Marine Rescue Western Australia and ACRM Base services

VHF repeater stations

A network of VHF repeater stations at strategic locations along the WA coast significantly extend the range of VHF radio transmissions out to sea. To determine if a VHF repeater is available in your locality, you should switch to a repeater channel and hold the microphone switch down and ask for a ‘radio check.’

The nominal range of each repeater is 80km, but this will vary from repeater to repeater and it should also be noted that VHF is generally ‘line of sight’. some areas of coastline might be in a shadow zone.

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When you need to carry a marine radio

You must carry a marine band radio if you go more than five nautical miles from the mainland, or more than one nautical mile from the nearest navigable water, or within five nautical miles from the mainland. The choice of radio is up to you, it can be 27MHz, VHF or HF.

Which channels to use and when

Always stay on the distress channel and if you need to make a call, you can use this channel first before switching to others.

When the call is finished, resume listening on the distress channel (and the working channel if needed using the dual watch function).

Marine radios

Marine radios have a very serious purpose. Falsely indicating distress wastes a lot of time and resources; possibly weakening the ability to respond to a genuine emergency, and making it very difficult for you to find your way back in the event of an emergency.

In an emergency, communication is vital and a marine radio is essential. Mobile telephones, although widely available, can only be used if there is no urgent need to transmit concerning the safety of the vessel or the safety of a person (for example, mechanical breakdown, medical emergency or a man overboard).

Making a distress call

The distress call ‘Mayday’ may be used only if the boat is in grave and imminent danger and immediate assistance is required.

You say:

Mayday procedure

A Mayday call on one of the distress channels will attract the attention of land based radio stations, rescue vessels in your area, the coast station, the Air Traffic Control, and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Mayday call is a distress call and the number of people on board.

Marine rescue services

Marine rescue services are very important strong weather warnings. However, a safety call is more likely to be made by a coast station or marine rescue group and may include important strong weather warnings.

The distress call ‘Mayday’ may be used only if the boat is in grave and imminent danger and immediate assistance is required.

Pan Pan urgency call

The Pan Pan urgency call should be used if the Mayday distress call cannot be justified but a very urgent message concerning the safety of your boat or a person needs to be sent to an island station (for example, you need to be searched for a missing person)

Unauthorised use of radios

Unauthorised use of radios is a criminal offence and carries a severe penalty.

Pan Pan urgency call

Marine Rescue WA  Station please go to channel xx OVER.

Log on procedure

Log on is a simple process and will only take a minute or two. Your call is being answered and you will be asked to give your vessel’s name, registration number or call sign, a short description of your vessel and your position.

Log off procedure

If you are going to change your planned time, call the radio station again and advise them of your change in plans.

Every trip

Logging on and off

Logging on and off

Marine Rescue WA Station please go to channel xx OVER.

Log on/off process

Log on is a simple process and you will only need to make a call, you can use this channel first before switching to others.

When the call is finished, resume listening on the distress channel (and the working channel if needed using the dual watch function).

DSC is a standard for sending pre-defined digital messages via the high-frequency (HF) and very-high-frequency (VHF) maritime radio systems. It is a core part of the Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS).

Selecting a distress channel

You select a distress channel by hitting the distress button on your radio and monitor both by hitting the distress button on your radio and monitor both by hitting the dual watch button.

A distress call is made on the distress frequency or any other frequency likely to attract attention.

The distress call ‘Mayday’ may be used only if the boat is in grave and imminent danger and immediate assistance is required.

Emergency distress call (DSC) capability

The distress call ‘Mayday’ may be used only if the boat is in grave and imminent danger and immediate assistance is required.