

HOW TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY CALL FOR HELP

WHEN YOU MAKE A MAYDAY CALL, YOU WANT TO INCLUDE:

- **Mayday call and boat name**
- **Your position**
- **Your emergency**

If you have time, describe your boat, number of persons on board, any injuries and if everyone has a life jacket.

Speak slowly and repeat this information three times.

If you don't receive an immediate response, continue to send out your Mayday call as long as the radio functions.

16

VHF

Turn your VHF to Channel 16, key the mic by pressing the talk button and follow this script:

“

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday.

This is Seas the Day.

**Our position is 36:33'
North and 74:85' West
and we are sinking.**

Say **Pan-Pan** instead of Mayday-Mayday if the situation is not life threatening.

Say **Sécurité** to signal weather information such as an upcoming storm.

ARE YOU RESCUE READY?

Before you leave shore, check for:

- FLOAT PLAN**
...file a float plan with a loved one with the details of your trip and vessel. In the event of an emergency, the sooner rescuers can get on the water and to the location of an overdue boater, the more likely the outcome will be positive.
 - SECONDARY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT**
...like a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or Satellite Phone should be on board as a back-up to your VHF Marine Radio.
 - DISTRESS SIGNALING DEVICES**
...including flares, electric distress lights or a flag, whistles and signaling mirrors.
 - LIFE JACKETS**
...a USCG approved life jacket should be worn by each person on the vessel.
 - A THROWABLE FLOTATION DEVICE**
...can be tossed to an individual who has fallen overboard. One throwable is required in addition to life jackets.
 - FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**
...are required on board and vary by boat size. Ensure you and your passengers know how to operate one: pull the pin, squeeze the handle and aim at the base of the flames.
- REMEMBER:** The Coast Guard requires different equipment for different kinds of vessels and activities, so be sure to know what you are required to carry. Consider getting a Vessel Safety Check from your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.



The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) was organized in September 1958. The NSBC serves as a national catalyst for developing a safe boating culture by providing educational resources, outreach programming, and training opportunities for industry partners and the boating community to influence safe, secure, and responsible boating.

National Safe Boating Council
8140 Flannery Court
Manassas, VA 20109
Phone: 703.361.4294

SAFEBOATINGCOUNCIL.ORG



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ALL ABOUT VHF MARINE RADIOS

WHAT IS A VHF RADIO?

A **VHF (Very High Frequency) Radio** is an essential piece of safety equipment to have on your boat, and in an emergency it may be your only line of communication from sea to shore. Knowing how to use a VHF Radio could save the life of you and your passengers.

WHEN DO I USE ONE?

- To contact other nearby boats
- To communicate with drawbridge, locks, and marina operators
- To call the Coast Guard for help in an emergency
- To get instant access to NOAA Weather Alert Monitoring



REMEMBER: Your cell phone is not a reliable source for communication when you're out on the water because its range is limited and they do not work if they get wet. **VHF is best.**



HOW DOES IT WORK?

VHF Marine Radio uses radio waves in the very high frequency (VHF) radio band to create two-way communications from boat to boat and boat to shore. When using your VHF Radio, the Coast Guard and all boats within line of sight of your vessel will hear your radio call if they are on the same channel.

TYPES OF VHF RADIOS



A VHF fixed-mount radio is installed in your boat and powered by its electrical system.

A VHF hand-held radio is portable, battery operated and has a self-contained antenna making it fully functional even if your boat is not. Most hand-helds are waterproof and will float, but they only work if the battery is charged, so they make a great back-up to a VHF fixed-mount radio.



DID YOU KNOW? Most VHF marine radios manufactured in the last several years have Digital Selective Calling, or VHF-DSC. It will allow you to send automatic distress calls to the Coast Guard's Rescue 21 system with the press of a button. However, it must be properly interfaced with the boat's GPS to give position data—something the U.S. Coast Guard estimates eight out of 10 boaters fail to do—and it must be registered with a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number. Recreational boaters may apply for a MMSI through BoatUS, U.S. Power Squadrons, and Shine Micro.

HOW TO USE YOUR VHF RADIO

1. Turn on the VHF unit and adjust the squelch by turning the knob until the static stops.
2. Then, perform a radio check to ensure your unit is functioning properly.
3. Radio checks can be performed by tuning to one of the common working channels (9, 68, 69, 71, 72, 78), by hailing "TowBoatUS" on channel 68 or using Sea Tow's Automated Radio Check Service on channels 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 84.
4. Then key your mic and call "radio check" three times, followed by the name of your boat. A boater will reply to confirm that your radio is working properly. If using Sea Tow's Automated Radio Check Service, the system will replay your transmission, letting you hear how you sound to ensure your radio is working.
5. You can then leave your VHF on Channel 16 to monitor communications.



DID YOU KNOW? Some VHF radios offer NOAA Weather Alert Monitoring, which provides instant access to National All-Hazards and weather information, 24/7. This could alert you to head back to shore before getting caught in a storm. **No cell phone can do that.**



VHF CHANNELS

6

CHANNEL 6 - reserved for safety use, primarily during search and rescue operations.

13

CHANNEL 13 - for navigational use between vessels, bridges and locks.

16

CHANNEL 16 - designated as the national distress, safety and calling frequency. Monitor this channel while underway. Tune to this channel when making a call for help.

20

CHANNEL 20 - reserved for communications with the Coast Guard.

22

CHANNEL 22 - Coast Guard's working channel. The Coast Guard will ask you to switch to this channel after you alert them on Channel 16.



CHANNELS 9, 68, 69, 71, 72, 78 common "working" or "open" channels. Switch to one of these once you've established contact on Channel 16.



REMEMBER: Check for channels authorized for use in your area as well as any local restrictions. You can do this by contacting your local Coast Guard Station.