

Resolution A.769(18)

*Adopted on 4 November 1993
(Agenda item 11)*

**PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ISSUING GMDSS CERTIFICATES
TO HOLDERS OF NON-GMDSS CERTIFICATES**

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 15(j) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to regulations and guidelines concerning maritime safety,

CONSIDERING the relevant provisions of the Radio Regulations, the 1988 amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS), and the 1991 amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW), for the introduction of the global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS),

NOTING that the 1991 amendments to STCW regulation IV/2 require that, in determining the appropriate level of knowledge and training for certification of GMDSS radio personnel, the Administration shall also take into account the relevant recommendations of the Organization,

NOTING ALSO that resolution A.703(17) on training of radio personnel differs substantially from resolutions 14 and 15 of the International Conference on Training and Certification of Seafarers, 1978, concerning the training and certification of radio officers and radiotelephone operators,

BEING OF THE OPINION that issuing of GMDSS certificates to holders of old (non-GMDSS) certificates without any requirement for passing an examination is not acceptable,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendation made by the Maritime Safety Committee at its sixty-second session,

1. ADOPTS the Procedures and Arrangements for Issuing GMDSS Certificates to Holders of non-GMDSS Certificates, set out in the annex to the present resolution;
2. RECOMMENDS Governments, before issuing a GMDSS certificate to a holder of a non-GMDSS certificate, to require the candidate for the certificate to pass a limited examination in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Radio Regulations and the Procedures and Arrangements set out in the annex to the present resolution;
3. RECOMMENDS ALSO that this procedure only lasts for a limited period of time, as recommended in the annex to the present resolution.

Annex

**PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ISSUING GMDSS CERTIFICATES
TO HOLDERS OF NON-GMDSS CERTIFICATES**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GMDSS operator certificates should only be issued to candidates who have passed an appropriate examination verifying that the candidate has reached the required level of competence, taking into account

the recommendations of the Organization. This requirement also applies to candidates who hold a non-GMDSS operator certificate.

1.2 However, Administrations may make arrangements, as described in the following paragraphs, to permit certain holders of non-GMDSS certificates to obtain a GMDSS certificate after passing a "limited GMDSS examination".

1.3 Arrangements for "limited GMDSS examinations" should cease on 1 February 1997. After this date all candidates should be required to pass the full GMDSS examination.

2 REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES HOLDING NON-GMDSS CERTIFICATES

2.1 Candidates wishing to obtain a General Operator's Certificate (GOC) after a "limited GMDSS examination" should hold a valid non-GMDSS certificate of one of the following types, issued before 1 February 1997:

- .1** Radiocommunication Operator's General Certificate for the Maritime Mobile Service (MRGC);
- .2** First or Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate;
- .3** Radiotelephone Operator's General Certificate; or
- .4** Radiotelephone Operator's Restricted Certificate for the combination of VHF, MF and HF.

2.2 Candidates wishing to obtain a Restricted Operator's Certificate (ROC) after a "limited GMDSS examination" should hold a valid certificate of one of the types listed above, or any Radiotelephone Operator's Restricted Certificate issued before 1 February 1997.

3 REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATES REGARDING PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING IN USE OF GMDSS EQUIPMENT

3.1 A "limited GMDSS examination" for GOC should only be offered to candidates who have practical experience or familiarity with relevant GMDSS equipment and procedures appropriate for a ship engaged on voyages in all sea areas.

3.2 Candidates for a ROC should have experience or familiarity with equipment and procedures appropriate for a ship engaged on voyages exclusively in sea area A1.

3.3 Each candidate should have had at least six months operational experience, preferably on board ships, since 1 February 1992, and should be able to provide proof of such experience.

3.4 The candidate should receive supplementary training in the use of, and operational procedures for, all GMDSS equipment with which he has no experience or familiarity. The candidate should provide proof of such training.

