

2.3 Radio Procedure

Effective use of the radios relies on keeping transmissions short and to the point, speaking clearly and following basic internationally recognised procedure.

The following guidelines are based on standard VHF radio procedure. They are internationally recognised and are consistent with the procedure regarded as standard by other radio users. The use of Procedure Words (pro-words) and the International Phonetic Alphabet makes transmissions easier to understand, especially when reception is poor. A list of pro-words and the phonetic alphabet are shown below. The pro-words are shown in red in the following examples.

Event Organisers are advised to consider having a dedicated channel for safety and rescue communications.

Advice on Radio Licensing and Operators' Certificates of Competence will be provided in ClubHub.

Radio Channels

Marine Mobile Band VHF channels

Marine Mobile Band radios typically have 57 channels with each channel having a designated function. The following channel designations should be noted:

- Channel 16 is used for initial calling, distress and safety only
- Channel 67 is the small craft safety channel
- Channels 6, 8, 72, and 77 are the primary inter-ship channels for "ship to ship" working
- Channel 70 is reserved for Digital Selective Calling (DSC) only

Other channels are reserved for Port Operations. If you operate near a port then you should know the primary channel used by that port. Monitoring the local Port Control or Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) channel can give you advance notice of large ship movements.

A list of the channels used by Port Radio (VTS) stations, locks and bridges can be found at https://www.waterways.org.uk/boating/navigating_your_boat/vhf/vhf_radio_channels

Some channels use different frequencies for "ship to shore" and "shore to ship" transmissions (these are known as duplex channels). They cannot be used for ship to ship communications.

Avoid channels commonly used by other local water users e.g. fishing boats, other local clubs.

Other radios

Other radios may have several channels but without a designated function for each channel. It is important that your club agrees which channels are to be used or that all radio users agree this at the start of the outing.

Making a Call

Listen

Only one radio can transmit successfully at a time so if you talk at the same time as someone else one of you will not be heard.

Make Your Call

To make your initial call, say their name and yours. e.g. "Control. **This is** Rescue 1. **Over.**"

If you do not get an immediate reply, wait a short time and then call again saying the station names twice, for example, at an event you may say "Control, Control, **this is** Rescue 1, Rescue 1. **Over.**"

At sea or where communications are difficult it is quite normal to say the station names three times for example "Falmouth Coastguard, Falmouth Coastguard, Falmouth Coastguard, **this is** Gig Swift, Swift, Swift, **Over.**"

When the other station has replied to your initial call, pass your messages. When you have finished saying something and want to hear the other station, say "**Over.**". At the end of the conversation, one station will say "**Out.**"

For example, at an event you may hear:

"Control, **this is** Rescue 1 **Over.**"

"Rescue 1, **this is** Control. **Over.**"

"Control, **this is** Rescue 1. I am in position just downstream of the bridge
Over."

"Rescue 1, **this is** Control. **Received. Out.**"

If communication is not clear then you may be asked to spell a name or word. This is what you may hear.

"**Station calling** London Coastguard **this is** London Coastguard. Please spell your vessel's name,
Over."

"London Coastguard **this is** the London Cornish Gig Fury Fury, **I spell**
Foxtrot, Uniform, Romeo, Yankee, Fury. **Over.**"

Always use the phonetic alphabet.

Examples of some standard calls

Radio Checks

At the start of an event, Control may carry out radio checks to ensure that everyone can hear and be heard. The procedure for this is:

“Rescue 1, **this is** Control. **Radio Check**, please. **Over.**”

“Control, **this is** Rescue 1. I have you loud and clear. **Over.**”

“Rescue 1, **this is** Control, I have you loud and clear also. **Out.**”

It is important that Rescue 1 knows that Control is receiving his transmissions.

Routine call to coastguards

A routine call may be made to the area Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre by a Gig, or any other vessel, leaving harbour and proceeding to sea if the club’s risk assessment, or the local conditions at the time, determine that this is appropriate.

In this example the Gig Troy is about to leave Fowey harbour and proceed to sea and wishes to call MRCC Falmouth.

Initial call on Channel 16,

“Falmouth Coastguard, Falmouth Coastguard, Falmouth Coastguard **this is** the Fowey Gig Troy, Troy, Troy. Routine safety traffic, **Over.**”

“Gig Troy **this is** Falmouth Coastguard, standby on channel 67 and await my call **Over.**”

“Falmouth Coastguard **this is** Troy, I will stand by on channel 67 **Out.**”

Then switch to channel 67 and listen, this is what you may hear.

“Gig Troy, Troy, Troy, **this is** Falmouth Coastguard Pass your message **Over.**”

“Falmouth Coastguard **this is** Troy. I am just leaving Fowey harbour and expect to return within one hour. I have seven persons on board. **Over.**”

“Troy, **this is** Falmouth Coastguard. **Received.** Please call again on your safe return to Fowey. **Out.**”

If the coastguard station is not particularly busy then it may transfer communication to Channel 67 immediately, as described below.

Initial call on Channel 16,

"Falmouth Coastguard, Falmouth Coastguard, Falmouth Coastguard **this is** the Fowey Gig Troy, Troy, Troy. Routine safety traffic, **Over.**"

"Gig Troy **this is** Falmouth Coastguard, channel 67 **Over.**"

"Falmouth Coastguard **this is** Troy, channel 67 **Out.**"

Then switch to channel 67 and listen, if the channel is clear then transmit your message.

"Falmouth Coastguard, Falmouth Coastguard **this is** the Fowey Gig Troy, Troy. **Over.**"

"Troy, **this is** Falmouth Coastguard Pass your message **Over.**"

"Falmouth Coastguard **this is** the Troy. I am just leaving Fowey harbour and expect to return within one hour. I have seven persons on board **Over.**"

"Troy, **this is** Falmouth Coastguard. **Received.** Please call again on your safe return to Fowey. **Out.**"

Do not forget to switch back to channel 16.

Broadcasting to All Stations

Sometimes it is important to tell everyone something e.g. that the lunch break has just started. To pass a message to everyone, call "All Stations".

"**All Stations, this is** Control. Be aware that the lunch break has started and the next race is due to start at 13:00. **Out.**"

This should be used when you need to communicate information to everyone. End the message with "**Out**" if you do not expect anyone to reply.

Distress calling - Mayday

The word Mayday is derived from the French m'aidez (help me). It is only to be used when there is grave and imminent danger of loss of life or a vessel and immediate assistance is required. "Mayday" calls take precedence over all other transmissions.

For example, on Marine Mobile Band, channel 16:

“Mayday Mayday Mayday Rogue **All Stations, this is** Ilfracombe Gig Rogue
Rogue Rogue **My position is** In The Range, half a mile north of Ilfracombe
Harbour. We have capsized and the boat is awash. We require rescue.
There are seven persons in the water with the boat. All the people
in the water are wearing lifejackets. There are no other boats in the vicinity.
All Stations, this is Rogue **Over.”**

At this point the Coastguard would respond to Rogue to confirm the information whilst another Coastguard officer would alert the appropriate Lifeboat station or Air Sea Rescue helicopter base.

If there are other vessels in the area then the Coastguard would retransmit the message using the pre-fix **Mayday Relay**. This prefix is used by a station that is not in distress to alert other stations that a vessel is in distress. For example, it would be used by a station upon sighting a red flare or other distress signal.

All further radio transmissions not directly associated with the rescue shall cease immediately and shall not resume until permission (**“Distress Fini”** (pronounced Distress Feenee)) is transmitted. All radio transmissions associated with the rescue should commence **“Mayday** Rogue”.

There is a standard order in which information should be passed in a distress or urgency situation. This can be remembered using the mnemonic **“MIPDANIO”**, as follows:

M = **Mayday**
I = **Identification** (the name of your vessel)
P = **Position** (your location, preferably as a bearing and distance from a well-known point)
D = **nature of your Distress** (what is your problem)
A = **the Assistance** required (what help do you need)
N = **the Number** of people involved
I = **any other relevant Information**
O = **Over**

The efficient transfer of information may help to save a life.

Urgency message - prefix Pan-pan

The message prefix **“Pan-pan”** is used when there is a matter of urgency but where there is no imminent danger of loss of life or a vessel. **“Pan-pan”** messages take precedence over all except **“Mayday”** messages and, although they do not impose radio silence automatically, further transmissions not associated with the incident should cease until the urgency has ended. There is an example below:

“Pan-pan, Pan-pan, Pan-pan, All Stations this is Umpire 1, Umpire 1. I am 50 metres upstream of the weir I have suffered engine failure but am using my anchor to maintain this position. I will require a tow. I have 2 persons on board. **All Stations this is** Umpire 1 **Over.”**

“Pan-pan Umpire 1 Umpire 1 **this is** Rescue 1. I will be with you in 30 seconds **Over”**

“Pan-pan Umpire 1 Rescue 1 **this is** Umpire 1. **Received Out”**

Safety message - prefix “Securite”

A Safety message is often used to broadcast safety information. For example, a Coastguard radio station will broadcast gale warnings, upon receipt. There is another example bellow:

“**Sécurité Sécurité Sécurité All stations this is** Start Marshall, Start Marshall. A large motor vessel is about to enter the course and navigate up the centre of the river at speed. Suspend racing and clear the course. **All Stations, this is** Start Marshall. **Out.**”

“Sécurité” messages take precedence over all except “Mayday” and “Pan-pan” messages.

Pro-words

This is	Indicates the Station making the call
Over	Invitation to reply
Out	Indicates the end of working (Never say “Over and Out”.)
Radio Check	Tell me the strength and clarity of my transmission
Wait	If a station is unable to receive traffic, it will reply “Wait ... minutes”
Station Calling	Used when a station receives a call but is unsure who is calling
I say again / Say again	I am repeating what I have just said / Please repeat what you have just said
All after / All before	Used after “say again” to request the repetition of a part of the previous message
Repeat	Used if a part of the message is important and needs emphasising
I Spell	I shall spell the next word or group. Use the phonetic alphabet
Received	Your message has been received and understood (Do not use Roger)
Break	I am going to continue to transmit but I am going to speak to another station
Mayday	This is a distress call
Silence Mayday	Announcement to impose radio silence during a distress situation
Distress fini	Announcement made to indicate the distress situation is now resolved
Pan-Pan	This is an urgency call. Urgent help is needed but there is no imminent danger of loss of life or a vessel.
Sécurité	This message contains safety information.

Phonetic Alphabet

A	Alpha	J	Juliet	S	Sierra
B	Bravo	K	Kilo	T	Tango
C	Charlie	L	Lima	U	Uniform
D	Delta	M	Mike	V	Victor
E	Echo	N	November	W	Whiskey
F	Foxtrot	O	Oscar	X	X-ray
G	Golf	P	Papa	Y	Yankee
H	Hotel	Q	Quebec	Z	Zulu
I	India	R	Romeo		

0	Zero
1	Wun
2	Too
3	Tree
4	Fower
5	Fife
6	Six
7	Seven
8	Ait
9	Niner