

To stress the importance of proper installation and use of your Marine VHF the Coast Guard has released this memo. Rescue 21 is operational in our area and has saved many lives since it was implemented. Let's see if we can become a squadron with 100% member participation on acquiring, installing and using MMSI information on our VHF radios. Sharing our MMSI with fellow boaters is also important, and could possibly be included in the squadron roster. If you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to contact me at 460-8338; I will be happy to assist. Also, watch for the next squadron presentation of the USPS seminar on Marine VHF.

Information from the US Coast Guard:

MARINER'S SAFETY ENDANGERED WHEN VHF RADIO DISTRESS ALERTS BY DIGITAL SELECTIVE CALLING (DSC) LACK LOCATION AND IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

As the Coast Guard's new marine radio network Rescue 21 becomes operational throughout the U.S., rescue centers can now receive instant distress alerts from commonly used DSC-capable VHF marine radios. However, approximately 90% of VHF DSC distress alerts received by the Coast Guard do not contain position information, and approximately 60% do not contain a registered identity. The Coast Guard cannot effectively respond to a DSC distress alert sent from such a radio.

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This means that search and rescue efforts may normally be suspended when:

- *no communications with the distressed vessel can be established,
- *no further information or means of contacting the vessel can be obtained from other sources, and
- *no position information is known.

HELP US HELP YOU

FIRST Obtain a Maritime Mobile Installation Identity (MMSI) and enter it into your radio. MMSI numbers are issued by the Federal Communications Commission if your vessel otherwise requires a station license, or

BOATUS, (<http://www.boatus.com/mmsi>),

Sea Tow (<http://www.seatow.com/mmsi>), or the US Power Squadrons

(<http://www.usps.org/php/mmsi>). Ensure any information originally provided is updated as changes occur. FCC regulations require that DSC-equipped radios "use MMSIs assigned by the Commission or its designees" (47 CFR 80.103(b)).

THEN Interconnect your radio to a GPS receiver using a two-wire NMEA 0183 interface on all DSC-equipped marine radios and on most GPS receivers. Instructions should be provided in the radio and GPS operators manual. Further information is provided and will be routinely updated in <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=mtDsc>.

Developed by the Spectrum Management and Telecommunications Policy Division

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