

Radio Fundamentals

Seafarers SC
February 2025



Caveat

- This is the personal view and guidance of one person who is not an RYA trainer for VHF/DSC operation but is an experienced user.



Objective

- To provide information and a common understanding of good VHF usage
- It is for use of a VHF on P4
 - with a bit extra for those using the gig
- Note this is not an RYA course and has no certificate



Channel P4 (or M2)

- Permitted channel for use of Clubs
 - But is also used by HHSC, LOSSC, Stokes Bay
- Users do not require a radio licence



Radio Discipline

- Listen before you transmit to make sure you will not interfere with another transmission
- Think before you speak – plan what you are going to say
- Use the microphone correctly –
 - the radio should be held about 2-5cm from the mouth
 - slightly to one side
 - out of the wind
- Speak normally, or raise your voice slightly, but do not shout.
 - Try to speak at a normal and flowing speed
- Always be aware that the person receiving or listening may be busy



Radio Prowords

- There are a number of basic but important prowords used in routine radio procedures
- These are:
 - **OVER** – My transmission has ended and await your reply
 - **OUT** – My transmission has ended and do not expect a reply
 - **STANDBY** – I will respond to you shortly
 - **SAY AGAIN** – Repeat your last transmission
 - **STATION CALLING** – I did not hear your call sign
- Roger is not a recognised proword
- 'Roger Out', 'Roger Over' or 'Over & Out' should never be used



The Use of Call Signs

- When making a call
 - first say the call sign of the station you are calling, either once, twice, or three times depending on the circumstances
 - followed by the procedure words “**this is**” and your own call sign either once, twice, or three times depending on the circumstances
 - finally the word “**over**”



Seafarers Call signs

- **Seafarer Shore** - Event Control Ashore
- **Seafarer One** – PB1 - the large patrol boat
- **Seafarer Two** - PB2
- **Seafarer Tractor**
- **Seafarer Beach** - Beach Crew
- **Seafarer Committee** - Race Control aboard a committee boat



Code Red

- Used by many clubs
 - If a patrol boat finds a seriously injured sailor or one with a medical emergency it is the correct call on the VHF
- A simple protocol to minimise comms from us and other Clubs using P4 channel
- In the first instance always contact Seafarers Shore



Use of Channel 16

- Club protocol is that the Race Officer or Shore Coordinator contacts the emergency services
- However, members are permitted to use Channel 16 where there is **risk to life**
- Patrol boat drivers should refer to emergency card



Radio Checks

- Always do a radio check before taking to the water
- Make sure you are a sensible distance away from the person you are doing the radio check with
- Remember to ask “**How me**” to ensure your transmission is auditable



Radio Checks

- The correct words to use when answering a radio check are:
- Signal Strength
 - **Loud** – signal is very strong
 - **Good** – signal strength is good
 - **Weak** – signal strength is weak
 - **Fading** – signal strength fades and cannot be relied on
- Readability
 - **Clear** – very good
 - **Readable** – satisfactory
 - **Unreadable** – quality so bad it cannot be read
 - **Distorted** – difficult to hear due to distortion
 - **With interference**
 - **Intermittent**



And if you don't get an answer?

- Listen for others using P4
- Call again
- If still no response use proword “**Nothing heard**”
 - E.g. Seafarer Shore, Seafarer Shore
this is Seafarer one, Seafarer Shore
Nothing Heard, Seafarer One **Out**



VHF Controls

- Power Level – Lo and High – use Lo by default
- Channel – P4 or M2
- Volume – start at mid position
- Squelch – Reduce until noise just heard and then increase until noise stops
- PTT
- Lock – Once set up use lock to stop accidental changes



Use of Channel 16

- Gig protocol is that a mobile should be used in an emergency
- However, members are permitted to use Channel 16 where there is **risk to life**



Mayday -relevant to Gig

- MIPDANIO
 - Mayday
 - Identify (what involved)
 - Position
 - Distress (nature)
 - Assistance (what required)
 - Number (number of persons on board)
 - Information (any other information)
 - Over (wait for response)

**Lifeboats**

**ICOM**

EMERGENCY

VHF RADIO CALLING PROCEDURE

1. Press **BLUE** Channel 16 button
2. Press **RED** button to activate DSC alert if fitted
3. Press and hold transmit button and say:
MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY
THIS IS ... (VESSEL NAME - 3 TIMES)
CALL SIGN MMSI
MAYDAY, (VESSEL NAME)
CALL SIGN MMSI
4. **MY POSITION IS...** (Describe position and give GPS location if possible)
5. **WE ARE...** (Describe the nature of distress, the assistance required, number of people/craft followed by any further information)
6. Say **OVER** and wait for a response
7. If no response – repeat procedure

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Summary

- In summary, when using the radio remember the following points:
 - Be confident, don't be afraid
 - Listen before you speak to ensure no one else is using channel
 - Speak clearly and in a voice whose tone and tempo can be understood by the receiving station
 - If you are busy when called use 'Standby'
- Anyone with their own personal VHF should obtain a RYA VHF/DSC licence and register their radio with OFCOM



And Finally

