

## VHF CHANNELS & THEIR USES

**FOR SAFETY'S SAKE, USE THEM PROPERLY!**

Purpose(Intended Use)	Channel
Distress-Safety-Calling	16
Ship-to Ship (SAFETY ONLY)	6
Digital Selective Calling (DSC)— (Distress, Safety, and General)	70
<b>Channels available for Recreational Boats</b>	
Ship-to-Ship or Ship-to-Shore	9,68,69,71,78
Ship-to-Ship only	72
Boater Calling Channel	9
Marine Operator	24 to 28 and 84 to 87
For Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Seaway, Puget Sound and Strait of Juan De Fuca and their approaches only	88
<b>Navigational</b>	
Bridge-to-Bridge	13
Lower Mississippi River and adjacent waters only	67
<b>REDUCE POWER TO 1 WATT ON CHANNELS 13 AND 67</b>	
<b>Weather (Receive only)</b>	
(162.550)	WX-1
(162.400)	WX-2
(162.475)	WX-3

## WHEN USING VHF

- Use the low power setting (1 watt) except during emergencies.
- In areas served by a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), know the channels used by the Service. Remember, in a VTS area commercial vessels (the BIG ones) may not monitor Channel 16, but they can be called on Channel 13.



Produced under a grant from the Aquatic Resources (Wallop/Breaux) Trust Fund. Administered by the U.S. Coast Guard



NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION

[www.n-b-f.org](http://www.n-b-f.org)

**ONLY YOU CAN TAKE THE SEARCH OUT OF SEARCH AND RESCUE!**



**PUT SAFETY FIRST!  
Use your VHF Radio**

## WHEN YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, CELL PHONES MAY NOT WORK!

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The use of a cell phone from a boat has many disadvantages including:

- Caller's location cannot be determined using radio direction finders
- 911 calls from maritime locations are frequently misdirected to police or fire departments preventing or greatly delaying any water rescue response
- A cellular call cannot be monitored by other boaters
- The caller cannot be contacted from rescue boats or aircraft

## WHEN YOU NEED ASSISTANCE, USE CHANNEL 16:

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- Transmit "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY THIS IS (BOAT NAME), (BOAT NAME), (BOAT NAME) "
- Report your location by position ("We are 3 miles west of Smith Point"), direction and last seen landmark (buoy, etc)
- Report the nature of your emergency ("Boat flooding, may sink!")
- Report the number of people aboard including yourself and the condition of any injured persons ("Two adults, one 6-year old and one 9 year old onboard. No injuries.")
- Report what assistance is needed ("Need to have children removed from the boat and we need a pump and tow.")
- Describe the boat and its seaworthiness ("Boat is a 30 foot white inboard with a blue canopy. Engine has stopped due to flooding and boat is in danger of sinking.")
- Wait for a response for 10 seconds and, if there is none, repeat the message.

**Have all persons put on life jackets!**

## WHEN A CELL PHONE IS YOUR ONLY MEANS OF MAKING DISTRESS CALLS

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Take the following precautions before leaving the dock:

- Make sure the battery is fully charged
- Keep the cell phone in a waterproof bag that floats
- Have the U.S. Coast Guard and other appropriate water rescue phone numbers with you. Have them highly visible and it is useful to tape the numbers to the phone
- When you first place the distress call, immediately give your:
  1. Your cell phone number
  2. Vessel name and/or description
  3. Position and/or location
  4. Nature of the emergency
  5. Number of people on board
  6. Repeat cell phone number before ending call
- Speak slowly so you can be clearly understood