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Washington, DC

## Loss of INMARSAT C Safety Messages

This advisory notifies users of Inmarsat C ship earth stations that urgent marine information, weather warning and navigational warning broadcast messages, distress-related messages, as well as routine messages may be lost if a printer is not connected to and maintained with the Inmarsat C terminal, or if floppy drive maintenance is not regularly performed on the terminal. Additionally, certain non-GMDSS-approved software (e.g. windows-based software) may freeze up if this maintenance is not performed.

All GMDSS versions of Inmarsat C have approved data terminal equipment (DTE) that interfaces with the user. DTE generally refers to the computer and screen, keyboard and printer (or user interface). These terminals are required to use only Inmarsat approved hardware and software. However, users need to understand that proper usage and housekeeping maintenance of the equipment is essential to ensure optimum user availability.

To avoid problems, and to ensure that unnecessary and irrelevant messages are not received, the recommended operating procedures in the manufacturer's equipment operating handbook and the below procedures should be followed:

**Message/Archive Log:** All ingoing and outgoing messages are recorded on a disk in special log files. Each log file may hold a limited number of messages (limited by disk size or PC storage capacity). When the free disk space falls below a certain size, the terminal will display an error message asking to insert an empty disk. A new message/archive log file will then be generated on the new disk.

**Disk Directory:** If so configured, ingoing and outgoing messages (OUT.xxx, IN.xxx, EGC.xxx) can be stored on a disk (this is different than the message/archive log), where they can be viewed, erased, printed and copied to different directories. On some models the directory shows the number of files (messages) stored on the disk/directory and this number is limited to 112 files (messages) regardless the free space left. If the disk already holds 112 messages, you will not be able to store any more messages. When the disk is full, use the "erase/delete" command to delete unwanted files and create free space for new messages.

**Message Routing:** Check the message routing option on the terminal. Incoming mail should be routed to at least one of the output media – disk or printer. Enhanced Group Call (EGC) SafetyNET messages with Urgency and Distress priority will be printed out automatically, if a printer is fitted.

EGC SafetyNET messages with Safety priority can be printed out (user option), otherwise they will be stored on the disk. EGC FleetNET messages can be printed out (user option), otherwise they will be stored on the disk. If the Inmarsat C is connected to a separate PC, a path for saving incoming and outgoing mail and EGC messages should be inserted/specified per the manufacturer's handbook.

**EGC SafetyNET setting-up:** Ensure that you are logged into the appropriate satellite for the scheduled maritime safety information (MSI) that you wish to receive. Otherwise log in to the satellite that broadcasts the MSI for your required area of operation. Timetables of broadcast and nominated satellites can be found in various national/international publications, such as the International Maritime Organization GMDSS/Circ.8
(see http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms/gmdss/reference_gmdss.htm) or the Admiralty List of Radio Signals, Vol.5. Ensure that your position (Lat/Long) on the Mobile Earth Station (MES) position screen is valid. Otherwise you will receive and print ALL EGC SafetyNET messages broadcast via the satellite. If automatic position updating is not available, it is essential to manually update the position on a regular basis e.g. every 4 hours. Instructions for doing this are in the manufacturer's handbook.

If properly set-up, your MES will receive automatically all relevant NAVAREA/METAREA and other maritime safety information addressed to the area where you are in. If you require additional information for neighboring area(s), you must program your terminal to receive this information. Be careful if using the "EGC only" option. If this option is selected, the terminal will, effectively, be logged out and you will not be able to receive normal messages (mail) on your terminal. Also, if you choose "EGC only", previous EGC settings may be ignored and the terminal may receive all EGC messages within the ocean region.

If Inmarsat C is used for communication (not as a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) or "black box" terminal), it MUST have a DTE terminal which includes a keyboard, Video Display Unit and printer. Every Inmarsat C terminal, if properly configured, set up and maintained, will receive all relevant messages addressed to it. These messages will be displayed or printed out, stored, or both. Improper settings, including printer settings, not in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, will degrade the performance.

This advisory was developed in cooperation with Inmarsat Ltd.

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