

Basic VHF radio use

Dundee Sailing and Rowing Club

Basic use of the VHF radio

- This is not intended as a replacement for the proper VHF course
 - What is VHF?
 - Some VHF channels
 - What do the buttons do
 - Radio Etiquette
 - Radio check procedure
 - Emergency and Pan Pan call procedure

VHF basic info

VHF = Very high frequency.

- Short-distance communication only
- 5-10 miles
 - Depends on the height of both the transmitter and receiver antenna
 - Power options (High or Low)
- Broadcast communication, so no private conversations
- Unlike mobile phones, only one radio can transmit at a time
- Technically, a licence is required to operate a VHF radio

VHF basic info – Some channels

- M or 37 = Private channels for clubs and marinas
- 12 = Dundee Port and Harbour use
- 16 = Distress safety and emergency calling
- 62/63/64 = HM Coastguard Maritime Safety Information

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marine_VHF_radio

VHF basic info - Buttons

- Operating the radio
 - Power on
 - Channel changer - Go to channel M or 37
 - Lock (stops the accidental change of channels)
 - It doesn't stop the PTT from working
 - PTT (Press To Talk) - transmit
 - Volume
 - Squelch (background noise threshold). Do not set too high.
 - Power option (High or Low). Use High.
 - Charging

VHF basic info - Etiquette

- Use 'call signs' (e.g. Grassy Beach, Eider, Wayfarer 11, Tatha)
- Be direct and to the point
- Remember - other users can hear you (broadcasting)

- Over = you are expecting a response
- Out = you are not expecting a response and want to end the call

- Roger = Do not use
- Roger, over and out, is never used, except on TV and movies

VHF basic info – Radio check

Why do we do a radio check before each row?

VHF basic info – Radio check

Why do we do a radio check before each row?

- Check our radio equipment can receive and make calls
- Adjust settings if needed, i.e. volume or squelsh
- An opportunity to practice. Talking on the radio can feel weird at first

Switch the radios on and go to channel M or 37

VHF basic info – Radio check

Eider



Call sign **Eider**

Radio check

Over = expecting a response.

Out = no response expected.

Clubhouse/Shore



Call sign **Grassy Beach**

1. *"Grassy Beach - this is Eider - radio check - over."*

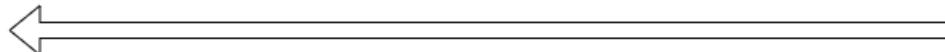


2a. *"Eider - this is Grassy Beach - receiving you loud and clear - over."*

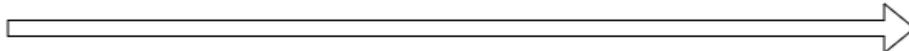


OR

2b. *"Eider - this is Grassy Beach - your signal is weak/distorted - over."*



3. *"Grassy Beach - thank you - out."*



VHF basic info - call for help

Mayday / Emergency

A mayday call is the international signal to notify life-threatening distress, and is only to be used in the case of "grave and imminent danger to a vessel or persons, such as fire, sinking, person overboard etc."

Panpan / Urgent

Maybe you've broken down, suffered significant structural damage to your boat, or someone on board is ill but their condition is not immediately life threatening. These are the kinds of incidents that warrant a Panpan call.

VHF basic info – Emergency

- Make sure the radio is powered on
- Unlock the radio
- Turn to **Channel 16**
- Press the talk button and speak slowly and clearly

VHF basic info – **Emergency**

- **MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY**
 - **THIS IS ROWING SKIFF EIDER, ROWING SKIFF EIDER, ROWING SKIFF EIDER**
 - **MAYDAY, THIS IS ROWING SKIFF EIDER**
 - **WE ARE** (distance and bearing from a landmark, e.g. 20 metres East of the horseshoe buoy - **if you don't know, don't guess, say POSITION UNKNOWN**)
 - **I AM** (nature of distress - sinking, crew member having a heart attack etc)
 - **I REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE**
 - **I HAVE** (number of people on board)
 - Intentions, e.g. we will swim to shore.
 - **OVER**
-
- Release the talk button
 - Keep listening on **Channel 16** for instructions.
 - If you haven't received a reply after 60 seconds, repeat the above.

VHF basic info – Emergency

- Don't worry if you can't remember the procedure.
- As long as you make contact on channel 16 to raise awareness of an emergency, the coastguard will talk you through things.
- You can raise a Mayday call on behalf of another vessel. Listen in on 16 first before calling.

VHF basic info – Urgent

1. Make sure the radio is powered on
 2. Unlock the radio
 3. Turn to **Channel 16**
 4. Press the talk button and speak the following slowly and clearly
 - **PANPAN, PANPAN, PANPAN**
 - **THIS IS ROWING SKIFF EIDER, ROWING SKIFF EIDER, ROWING SKIFF EIDER**
 - **WE ARE** (distance and bearing from a landmark, e.g. 20 metres East of the horseshoe buoy - if you don't know, don't guess, say **POSITION UNKNOWN**)
 - **I AM** (nature of issue, i.e., adrift)
 - **I REQUIRE** (what you require, i.e., a tow)
 - **I HAVE** (number of people on board)
 - Intentions, e.g. I have anchored
 - **OVER**
1. Release the talk button
 2. Keep listening on **Channel 16** for instructions.
 3. If you haven't received a reply after 60 seconds, repeat the above.

VHF basic info

Any more questions?