

Isle of Man Ship Registry Technical Advisory Notice

Radio Regulations – VHF Channels

Ref. 004-23 Rev 1
Issued: 29/09/2023

1. Introduction

The 2020 edition of the ITU Radio Regulations (RR) established revised frequencies and channelling arrangements for the maritime VHF bands contained in appendix 18 of the RR. This notice provides guidance to all VHF owners and operators on the new channelling arrangements and their requirements.

2. Key Changes

The changes introduce a number of 4 digit VHF channels. Existing 2-digit international simplex channels remain unchanged. These changes do not affect existing maritime distress frequencies or the bridge to bridge communications channel.

3. Application

This notice is for all owners and operators of maritime VHF radios. These requirements have now been delayed until 2028 due to the availability of VHF radios with 4 digit VHF Channels

4. Guidance

The IMO have issued the below guidance for the new VHF channelling arrangements. The Ship Registry does not consider these recommendations mandatory at this time.

- Prior to 01/01/2028, operators should continue to provide at least the channelling arrangements as listed in Appendix 18 of the 2009 RR, other channels may be provided if they are permitted by the 2020 RR.
- By the first radio survey after 01/01/2028, all vessels using VHF radio should meet the channelling arrangements reflected in Appendix 18 of the RR.

A 4 digit channel VHF radio may be required to interact with coastal stations that have adopted these frequencies. Prior to any voyage, it is the responsibility of the radio operator or owner to review channel frequencies for the vessels area of operation and ensure that the radio communications equipment is suitable; this may require a software update or replacement of the equipment.

Where a frequency is required by regulations but the channel is no longer correct, a cross-reference table must be kept at the operating station. Operators should review the latest publication from the [Admiralty List of Radio Signals](#) or [ITU List IV](#) to understand if any changes have been made to their area of operation.

5. Further Information

[Msc.1/Circ.1460/Rev.4 - Guidance on the validity of radio communications equipment](#)

[ITC Radio Regulations 2020](#)

[MSC.1/Circ.1389 - Guidance on procedures for updating shipborne navigation and communication equipment](#)

Please note - The Isle of Man Ship Registry cannot give legal advice. Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel. You should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position

