§ 80.1119 Receipt and acknowledgement of distress alerts by coast stations and coast earth stations.

(a) Coast stations that receive a distress alert should defer acknowledgement for a short interval so that receipt may be acknowledged by a Rescue Coordination Center. Where an acknowledgement is not forthcoming within 3 minutes, the coast station in receipt of distress alerts must ensure that they are routed to a Rescue Coordination Center as soon as possible. Coast stations must provide assistance for distress communications when requested to do so by the U.S. Coast Guard. (This subpart does not specify any radio watches for coast stations.)

(b) Coast earth stations in receipt of distress alerts must ensure that they are routed as soon as possible to a Rescue Coordination Center. Coast earth stations must relay, as soon as possible, an acknowledgement of a distress alert from a Rescue Coordination Center.

(c) Certain messages must be carried without charge, regardless of the means by which they are transmitted:
   (1) Distress alert messages;
   (2) Search and rescue coordination messages;
   (3) Medical assistance messages where an imminent danger to life is present, or
   (4) Urgent meteorological or navigational danger messages passed in the ship-to-shore direction.

§ 80.1123 Watch requirements for ship stations.

(a) While at sea, all ships must maintain a continuous watch:
   (1) On VHF DSC channel 70, if the ship is fitted with a VHF radio installation in accordance with §80.1089(a)(2);
   (2) On the distress and safety DSC frequency 2187.5 kHz, if the ship is fitted with an MF radio installation in accordance with §80.1091(a)(1) or §80.1091(a)(3);
   (3) On the distress and safety DSC frequencies 2187.5 kHz and 1565.6 kHz also on at least one of the distress and safety DSC frequencies 4207.5 kHz, 6312 kHz, 12577 kHz, or 16804.5 kHz appropriate to the time of day and the geographical position of the ship, if the ship is fitted with an MF/HF radio installation in accordance with
§ 80.1125 Search and rescue coordinating communications.

(a) The distress signal consists of the word MAYDAY, pronounced in radiotelephony as the French expression “M’aider”. For distress traffic by radiotelephony, when establishing communications, calls must be prefixed by the distress signal MAYDAY.

(b) Error correction techniques, in accordance with ITU-R Recommendation M.625-3, “Direct-printing Telegraph Equipment Employing Automatic Identification in the Maritime Mobile Service,” with Annex, 1995, as specified in §80.1101, must be used for distress traffic by direct-printing telegraphy. All messages must be preceded by at least one carriage return, a line feed signal, a letter shift signal and the distress signal MAYDAY. ITU-R Recommendation M.625-3 with Annex is incorporated by reference. The Director of the Federal Register approves this incorporation by reference in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 5. Copies of this standard can be inspected at the Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC (Reference Information Center) or at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/cod_of_federal_regulations/ibr_locations.html. The ITU-R Recommendation can be purchased from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Place des Nations, CH–1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

(c) Distress communications by direct-printing telegraphy should be in the ARQ mode when ships are communicating directly to the Coast Guard or other coast stations on channels which they normally guard. Other distress communications, including those on simplex channels provided for that purpose, should be in the broadcast forward error correction mode. The ARQ mode may subsequently be used when it is advantageous to do so.

(d) The Rescue Coordination Center responsible for controlling a search and rescue operation will also coordinate the distress traffic relating to the incident or may appoint another station to do so.

(e) The Rescue Coordination Center coordinating distress traffic, the unit coordinating search and rescue operations, or the coast station involved may impose silence on stations which interfere with that traffic. This instruction may be addressed to all stations or to one station only, according to circumstances. In either case, the following will be used: