

Phonetic Alphabet

Letter	Word	Pronunciation
A	ALFA	<u>AL</u> FAH
B	BRAVO	<u>BRAH</u> VOH
C	CHARLIE	<u>CHAR</u> LEE (or) <u>SHAR</u> LEE
D	DELTA	<u>DELL</u> TAH
E	ECHO	<u>ECK</u> OH
F	FOXTROT	<u>FOKS</u> TROT
G	GOLF	GOLF
H	HOTEL	HOH <u>TELL</u>
I	INDIA	<u>IN</u> DEE AH
J	JULIETT	<u>JEW</u> LEE ETT
K	KILO	<u>KEY</u> LOW
L	LIMA	<u>LEE</u> MAH
M	MIKE	MIKE
N	NOVEMBER	NO <u>VEM</u> BER
O	OSCAR	<u>OSS</u> CAH
P	PAPA	PAH <u>PAH</u>
Q	QUEBEC	KEH <u>BECK</u>
R	ROMEO	<u>ROW</u> ME OH
S	SIERRA	SEE <u>AIR</u> RAH
T	TANGO	<u>TANG</u> GO
U	UNIFORM	<u>YOU</u> NEE FORM (or) <u>OO</u> NEE FORM
V	VICTOR	<u>VIK</u> TAH
W	WHISKEY	<u>WISS</u> KEY
X	XRAY	<u>ECKS</u> RAY
Y	YANKEE	<u>YANG</u> KEY
Z	ZULU	<u>ZOO</u> LOO

Types of Call

Routine Calls – All calls other than Distress, Urgency or Safety calls. DSC alert sent using Menu > DSC Calls > Individual call or similar.

The key phrase with routine calls is “Ship's Business”. Where to meet for lunch, eta, fuel stops etc are fine, discussing the football is not.

Routine calls use Channels 6, 8, 72 and 77.

Non DSC (Digital Selective Calling) routine calls start on Channel 16 then move to a working channel as soon as possible. The caller chooses the working channel as the person receiving the call will not be expecting it so can not listen to see if the working channel is clear.

DSC routine calls include an option for selecting the channel as part of the call set up. This channel is then selected by each radio ready for the call as part of the digital call set up.

Be aware that the Coastguard and some other stations such as port authorities will dictate the working channel regardless of what is suggested by the caller.

Safety Calls – Proword “SECURITAY”, used for navigation and weather warnings. DSC Safety Alert sent using Menu > All Ships Calls > Safety or similar.

Safety calls must be addressed to someone, eg “all ships” or “Solent Coastguard”. Most commonly used by the Coastguard or port authorities to report events such as strong wind warnings, hazards such as floating debris in shipping channels or large vessel movements. Anyone can send a Safety call if appropriate.

Urgency Calls – Proword “PANPAN”, used for non emergency requests, medical relay or distress relay calls. DSC Urgency Alert sent using Menu > All Ships Calls > Urgency

Urgency calls must be addressed to someone, eg “all ships” or “Solent Coastguard” and should contain some indication of the point of the call, for example a boat that has run aground may be looking for a tow.

Medical relay calls are generally directed to the Coastguard and involve setting up a linked call to hospital staff trained to give medical advice for non life threatening situations over the radio. Examples may include people who have had sea sickness for several days, or feeling dizzy etc.

Distress relay calls are used for distress situations that are happening to other people or to pass on the details of a Distress call that has been heard but not acknowledged. Examples may include witnessing a boat exploding, a man overboard from another vessel that seems unaware, passing on a Distress call from a vessel in the English Channel that is out of range of Coastguard stations etc.

Distress Calls – Proword “MAYDAY” DSC Distress Alert sent using the dedicated Distress button.

The internationally accepted definition of Distress situations is:

Grave and imminent danger to life, vessel, aircraft or vehicle.
Immediate assistance is required.

Distress calls are made by the station that the Distress situation is happening to.

All Distress working transmissions start with the proword “Mayday”. The Coastguard will use the prowords “Mayday Seelonce” to clear a channel for distress working, and “Mayday Finnee” when distress working has ended.

Distress Call

This is the Distress call for a motorboat called “Flam” with unique call sign MABC8 and MMSI 232004876. To aid clarity it is a good idea to have radio procedure cards by your radio including a template distress call. The MCA frequently have waterproof procedure stickers available for free on their website.

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday
This is Motor Vessel Flam,Flam,Flam
Call sign MABC8 MMSI 232004876
<PAUSE>
Mayday Flam Call sign MABC8 MMSI 232004876
In position 50°42.07' N 001° 12.42' W
Fire On Board
I Require Immediate Assistance
Eight Persons On Board
Abandoning To Life Raft
Over

It may help to use the following acronym to ensure all information is included in the distress call:

M ayday

I dentify yourself – Name, Call sign and MMSI number

P osition – Either latitude and longitude, or distance and bearing eg
half a mile N of Cowes

D istress type – eg fire, sinking etc

A ssistance – Immediate assistance required

N umber of people on board and any special requirements.

Remember to include yourself!

