

VHF marine radio awareness campaign underway

The ACMA has begun an information campaign to inform recreational marine radio operators of the correct VHF radio channels to use in particular circumstances and the protocols they need to follow.

The need for greater awareness emerged during the ACMA's ongoing review of marine radio operator certificate requirements for recreational boaters. A recent ACMA-commissioned Newspoll survey of VHF marine radio owners found that only 29 per cent have the required certificate of proficiency.

This low compliance means that many recreational boaters may not know the correct radio usage and protocols, highlighting the pressing need to inform all recreational boaters about the proper way to use a VHF radio.

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Stickers and postcards that contain important VHF radio use messages are currently being distributed via many different marine stakeholder channels, including:

- > Bureau of Meteorology
- > state marine safety regulators
- > Australian Maritime Safety Authority
- > Australian Maritime College
- > marine volunteer organisations
- > Boating Industry Association.

A diagram on the sticker shows the purpose of each VHF channel. It is important that operators are aware of these channels and their purpose, and the priority of communications applicable to each channel. VHF channels should only be used for their assigned purpose(s); for example, channels authorised for calling are not to be used as working channels.

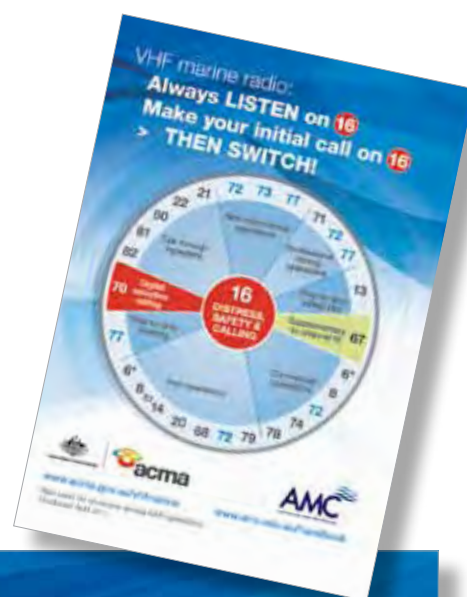
The campaign also includes web-based information and many relevant organisations have linked to this information from their own websites.

All submissions can be viewed on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to About ACMA: News & media centre > Issues for comment > Issues for comment archive > ACMA Issues for comment 2010 > IFC 46/2010).

The VHF marine radio campaign, delivered in conjunction with the ACMA's marine stakeholders, will be ongoing. Further information is available on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au/vhfmarine.

VHF marine radio equipment is suitable for small vessels that remain relatively close to the coast and within operating range of limited coast stations operating on VHF channels.

The comment period for the ACMA's latest consultation paper on the review of the marine radio operators certificate of proficiency for recreational boaters has now closed and submissions are currently being analysed. 🗨️



Are you using the right VHF marine radio channel?

Always LISTEN on 16
Make your initial call on 16 → THEN SWITCH!
Distress and safety messages are announced on channel 16 → ARE YOU LISTENING?

- > Listen on channel 16 for distress calls when not using a working channel. Don't use it to chat.
- > If no distress, urgency or safety traffic is in progress, call on channel 16, then switch to an appropriate working channel to keep channel 16 clear for emergencies.