

GMDSS VHF DSC Procedures for Small Boat Users

BEST PRACTICE: Listen before transmitting. Be brief and concise. Always identify yourself. Speak clearly using prowords. Stick to ship's business. Wait for a reply before re-transmitting. Try low power first except for Distress. Keep a listening watch on Channel 16.

DISTRESS ALERT

Only to be used in the event of grave and imminent danger AND assistance is required.

Send a Distress Alert using DSC, (press and hold the button until the alert is sent).

On receipt of a DSC acknowledgement or after about 15 seconds, transmit the distress call and message on Channel 16:

MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY

This is (name of own vessel – say three times)

Call sign or other identification

MMSI of own vessel

MAYDAY

This is [name, call sign and MMSI]

Position, [preferably as latitude and longitude]

Nature of distress

Assistance required

Number of persons on board

Other information

Over

DISTRESS ALERT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When a DSC radio receives a Distress Alert it will sound an audible alarm.

Immediately cease any transmission that may interfere with distress traffic and continue a listening watch on Channel 16.

If there is no DSC acknowledgement after a short interval (five minutes) then, if you are able to offer assistance, acknowledge by voice on Channel 16:

MAYDAY

Name of vessel sending the distress message, followed by their call sign or MMSI

This is (name of own vessel – say three times) Call sign or MMSI of your vessel

RECEIVED MAYDAY

State what assistance you can give (including ETA if proceeding to the casualty)

Over

You should use any available means to relay the Distress message to an appropriate coast station.

URGENCY

If you are concerned about the safety of a person or vessel, you can send an Urgency Announcement using a DSC All Ships Urgency Call, nominating a working channel. Tune to Channel 16 to make the Urgency Call:

PAN PAN, PAN PAN, PAN PAN

All stations – say three times

This is (name of own vessel – say three times)

Call sign or other identification

MMSI of own vessel

Please go to Channel (nominated working channel)

Out

Tune to the working channel and send your Urgency message.

SAFETY

To pass safety information to the Coastguard use an Individual DSC call with safety priority if available on your radio, entering the appropriate MMSI number. Transmit the DSC call and wait for the Coastguard acknowledgement. Accept the acknowledgement and ensure your radio is on the working channel indicated in the response. You should wait for the Coastguard to contact you on that channel.

If your radio does not support the call, then you should make a voice call on Channel 16.

INTER-SHIP – MMSI OF OTHER VESSEL KNOWN

Use an Individual DSC call with routine priority. Enter the MMSI or select from the directory and indicate the inter-ship channel that will be used for radiotelephony (R/T) communication. When the called radio 'rings' the called vessel should acknowledge the DSC call. The conversation can then start on the selected inter-ship channel.

