



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant (CG-5PC)
Attn: Inspections and Compliance Directorate
U.S. Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Stop 7501
Washington, DC 20020

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E-Mail: HQS-SMB-CG-672@uscg.mil

Performing a VHF Marine Radio Check

Sea Tow Automated Radio Check System no longer available:

For several years, Sea Tow operated an Automated Radio Check System available on VHF-FM CH 24 and CH 28 for the benefit of mariners in over 130 locations. However, this was discontinued on October 2nd, 2020.

How to test a VHF Radio using Rescue 21 on VHF-FM Channel 70:

For DSC radios equipped with a Test Call feature, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) continues to offer an automated DSC Test Call capability from each of its Rescue 21 coastal stations on VHF-FM CH 70 (156.525MHZ). (All fixed mount marine radios certified by the Federal Communications Commission since 1999 are required to have a DSC capability. All such radios sold since 2011 must also have a DSC test call capability.) Marine radios transmitting and successfully receiving a response from a DSC test call can be expected to operate acceptably in the voice mode as well. Test transmissions can be made to another vessel by using a routine individual call to the other radio's Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI). Please consult your radio manufacturer's manual to determine proper operation.

To perform a DSC Test Call with the USCG, enter the coast station group identity "003669999" into the radio's DSC memory. Once stored, a DSC test call can be made by executing the following three steps:

- (1) Select "Test Call" from the radio's DSC menu,
- (2) Select the USCG number entered into memory, and
- (3) Transmit the call.

The radio display should indicate when that test call is acknowledged and display the acknowledging station's nine-digit identity. That identity may be different than the group identity previously entered into memory.

Under no circumstances should a DSC Distress Alert be sent to test your radio.

Voice Radio Checks:

For radio checks by voice with other boaters, please use VHF-FM CH 09 (156.45MHZ). The USCG does not monitor CH 09. Please refrain from using VHF-FM CH 16 (156.8MHZ).

Please send questions concerning this notice to USCG Spectrum Management and Communications Policy Division (CG-672) at HQS-SMB-CG-672@USCG.MIL or to the [Coast Guard Navigation Center's "Contact Us" page](#) by selecting "Maritime Telecommunications" as the subject. More information is available at www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=DSCTesting.

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