



BASIC MARINE VHF RADIO PROCEDURE (CANADA)

Anyone operating a marine VHF radio in Canadian waters must have a Restricted Operator's Certificate (Maritime) obtainable through the [Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons](#). The purpose of this aide memoire is to act as a quick reference and refresher only.

MAKING A VHF CALL

Listen to Channel 16. Turn the squelch control down until you hear radio noise for at least 10 seconds to make sure no one else is using the channel. Say:

Titanic - Titanic - Titanic THIS IS African Queen - African Queen - African Queen

You don't have to say: "OVER" when calling. Give the other vessel several minutes to respond: **Repeated calling is extremely annoying** to everyone monitoring Channel 16.

The vessel being called should respond by saying,

African Queen - African Queen - African Queen - THIS IS Titanic - CHANNEL ZERO SIX

Carry on your conversation on the working Channel 06.

- Be BRIEF. Be considerate of others. Chat on your cellphone.
- Never use profanity.
- Transmit on low power whenever possible.
- Learn and use the [phonetic alphabet](#). It saves times and repetition.

During your conversation on the working channel, say "OVER" when you expect a reply. Say "OUT" when the conversation is finished and you do not expect a reply.

VHF CHANNEL ALLOCATION

Channel 16 is the distress and calling channel. Do not carry on conversations on Channel 16: use a working channel such as Channel 06 or Channel 68.

Monitor Channel 16 when your radio is on.

Call marinas on Channel 68 NOT Channel 16.

Channel 70 is reserved for Digital Selective Calling (DSC) only. Take the [CPSS Course](#) to find out about DSC.

The official list of channels can be had from [Industry Canada](#).

DISTRESS AND WARNING (CHANNEL 16)

MAYDAY: Danger to life. **It is a criminal offence to transmit a false MAYDAY.**

PAN - PAN - PAN: Danger to property. Use this if, for example, you have broken down offshore, need a tow but are in no immediate danger.

SECURITÉ: Warning of hazard. Use SECURITE for example, if you are reporting a floating log off the entrance of a harbour.

MAYDAY EXAMPLE

There is no specific format for a MAYDAY call, but you want the vital information to get out on Channel 16:

MAYDAY - MAYDAY - MAYDAY

THIS IS AFRICAN QUEEN - AFRICAN QUEEN - AFRICAN QUEEN

POSITION THREE MILES NORTH OF MAIN DUCK ISLAND

EXPLOSION ON BOARD WITH INJURED CREW

BLUE TWENTY FOOT POWER CRUISER

SIX PERSONS ON BOARD TWO INJURED

MAYDAY - MAYDAY - MAYDAY

Give your MAYDAY information POSITION first. If that's the only information that gets through, at least they know where in the world to look for you. Follow with the nature of the emergency and a description of the vessel, number aboard and any other pertinent information.

If you are not involved, maintain SILENCE on Channel 16 while a MAYDAY situation is in progress.

Copy the MAYDAY information and post it near your radio. It's too late to try and remember it in a real emergency.

RADIO CHECKS

Don't ask for a radio check on Channel 16! Worse yet - don't ask the Coast Guard for a radio check!!

CONTINUOUS WEATHER RADIO

Your VHF radio is capable of receiving continuous weather broadcasts from both Environment Canada and the NOAA weather service. (In the Kingston area, Environment Canada's station XGV broadcasts on WX Channel 2.)

Set your channel selector to "WX" and pick one of the 10 weather channels which gives the best reception.

COURSES

This aide memoire is not a substitute for a proper VHF operator course leading to a Restricted Operator Certificate (Maritime) licence.

Contact your local [Canadian Power and Sail Squadron](#).

PHONETIC ALPHABET

ALPHA	BRAVO	CHARLIE	DELTA	ECHO	FOXTROT	GOLF	HOTEL	INDIA	JULIET
KILO	LIMA	MIKE	NOVEMBER	OSCAR	PAPA	QUEBEC	ROMEO	SIERRA	TANGO
UNIFORM	VICTOR	WHISKEY	X-RAY	YANKEE	ZULU				