

M.S. Notice 12 of 1998

This Directorate has in the recent past been receiving queries from various ship owners and suppliers of GMDSS Equipment in respect of Merchant Shipping (Distress & Safety Radio Communication) Rules, 1995 and with particular reference to Rule 7 (I).

In order to determine the number of VHF sets with the appropriate features, required to be fitted on a ship plying in A1, A2 and A3 sea areas, it needs to be noted that compliance with duplication requirements prescribed in the Fourth Schedule of the above rules is essential. Provisions of Rule 7(1) require VHF installation to possess following four features :-

- a. capability of transmitting and receiving DSC on Channel 70,
- b. capability of initiating distress alert transmission on Channel 70,
- c. maintaining continuous watch on Channel 70 for DSC, and
- d. capability of maintaining radio telephony communication on Channels 6, 13 and 16.

In connection with above, it may be clarified that continuous DSC watch on Channel 70 can be interrupted when the VHF installation is operated in compliance with sub-rule (a) and/or (b) above. However, it needs to be ensured that the feature described in sub-rule (d) above, viz. Radio Telephony Communication on Channels 6, 13 and 16 remains undisturbed and independent. As such, the VHF installation needs to be capable of performing the operations simultaneously described under para (d) in combination with the operations under para (a), (b) and (c) as described above.

If one VHF installation is so designed as to incorporate the above capability, the ship may be permitted to carry two such VHF radio installations in compliance with duplication provisions. In all other cases, the ship may be required to be provided with more than two VHF installations to the satisfaction of the attending Radio Inspector of the Mercantile Marine Department.

Sd/-

(Capt. R.K. Awasthi)
Nautical Surveyor