4 ARRANGEMENTS FOR "LIMITED GMDSS EXAMINATION"

4.1 Each Administration may decide the practical arrangements to use for "limited GMDSS examination" (i.e. whether to use a "traditional classroom type examination" or to accept different arrangements), provided that the following requirements are fulfilled in all cases:

- .1** The examination should verify – with a high degree of certainty – whether or not the candidate possesses the knowledge and skills needed for correct operation of all relevant types of GMDSS equipment.
- .2** As a minimum, the content of each "limited GMDSS examination" should be such as to check that the candidate has knowledge and skills as follows:
 - .2.1** Candidates for a GOC: Appendix 1

- .2.2 Candidates for a ROC: Appendix 2
- .3 Precautions should be taken to prevent candidates being given the opportunity of receiving or using any kind of unauthorized written or verbal assistance during examination.
- .4 The evaluation of whether or not the candidate has proved that he possesses the necessary knowledge and skills during the limited examination should always be done by a person authorized by the Administration.

Appendix 1

Examination syllabus applicable to limited GMDSS examinations for the General Operator's Certificate

- 1 Global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS)**
 - 1.1 Sea area concept and the GMDSS master plan
 - 1.2 Functions of the GMDSS
 - .1 Alerting
 - .2 Search and Rescue (SAR) co-ordinating communications
 - .3 On-scene communications
 - .4 Locating and homing signals
 - .5 Dissemination of maritime safety information (MSI)
 - .6 General radiocommunications
 - .7 Bridge-to-bridge communications
 - 1.3 Means of ensuring availability of the GMDSS functional requirements
 - .1 Equipment maintenance strategies
 - 1.4 Sources of energy of ship stations
 - 1.5 GMDSS frequencies
 - 1.6 Protection of distress frequencies
 - .1 Guard bands
 - .2 Test on distress frequencies
 - .3 Transmissions during distress traffic
 - .4 Avoiding harmful interference
 - .5 Prevention of unauthorized transmissions
 - 1.7 Watchkeeping on GMDSS frequencies
 - 1.8 Carriage requirements of ship stations
 - 1.9 Licences, radio safety certificates, inspections and surveys
 - 1.10 Radio record keeping

2 SAR Operations in the GMDSS

- 2.1 The role of rescue co-ordination centres (RCCs)
- 2.2 Merchant Ship Search and Rescue Manual (MERSAR)
- 2.3 Maritime rescue organizations
- 2.4 Ship reporting systems

3 Communication procedures in the GMDSS

3.1 Distress communications via a ship station

- .1 Digital selective calling (DSC) distress alert
 - .1.1 The definition of a distress alert
 - .1.2 Transmission of a distress alert
 - .1.3 Transmission of a shore-to-ship distress alert relay
 - .1.4 Transmission of a distress alert by a station not itself in distress
- .2 Receipt and acknowledgement of a DSC distress alert
 - .2.1 Acknowledgement procedure by radiotelephony
 - .2.2 Acknowledgement procedure by narrow-band direct printing (NBDP)
 - .2.3 Receipt and acknowledgement by a coast station
 - .2.4 Receipt and acknowledgement by a ship station
- .3 Handling of distress alerts
 - .3.1 Preparations for handling of distress traffic
 - .3.2 Distress traffic terminology
- .4 On-scene communications
- .5 SAR operation

3.2 Urgency and safety communications via a ship station

- .1 The meaning of urgency and safety communications
- .2 Procedures for DSC urgency and safety calls
- .3 Urgency communications
- .4 Medical transport
- .5 Safety communications

3.3 Testing DSC equipment

3.4 Distress communications via a ship earth station

- .1 INMARSAT-A
 - .1.1 Use of the distress facility
 - .1.2 Satellite acquisition
 - .1.3 Telex and telephony distress calls

- .1.4 Procedures for distress calls
- .1.5 RCCs associated with the coast earth stations
- .2 INMARSAT-C
 - .2.1 Store and forward operation
 - .2.2 Entering/updating position
 - .2.3 Sending a distress alert
 - .2.4 Sending a distress priority message
 - .2.5 2-digit code services

