



RECOMMENDATION ON USE OF GMDSS EQUIPMENT FOR NON-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

1 The Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR), at its third session (23 to 27 February 1998), taking into account reports that some ship masters had instructed watchstanders not to use GMDSS radiocommunications equipment except for safety and distress communications, decided to publish this circular as a recommendation to Member Governments and ship operators that GMDSS equipment should be utilized for routine communications or testing in order to ensure equipment availability and operator competency and also to reduce the false alerts which are often transmitted inadvertently by inexperienced operators.

2 Use of GMDSS equipment for transmission of general radiocommunications is one of the functional requirements specified in SOLAS chapter IV, regulation 4. Regular use of GMDSS equipment helps to develop operator competency and ensure equipment availability. If ships use other radiocommunication systems for the bulk of their business communications, they should adopt a regular programme of sending selected traffic or test messages via GMDSS equipment to ensure operator competency and equipment availability and to help reduce the incidence of false alerts. This policy extends to all GMDSS equipment suites including Digital Selective Calling (DSC) on VHF, MF and HF, to the Inmarsat-A, B and C systems, and to any duplicated VHF and long-range communications facilities.

3 Member Governments are invited to bring this guidance to the attention of telecommunication authorities, shipowners, ship operators, shipmasters, GMDSS training institutions and other interested parties.
