calling station should indicate the channel to which it is proposed to transfer by reference to the frequency in MHz or, preferably, to its channel designator.

(2) When communication on 156.8 MHz has been established between a port station and a ship station, the ship station should indicate the particular service required (such as navigational information, docking instructions, etc.) and the port station should then indicate the channel to be used for the exchange of traffic by reference to the frequency in MHz, or, preferably, to its channel designator.

(3) When communication on 156.8 MHz has been established between a coast station in the ship movement service and a ship station, the coast station should then indicate the channel to be used for the exchange of traffic by reference to the frequency in MHz or, preferably, to its channel designator.

(4) A ship station, when it has established communication with another ship station on 156.8 MHz, should indicate the intership channel to which it is proposed to transfer for the exchange of traffic by reference to the frequency in MHz or, preferably, to its channel designator.

(5) However, a brief exchange of traffic not to exceed one minute concerning the safety of navigation need not be transmitted on a working frequency when it is important that all ships within range receive the transmission.

(6) Stations hearing a transmission concerning the safety of navigation should listen to the message until they are satisfied that the message is of no concern to them. They should not make any transmission likely to interfere with the message.

F. Agreement on the frequency to be used for traffic

21. (1) If the station called is in agreement with the calling station, it should transmit:
- a) an indication that from that moment onwards it will listen on the working frequency or channel announced by the calling station;
 - b) an indication that it is ready to receive the traffic of the calling station.
- (2) If the station called is not in agreement with the calling station on the working frequency or channel to be used, it should transmit an indication of the working frequency or channel proposed.
- (3) For communications between a coast station and a ship station, the coast station should finally decide the frequency or channel to be used.
- (4) When agreement is reached regarding the working frequency or channel which the calling station should use for its traffic, the station called should indicate that it is ready to receive the traffic.

G. Difficulties in reception

22. (1) If the station called is unable to accept traffic immediately, it should reply to the call as indicated in § 14 followed by “WAIT . . . MINUTES”, indicating the probable duration of waiting time in minutes. If the probable duration exceeds ten minutes the reason for the delay should be given. Alternatively the station called may indicate, by any appropriate means, that it is not ready to receive traffic immediately.
- (2) When a station receives a call without being certain that such a call is intended for it, it should not reply until the call has been repeated and understood.
- (3) When a station receives a call which is intended for it, but identification of the calling station is uncertain, it should reply immediately asking for a repetition of the call sign or other identification of the calling station.

Section III. Forwarding (routing) of traffic*A. Traffic frequency*

23. (1) Every station should transmit its radiotelephone calls on one of its working frequencies in the band in which the call has been made.
- (2) In addition to its normal working frequency, specified in the List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations, a coast station may use one or more supplementary frequencies in the same band, in accordance with the provisions of RR Article 52.
- (3) Before transmitting for other than distress purposes on any of the frequencies identified in RR Appendix 15 for distress and safety, a station should, where practicable, listen on the frequency concerned to make sure that no distress transmission is being sent. The use of frequencies reserved for calling should be forbidden for traffic, except distress traffic (see RR No. 31.4).
- (4) After communication has been established on the frequency to be used for traffic, the transmission of a radiotelegram or radiotelephone call should be preceded by:
- the call sign or other identification of the station called;
 - the words “THIS IS”;

- the call sign or other identification of the calling station (see RR Nos. **19.73** and **19.74**) once.

Section IV. Duration and control of working

24. (1) In communications between coast stations and ship stations, the ship station should comply with the instructions given by the coast station in all questions relating to the order and time of transmission, to the choice of frequency, and to the duration and suspension of work.

(2) In communications between ship stations, the station called controls the working in the manner indicated in § 24.(1) above. However, if a coast station finds it necessary to intervene, the ship stations should comply with the instructions given by the coast station.
