

Loss Prevention Bulletin

Ship Type: All

Trade Area: Worldwide

Bulletin 125 - 01/00 - Wrong Calibration of GMDSS Equipment - Worldwide

It has come to the attention of the Club that there have been instances where incorrect identity information has been entered into vessels radio and electronic distress equipment. In two instances the erroneous information came to light upon receipt by the authorities of distress alerts, in others, fortuitously the problem was discovered at the time of the annual radio survey.

At the time of commissioning a ship board Radio Station (new installation, change of flag and or name) the MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity) of the vessel is entered into the equipment either via a computer keyboard (GMDSS Station) or EPROM for the EPRIB. Once this identity information has been entered there should be no reason to change it unless the station is recommissioned under a new identity. It is assumed that this information has been correctly entered and is rarely verified during the normal course of operation.

The MMSI assigned to a vessel is indicated on the Radio Station Licence and errors most commonly found are the displacement of two or more digits.

It is possible for the MMSI originally entered into the GMDSS equipment to be changed, but this requires a deliberate effort on the part of the operator and cannot be accomplished accidentally without the assistance of the operating manual. The information entered into the EPRIP cannot be changed onboard and requires specialist knowledge and equipment.

Although instances of such erroneous information being entered into the equipment are rare, the attention of members is drawn to the possibility that the problem can exist.

Routine checks of the MMSI displayed (or printed) during the regulatory checks on the equipment against that shown on the vessels Radio Station Licence would highlight any discrepancies. Additionally, it is suggested that Masters be advised to ensure that Radio Surveyors confirm the correct information is entered during the annual radio surveys as there have been instances where errors have escaped discovery at such times.

Source of information : Capt D Heaselden (Ship Inspection Department)