



DSC-Equipped Marine Radios Must Meet More Rigorous Technical Standards Beginning March 25, 2011

Beginning on March 25, 2011, the Federal Communications Commission will prohibit the manufacture, importation, sale and installation of fixed mounted (non-portable) digital selective calling (DSC) equipped marine radios that do not meet the requirements of International Telecommunications Union (ITU-R) Recommendation M.493-11 or higher, and in the case of Class D VHF DSC equipment only, International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) International Standard 62238. Therefore, after March 25, 2011, radios built to RTCM Standard SC-101 can no longer be manufactured, imported, sold or installed; *however*, previously-installed radios meeting the older standard may continue to be used.

On March 25, 2012 the FCC will not accept new applications (but will continue to process then-pending applications) for certification of handheld, portable DSC-equipped radios that do not meet the requirements of ITU-R Recommendation M.493-11 or higher and IEC 62238. On March 25, 2015 the FCC will prohibit the manufacture, importation, and sale of portable DSC-equipped radios that do not comply with these standards.

Compliance with these new international technical standards ensure DSC-equipped radios will incorporate many new safety features and functions, including eliminating dangers associated with automatic channel switching addressed in Coast Guard Safety Alert 02-10 of April 13, 2010. 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 with the support of the U.S. Coast Guard adopted final rules, effective January 25, 2008, implementing these new more rigorous standards. The FCC stopped accepting new applications for certification of DSC-equipped fixed mounted radios not meeting the new ITU-R and IEC standards on March 25, 2009. (*47 CFR 80.225*)

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