



# TECHNICAL INFORMATION

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## **Subject : GUIDANCE ON THE VALIDITY OF RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT INSTALLED AND USED ON SHIPS (MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5)**

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) issued MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5 on 27 January 2025. Below are the key points and recommendations regarding this document.

### **1. Background**



The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) made significant revisions to Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations during the World Radiocommunication Conferences held in 2012, 2015, and 2019. VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on ships should comply with the frequency channels specified in Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations (Edition 2020).

MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.3, issued on October 18, 2021, required that VHF radiocommunication equipment be updated to include the new digital channels introduced in Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations by the first radio survey on or after 1 January 2024. However, considering the non-availability of VHF radiocommunication equipment and the proximity of the implementation date, the IMO decided to amend MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.4 and defer the implementation date to 1 January 2028.

MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5 clarifies that all shipboard VHF radio installations should comply with the latest channel arrangements in appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations by the first radio survey on or after 1 January 2028 or earlier, as appropriate. Additionally, considering some administrations may have already implemented the new available channels prior to 1 January 2028, ships should be equipped with the capability to communicate with shore facilities in their operating area using VHF.

## 2. Content of MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5

As a result of the revision of Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations (Edition 2020), four-digit VHF channels have been added to the existing two-digit channels for VHF channels.

While these changes do not affect the designated VHF channels used for distress, urgency and safety communications, they do affect the use of other frequencies used for VHF meteorological, navigational and urgent marine information broadcasts, port operations and Vessel Traffic Service (VTS).

Therefore, all VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on ships should take appropriate measures to comply with the updated frequencies arrangement in Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations by the first radio survey on or after 1 January 2028, or earlier, as appropriate.

However, some administrations<sup>1</sup> have already implemented the new VHF channels prior to 1 January 2028. Therefore, ships operating in areas where the new VHF channels are used should take appropriate actions to ensure capability of VHF communication with shore facilities.

## 3. Expected Actions

Since MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.3 was issued in October 2021, the VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on ships may already comply with Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations. However, if the VHF equipment installed on the ship does not support the new channels, some ships may be able to upgrade the existing VHF equipment through software or firmware updates, while others may require equipment replacement to use the new channels<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. Requests

**Shipowner/Operator:** It is strongly recommended that, by the first radio survey scheduled on or after 1 January 2028, all VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on the ship be brought into compliance with new channel arrangement set out in Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations (Edition 2020). If the vessel passes the area using the new VHF channels prior to 2028, all VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on the ship should comply with the new frequency arrangement, and a document certifying this compliance should be obtained from the

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<sup>1</sup> Some ports in the Netherlands, Belgium, etc. (see Attachment 2).

<sup>2</sup> FURUNO (<https://www.furuno.se/news/4639>)

JRC (<https://www.jrc-world.com/en/article/new-vhf-regulations/>)

manufacturer or service provider and kept onboard. The shipowner/operator should contact the manufacturer or a service provider to take the necessary actions.

## **Attachment**

1. MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5: GUIDANCE ON THE VALIDITY OF RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT INSTALLED AND USED ON SHIPS
2. Circular Letter No.4791: Communication from the Governments of Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands

(Distributions : Ship owners, equipment manufacturers, service suppliers and other relevant parties)

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