



ERC Recommendation 31-04

Harmonised CEPT examination procedures for the Short
Range Certificate (SRC) for non-SOLAS vessels

approved 1994

latest amended 16 February 2024

INTRODUCTION

The full implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) has made it necessary to review and to harmonise the examination requirements for the certificates of maritime radio operators. Harmonised examination procedures for the General Operator's Certificate and Restricted Operator's Certificate were introduced for maritime radio operators performing radiocommunication duties on board vessels subject to SOLAS¹. Likewise harmonised examination procedures for the Short Range Certificate and Long Range Certificate were introduced for maritime radio operators performing radiocommunication duties on board non-SOLAS vessels.

The GMDSS was fully implemented as per 1. February 1999. Because of the decision-making by WRC 07, the DSC and radio telephone procedures were amalgamated into one set of regulation (see RR Article 32). The changes to the Radio Regulations needed to be fully reflected in the examination syllabus and this led to this revision. Having gained experience of the GMDSS, the opportunity has been taken to simplify and clearly define the differential between the requirements of the individual certificates. This Recommendation describes the examination procedures for maritime radio personnel on board vessels sailing in sea area A1 which use the frequencies and techniques of the GMDSS on a non-compulsory basis.

¹ International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (1974), as amended.

ERC RECOMMENDATION 31-04 OF 1994 ON HARMONISED CEPT EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR THE SHORT RANGE CERTIFICATE (SRC) FOR NON-SOLAS VESSELS, REVISED 2009, AMENDED 16 FEBRUARY 2024

“The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations,

considering

- a) that the Maritime Mobile Service and the Maritime Mobile-Satellite Service are services according to the ITU Radio Regulations (Article 1) and governed by the ITU Radio Regulations and national regulations;
- b) that provisions of the GMDSS, closely related to the Maritime Mobile Service and the Maritime Mobile-Satellite Service, are also given in SOLAS and other international conventions and resolutions;
- c) that it is desirable to establish common standards of competence for the operators of stations of the Maritime Mobile Service operating in accordance with the GMDSS;
- d) that the GMDSS entered into force on 1 February 1992 and was fully implemented on 1 February 1999;
- e) that administrations are responsible, in accordance with Article 48 of the ITU Radio Regulations, to ensure that the operators of ship stations and ship earth stations operating in accordance with the GMDSS are adequately qualified to enable efficient operation of the station;
- f) that Article 48 also requires the radio operators on vessels for which a radio installation is not compulsory under international agreements and which use the frequencies and techniques of the GMDSS to be adequately qualified in accordance with the administrations' requirement;
- g) that the basic requirements for the format of certificates are set down in Radio Regulations Article 47;

recommends

1. that administrations issue the Short Range Certificate for candidates passing the examination described in the Annex;
2. that developments in IMO should be monitored and this Recommendation should be modified accordingly;
3. that examination establishments should continuously update examination procedures;
4. that quality assurance processes with regards to Short Range Certificate examination should be applied;
5. that administrations mutually recognise each other's certificates when these are issued in accordance with ITU Radio Regulations Resolution 343 and the Annex of this document;
6. that Short Range Certificates issued in accordance with this Recommendation should bear a reference to the Radio Regulations and this Recommendation;
7. that the administrations applying this Recommendation should complete the arrangements for introducing the examination syllabus described in the Annex by [XXXX] and, in any event, not later than [XXXX].”

Note:

Please check the Office documentation database <https://docdb.cept.org/> for the up to date position on the implementation of this and other ECC Recommendations.

ANNEX 1: CEPT EXAMINATION SYLLABUS FOR THE GMDSS SHORT RANGE CERTIFICATE (SRC)

The examination should consist of theoretical supplemented by practical tests and/or assessed practical training, overseen by an independent examiner and should include at least:

A. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS IN THE MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE

- A1. The general principles and basic features
- A2. System overview of the GMDSS structure
- A3. Search and Rescue (SAR)
- A4. Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

B. PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF RADIO EQUIPMENT

- B1. VHF radio installation
- B2. Digital Selective Calling (DSC)
- B3. Antennas, interfacing and power sources

C. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICAL OPERATION OF THE SUBSYSTEMS

- C1. DSC Distress, urgency and safety communication procedures for VHF
- C2. Protection of distress frequencies on VHF
- C3. Alerting, Communication and Locating Signals

D. RADIOTELEPHONY PROCEDURES

- D1. Ability to exchange communications relevant to the safety of life at sea
- D2. Practical and theoretical knowledge of radiocommunication procedures

E. REGULATIONS FOR VHF COMMUNICATIONS

- E1. Regulations, obligatory procedures and practices

ANNEX 2: CEPT EXAMINATION SYLLABUS GUIDELINES FOR THE GMDSS SHORT RANGE CERTIFICATE (SRC)

A. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS IN THE MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE

A1. The general principles and basic features

- 1.1 Types of communication in the maritime mobile service
 - Distress, urgency and safety communications
 - SAR (Search and Rescue) Communication
 - Public correspondence
 - Port operations and ship movement service
 - Inter-ship communications
 - On board communications
- 1.2 Types of stations
 - Ship stations
 - Coast stations
 - Rescue coordination centres
 - Pilot, VTS and port stations
 - Aircraft stations
- 1.3 General knowledge of VHF radio channels
 - The physical concept of frequency
 - Propagation and range of communications
 - The concept of radio channel: simplex and duplex
 - The usage of and restriction on VHF channels
 - Distress and safety channels
 - Calling channels
 - Inter-ship channels
 - Port operations and ship movement channels
 - Public correspondence channels
 - National channels for small craft safety

