



GIBRALTAR REGULATORY  
AUTHORITY

# *Information Sheet*

## Port Operations Radio Licence

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The use of all radio frequencies is agreed internationally and it is therefore important that the correct frequencies are used for the correct types of applications. A Port Operations Radio Licence is designed to enable vessels in Gibraltar waters and base stations on shore to communicate with each other. The frequencies available for Port Operations are **Channel 71 (calling) and Channels 61, 62, 63, 68 and 69 (working)**.

Please note that, at any time, the port authorities may instruct licence holders to move to other channels if they are using channels whose use is unauthorised or likely to pose a danger to shipping or ship movements.

***The Gibraltar Port Authority will inform ships within Gibraltar waters that the calling channel for their agents and ship chandlers is Channel 71 and will advise them to maintain a watch on that channel as well Channel 16 and Channel 12.***

Under the Communications Act 2006, you must have a licence to install or use radiocommunications equipment, unless the equipment has been specifically exempted from this requirement. The equipment associated with Port Operations installations has not been exempted and a licence is therefore required for its installation or use. This information sheet is designed to answer questions that you may have concerning a Port Operations licence.

Operating without a licence or not complying with the terms of a licence increases the likelihood of harmful interference being caused to other users of radio and can pose a threat to the safety of life. Consequently the penalties are severe and can include imprisonment and forfeiture of anything associated with an unlicensed transmission. As the licensee, you are ultimately responsible for the actions of anyone who uses the equipment. You should therefore study the conditions attached to the licence and ensure that you, and anyone else who uses the installation, complies with them.

### **2. PORT OPERATIONS LICENCE**

The Port Operations licence is intended to enable organisations, principally businesses, to communicate with their vessels, using international maritime channels. The licence covers the coast station only. The use of ships' radios must be licensed separately, under a Ship Radio Licence. Those who use channels under a Port Operations licence must be suitably qualified. The channels assigned in Gibraltar are Ch 71 (calling) and Ch's 61, 62, 63, 68 and 69 (working). Holders of a Port Operations licence must **not** use any other channel.

Fees for Port Operations licences are calculated on the number of base stations and mobile stations.

### **3. EQUIPMENT**

It is important that the correct radio equipment is used, to minimise the likelihood of interference and it is a condition of a Port Operations licence that only suitably approved radio equipment be used. The principal performance specification to which Port Operations base station equipment should be approved is MPT 1250 and for mobile equipment MPT 1251. Alternatively, Port Operations equipment may be approved to ETS 300 162 or ETS 300 225. All Digital Selective Calling (DSC) equipment must, additionally, be approved to ETS 300 338. Once supplied, equipment must not be altered as to do so would invalidate its approval.

### **4. ANTENNA SITING**

The effective communication range of a base station is governed largely by the height of the antenna. The operational range of a base station increases progressively, with the height of the antenna. Consequently, the Minister may place limits on the height of an antenna, to ensure that the operational range of the station is no more than is needed. This will allow more efficient use of the limited number of channels available, increasing spectrum efficiency, and minimise co-channel interference.

### **5. CORRECT RT PROCEDURES**

Those in the maritime community rely on radio for their safety. Improper use of radio endangers life. It is the responsibility of those using radio to ensure that they know and observe correct procedures.

#### **THE PORT OPERATIONS GUIDE TO BEST PRACTICE**

If one or two simple conventions are observed, then all those wishing to use Port Operations can do so without fear of undue interference from others. Messages will also be understood sooner and more easily. In Gibraltar, more than one user is licensed to use a channel. In these instances, consideration for other licensees is particularly important.

#### ***Avoid chit chat***

An average transmission should not exceed 10-15 seconds. If passing a message of more than 20 seconds, pause occasionally, to permit other stations to send any urgent messages.

#### ***Interruptions***

Never interrupt another user on the channel that you wish to use, yourself, even in an emergency, because this will cause interference and your message will not get through.

#### ***Reply promptly***

When you are called, always reply promptly, with your call sign and acknowledgement. This will obviate the need for calls to be repeated.

#### ***No response***

Do not persist in calling a station, which is clearly unattended. This simply occupies the channel unnecessarily, to the exclusion of others.

#### ***Be understood***

Ensure that you enunciate your words clearly, to ensure that you are understood first time. Do not shout, as this distorts your message and renders it unintelligible.

### ***Content of messages***

You must not transmit music, retransmit radio broadcasts and you must not use obscene language. All of these are prohibited by the conditions of your licence. Moreover, you must not send false or misleading distress messages and you must not cause deliberate interference to radio. These are expressly prohibited by law. The Gibraltar Regulatory Authority monitors all use of radio periodically. Instances of abuse will be pursued and carry the same penalties as unlicensed use.

## **6. USE OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME VHF CHANNELS**

### **Distress, Urgency, Safety and Calling Channels**

#### **Channel 16 (156.800 MHz)**

Channel 16 is the international channel for distress, urgency, safety and calling by voice communication. Where it is necessary to call a station on Channel 16, other than in cases of distress, urgency or safety both stations should switch to an alternative channel as soon as possible. For a call between ship stations an inter-ship channel should be used, such as Channels 6, 13, 72 or 77. For a call to a coast station the station's assigned channel should be used. All calls on Channel 16 should be kept brief and should not exceed one minute, when not concerning distress, urgency or safety.

#### **Channel 70 (156.525 MHz) - Digital Selective Calling**

In the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), Channel 70 is used for initial alerting of Distress, Urgency, Safety and Calling communications using Digital Selective Calling (DSC), and must not be used for voice communications.

#### **Channel 67 (156.375 MHz), Channel 73 (156.675 MHz) and Channel 10 (156.500 MHz)**

These channels have been set aside internationally for use in co-ordinated search and rescue operations. In the Gibraltar, their use is as follows.

<b>Channel 67</b>
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This is the primary channel for SAR operations and safety communications.

<b>Channel 73</b>
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This is the secondary channel for SAR operations and safety communications.

<b>Channel 10</b>
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In addition to its use for SAR, this channel is used during oil spill and other pollution incidents..

### **Other Designated Channel Usage**

#### **Inter-ship**

Inter-ship channels are for communications between ship stations. Ideally, inter-ship communications should be restricted to Channels 6, 13, 72 and 77. Channels 67, 73 and 10 must be avoided within VHF range of coastal areas in Europe and Canada.

#### **Port Authorities and Ship Movement**

Certain channels have been set aside, by international agreement, for use by Port Authorities and Ship Movement services. These are assigned to users, such as a port or oil terminal where the safe movement of ships is important. The channels assigned to particular users are published in the Admiralty List of Ship Signals. It is important not to use these channels for other purposes if they have

been assigned locally or if they have not been set aside for inter-ship working. In Gibraltar, the Port Authority uses Channel 12 and Channel 20, and the Queen's Harbour Master uses Channel 8.

### **Public correspondence**

These channels have been set aside, by international agreement, for relaying calls to the public telephone network. Calls made on these channels are often referred to as "link calls".