MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE
SHIPPING CIRCULAR
NO. 15 OF 2024

MPA Shipping Division
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12 December 2024

Applicable to: Ship owners, ISM managers, Ship Masters, Officers of the Watch (OOWs), and GMDSS duty Personnel engaged on Singapore Registered Ships

ADVISORY FOR USE OF APPROPRIATE RADIOCOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT IN DISTRESS SITUATIONS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTER IV OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA, 1974

1 The International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Maritime Safety Committee ("MSC"), at its 106th session in November 2022, approved the MSC.1/Circ.1656 ("*Revised GMDSS operating guidance for ships in distress situations"*) as attached in the Annex), effective 1st January 2024.

2 This circular serves as a reminder to Ship Masters, OOW and GMDSS duty personnel engaged on Singapore-registered ships to:

a) use appropriate radiocommunication equipment during distress situations, in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, Chapter IV;
b) be aware of coast stations[1] that maintain MF, HF and VHF watch using digital selective calling (DSC);
c) consider relevant coast station information (including DSC equipment and operating frequencies) in preparation of ship's voyage plan; and
d) ensure all GMDSS duty personnel onboard are familiar with preferred methods for transmitting distress alerts from the bridge, to prompt Search and Rescue (SAR) assistance.

3 The master is advised to broadcast distress alert via **all available radio communication systems** on the bridge in event of distress situations. This approach would mitigate the risk of coastal stations failing to receive the alert due to absence of the watch on particular reception equipment.

4 The ship's ISM manager should revise the Safety Management System procedures to incorporate and reflect the "Revised GMDSS operating guidance for

[1] Refer to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s List IV, which provides comprehensive details of maritime coast radio stations worldwide

ships in distress situations". In addition, the flow-chart provided in MSC.1/Circ.1656 should be prominently displayed as an A4 poster on ships' bridges for quick reference.

5 Please direct your queries relating to this circular to shipping@mpa.gov.sg.

CHEAH AUN AUN
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Annex

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MSC.1/Circ.1656
28 November 2022

GMDSS OPERATING GUIDANCE FOR SHIPS IN DISTRESS SITUATIONS

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 106th session (2 to 11 November 2022), approved the revised *GMDSS operating guidance for ships in distress situations*, as set out in the annex, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), at its ninth session (21 to 30 June 2022).

2 This circular provides guidance concerning the use of appropriate radiocommunication equipment in distress situations, in accordance with chapter IV of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974. The Guidance in the annex is recommended to be displayed on ships' bridges as an A4 size poster.

3 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed Guidance to the attention of seafarers and all other parties concerned.

4 This circular becomes effective on 1 January 2024, superseding COM/Circ.108 as from that date.

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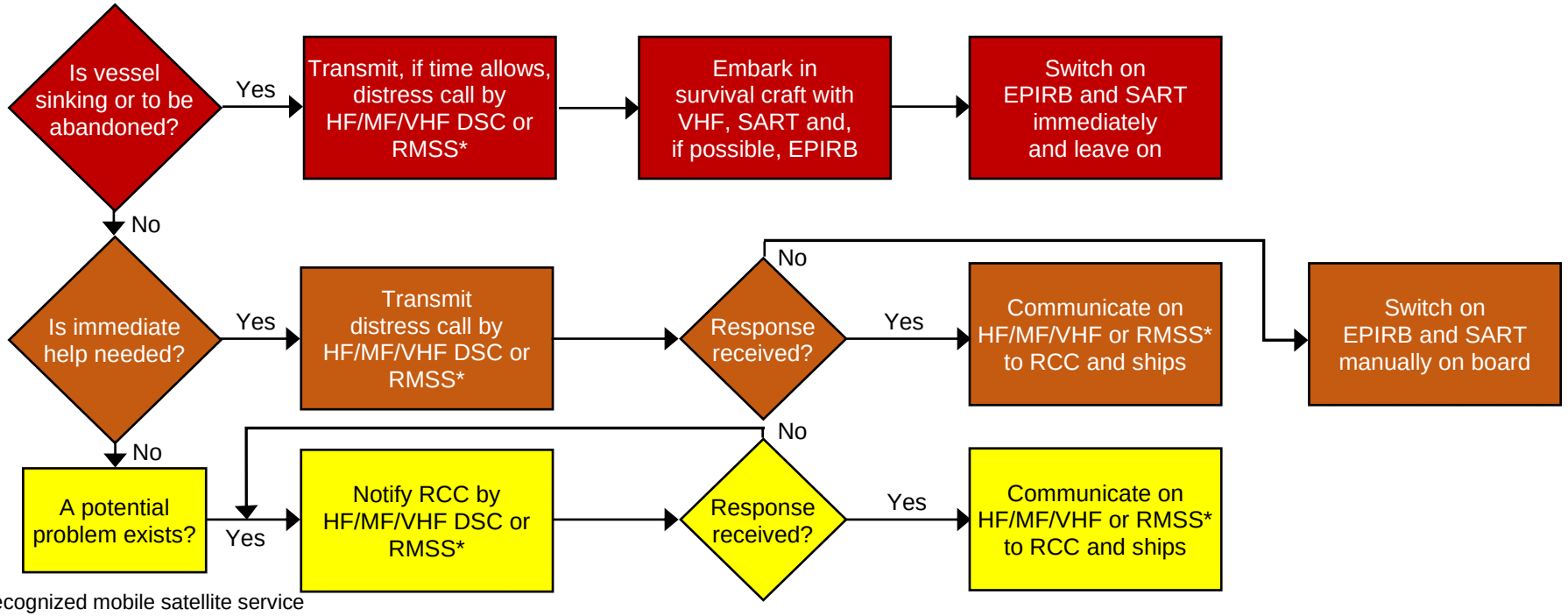
ANNEX

GMDSS OPERATING GUIDANCE FOR SHIPS IN DISTRESS SITUATIONS



* Recognized mobile satellite service

1. EPIRB should float free and activate automatically if it cannot be taken into survival craft.
2. Where necessary, ships should use any appropriate means to alert other ships.
3. Nothing above is intended to preclude the use of any and all available means of distress alerting, including those listed in COLREG 72, annex IV.

Frequencies for Distress Communications

	Digital selective calling (DSC)	Radiotelephone
VHF	Channel 70	Channel 16
MF	2 187.5 kHz	2 182 kHz
HF4	4 207.5 kHz	4 125 kHz
HF6	6 312.0 kHz	6 215 kHz
HF8	8 414.5 kHz	8 291 kHz
HF12	12 577.0 kHz	12 290 kHz
HF16	16 804.5 kHz	16 420 kHz