I nformation – Any other relevant information eg, lifejackets are
worn etc

O ver.

Urgency Call

Three calls of pan-pan in radiotelephone communications is used to signify that there is urgency on board a boat, ship, aircraft, or other vehicle but that, for the time being at least, there is **no immediate danger** to anyone's life or to the vessel itself. Again, to avoid having to memorise the call sign, mmsi number or overall format a radio procedure card near the radio is recommended.

Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan
Solent CG, Solent CG, Solent CG
This Is Sailing Yacht Dab,Dab,Dab
Call Sign M4GHQ MMSI Number 235899983
My Position 51°44'.71N 001°04'.32E
I Have An Injured Crew Member And Request Urgent Medical Advice
Over

U K VHF Channels and Usage

In the United Kingdom there are approximately 57 VHF channels available plus the private channels for use by yacht clubs and emergency services. 3 channels are dedicated to digital data, Channel 70 for DSC data and 2 channels for Automatic Identification System services.

The U. K. uses the "International Frequency" plan. Like virtually all other countries throughout the world, the United Kingdom has dedicated many of these channels to specific uses.

Distress, Safety and Calling Channels

Channel 16 – Distress, Safety & Calling

Channel 16 is the international distress, safety and calling radiotelephony channel. Where it is necessary to call a station on Channel 16, other than in cases of Distress or Urgency, both stations should switch to an alternative channel as soon as possible. All calls on Channel 16 should be kept brief and should not exceed one minute, when not concerning distress, urgency or safety.

For a call between ship stations an inter-ship channel should be used, such as Channels 6, 8, 72 or 77. For a call to a coast station the station's assigned channel should be used.

Channel 70 - Digital Selective Calling

All DSC (Digital Selective Calling) alerts are sent via digital data transmissions on Channel 70 by the radio equipment once the relevant buttons have been pressed. This digital data allows additional information such as the vessel name, radio MMSI and position to be received by DSC capable radios adding an extra layer of functionality.

It must not be used for voice communications.

It is strongly recommended that any newly purchased equipment be DSC equipped.

Channel 13 – Bridge to Bridge

This channel is used for bridge to bridge voice communications under GMDSS. It will normally be monitored by commercial vessels if a danger of collision exists. This channel is one of the few, under GMDSS that can be used without a preceding DSC alert on Channel 70.

Channels 6, 8, 72, 77 – Inter-ship

Inter-ship channels are for communications between ship stations. Routine communications should be restricted to Channels 6, 8, 72 and 77. However, if these are not available, the other channels in the chart in the book, marked as being available for inter-ship working, may be used.

Channels 11, 12, 14 - Port Operations

Certain channels have been set aside, by international agreement, for use in the Port Operations and Ship Movement services. These are assigned to a user, such as a port or oil terminal where the safe movement of ships is important. The channels assigned to particular users are published in the Admiralty List of Radio Signals. It is important not to use these channels for other purposes if they have been assigned locally or if they have not been set aside for inter-ship working.

Be aware that some harbour masters and smaller ports use other channels for port operations as listed in the almanac or online.

Channels 15, 17, 75 and 76 – Guard band. These frequencies are either side of Channel 16's frequency. To prevent interference on Channel 16 these channels are restricted to low power (1w) for transmitting. 15 and 17 are designated for on board working, 75 and 76 are designated for port operations and should only be used at the request of the port authority.

Channel 67 – UK Small Craft Safety Used by HMCG as a small ship safety channel in the UK only. For routine communications, ie anything not related to distress working, this channel should be used to contact the Coastguard directly without using Channel 16.

Private & Marina channels

These channels have been set aside by the United Kingdom administration, for matters relating to mooring, berthing and race control.

Channel 80 - Channel 80 is used for contacting marinas in the UK. Most UK marinas can only be contacted on this channel as shore based radio licenses are issued on a channel by channel basis and require the licensee to pay an annual fee for each channel used. Any variation on this is listed in the almanac or online.

Channel 80 is a duplex channel, meaning it has two separate frequencies, one for outgoing and one for incoming transmissions. Type D radios can only receive one of these frequencies, meaning that only one side of the conversation is heard. For this reason, take at least a minute to ensure that the channel is not in use before transmitting.

Channel M and M2

Channels M and M2 are UK channels and should only be used in UK territorial waters.

They are used by sailing clubs for race control and safety communications. As they are usually used by shore based radios as well as ship based radios and therefore incur an annual fee their use is restricted to the club that hold the license.

Channel M1 may be shown as P1 or 37A depending on the radio equipment. M2 may be shown as P2.

Further information

The channels between 29 – 59 are private channels for specific licensed use, eg by the RNLI or Coastguard. Radio equipment needs to be reprogrammed to receive these channels and users need to hold a license specific to the channel being used.

Unauthorised access to these channels can be subject to a fine from Ofcom for breach of licensing.

Channels 00 and 0 are used exclusively by search and rescue and emergency services in the UK, and similarly to channels 29 – 59 radios should only be able to access channels 00 and 0 if properly authorised and licensed to do so. Again, unauthorised use is illegal and may be subject to a fine from Ofcom.