

## Federal Communications Commission

## § 80.320

as practicable over a period of approximately one minute. The purpose of this special signal is to attract the attention of the person on watch or to actuate automatic devices giving the alarm.

### § 80.318 Use of alarm signals.

(a) The radiotelegraph or radiotelephone alarm signal, as appropriate, must only be used to announce:

(1) That a distress call or message is about to follow;

(2) The transmission of an urgent cyclone warning. In this case the alarm signal may only be used by coast stations authorized by the Commission to do so; or

(3) The loss of a person or persons overboard. In this case the alarm signal may only be used when the assistance of other ships is required and cannot be satisfactorily obtained by the use of the urgency signal only, but the alarm signal must not be repeated by other stations. The message must be preceded by the urgency signal.

(b) In cases described in paragraphs (a)(2) and (3) of this section, the transmission of the warning or message by radiotelegraphy must not begin until two minutes after the end of the radiotelegraph alarm signal.

### § 80.319 Radiotelegraph distress call and message transmission procedure.

(a) The radiotelegraph distress procedure consists of the following six steps; however, when time is vital, the first and second steps may be omitted. These two steps of the distress procedure may also be omitted in circumstances when transmission of the alarm signal is considered unnecessary:

- (1) The radiotelegraph alarm signal;
- (2) The distress call and an interval of two minutes;
- (3) The distress call;
- (4) The distress message;
- (5) Two dashes of ten to fifteen seconds each;
- (6) The call sign of the mobile station in distress.

(b) The radiotelegraph distress transmissions must be sent by means of the international Morse code at a speed not exceeding 16 words per minute nor less than 8 words per minute.

(c) The distress message, preceded by the distress call, must be repeated at intervals until an answer is received. The radiotelegraph alarm signal may also be repeated, if necessary.

(d) The transmissions under paragraphs (a) (5) and (6) of this section, which are to permit direction finding stations to determine the position of the station in distress, may be repeated at frequent intervals if necessary.

(e) When the mobile station in distress receives no answer to a distress message transmitted on the distress frequency, the message may be repeated on any other available frequency on which attention might be attracted.

[51 FR 31213, Sept. 2, 1986, as amended at 69 FR 64674, Nov. 8, 2004]

### § 80.320 Radiotelephone distress call and message transmission procedure.

(a) The radiotelephone distress procedure consists of:

- (1) The radiotelephone alarm signal (whenever possible);
- (2) The distress call;
- (3) The distress message.

(b) The DSC distress procedure consists of:

- (1) Transmission by a mobile unit in distress;
- (2) Reception;
- (3) Acknowledgement of distress calls;
- (4) Distress relays.

(c) Radiotelephone distress transmissions must be made slowly and distinctly, each word being clearly pronounced to facilitate transcription.

(d) After the transmission by radiotelephony of its distress message, the mobile station may be requested to transmit suitable signals followed by its call sign or name, to permit direction-finding stations to determine its position. This request may be repeated at frequent intervals if necessary.

(e) The distress message, preceded by the distress call, must be repeated at intervals until an answer is received. This repetition must be preceded by the radiotelephone alarm signal whenever possible.

(f) When the mobile station in distress receives no answer to a distress message transmitted on the distress

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frequency, the message may be repeated on any other available frequency on which attention might be attracted.

[51 FR 31213, Sept. 2, 1986, as amended]

### **§ 80.321 Acknowledgement of receipt of distress message.**

(a) Stations of the maritime mobile service which receive a distress message from a mobile station which is beyond any possible doubt in their vicinity must immediately acknowledge receipt. However, in areas where reliable communication with one or more coast stations is practicable, ship stations may defer this acknowledgement for a short interval so that a coast station may acknowledge receipt.

(b) Stations of the maritime mobile service which receive a distress message from a mobile station which is beyond any possible doubt is not in their vicinity, must allow a short interval of time to elapse before acknowledging receipt of the message in order to permit stations nearer to the mobile station in distress to acknowledge receipt without interference.

### **§ 80.322 Form of acknowledgement.**

(a) The acknowledgement of receipt of a radiotelegraph distress message is transmitted in the following form:

- (1) The distress signal SOS;
- (2) The call sign of the station sending the distress message, sent three times;
- (3) The word DE;
- (4) The call sign of the station acknowledging receipt, sent three times;
- (5) The group RRR;
- (6) The message signal SOS.

(b) The acknowledgement of receipt of a radiotelephone distress message is transmitted in the following form:

- (1) The distress signal MAYDAY;
- (2) The call sign or other identification of the station sending the distress message, spoken three times;
- (3) The words THIS IS;
- (4) The call sign or other identification of the station acknowledging receipt, spoken three times;
- (5) The word RECEIVED;
- (6) The distress signal MAYDAY.

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### **§ 80.323 Information furnished by an acknowledging station.**

(a) Every mobile station which acknowledges receipt of a distress message must on the order of the master or person responsible for the ship, aircraft, or other vehicle carrying such mobile station, transmit as soon as possible the following information in the order shown:

- (1) Its identifier;
- (2) Its position;
- (3) The speed at which it is proceeding towards, and the approximate time it will take to reach the mobile station in distress.

(b) Before sending this message, the station must ensure that it will not interfere with the emissions of other stations better situated to render immediate assistance to the station in distress.

### **§ 80.324 Transmission of distress message by station not itself in distress.**

(a) A mobile station or a land station which learns that a mobile station is in distress must transmit a distress message in any of the following cases:

- (1) When the station in distress cannot transmit the distress message.
- (2) When the master or person responsible for the ship, aircraft, or other vehicle not in distress, or for the land station, believes that further help is necessary.
- (3) When, although not in a position to assist, it has heard a distress message which has not been acknowledged.

When a mobile station transmits such a distress message, it must notify the authorities who may be able to assist.

(b) Transmission must be made on the international distress frequencies or on any other available frequency on which attention might be attracted.

(c) Transmission of the distress message must always be preceded by the call indicated below, which must itself be preceded whenever possible by the radiotelegraph or radiotelephone alarm signal. This call consists of:

- (1) When radiotelegraphy is used:
  - (i) The signal DDD SOS SOS SOS DDD;
  - (ii) The word DE;
  - (iii) The call sign of the transmitting station, sent three times.
- (2) When radiotelephony is used: