Subject:	**MMSI – Maritime Mobile Service Identity**
To:	Owners, Companies, Charteres, Recognized Organizations, dealers, repairers and shore base maintenance, Masters and skippers

1. OBJECTIVE

The aim of this Circular is to make known the 6th amendment to the Recommendation ITU-R M.585, of January 2012 and made it available to the persons concerned in order to inform them of the changes introduced on the assignment and use of identities in the maritime mobile service.

2. INTRODUCTION

The MMSI assignment to stations of the maritime mobile service and maritime mobile satellite service set out on article 30º nr.1 of the "Regulamento do Serviço Radioeléctrico das Embarcações", annex to Decree-law nr. 73/2007, of the 27th March, became responsibility of the "Direção Geral de Recursos Naturais e Serviços Marítimos" (DGRM) under national legislation in force.

A registry of all the MMSI assigned already is maintained by DGRM, and the database is automatically and continuously shared with MRCC1, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

A MMSI shall be assigned to all ship stations, not only to those the SOLAS Convention applies, but also to those that, by enforcement of national legislation in force have to carry Digital Selective Calling (DSC), Electronic Positioning Indicating Radio Beacons, either EPIRBs or PLBs, AIS or MONICAPs for Monitoring and Control of Fishing Activities. An MMSI shall be assigned also to those vessels that, on a voluntary basis, have installed DSC, EPIRBs, PLBs or AIS.

3. DEFINITIONS & ABREVIATIONS

ITU – The International Telecommunications Union, a Geneva (Switzerland) based organization;

Radio Regulations (RR) – the ITU Radio Regulations, including its appendix, resolutions and recommendations incorporated by reference, in its up to date version;

EPIRB – Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon, operating on the 406 MHz band;

PLB – Personal Locator Beacon, operating on the 406 MHz band;

DSC – Digital Selective Calling; technique that allows the link between two or more stations automatically through a common radiocommunication channel;

AIS - Automatic Identification System – An autonomous and continuous vessel identification and monitoring system which provides means for ships to electronically exchange with other nearby ships and with land based stations ship data including identification, position, course and speed;

AIS-SART2 – search and rescue transmitter device (SART) operating in the VHF band, on the frequencies allocated to AIS1 (161,975 MHz) and AIS2 (162,025 MHz);

EPIRB-AIS – device which is simultaneously an EPIRB operating on 406 MHz, and AIS, working on the frequencies allocated to AIS1 (161,975 MHz) and AIS2 (162,025 MHz);

MOB – the situation where a person has fallen from a boat or a ship into the water and needs to be rescued. However, it represents more than the hazardous situation of someone in distress, it refers also to personal locating devices, buoys, etc.;

IMO – the International Maritime Organization in London, UK;

Convention – the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, SOLAS 74, with its protocols and amendments, in its up to date version.

4. MMSI – MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE IDENTITY

The MMSI is a unique nine digit code, programmable in the VHF DSC's and/or AIS and/or EPIRBs, which allows the identification of a boat, a ship or a coast station. Only one MMSI will be assigned to every ship; every equipment with DSC will be programmed, whether they are a two way VHF, an AIS or an EPIRB.

The first three digits represent the MID allocated to the Administration (DGRM, Portugal), and they are known as Maritime Identification Digit. For coast stations, these three digits correspond to the geographical area where the coast station is located; for ship stations,

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this number refers to the country or territory where the ship is registered. The following six digits identify the station itself.

Basically Portugal is formed by the Continental part of Portugal, and the autonomous regions of the Madeira and Azores Islands; for this reason, three different MIDs have been allocated, one for each territory: 263 to Continental Portugal, 204 to the Azores Islands, and 255 to the Madeira Island.

4.1. Assignment of identification to ship station (ship's station MMSI)

As said before, the ships registered in the Continental part of Portugal have an MMSI which begins by 263xxxxxx, for those registered in the Madeira Island 255xxxxxx, and for the ones registered in Azores 204xxxxxx; where x is a number between 0 and 9.

ITU List V – List of Ship Stations and Maritime Mobile Service Identity has a complete list of all the MIDs. More information can be obtained on internet at http://www.itu.int/online/mms/glad/cga_mids.sh.

4.2. Group ship station call identities

A group of ships can be called via DSC through a Group ID or a Group MMSI. This is very common either on yacht races or in big fleets.

These MMSIs begin with an 0, followed by the MID. The group MMSI for Continent registered ships will be 0263XXXXX, for Madeira 0255XXXXX, and for Azores 0204XXXXX; in every case X is a number between 0 and 9.

4.3. Assignment of identification to coast stations

Coast stations MMSIs begin by "00" followed by the MID, as described in the Radio Regulations. Portuguese Coast stations MMSI will be 00263XXXX for the continent, 00255XXXX in Madeira, and 00204XXXX in Azores; X is a number between 0 and 9.

As the number of coats stations decreases in many countries, an administration may which to assign MMSI to harbour radio stations, pilot stations, system identities and other stations participating in the maritime radio services.

The administration may use the sixth digit to further differentiate between certain specific uses of this class of MMSI, as shown below:

- 00MID1XXX, for coast radio stations;

- 00MID2XXX, for harbour radio stations;

- 00MID3XXX, for pilot stations, etc.

4.4. Assignment of Identification to Aircraft

When an aircraft is required to use maritime mobile service identities for the purpose of search and rescue operations and other safety-related communications with stations in the maritime mobile service, the responsible administration should assign a nine-digit unique aircraft identity in the format 111MIDxxx, where x is a number between 0 and 9.

The seventh digit may be used to differentiate between certain specific uses of this class of MMSI, as shown below:

- 111MID1xx, for fixed-wing aircraft;

- 111MID5xx, for helicopters.

4.5. Assignment of identification to automatic identification systems aids to navigation (AtoN)

When a means of automatic identification is required for a station aiding navigation at sea, a nine-digit unique number in the format 99MIDxxxx, where x is a number between 0 and 9, should be assigned.

This specific format applies to all type of AtoN, as listed in the most recent version of Recommendation ITU-R M.1371, see AIS message 21 parameter "types of aids to navigation" and the associated table for this parameter. To differentiate between certain specific uses of the MMSI the sixth digit may be used as in the example:

- 99MID1xxx, physical3 AIS AtoN,

- 99MID6xxx, virtual4 AIS AtoN, where x is a number between 0 and 9.

A registry of these assignments is kept by IALA - International Association of marine aids to navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (http://www.iala-aism.org/) and Instituto Hidrogáfico – IH (http://www.hidrografico.pt/).

4.6. Assignment of identification to craft associated with a parent ship

Craft associated with a parent ship need unique identification. These crafts which participate in the maritime mobile service should be assigned an MMSI in the format 98MIDxxxx, where x is a number between 0 and 9. This numbering format is only valid for devices on board craft associated a parent ship. A unique MMSI should be assigned to each

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craft associated with a parent ship and will have to be separately and linked to the MMSI for the parent ship.

5. MARITIME IDENTITIES USED FOR OTHER MARITIME DEVICES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

5.1. Assignment of identities for handheld VHF transceivers with DSC and GNSS

Even though DGRM recognizes the added value of this equipment to enhance ship's safety, we should also like to warn that this equipment are not mandatory equipment, neither in the Convention nor in any of the legal national documents that applies any class of vessel5. The handheld VHF transceiver with DSC and GNSS should be used exclusively in the maritime mobile service. A unique nine-digit number in the format 8MIDXXXXX, where X is a number between 0 and 9, should be assigned.

On request DGRM will assign these identities, and will keep and be responsible for a database; in resemblance with ships' MMSI database, this one will be also shared with MRCC.

5.2. Devices using a freeform number identity

These identity numbers are also 9-digit unique format, which use the 3-digit prefix (allocated from the table of maritime identification digits) are used to identify maritime radio equipment like the AIS-SART, MOB and EPIRB-AIS and similar equipment needing identification.

5.2.1. AIS-SART

The AIS-SART should use an identity 970XXYYYY, where XX is the Manufacturer ID (from 01 to 99), and YYYY the sequence number from 0000 to 9999. When reaching 9999 the manufacturer should restart the numbering at 0000.

5.2.2. MOB

The MOB (man overboard) device that transmit DSC and/or AIS should use an identity 972XXYYYY, where X is the Manufacturer ID (from 01 to 99), and YYYY the sequence number from 0000 to 9999. When reaching 9999 the manufacturer should restart the numbering at 0000.

Either MOB or other survival locator devices may initiate distress alerts by DSC on VHF channel 70, and transmit a small distress message automatically on 156,8 MHz (VHF channel 16). These low power devices may even be able to give the position associated with the distress, by an inbuilt GPS.

5.2.3. EPIRB-AIS

EPIRB-AIS devices will be 406 MHz distress alert devices that contain an additional AIS transmitter developed using the same AIS-SART technology, where the AIS component is used as an aid in locating that EPIRB-AIS.

The EPIRB-AIS should use an identity 974XXYYYY, where X is the Manufacturer ID (from 01 to 99), and YYYY the sequence number from 0000 to 9999. When reaching 9999 the manufacturer should restart the numbering at 0000.

APIRB-AIS will be a two-in-one device; the user identity of the EPIRB-AIS indicates the identity of the AIS transmitter of the EPIRB-AIS and not the MMSI of the ship.

While an EPIRB these devices shall be programmed with the assigned ship's MMSI.

5.2.4. Final comments

As previously referred in 2.Introduction, a database of the entire already assigned MMSI is kept and maintained by DGRM. Besides that, a database with the user identity of the devices using a free form identity (AIS-SART, MOB, and EPIRB-AIS) is also kept and maintained by DGRM, as long as it is duly informed by the owners or their legal representatives.

DGRM doesn't keep nor maintains a database with the AtoN user identity; as previously referred in 4.4 Assignment of identification of AtoN, the websites of the above mentioned entities should be visited.

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6. SUMMARY OF THE MMSI AND USER IDENTITIES USED

Station type	MMSI format		
DSC Transceivers	**Continent**	**Madeira**	**Azores**
Ship stations	263xxxxxx	255xxxxxx	204xxxxxx
Group stations (ships)	0263xxxxx	0255xxxxx	0204xxxxx
Coast stations	00263xxxx	00255xxxx	00204xxxx
Portable VHF with DSC	8263xxxxx	8255xxxxx	8204xxxxx
Automatic Identification Systems –AIS			
AIS class A/B transceivers	263xxxxxx	255xxxxxx	204xxxxxx
AIS base stations	00263xxxx	00255xxxx	00204xxxx
Physical aid to navigation (AtoN)	992631xxx	992551xxx	992041xxx
Virtual aid to navigation (AtoN)	992636xxx	992556xxx	992046xxx
Aircraft engaged on SAR operations	1112631xxx	-	-
Helicopters engaged on SAR Operations	1112635xxx	-	-
AIS-SART	970xxyyyy		
MOB	972xxyyyy		
EPIRB-AIS	974xxyyyy		

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The Director of the Maritime Administration Services

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