

A life changing experience

Here at the RYA we always try to make you feel appreciated for the great job you do for your students. However, if you've ever wondered whether your students really appreciate you, read on...

Margaret Norris won this year's Senior Instructor of the Year Award following a nomination from Hengistbury Head Centre in Dorset. On hearing the news, she wrote to us with a bit more background on her experiences in sailing – here is an extract from her letter.

"I was down at the Hengistbury Head Centre helping a teacher friend keep his school children in order whilst he was teaching them to sail. Having launched the last boat, he pulled over a Topper and told me to hop in. I'd been listening to his instructions, but at the age of 42 and never having stepped foot in a sailing dinghy before, I didn't feel at all prepared! Predictably I capsized, but from that moment on I was hooked.

I started volunteering in my spare time on RYA courses at weekends and in



school holidays. With lots of help, sound advice and buckets of encouragement from the centre staff, I eventually became an assistant instructor, got my instructor certificate at 50 and my senior instructor certificate at 55.

Learning to sail has literally changed my life. The enjoyment, the sense of achievement and confidence I've gained has changed me personally beyond recognition. With the SI qualification under my belt, I gave up my full time job and became a self-employed instructor. Teaching sailing came late to me but I've definitely found my niche in life at long last!

I will always be grateful for the high quality training I received from the centre staff because I am now passing that onto others. Our job as instructors is a diverse one, being welcoming and encouraging and having the ability to see potential in students who very often don't see it themselves. What is certain is that a good instructor makes the difference between a good and bad experience on the water.

What do I enjoy most about instructing? Passing on my passion for sailing to others. I tell them that if I can do it, then they certainly can. Seeing people feel good about themselves for mastering their fears and watching their happy expressions when they realise they really can sail is enough to make me feel BRILLIANT! Who knows, maybe their lives will change for the better as a result, as mine did."

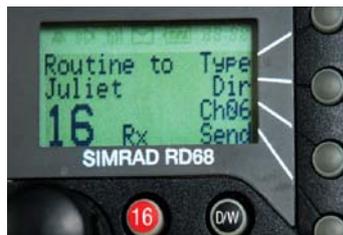
Calling the Coastguard using DSC

Alison Noice, our National SRC Adviser, has had a few queries about calling the Coastguard using DSC. There appears to be some confusion about the procedure arising from differences in the software used by the equipment manufacturers.

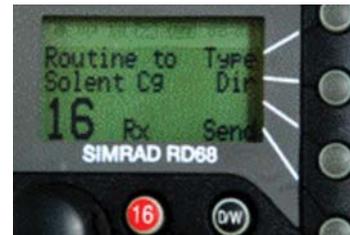
When selecting a 'routine call' to another ship station, most sets will offer Channel 6 to the calling station as a default. However, when routine calling a Coast Station, one with

an MMSI beginning 00, some sets show no channel, some continue to offer Channel 6 and others offer the channel the set is tuned to.

In all cases, the caller should simply press "ENTER" to initiate the call. Shortly afterwards a channel will appear on the screen, usually Channel 67 in the UK. As soon as this channel number appears on the screen it is THE CALLER WHO SPEAKS FIRST. Do not wait for the Coastguard to call first – he will NOT.



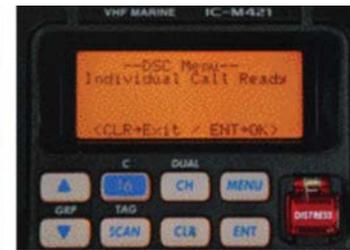
Call to a ship station using the Simrad RD68. Channel 6 is selected as the default channel.



Simrad RD68 giving name but no channel



Standard Horizon Quest 1500 offering Ch 06



Icom 421 showing no name or channel

Not my problem mate – or is it?

If you work closely with other RTCs and companies and send students to them for courses that you can't supply, please be aware of your responsibilities to the client.

If you take a booking for a course or event and sub-contract the business to another centre, you may well still be liable for that course – even if it is completely out of your control. If, for instance, the instructor's qualifications were out of date or the

vessel ill-equipped, the contract with the client could still be with you and you could be liable. If you are in a situation where this could happen, or if you are considering using this sort of arrangement, consider the implications if all does not go as planned.

This situation can arise when you only have one or two students booked on a course and they are sent to another centre to make up a full or non-loss making course. If they cancel, who

gives a refund? They will expect (and may be entitled to) a full refund but their payment may have been split between the companies. If there is a problem, who deals with it?

If you need to offload a student, it is far better to be honest with them – simply pass them on to the other RTC and refund their money. If you have arranged a booking fee or cut from the other RTC, they can pay you as a supplier and this will keep your responsibility to a minimum.

Moving address

Please do remember to inform the RYA if you move or change telephone numbers.

With 24,000 instructors on the database, keeping track of everybody is a mammoth task.

Email training@rya.org.uk