

RECOMMENDATION ITU-R M.585-3

Assignment and use of maritime mobile service identities

(1982-1986-1990-2003)

Summary

This Recommendation provides guidance to administrations for the assignment and conservation of maritime mobile service identities (MMSIs). Formats for ship stations and coast stations are described as well as some limitations which constrain assignments for ships which utilize the satellite services of the global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS). Guidance is provided for future mobile satellite systems and the reuse of decommissioned numbers.

The ITU Radiocommunication Assembly,

considering

- a) the need for a unique ship identity for safety and telecommunication purposes;
- b) that the unique number shall be the maritime mobile service identity (MMSI);
- c) the need for this identity to be usable with automated radiocommunication systems;
- d) that the identities assigned to ship stations, coast stations and used for establishing group calls should be of a similar nature;
- e) Article 19 of the Radio Regulations (RR);
- f) that it is possible to use the MMSI to establish a telephone call to a ship after routing through the public switched networks to an appropriate coast station;
- g) that the public switched networks in many countries have restrictions on the maximum number of digits that may be dialled or keyed to identify the called ship station and the routing coast station, which would prevent the translation of the complete MMSI directly into a dial number for the ship that is compliant with ITU-T Recommendation E.164;
- h) that whatever restrictions may be required should, in the interests of the development of automatic shore-to-ship operations, be as few as possible;
- j) that mobile-satellite systems enable the maritime community to participate in or interwork with international public correspondence telecommunication systems on a fully automatic basis, utilizing the numbering, naming and addressing scheme pertaining to the service being used;
- k) that the current generation of mobile-satellite systems participating in the global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS) have signalling and routing characteristics requiring ships using these networks to have an MMSI ending with three zeroes;

1) that the numbering scheme specified for future generations of mobile-satellite systems participating in the GMDSS will be designed to meet the needs of the international public correspondence service and is unlikely to offer the facility to incorporate any part of the MMSI in a dial number for a ship,

recommends

1 that ships complying with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended, and other ships equipped with automated radiocommunication systems, including digital selective calling (DSC) and/or carrying alerting devices of the GMDSS should be assigned ship station identities in accordance with Annex 1;

2 that ship and coast stations using DSC calling equipment in accordance with Recommendation ITU-R M.493 should use their 9-digit numerical identities transmitted as a 10-digit address/self-identity, normally with a digit 0 added at the end of the identity (see also Recommendation ITU-R M.1080);

3 for the purpose of ensuring compatibility with the GMDSS, the numbers, names and addresses of ship earth stations participating in international telecommunication services shall be made readily available to all authorized entities by the telecommunication service providers concerned;

4 that the guidance given in Annex 2 should be employed regarding the reuse of MMSI numbers, particularly those with three trailing zeroes.

Annex 1

Assignment of ship station identification

1 Ships participating in the maritime radio services mentioned in *recommends* 1 shall be assigned a nine digit unique ship station identity in the format $M_1I_2D_3X_4X_5X_6X_7X_8X_9$ wherein the first three digits represent the maritime identification digits (MIDs).

2 Restrictions may apply with respect to the maximum number of digits, which can be transmitted on some national telex and/or telephone networks for the purpose of ship station identification.

3 The maximum number of digits that could be transmitted over the national networks of many countries for the purpose of determining ship station identity was six. The digits carried on the network to represent the ship station identity are referred to as the “ship station number” in this text and in the relevant ITU-R Recommendations. The use of the techniques described below should have made it possible for the coast stations of such countries to engage in the automatic connection of calls to ship stations.

To obtain the required nine digit ship station identity a series of trailing zeros would have to be added automatically to the ship station number by the coast station in order to complete a shore-originated telephone call, for example, carried over the public switched telephone network:

Ship station number

$M_1I_2D_3X_4X_5X_6$

Ship station identity

$M_1I_2D_3X_4X_5X_60_70_80_9$

4 In accordance with the above, and the relevant ITU-T Recommendations, a numbering plan was instituted for Inmarsat Standard B, C and M systems participating in the GMDSS, which also requires that MMSIs with three trailing zeroes be assigned to ships fitting standard B, C and M ship earth stations.

5 With respect to Inmarsat Standard C Systems, the above restriction may not necessarily apply (see Circular Letter CM/4 for further guidance).

6 As long as the above restrictions apply, ships reasonably expected to be affected by the above limitations shall only be assigned ship station identities with $X_7X_8X_9 = 000$.

7 With the evolution of global mobile-satellite systems, ships earth stations are able to participate in international public correspondence telecommunication services. Ship earth stations having this functionality may be assigned international telecommunication numbers that have no direct correspondence with the ship station MMSI. Those authorized to assign the numbers, names and addresses associated with such ship earth stations should maintain a record of the cross reference relationships with the MMSI, for example in an appropriate database. For the purposes of GMDSS the details of these relationships should be made available to authorized entities such as but not limited to the rescue coordination centres (RCCs)¹. Such availability should be on an automatic basis, 24 h per day 365 days per year.

Annex 2

Guidance on the conservation and management of MMSI numbers

1 Administrations should employ the following measures to manage the limited MMSI numbering resource, particularly for the reuse of MMSIs with three trailing zeroes, in order to avoid depletion of MIDs and the corresponding MMSI number series:

- implement effective national procedures for MMSI assignment and registration taking into account the requirements of Resolution 340 (WRC-97);
- provide the Bureau with regular updates of assigned numbers in conformity with RR No. 20.16;
- ensure that the period from the expiration of the ship station licence associated with the number assignment until the date of reassignment of that number is sufficient for the changes to be incorporated in the relevant ITU service publications, e.g., Lists V and VIIa, taking into account the standard intervals between successive published editions;
- ensure that when ships move from the flag of registration of one administration to that of another administration, all of the assigned means of ship station identification, including the

¹ International Maritime Organization (IMO) Resolution A.888(21) requires that distress priority communications in these systems should, as far as possible, be routed automatically to an RCC.

MMSI number, are reassigned as appropriate and that the changes are notified to the Radiocommunication Bureau as soon as possible (see RR No. 20.16).

2 It is essential for a lapsed number assignment to remain dormant for a number of years before taking it back into use again, in order to avoid confusion over the origin of distress communications or over the responsible parties for billing and reconciling accounts for maritime radiocommunications.

3 The objective is to ensure that a period of five years or a period spanning two successive editions of List VIIa, whichever is the greater, should pass before a lapsed MMSI number is reused and entered into national and international databases pursuant to Resolution 340 (WRC-97) and RR No. 20.16.

4 Administrations could also apply the above procedures to MMSI numbers assigned with 2, 1 or no trailing zeroes in the interests of the long term conservation of MMSI and MID resources. However these number formats are normally not critical to the assignment of an additional MID to an administration (see Section VI of RR Article 19).
