



PRE-COURSE LEARNING AND READING

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IDEALLY YOU WILL HAVE READ THROUGH SECTIONS 5, 6, 7, AND 8 OF YOUR VHF COURSE HANDBOOK.

VHF RADIO CHANNELS

There are a number of VHF radio channels across the VHF spectrum that are designated for different uses. As leisure craft we only use a small number of the channels which are designated to particular types of radio traffic. Whilst some channels will be written into the local almanacs/publications it is essential that you are familiar with the main calling / distress, ship-to-ship and Coastguard operating channels.

VHF CHANNEL NUMBERS

CHANNEL	USE
0	Private Channel, designated in the UK for Search & Rescue Organisations
6, 8	Inter-Ship Channels
13	Used for Bridge to Bridge contact for Navigational Safety
16	Distress, Safety and Calling Channel
67	In the UK: Small Craft Channel
70	DSC ONLY (no voice calling)
72, 77	Inter-Ship Channels
80	In the UK: used by most marinas
M, M2	In the UK: private channel used by marina's, Yacht Clubs etc

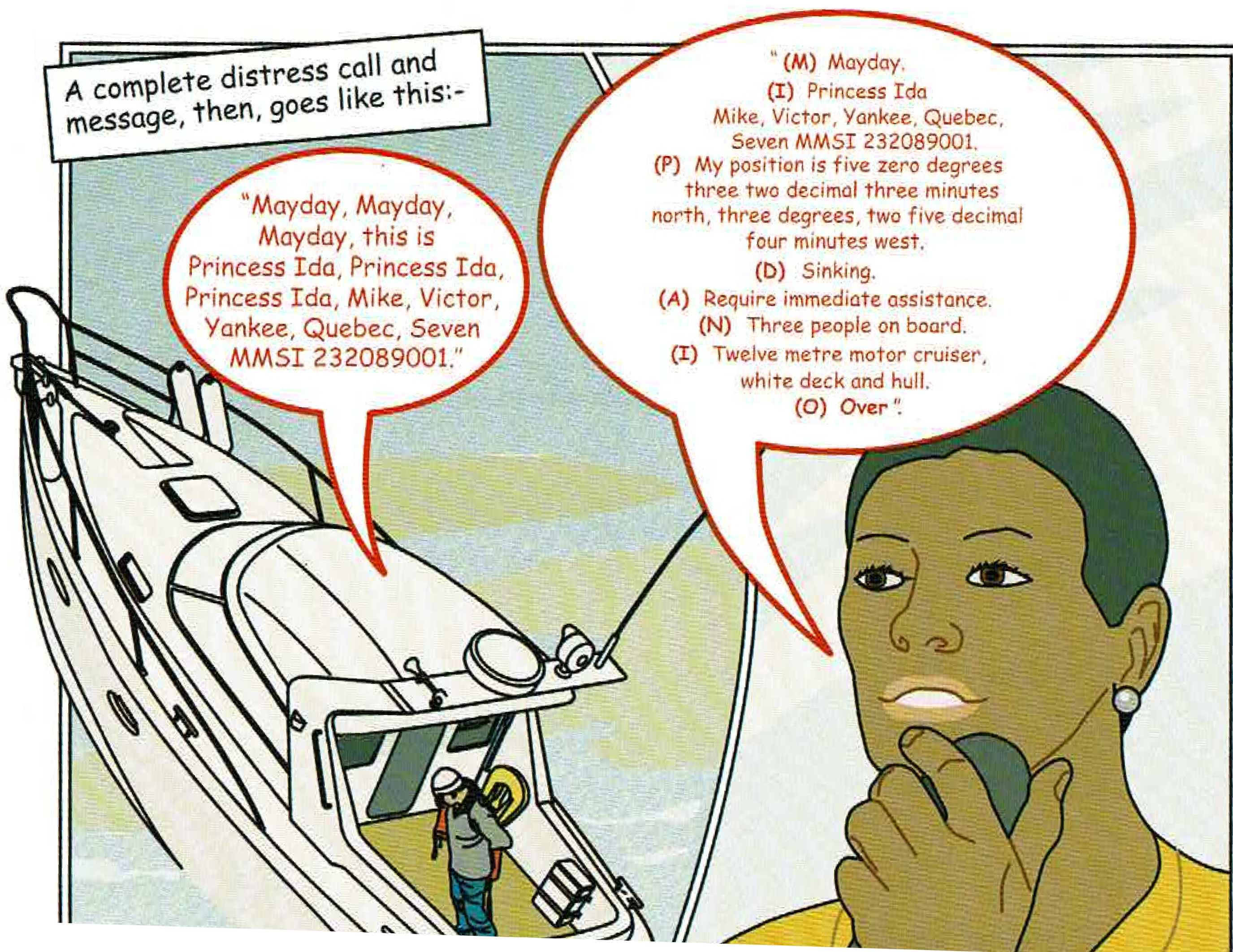


DISTRESS MESSAGES – CALLING A MAYDAY

Being able to raise the alarm in the event of a distress situation is critical. In some cases, where sailing inshore, you might still be able to resort to calling the emergency services using your mobile phone, but the most reliable method is by way of a VHF radio transmitter.

Sending a Mayday must be authorised by the skipper, although if the skipper is incapacitated or overboard this important task may fall to you. It's therefore important that you know the basics and it's in the skipper's best interests to make sure his crew know what to do in the event that he is incapacitated.

Sending a mayday is relatively simple, but it's worth gathering a few pieces of information in the seconds before you start to speak. This will include your vessel's position, your vessel's name, the number of people on board and a clear understanding of what your emergency is. For example, do you have a man overboard or are you sinking? Perhaps someone has collapsed with a suspected heart attack. Collating this information in the 30 seconds before broadcast will make your transmission more efficient and speed up the rescue process.





NATO PHONETIC ALPHABET

A spelling alphabet is used to spell parts of a message containing letters and numbers to avoid confusion, because many letters sound similar, for instance “n” and “m” or “f” and “s”; the potential for confusion increases if static or other interference is present. Distortion, background noise, poor signal and even the accent or dialect of the speakers can all hamper the effectiveness of a message getting through. Ashore we often use the phonetic alphabet when giving postcodes or spelling names over the phone and afloat we may also need to spell a vessel name or a location. You can learn more about the NATO phonetic alphabet at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_phonetic_alphabet It is essential that you learn the phonetic alphabet prior to attending your course. Please work through the file below for some exercises to practice your alphabet. You should be able to view on the page, download or print.

The NATO Phonetic Alphabet

A Alfa	B Bravo	C Charlie	D Delta	E Echo
F Foxtrot	G Golf	H Hotel	I India	J Juliett
K Kilo	L Lima	M Mike	N November	O Oscar
P Papa	Q Quebec	R Romeo	S Sierra	T Tango
U Uniform	V Victor	W Whiskey	X X-ray	Y Yankee
				Z Zulu