INTER-SHIP – MMSI OF OTHER VESSEL UNKNOWN

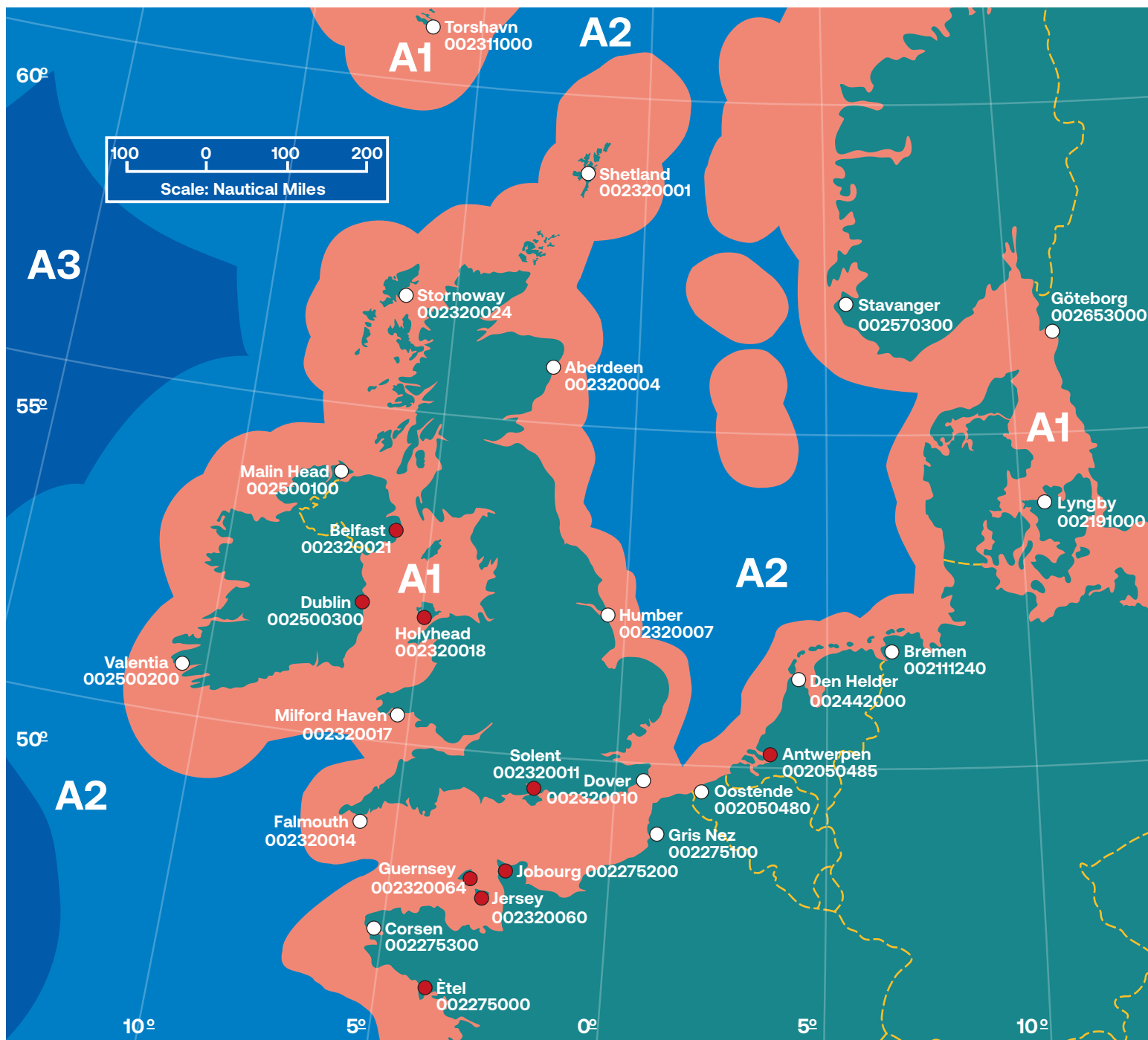
Voice call on Channel 16, initially using low power, moving to an inter-ship channel once contact is established.

If no response, call on Channel 13 which is allocated in the GMDSS for bridge to bridge communications.

COAST STATION CALLS

Call the Coastguard (and other coast stations) that use DSC with an Individual DSC Call with routine priority, entering the MMSI of the required station or selecting from the radio's directory.

When the Coastguard acknowledges the call, they will indicate the working channel for voice communications. Ensure your radio is set on the indicated working channel and wait for them to call you on it.



This map is for illustration purposes only.

GMDSS Sea Areas

- Medium Frequency (MF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) Coast Radio Station
- Very High Frequency (VHF) Coast Radio Station

Sea Area A1

The radiotelephone coverage of VHF coast stations in which continuous alerting by Digital Selective Calling (DSC) is available.

This area relates to a vessel with an antenna 4m above sea level. Where the antenna is lower or it is a portable radio, the area is smaller.

Sea Area A2

The radiotelephone coverage of MF coast stations in which continuous alerting by Digital Selective Calling is available.

Sea Area A3

The coverage of an IMO recognised mobile satellite service in which continuous alerting is available.

CONTACTS

Ofcom

Ofcom, Riverside House, 2a Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA
Tel: +44 (0)207 981 3000
www.ofcom.gov.uk

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Maritime and Coastguard Agency Navigation Safety Branch, Spring Place, 105 Commercial Road, Southampton SO15 1EG
Tel: +44 (0)203 817 2000
e-mail: infoline@mcga.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/mca



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency