

SAFETY NOTICE

There has been a lot of controversy regarding the contents of Marine Notice No. 4 of 2015 issued by the South African Maritime Authority (SAMSA) that caused a lot of confusion amongst our affiliated members, which led to some of our Members rushing out to take actions that at this stage are not necessary. This MN 4 of 2015 announced the “Cessation of 29Mhz SOLAS Distress Watch Keeping by Telkom Maritime Services” with effective from 01/07/2015. The SADSAA Executive immediately took this up directly with SAMSA and as a result MN 4 of 2015 has been cancelled and MN 6 of 2015 has been issued in its place. I have attached this replacement notice for easy reference followed by some clarity on the interpretation thereto.



South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM6/5/2/1

Date: 30 March 2015

Marine Notice No. 6 of 2015

Cessation of 29 Mhz SOLAS Distress Watch Keeping by Telkom Maritime Services

TO ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SMALL VESSEL SKIPPERS AND OPERATORS, SMALL VESSEL OWNERS AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Marine Notice No 4 of 2015 is cancelled

This Marine Notice outlines the changes to Maritime Radio SOLAS watch keeping by Telkom Maritime Services and the changes in Radio carriage requirements by small vessels ensuing from these changes.

1. The renewal of the Telkom/Department of Transport SOLAS Service Agreement was signed on the 14th January 2014. This is the Agreement whereby Telkom Maritime Services provides SOLAS distress watch keeping and Maritime Safety Information Services.
2. The Agreement shall be fully implemented by 01/01/2016 and South Africa shall declare GMDSS Sea Area A1 along with the existing Sea Area A3.

Sea Area A1 is defined as:

“A coastal area within the radiotelephone coverage of at least one VHF coast station in which continuous DSC alerting is available”.

3. The existing analogue shore based radio equipment will be replaced by digital equipment. For small vessels to interact with the digital equipment once the system is fully operational, a VHF radio with DSC capability is required. This will also ensure interoperability between all vessels.

(Clarity – Telkom Maritime maintain a radio service whereby the entire coast of South Africa from Ponta do Ouro to the Orange River is covered by means of VHF repeater stations monitored and operated from Cape Town Radio.)

4. A DSC distress alert sent on VHF CH 70 has the following advantages over the traditional radiotelephone Mayday call transmitted on VHF CH 16:
 - a. A digital signal travels further than a voice signal – improved range of transmission;
 - b. Distress alert (undesignated) provided with the single press of a button;
 - c. The position is included in the initial distress alert.

5. VHF CH 16 aural watch keeping will be maintained by Telkom Maritime Services until further notice to allow all vessels to make the transition to DSC carriage.
6. 29 MHz and 2182 kHz aural watch-keeping by Telkom will cease with effect from 01/01/2016.
7. Due to the cessation of the SOLAS watch keeping by the South African coast stations on 29 Mhz it will no longer be appropriate for small vessels to carry 29 Mhz radios as a safety option in terms of item 18, Annexure 2 of the Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations 2007.

Vessels covered by these regulations shall be equipped with VHF Marine Radios to comply with the safety requirement by their first annual safety survey after 01/01/2016.

8. In summary, vessels may continue to carry 29 Mhz radios as voluntary fit equipment for intership communications, communications with clubs, licensed launch sites etc. however these radios will no longer be appropriate to fulfill the safety requirements of the regulations from 01/01/2016 as Telkom Maritime Radio Services will no longer be watch keeping this band.

30 March 2015

SM6/5/2/1

Issued by and obtainable from:
The South African Maritime Safety Authority
146 Lunnon Road
Hillcrest, Pretoria

PO Box 13186
Hatfield 0028

Tel: +27 12 366 2600

Fax: +27 12 366 2601

[E-mail: marinenotices@samsa.org.za](mailto:marinenotices@samsa.org.za)

[Web Site : www.samsa.org.za](http://www.samsa.org.za)

You will now note that Item 6. has extended the effective date from 01/07/2015 to 01/01/2016 and Item 7. has a paragraph that reads;

“Vessels covered by these regulations shall be equipped with VHF Marine Radios to comply with the safety requirement by their first annual safety survey after 01/01/2016.”

For clarity, this effectively means that all SADSAA Affiliated Club Members registered craft that have passed their annual 2016 Boat Safety inspection prior to 01/01/2016 will not be required to be fitted with a VHF DSC radio until their next annual Club Boat inspection that usually takes place towards the end of 2016. It is therefore most important for all Clubs to make sure that they hold their 2016 annual Club Boat inspections prior to 01/01/2016, failing which they could possibly be required to fit the new VHF DSC radio and obtain the appropriate radio operators licence.

I hope and trust that this sheds some light on this whole issue and in closing I can only confirm that the law on National Safety Regulations in SA is promulgated by the Dept. of Transport wherein, currently, the 29Mhz radio capable of operating on local marine channels A, B and C is recorded as a valid safety appliance and until such time as the Regulations are changed the position remains status quo. Marine Notices issued by SAMSA do not change the National Safety Regulations.

ooOoo