A2. System overview of the GMDSS structure

- 2.1 System overview
 - Structure
 - Block Diagram
- 2.2 Sea Areas, A1 (and awareness of A2)

A3. Search and Rescue (SAR)

- 3.1 SAR regions
- 3.2 The role of Rescue coordination centres
- 3.3 Organisation of search and rescue
- 3.4 SAR communication including on-scene communications

A4. Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

- 4.1 The NAVTEX system
 - Purpose and capabilities, including Distress and Safety functions
 - Message format (transmitter ID, message type, message number)
 - Selection of transmitters and message type
 - Messages, which cannot be rejected (mandatory messages)

B. PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF RADIO EQUIPMENT

B1. VHF radio installation

- 1.1 Radiotelephone channels
 - Channel selection and controls
 - Dual watch and scanning facilities and controls
- 1.2 Basic controls and usage
 - Connecting the power
 - On/Off control
 - Press to transmit switch
 - High/low output power switch
 - Volume control and squelch
 - Squelch control
 - Dimmer
- 1.3 Handheld VHF radiotelephone
 - Specifications

B2. Digital Selective Calling (DSC)

- 2.1 Call categorisation, priority and definitions
 - Distress
 - Urgency
 - Safety
 - Routine
- 2.2 Types of call
 - Distress
 - All ships
 - Group Call
 - Individual
- 2.3 Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI)
 - The nationality identification: Maritime Identification Digits (MID)
 - Structure of ship station numbers
 - Structure of coast station numbers
 - Structure of group call numbers
- 2.4 Facilities and usage
 - Distress button
 - Data entry and display
 - Manual and automatic updating of vessel position
 - Reviewing received messages
 - Watchkeeping functions and controls

B3. Antennas, interfacing and power sources

- 3.1 Antennas performance and positioning
- 3.2 Interfacing
 - Connection to position device
- 3.3 Power sources
 - Connections to different power sources
 - Requirements and safety
 - Charging
 - Maintenance of batteries

C. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICAL OPERATION OF THE SUBSYSTEMS

C1. DSC distress, urgency and safety communication procedures

- 1.1 Distress procedures
 - Transmission of a distress alert
 - Receipt and acknowledgement by a coast station
 - Reception of a shore-to-ship distress alert relay
 - Transmission of a distress alert by a station not itself in distress
- 1.2 Urgency and Safety communications via DSC equipment
 - Procedures for DSC Urgency and Safety announcements

C2. Protection of distress frequencies

- 2.1 Avoiding harmful interference
 - Avoidance of the transmission of false alerts
 - Status of Channel 16 and 70
- 2.2 Transmissions during distress traffic
- 2.3 Prevention of unauthorised transmissions
- 2.4 Test protocols and procedures
 - Testing DSC equipment
 - Radiotelephone test procedures
- 2.5 Avoidance of transmissions in VHF guard bands
- 2.6 Procedures to follow when cancelling a false or inadvertent Distress Alert

C3. Alerting, Communication and Locating Signals

- 3.1 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB)
 - Registration and coding
 - Operation, activation and testing
 - 121.5 MHz homing function
 - Mounting float-free mechanism
 - Battery expiry date
- 3.2 Search and Rescue Transponders and Transmitters
 - Purpose
 - Operation
 - Range
 - Routine maintenance
 - Checking battery expiry date
 - Testing
- 3.3 Handheld VHF
 - Operation
 - Communication range
 - Battery provision

D. RADIOTELEPHONY PROCEDURES

D1. Ability to exchange communications relevant to the safety of life at sea

- 1.1 Distress communications
 - Distress signal MAYDAY
 - Distress call

- Distress message
 - Acknowledgement RECEIVED MAYDAY
 - Follow up distress traffic
 - The control of distress traffic
 - SEELONCE MAYDAY and SEELONCE FEENEE
 - Transmission of a distress message by a station not itself in distress (MAYDAY RELAY)
- 1.2 Urgency communications
- Urgency signal PAN-PAN
 - Urgency call
 - Urgency message
 - Radiomedical (or similar services)
- 1.3 Safety communications
- Safety signal SECURITE
 - Safety call
 - Safety message
- 1.4 Awareness of the existence and use of the IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases Vocabulary
- English phrases
- 1.5 Phonetic alphabet

D2. Practical and theoretical knowledge of radiotelephony procedures

- 2.1 Traffic routines
- Use of call signs
 - Establishing communication on inter-ship, port operation and ship movement channels
 - Unanswered calls and garbled calls
- 2.2 Public correspondence and radiotelephony call procedures
- Method of calling a Coast Station
 - Calls to ships from Coast Stations
- 2.3 Traffic charges
- International charging system including Accounting Authority Identification Code (AAIC) (ITU documentation)
 - Accounting Authority Identification Code (AAIC)

E. REGULATIONS FOR VHF COMMUNICATIONS

E1. Regulations, obligatory procedures and practices

- 1.1 Awareness of National and International Documentation and databases
- List of Coast Stations and Special Service Stations (ITU)
 - List of Ship Stations and Maritime Mobile Service Identity Assignments (ITU)
 - National manuals and documentation
- 1.2 Knowledge of the international regulations and agreements
- Radio Operators Certificate
 - Ship Station Licence
 - Radio record keeping
 - Secrecy of correspondence
 - Prohibited transmissions
 - Watchkeeping