



# National Marine Electronics Association

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## **NMEA takes aim at unauthorized use of its standards**

*Action designed  
to protect rights*

SEVERNA PARK, MD—Every year the National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA) and its volunteer members spend significant time, effort, and money to create data exchange standards that benefit the entire marine industry. Many users comply with the NMEA licensing agreement requiring that use of the standards be purchased, but some do not. The NMEA has announced that it will take whatever action is necessary to protect its ownership rights to these standards and collect payments for their use.

“The NMEA is a member-supported industry organization that supports the marine electronics industry by providing technical training and the development of various standards,” said Johnny Lindstrom, chairman and acting executive director of the NMEA. “The standards developed and released are the sole property of our members.

“Over the years we have been too lax in enforcing our rights under various copyright and intellectual property rights laws. By doing so, our members have missed benefiting from the revenue that should be realized from the use of these technologies. We are embarking on an effort to aggressively enforce these rights and collect for the use of our technologies by numerous individuals and businesses around the world.

“Did you know that the cell phone network infrastructure timing is, in many cases, using the ‘UTC Time’ sentences from our NMEA 0183 standard for

synchronization? I have a major cell carrier 'air card' that has NMEA 0183 functions in it; I find no record of this carrier ever purchasing the rights to use this standard.

“This is just one instance; there are numerous cases where ‘NMEA 2000® compatible’ or some variation of this description is used. There is no such thing as ‘NMEA 2000® compatible’—the product is either certified or it is not, as stated in the NMEA licensing agreement.

“By allowing this abuse of our standards we are cheating those that play by the rules and by doing so support the maintenance of existing standards and the development of future ones. In the past, the only way NMEA has known about any of these violations is by members contacting us. I ask all of our members to be more diligent and to alert the NMEA national office to any abuses of our rights, so that we may pursue enforcement of these rights by whatever means available.”

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](http://www.NMEA.org) or call 410-975-9425.