4 GMDSS Subsystems

- 4.1 Alerting and locating signals
 - .1 Purpose and definition
 - .2 Emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs)
 - .2.1 Satellite EPIRBs
 - .2.1.1 The COSPAS/SARSAT 406 MHz EPIRB
 - .2.1.2 The INMARSAT-E 1.6 GHz EPIRB
 - .2.2 The VHF DSC EPIRB
 - .3 The search and rescue radar transponder (SART)
- 4.2 Maritime safety information (MSI)
 - .1 Reception by NAVTEX
 - .2 Reception by INMARSAT enhanced group calling (EGC) system
 - .3 Reception by HF NBDP
 - .4 Dissemination of meteorological and navigational warnings

Appendix 2

Examination syllabus applicable to limited GMDSS examinations for the Restricted Operator's Certificate

1 Global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS)

- 1.1 Sea area concept and the GMDSS master plan
- 1.2 Functions of the GMDSS
 - .1 Alerting
 - .2 Search and Rescue (SAR) co-ordinating communications
 - .3 On-scene communications

- .4 Locating and homing signals
- .5 Dissemination of maritime safety information (MSI)
- .6 General radiocommunications
- .7 Bridge-to-bridge communications
- 1.3 Means of ensuring availability of the GMDSS functional requirements
 - .1 Equipment maintenance strategies
- 1.4 Sources of energy of ship stations
- 1.5 GMDSS frequencies
- 1.6 Protection of distress frequencies
 - .1 Guard bands
 - .2 Test on distress frequencies
 - .3 Transmissions during distress traffic
 - .4 Avoiding harmful interference
 - .5 Prevention of unauthorized transmissions.
- 1.7 Watchkeeping on GMDSS frequencies
- 1.8 Carriage requirements of ship stations
- 1.9 Licences, radio safety certificates, inspections and surveys
- 1.10 Radio record keeping

2 SAR Operations in the GMDSS

- 2.1 The role of rescue co-ordination centres (RCCs)
- 2.2 Merchant Ship Search and Rescue Manual (MERSAR)
- 2.3 Maritime rescue organizations
- 2.4 Ship reporting systems

3 Communication procedures in the GMDSS

- 3.1 Distress communications via a ship station
 - .1 Digital selective calling (DSC) distress alert
 - .1.1 The definition of a distress alert
 - .1.2 Transmission of a distress alert
 - .1.3 Transmission of a shore-to-ship distress alert relay
 - .1.4 Transmission of a distress alert by a station not itself in distress
 - .2 Receipt and acknowledgement of DSC distress alert
 - .2.1 Acknowledgement procedure by radiotelephony
 - .2.2 Receipt and acknowledgement by a coast station
 - .2.3 Receipt and acknowledgement by a ship station

- .3 Handling of distress alerts
 - .3.1 Preparations for handling of distress traffic
 - .3.2 Distress traffic terminology
- .4 On-scene communications
- .5 SAR operation
- 3.2 Urgency and safety communications via a ship station
 - .1 The meaning of urgency and safety communications
 - .2 Procedures for DSC urgency and safety calls
 - .3 Urgency communications
 - .4 Medical transport
 - .5 Safety communications
- 3.3 Testing of DSC equipment.

4 GMDSS Subsystems

- 4.1 Alerting and locating signals
 - .1 Purpose and definition
 - .2 Emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs)
 - .2.1 Satellite EPIRBs
 - .2.1.1 The COSPAS/SARSAT 406 MHz EPIRB
 - .2.1.2 The INMARSAT-E 1.6 GHz EPIRB
 - .2.2 The VHF DSC EPIRB
 - .3 The search and rescue radar transponder (SART)
- 4.2 Maritime safety information (MSI)
 - .1 Reception by NAVTEX
 - .2 Reception by INMARSAT enhanced group calling (EGC) system
 - .3 Dissemination of meteorological and navigational warnings