



National Marine Electronics Association

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For Immediate Release

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DSC-equipped VHF's must meet new technical standards

Make sure that radio you're buying complies with the latest requirements

SEVERNA PARK, MD—On March 25, 2011, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) prohibited the manufacture, importation, sale, and installation of fixed-mount (non-portable) digital selective calling (DSC)–equipped marine radios that do not meet certain new requirements. It is important to note that the FCC action does not affect previously installed radios that meet the old RTCM Standard SC-101.

In forewarning the marine industry about this action last year, the Coast Guard said, “Compliance with these new international technical standards ensures that DSC-equipped radios will incorporate many additional safety features and functions, including eliminating dangers associated with automatic channel switching.” The CG Safety Alert went on to explain that “New features also include provisions for making test calls, dual-receiver functionality to improve operation, and Global Positioning System (GPS) interconnection alarms designed to ensure that distress alerts include a valid and accurate position. The new requirements ensure improved detection of distress alerts, a reduction in the rate of false alarms, and reduced incessant alarming caused by DSC-equipped radios meeting the older standard.”

The FCC has identified the new standards as International Telecommunications Union (ITU-R) Recommendation M.493-11 and higher and (in the case of Class D VHF DSC equipment only) International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) International Standard 62238. Portable DSC-equipped VHF radios must also comply with these requirements in 2015.

“Boat owners need to be aware of the change so that they don’t inadvertently purchase a VHF that does not comply with the new standards,” said NMEA President David Hayden. “Unlike some online and other suppliers that may be selling old inventory, NMEA dealers are ready to provide boaters with VHF’s that comply with the latest safety and technical requirements. You can find a dealer near you by visiting marineelectronicsjournal.com and clicking on the *Find an NMEA Dealer* tab.”

Founded in 1957, the NMEA has led the way in establishing technical standards for data exchange in marine electronics, with the widely accepted NMEA 0183 data protocol, NMEA 2000® and certification standards for marine electronics technicians. NMEA standards and programs focus on ensuring that the boating consumer is provided with reliable products and professional service. For more information, visit the NMEA website at www.NMEA.org or call (410) 975-9425.