

To all -

This is advance information on the FCC action relative to the GMDSS Task Force Petition urging them to collect the full descriptive information when issuing MMSI numbers for identification of vessels using Digital Selective Calling (DSC) on VHF; MF; and HF radios. I will send out a general announcement to Task Force members soon but wanted you to be aware since the time for action is short. Note that replies must be submitted in letter form rather than email form and that copies are to be sent to 3 additional offices. The deadline is 27 January 2003 which should be interpreted as a date of receipt rather than a postmarked date of mailing. I have also attached a copy of our petition for reference.

What is needed now is to spread the word in the boating community, especially the USPS and Coast Guard Auxiliary membership to encourage positive responses supporting the petition. While most of the complaints have come from the boating community, this is also an issue for larger vessels which are more likely to need a station license and thus receive their MMSI number from the FCC rather than BOAT US. They should also very much want the Coast Guard to have access to full descriptive information on their vessels in event of a distress situation. We expect the Coast Guard to make a filing strongly supporting the Task Force since the need for the expanded data is a U.S.Coast Guard initiative.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter,

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From the FCC 23 Dec Daily Digest

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WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON REQUEST THAT THE COMMISSION COLLECT FULL MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE IDENTITY DATA SET RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

Comment Date: January 27, 2003
Comment Date: February 11, 2003

Reply

On September 19, 2002 the National GMDSS Implementation Task Force (Task Force) submitted a request to the Commission to expand its Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) database to incorporate additional data fields in accordance with the recommendation in International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.887(21). The Task Force suggests that the change be implemented by revising the Commission's application forms to require submission of the expanded data when applying for a station license and when renewing such licenses.

By way of background, an MMSI is a unique nine-digit number assigned to commercial and recreational U.S. vessels participating in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). Vessel owners must obtain an MMSI prior to using a digital selective calling (DSC) radio. The Commission has entered into agreements with private entities authorizing them to distribute MMSIs to vessels that are no longer required to obtain an individual license, but licensed vessels continue to receive MMSIs from the Commission through the licensing process. The Commission collects from applicants only that information which is necessary for the Commission's licensing processes, but the private entities that issue MMSI collect additional information, as recommended by the IMO. Specifically, the IMO

recommends collection of the following data for each vessel (items that the Commission currently does not collect from applicants are indicated with an asterisk):

1. ship name;
2. Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI);
3. call sign;
4. * EPIRB Identification Code (if applicable) and its homing frequency;
5. country;
6. ship identification number (IMO number or national registration number);
7. brief ship description;
8. * name, address, telephone and telefax number of emergency contact person ashore;
9. * alternative 24-hour emergency telephone number (alternative contact ashore);
10. * capacity for persons on board (passengers and crew);
11. * radio installation (Inmarsat-A,B,C,D, VHF DSC, etc.) for ship and survival craft;
12. identification number for all radio systems available;
13. * type and number of survival craft; and
14. date of last modification of database record.

The Task Force argues that search and rescue operations could be significantly improved if the Commission's database contained this additional information. It believes that the additional data fields are needed because the efficiency and ease of use of the new GMDSS radio system has resulted in a substantial increase in advertent transmission of false alerts, particularly by vessels using the system voluntarily whose operators are not required to be trained or licensed. The U.S. Coast Guard utilizes the information available from numerous data bases including the Commission's MMSI database to enhance response to GMDSS distress alerts, including the prevention of unnecessary launching of search and rescue assets. The Task Force maintains that the validation process is severely impeded without access to the additional data fields, as the information contained in those fields is essential for search and rescue.

Interested parties may file comments on this Request on or before January 27, 2003. Parties interested in submitting reply comments must do so on or before February 11, 2003. All submissions should reference this Public Notice, including the DA number, and should be filed with the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., TW-325, Washington, D.C. 20554. A copy of each filing should be sent to 1) Qualex International (Qualex), Portals II, 445 Twelfth St., S.W., Room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554; 2) Ghassan Khalek, Federal Communications Commission, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Policy and Rules Branch, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room 4-C421, Washington, D.C. 20554; and 3) Maria Ringold, Federal Communications Commission, Consumer Information Branch, Reference Information Center, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room CY-B529, Washington, D.C. 20554. Copies of the proposal and all responses to this Public Notice will be available for inspection and copying during regular business hours in the Reference Information Center (RIC) of the Consumer Information Branch, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth St., S.W., Room CY-A257, Washington, D.C. 20554. Copies may also be obtained from Qualex. For further information regarding the public reference file, please contact Maria Ringold, Chief, Wireless Branch, RIC, (202) 418-1350.

For further information, contact Mr. Ghassan Khalek of the Policy and Rules Branch, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau at (202) 418-0680, TTY (202) 418-7233, or via email to ghkhalek@fcc.gov.

By the Chief, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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