



South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM6/5/2/1

Date: 30 March 2015

Marine Notice No. 6 of 2015

Cessation of 29 Mhz SOLAS Distress Watch Keeping by Telkom Maritime Services

TO ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SMALL VESSEL SKIPPERS AND OPERATORS, SMALL VESSEL OWNERS AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Marine Notice No 4 of 2015 is cancelled

Summary

This Marine Notice outlines the changes to Maritime Radio SOLAS watch keeping by Telkom Maritime Services and the changes in Radio carriage requirements by small vessels ensuing from these changes.

1. The renewal of the Telkom/Department of Transport SOLAS Service Agreement was signed on the 14th January 2014. This is the Agreement whereby Telkom Maritime Services provides SOLAS distress watch keeping and Maritime Safety Information Services.
2. The Agreement shall be fully implemented by 01/01/2016 and South Africa shall declare GMDSS Sea Area A1 along with the existing Sea Area A3.

Sea Area A1 is defined as:

“A coastal area within the radiotelephone coverage of at least one VHF coast station in which continuous DSC alerting is available”.

3. The existing analogue shore based radio equipment will be replaced by digital equipment. For small vessels to interact with the digital equipment once the system is fully operational, a VHF radio with DSC capability is required. This will also ensure interoperability between all vessels.

(Clarity – Telkom Maritime maintain a radio service whereby the entire coast of South Africa from Ponta do Ouro to the Orange River is covered by means of VHF repeater stations monitored and operated from Cape Town Radio.)

4. A DSC distress alert sent on VHF CH 70 has the following advantages over the traditional radiotelephone Mayday call transmitted on VHF CH 16:
 - a. A digital signal travels further than a voice signal – improved range of transmission;
 - b. Distress alert (undesigned) provided with the single press of a button;
 - c. The position is included in the initial distress alert.

5. VHF CH 16 aural watch keeping will be maintained by Telkom Maritime Services until further notice to allow all vessels to make the transition to DSC carriage.
6. 29 MHz and 2182 kHz aural watch-keeping by Telkom will cease with effect from 01/01/2016.
7. Due to the cessation of the SOLAS watch keeping by the South African coast stations on 29 Mhz it will no longer be appropriate for small vessels to carry 29 Mhz radios as a safety option in terms of item 18, Annexure 2 of the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007.

Vessels covered by these regulations shall be equipped with VHF Marine Radios to comply with the safety requirement by their first annual safety survey after 01/01/2016.

8. In summary, vessels may continue to carry 29 Mhz radios as voluntary fit equipment for intership communications, communications with clubs, licensed launch sites etc. however these radios will no longer be appropriate to fulfill the safety requirements of the regulations from 01/01/2016 as Telkom Maritime Radio Services will no longer be watch keeping this band.

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