

MARITIME SAFETY INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Her Majesty's Coastguard (HMCG) is responsible in the UK for the broadcast of Maritime Safety Information (MSI) on VHF, MF and NAVTEX and for the provision of Radio Medical Link Calls (MEDILINK) Service.

COVERAGE

Its network of remote radio sites around the coast of the UK provides VHF and MF coverage out to 30 miles and 150 miles respectively, with NAVTEX coverage out to 270 miles.

SCHEDULES AND TIMING

HM Coastguard's co-ordination centres make MSI Broadcasts every 4 hours. The broadcast times shown in the schedules are UTC.

FREQUENCIES

MSI is broadcast on VHF Channels 10, 23, 73, 84 or 86 and exceptionally on VHF Channel 67. This prevents mutual interference and allows one operator to broadcast simultaneously on 2 or more aerials. This is important when some broadcasts are in excess of 20 minutes.

NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS

Navigational Warnings are provided by the NAVAREA ONE co-ordinator at the UK Hydrographic Office, Taunton. The primary means of disseminating this information is by NAVTEX and INMARSAT SAFETYNET. However, WZ navigational warnings are also broadcast on VHF and MF on selected aerials, on receipt and at four hourly intervals (see broadcast schedules).

Negative Tidal Surge Warnings are issued as a WZ on receipt, and at hourly intervals until absorbed into the next regular broadcast.

METEOROLOGICAL WARNINGS

Meteorological Warnings are broadcast at four hourly intervals and include Local Inshore Forecasts and Gale Warnings. Area forecasts are broadcast twice daily. Strong wind warnings will be broadcast if significantly different from the inshore forecast. Users are encouraged to listen to these broadcasts as an alternative to calling co-ordination centres for meteorological information outside these times.

VHF

Maritime Safety Information will be broadcast by co-ordination centres either on VHF Channels 10, 23, 73, 84 or 86, and exceptionally channel 67, following an initial announcement on Channel 16. The initial announcement will indicate the working channel the mariner should return to.

The following will be broadcast at four hourly intervals by co-ordination centres starting at the times shown in the left-hand column below.

Routine A Local Inshore Forecast - (within 12 miles of the coast);
 Strong Wind Warnings when appropriate - (force 6 and above for the coastal waters out to 5 miles offshore);
 Gale (Storm) Warnings¹;
 WZ Navigational Warnings including Negative Tide Surge Warnings²;
 GUNFACTS/SUBFACTS – from selected stations only³.

Routine B Area forecasts will be broadcast twice daily starting at the times shown in the right hand column below.

Co-ordination Centre	Routine A - Every 4 hours per station starting at:	Routine B – Twice Daily per station starting at :
Swansea	0005	0805
Thames	0010	0810
Clyde	0020	0820
Yarmouth	0040	0840
Solent	0040	0840
Brixham	0050	0850
Dover	0105	0905
Shetland	0105	0905
Stornoway	0110	0910
Falmouth	0140	0940
Forth	0205	1005
Liverpool	0210	1010
Portland	0220	1020
Holyhead	0235	0635
Belfast	0305	0705
Aberdeen	0320	0720
Milford Haven	0335	0735
Humber	0340	0740

¹ Gale Warnings, Storm Warnings and Navigation Warnings will additionally be broadcast on receipt. Such warnings will also be announced on DSC.

² Negative Tide Surge Warnings will be broadcast on receipt, and at hourly intervals until the next scheduled routine broadcast. Such warnings will also be announced on DSC.

³ Broadcast from MRCC's Falmouth and Clyde, MRSC's Brixham, Belfast and Stornoway only.

MF

For the time being, Maritime Safety Information will continue to be broadcast by co-ordination centres via MF on the designated frequencies shown below, with an initial announcement on 2182 kHz MF.

Routine C WZ Navigation Warnings including Negative Tide Surge Warnings, Gale (Storm) Warnings.

Routine D Area Forecasts.

Co-ordination Centre	Routine C - Every 4 hours per station starting at:	Routine D – Twice Daily per station starting at :
Clyde 1883 kHz	0020*	0820
Yarmouth 1869 kHz	0040	0840
Solent 1641 kHz	0040	0840
Shetland 1770 kHz	0105	0905
Stornoway 1743 kHz	0110*	0910
Falmouth 2226 kHz	0140	0940
Holyhead 1880 kHz	0235	1035
Aberdeen 2226 kHz	0320	0720
Milford Haven 1767 kHz	0335	0735
Humber 2226 kHz	0340	0740

*Broadcasts will also include GUNFACTS/SUBFACTS information on MF relevant to North Atlantic NATO exercises, only when advised by the Ministry of Defence.

Co-ordination centres will only broadcast information relevant to its own district and areas immediately adjacent to it. Routine broadcasts will not be announced on DSC.

NAVTEX

Maritime Safety Information and additional weather information is transmitted on NAVTEX as follows: -

CULLERCOATS – 518 kHz [G]	
Gale Warnings	On receipt, 0100,0500, 0900, 1300, 1700, 2100
24 Hour synopsis	0900, 2100
Extended Outlook (3-4days)	0100
WZ Navigation Warnings	0100,0500, 0900, 1300, 1700, 2100
Tidal Surge Warnings – S. North Sea	On receipt

NITON – 518 kHz [E]	
<i>(From 17 September 2002)</i>	
Gale Warnings	On receipt – 0040, 0440, 0840, 1240, 1640, 2040
24 Hour synopsis	0840, 2040
Extended Outlook (3-4days)	0040
WZ Navigation Warnings	0040, 0440, 0840, 1240, 1640, 2040
Tidal Surge Warnings	On receipt
SUBFACTS	0840, 2040

PORTPATRICK – 518 kHz [O]	
Gale Warnings	On receipt, 0220, 0620, 1020, 1420, 1820, 2220
24 Hour synopsis	0620, 1820
Extended Outlook (3-4days)	0220
WZ Navigation Warnings	0220, 0620, 1020, 1420, 1820, 2220
Tidal Surge Warnings	On receipt
SUBFACTS	0700, 1900

The 490 kHz NAVTEX service also provides the Local Inshore Forecast (LIF)

CULLERCOATS – 490 kHz [U] - LIF	0720, 1920
NITON – 490 kHz [I] - LIF	0520, 1720
PORTPATRICK – 490 kHz [C] - LIF	0820, 2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The broadcast of MSI may be interrupted or delayed as a result of Search and Rescue operations.

MEDICAL ADVICE LINK CALLS

The Master or Skipper of any vessel requiring **Medical Advice** can contact the nearest Co-ordination Centre on either VHF Channel 16 (156.8 MHz) or VHF DSC or MF DSC, requesting medical advice. Alternatively, particularly in an urgent situation, an urgency alert using the pro-words "PAN PAN" should be broadcast.

The Co-ordination Centre will give priority to requests for Medical Advice. A doctor from a nominated hospital will be contacted by telephone, and the doctor will be linked to the vessel through the co-ordinating centre via an appropriate VHF Channel or MF frequency. While the call is being placed, the Coastguard will establish additional information with the vessel relating to position, a description of the vessel, and if appropriate, brief details of the casualty. Channels 23, 84 or 86, will invariably be used for Medical Link Calls which will permit duplex working.

REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The Master or Skipper of a vessel requesting **Medical Assistance** for an injured or sick person will also be required to seek medical advice prior to HMCG tasking a Search and Rescue (SAR) Unit. While this is being arranged, the Co-ordination Centre will establish additional information and may bring a Search and Rescue unit to immediate readiness. In exceptional cases, the Co-ordination Centre may scramble/launch a SAR unit on receipt of the call, but it is also obliged to arrange a Radio Medical Advice Call for the vessel.

COMMERCIAL RADIO/TELEPHONE TRAFFIC

HM Coastguard has neither the facility nor the mandate to undertake commercial radiotelephone traffic.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

All co-ordination centres are being fitted with a new state of the art, radio and telephone communication system. One of the options that the new system provides is a facility to semi-automate MSI broadcasts. This should overcome the recognised problem of having to delay or cancel broadcasts when SAR operations intervene.