



Ref. T2/6.04

MSC/Circ.959
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INTERIM PROCEDURES FOR MRCCs ON RECEIPT OF DISTRESS ALERTS

- 1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-second session (17 to 26 May 2000), recalling that the reception of distress alerts from distant areas is a common problem, noted that there was a need for interim procedures for MRCCs and coast stations (CSs) to follow on receipt of DSC alerts.
- 2 Noting further that the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR), at its fourth session (12 to 16 July 1999), addressed that problem and developed such interim procedures, the Maritime Safety Committee approved the interim MRCC/CS procedures upon reception of a DSC alert and an Inmarsat alert, as set out in annexes 1 and 2, accordingly.
- 3 Member Governments are invited to use the annexed Interim MRCC/CS procedures and bring them to the attention of all parties concerned.

ANNEX 1

INTERIM PROCEDURES FOR MRCC ON RECEIPT OF A DSC DISTRESS ALERT

The procedure described below is a guidance, and should under no circumstances restrict the effort necessary to confirm the safety of a vessel or persons onboard.

DISTRESS ALERT WHERE SHIP'S POSITION IS INCLUDED

- The position is within own SRR
 - The position is outside own SRR.
- MRCC/CS to acknowledge the alert by DSC and telephony.
 - Defer acknowledgement for a short period to allow appropriate MRCC/CS to acknowledge.
 - If no acknowledgement, relay the alert to appropriate MRCC. Request acknowledgment.

DISTRESS ALERT WHERE SHIP'S POSITION IS NOT INCLUDED

- The alert received via VHF.
 - The alert received via MF or HF
- MRCC/CS to acknowledge the alert by DSC and telephony. Assume co-ordination.
 - Attempt to ascertain the position.
 - Defer acknowledgement for a period.
 - Check the MMSI/MID, acknowledge and attempt to establish contact .
 - If response received, and in own SRR co-ordinate as appropriate. If in distress outside own SRR, co-ordinate until appropriate MRCC assumes SMC.
 - If no response received, continue investigating, but also pass alert to the flag state /appropriate MRCC/SAR data provider. Request acknowledgement.

DISTRESS RELAY ALERT

- If transmitted by MRCC/CS
 - If transmitted by a ship within own SRR.
 - If transmitted by a ship outside own SRR.
 - If transmitted by a ship without distress position.
- The distress relay alert shall not be acknowledged.
 - MRCC/CS to acknowledge.
 - Pass alert to appropriate MRCC. Request acknowledgement.
 - Attempt to ascertain position and continue investigating..

ALL SHIP URGENCY

- DSC urgency is an announcement of a call to be transmitted via a given frequency.
- Do not acknowledge.
 - Monitor given frequency.

DSC DISTRESS ALERT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Received from a ship station
 - Received from a MRCC/CS
- If original distress is not received, request distress details from the acknowledging ship.
 - Acknowledging MRCC/CS will be responsible for the co-ordination. If necessary seek additional information.

ANNEX 2

INTERIM MRCC/CS PROCEDURES UPON RECEPTION OF AN INMARSAT ALERT

The procedure described below is a guidance, and should under no circumstances restrict the effort necessary to confirm the safety of a vessel or persons onboard.

DISTRESS ALERT

- The position is within own SRR.
 - Acknowledge the alert
 - MRCC to assume co-ordination.
 - The position is outside own SRR.
 - Acknowledge the alert.
 - MRCC to co-ordinate actions until appropriate MRCC assumes SMC.
 - Pass alert to appropriate MRCC. Request acknowledgement.
 - Missing or not updated position.
 - Acknowledge the alert.
 - MRCC to assume co-ordination.
 - Check ID/MID, and pass information to appropriate MRCC/SAR data provider/Flag State. Request acknowledgement.
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