

## OTHER SAFETY

### COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT



#### Emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB)

All recreational vessels heading out more than 2 nautical miles from the coast are required to carry a registered 406 Mhz EPIRB.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** We recommend that all vessels carry a GPS-enabled EPIRB to alert rescuers to your distress and your location.

#### Personal locator beacon (PLB)



PLBs are smaller and lighter than EPIRBs. You can attach one to your lifejacket so it remains upright and out of the water if you fall in.

Register your EPIRB and PLB with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** PLBs are not considered a substitute for EPIRBs when adhering to State marine carriage regulations.

### HELPFUL APPS

Trip preparation  
**Boating Vic**



Weather tools  
**BOM Weather**



Log your trip  
**Coast Guard SafeTrx**



Share your location  
**Emergency +**



## CONTACTS

Australian Communications and Media Authority  
acma.gov.au 1300 850 115

Australian Maritime College  
amc.edu.au 1300 365 262

Australian Maritime Safety Authority  
amsa.gov.au 1800 627 484

Bureau of Meteorology  
bom.gov.au/marine 03 9669 4000

Marine Radio Victoria  
VHF Operations: 02 6151 6688  
HF Operations: 02 6279 5774

Maritime Safety Victoria  
msv.vic.gov.au 1800 223 022

BOM telephone weather:

➤ *Port Phillip, Western Port local waters:*

➤ 1300 978 022

➤ *Victorian coastal waters:*

➤ 1300 915 615

➤ *Full state service:*

➤ 1300 978 022

# MARINE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS



A guide to using VHF marine radios on Victorian waterways

This publication provides general information and should not be relied upon as a substitute for the relevant legislation.

For information about the *Marine Safety Act 2010 (Vic)*, visit:  
[transportsafety.vic.gov.au/msv](https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/msv)

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**MARITIME SAFETY VICTORIA**



A branch of Transport Safety Victoria

## MARINE RADIO: AN OVERVIEW

Marine radios provide a means of broadcasting for assistance if a vessel is in distress, monitoring and/or updating rescue operations, and positioning a vessel by radio direction finding.

You must carry a marine radio if you go more than two nautical miles from the coast.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** MSV recommends that you carry a VHF radio instead of a 27MHz radio. This is due to them being deemed less reliable and being infrequently monitored.

### MARINE RADIO VICTORIA

In Victoria, VHF emergency radio traffic is monitored and responded to by Marine Radio Victoria (MRV) **24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.**

### THE 3 TYPES OF MARINE RADIOS

Radio Type	Distress frequency channels and range
Handheld VHF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 16 and 67</li> <li>➤ Monitored by Marine Radio Victoria out to 20 Nautical Miles of the Victorian Coastline</li> <li>➤ Limited range due to short antenna and lower power of transmission.</li> </ul>
Fixed mount VHF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 16 and 67</li> <li>➤ Monitored by Marine Radio Victoria out to 20 Nautical Miles of the Victorian Coastline</li> <li>➤ Line-of-sight range which can be enhanced with a high antenna and greater power of transmission.</li> </ul>
VHF Radio with DSC (Digital Selective Calling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 70 for digital selective calling – DSC</li> <li>➤ Monitored by Marine Radio Victoria</li> </ul>

Fixed mount VHF radio with DSC



Handheld VHF



## KEY RADIO PROCEDURES (all radio types)

### ROUTINE MESSAGE

In making a normal call to another vessel or coast station **the most important points to remember are:**

- **SAY: 'OTHER VESSEL NAME' THREE TIMES**
- **SAY: 'THIS IS (your vessel name) THREE TIMES**
- **SAY: 'OVER'**

When they answer, agree on a working frequency  
After each transmission, **SAY: 'OVER'**

On completion of conversation, say: **'OUT'.**



Ensure to switch radio to **channel '16'** before sending out 'Safety', 'Urgency' and 'Distress' messages.

### SAFETY MESSAGE

This message is preceded by the word **'SECURITE'** and is used for broadcasts of navigational warnings, weather warnings and weather forecasts – initiated by ship stations and shore stations.

### URGENCY MESSAGE

An urgency message indicates that the station sending it has a very urgent message to transmit concerning the safety of a vessel or aircraft, or the safety of a person. Urgency messages are sent on all distress frequencies and are identified by the words and sequence:

- **'PAN PAN' THREE TIMES**
- **'HELLO ALL STATIONS' THREE TIMES**
- **'THIS IS... (your vessel name) THREE TIMES**
- **'Urgency message' ONCE**
- **'OUT'.**

### DISTRESS MESSAGE

Distress messages are only sent when a vessel is in grave or imminent danger. **Distress messages take priority over all other calls**, so if you hear anything that sounds even remotely like a distress message, you should suspend your own calls **immediately.**

In an emergency, the vessel in distress has full control over all other calls; not the coast station or other vessels which may be involved, unless control is delegated.

- **SAY: 'MAYDAY' THREE TIMES**
- **SAY: 'THIS IS... (your vessel name) THREE TIMES**
- **SAY: 'MAYDAY – THIS IS... (your vessel name) ONCE**

State your position, nature of distress, kind of assistance required, number of people and any other information.

## RADIO WEATHER

MRV also provides radio checks and broadcasts weather forecasts and warnings.

You will find weather information on VHF **channel 67** including:

➤ **Victorian coastal waters forecasts** - including Bass Strait (four zones) as well as Port Phillip, Western Port and Gippsland Lakes - at 06:48 and 18:48 EST.

➤ **Initial weather warning** as soon as possible after receipt.

➤ **Current weather warnings** at 00:48, 02:48, 04:48, 06:48, 08:48, 10:48, 12:48, 14:48, 16:48, 18:48, 20:48, 22:48 EST following initial broadcast, until cancelled

➤ **Notices of cancellation** of weather warning as soon as possible after receipt and at the next scheduled Victorian coastal weather forecast broadcast.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Broadcasts and cancellations of weather warnings will be preceded by a **SECURITE** announcement on VHF **channel 16.**

## QUALIFICATIONS

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You don't need a qualification to operate the less effective 27MHz radio but should follow marine radio procedures.

### VHF

The Australian Waters Qualification is the minimum qualification you must have to operate a VHF marine radio.

The course includes how to use VHF radio and digital selective calling (DSC).

Learn more on the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) website, and visit the Australian Maritime College (AMC) website for details on Marine Radio course providers.

The Marine Radio operators VHF certificate of proficiency (MROVCP) has been replaced by the Short range operator certificate of proficiency (SROCP) and the Marine radio operators certificate of proficiency (MROCP) by the Long range operator certificate of proficiency LROCP. All existing certificates are valid however, new applicants will be issued with a SROCP or a LROCP.



We recommend familiarising everyone on board the vessel with VHF Radios and procedures (including if you or your passengers have yet to obtain either a marine licence or VHF marine radio qualification).