Marine Rescue Western Australia and ACRM Base services

There are 39 Marine Rescue WA groups situated between Esperance and Kununurra including Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. In addition to the Marine Rescue WA groups, ACRM Base has a long history of coastal radio coverage in WA.

Some of the Marine Rescue WA groups provide a log on and log off service, but not all and each operates at different times of the day and night. Therefore contact your local radio base station prior to heading out on the water. Refer to the contacts page of this brochure and visit the Marine Rescue WA services website. If there is no coverage in the area you plan to go boating, leave your vessel and voyage details with a responsible person and advise them to contact the police if you fail to return on time.

The information contained in this publication is provided in good faith and believes to be accurate at time of publication. The State shall in no way be liable for any loss or damage caused by reliance on the information.
Marine radios

In an emergency, communication is vital and a marine radio is essential. Mobile telephones, although useful as a backup communications system, cannot replace a marine radio.

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 radio station. The choice of radio is up to you, it can be 27MHz, VHF or HF.

Which channels to use and when
Always remain on the distress channels (16 or 9) and immediately call for help if you need to make a call, you can use this channel first before switching to another.

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

Using dual watch function
The dual watch (DW) function allows you to pre-program two different channels into your radio and monitor both by hitting the DW button. The first channel programmed should always be the distress channel. The second channel programed is your working channel. Once these are programmed, it’s easy to switch back and forth and automatically hear a call coming in on either channel.

Digital Selective Calling
If you have a marine radio with Digital Selective Calling (DSC) capability, then you are advised to refer to the radio operator’s manual to ensure you understand and are familiar with how to use the DSC function in an emergency.

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. To use the urgent call ‘Pan’, you should be used within two minutes of any distress call.

Mayday procedure

This is Marine Rescue WA Station, Marine Rescue WA Station - This is (vessel registration) (spoken three times) OVER.

Pan Pan procedure

This is Marine Rescue WA Station please go to channel xx OVER.

Log on and off

Skipper are advised to log on and off every time they go out on their boats with their nearest radio station. Typically a rescue group, MARC (marine safety), Australian Coast Radios Monitors (ACRM) base or Water Police. The idea being that you log on with a radio station and let them know who you are, where you are going, and when you will arrive and back off on your return.

Logging on procedure

This is an example of the radio call and details the radio station will need to take you off their log.

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