



United Safe Boating Institute

1504 Blue Ridge Road
Raleigh, North Carolina 27607

31 January 2013

Mr. Carlin R Hertz,
Non Profit Grants Coordinator,
United States Coast Guard

Dear Mr. Hertz

RE: 1002.32 – GMDSS Brochure Final Report

This is to advise that we have expended \$49,878 of the \$50,000 original forwarded to us on layout, artwork, printing, shrink wrapping, and shipping of the new GMDSS , now entitled “Your VHF-DSC Marine Radio”.

With the introduction of digital selective calling VHF marine radios into the recreational boating market in the 1990’s, the United Safe Boating Institute (USBI) undertook to publish an educational brochure, “GMDSS for Recreational Boaters”, funded by a grant of \$50,000 from the then Aquatic Resources (Wallop-Breaux) Trust Fund, administered by the United States Coast Guard.

The original brochure produced by USBI proved to be very popular, and the supply of brochures produced in 2002 was quickly exhausted..



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In 2006, after a complete update and redesign, 750,000 copies of a new revised “GMDSS for Recreational Boaters” brochure was printed, again under a grant from the Aquatic Resources (Wallop-Breaux) Trust Fund, administered by the United States Coast Guard.

This revised 6 page brochure too was well received, and it appeared likely to be exhausted before the end of 2010.

Our research has indicated that a rewrite of the current brochure focusing more on education of the boaters, and less on the technical aspects of the GMDSS system would be desirable. A review and rewrite was therefore undertaken.

There is little doubt that proper use of the VHF-DSC marine radio by recreational boaters can be very beneficial to boaters and search and rescue activities alike. Proper use requires that boaters understand the many advantages to be found in the proper use of the radio, as well as the problem areas.

A good understanding and proper use will reduce problems such as false alerts, use of incorrect/invalid Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) numbers, stuck microphones and requests for radio checks on Channel 16, to mention just a few related to improper use of the VHF-DSC radios.

Proper use will also reduce frequency congestion on the “distress/calling” channel 16. Use of the “Distress” button on the radio, together with a valid MMSI number and connection to a Global Positioning System (GPS), will ensure a prompt and appropriate search and rescue response by Coast Guard and other nearby vessels, as the vessel distress message will include the

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identification and accurate position of the vessel in distress. The “Test” feature will enable the boater to obtain verification of the operation of the VHF-DSC radio digitally without requiring voice communications with the Coast Guard station.

This grant request was aimed squarely at the Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program 2007 – 2011, Strategy 8.4 Increase boater’s knowledge of safety equipment by providing educational materials regarding required and recommended safety equipment carriage. Secondly, it emphasizes Strategy 2.6 – to Promote and encourage recognized programs for outreach initiatives that demonstrate safe boating practices.

The continuing goal of this USBI grant proposal is to save lives on the water through addressing issues of boating safety and boater education.

This proposed revised and updated 8 page brochure will assist in educating the recreational boater to a better understanding of, and proper use of the VHF-DSC radio, thereby reducing the traditional “problem” areas, enabling rescuers to more accurately locate vessels in distress, improving safety, and reducing the loss of life on the water.

The objectives of this revised brochure included:

- a) Educating the recreational boaters on features and the proper use of their VHF-DSC radio.
- b) Emphasizing the importance of obtaining and installing a valid MMSI.



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- c) Encouraging recreational boaters to connect the VHF-DSC radio to a GPS so as to ensure transmission of a precise position.
- d) Encouraging boaters to also use the VHF-DSC radio for “routine” communications with other boats and coast stations.
- e) Explaining the proper use of the automated “Distress” feature.
- f) Encouraging recreational boaters to use the “Test” feature rather than verbally requesting a “radio check”.

We have published 650,000 copies of this new brochure; 162,500 copies included a comment card inside, and 487,500 did not.

The brochures were shipped to the Auxiliary National Supply Centre – ANSC for storage and distribution.

Hopefully the foregoing meets your requirements as a final report.

Sincerely,

Norm Dyck, Director