

RESOLUTION 349 (REV.WRC-19)

**Operational procedures for cancelling false distress alerts in
the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System**

The World Radiocommunication Conference (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2019),

considering

- a) that the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), as amended, prescribes that ships subject to that Convention shall be fitted with Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) equipment as appropriate;
- b) that non-SOLAS vessels are also being equipped with GMDSS equipment;
- c) that the transmission and relay of false distress alerts is a significant problem within the GMDSS,

noting

that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has developed similar operational procedures to cancel false distress alerts,

resolves

- 1 to urge administrations to take all necessary measures to avoid false distress alerts and to minimize the unnecessary burden on rescue organizations which occurs;
- 2 to urge administrations to encourage the correct use of GMDSS equipment, with particular attention to appropriate training;
- 3 to urge administrations to implement the operational procedures contained in the Annex to this Resolution;
- 4 that administrations should take any consequential appropriate action in this respect,

instructs the Secretary-General

to bring this Resolution to the attention of IMO.

ANNEX TO RESOLUTION 349 (REV.WRC-19)

Cancelling of false distress alerts

If a distress alert is inadvertently transmitted, the following steps shall be taken to cancel the distress alert.

1 VHF digital selective calling

- 1) Reset the equipment immediately;
- 2) If the DSC equipment is capable of cancellation, cancel the alert in accordance with the most recent version of Recommendation ITU-R M.493;
- 3) Set to channel 16; and
- 4) Transmit a broadcast message to “All Stations” giving the ship’s name, call sign and maritime mobile service identity (MMSI), and cancel the false distress alert.

2 MF digital selective calling

- 1) Reset the equipment immediately;
- 2) If the DSC equipment is capable of cancellation, cancel the alert in accordance with the most recent version of Recommendation ITU-R M.493;
- 3) Tune for radiotelephony transmission on 2 182 kHz; and
- 4) Transmit a broadcast message to “All Stations” giving the ship’s name, call sign and MMSI, and cancel the false alert.

3 HF digital selective calling

- 1) Reset the equipment immediately;
- 2) If the DSC equipment is capable of cancellation, cancel the alert in accordance with the most recent version of Recommendation ITU-R M.493;
- 3) Tune for radiotelephony on the distress and safety frequency in each frequency band in which a false distress alert was transmitted (see Appendix 15); and
- 4) Transmit a broadcast message to “All Stations” giving the ship’s name, call sign and MMSI, and cancel the false alert on the distress and safety frequency in each frequency band in which the false distress alert was transmitted.

4 Ship earth station

Notify the appropriate rescue coordination centre that the alert is cancelled by sending a distress priority message. Provide ship name, call sign and ship earth station identity with the cancelled alert message.

5 Emergency position indicating radiobeacon (EPIRB)

If for any reason an EPIRB is activated inadvertently, immediately stop the inadvertent transmission and contact the appropriate rescue coordination centre through a coast station or land earth station and cancel the distress alert.

6 General

Notwithstanding the above, ships may use additional appropriate means available to them to inform the appropriate authorities that a false distress alert has been transmitted and should be cancelled.

