

## NATIONAL GMDSS TASK FORCE

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The Coast Guard sponsored National Task Force to facilitate implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), is pleased to endorse the new video training product, "Taking the Search Out of Search and Rescue". The GMDSS is a major new upgrade to the international safety radio system used by large ships since 1999. The Task Force has long advocated the voluntary use of selected GMDSS systems by the Recreational Boater as a major safety improvement. While many other nations have made such safety improvements for small craft mandatory and required specialized training, this is not the case in the U.S. Under the circumstances, the Task Force strongly advocates voluntary self training programs to ensure that recreational boat operators fully understand how to properly use the systems to enhance their safety and minimize unintended false distress alerts.

The GMDSS safety system most used by recreational boaters is the Marine VHF Radio with Digital Selective Calling (DSC). This video training program will explain the advantages of DSC and provide guidance on using the system to enhance your safety. While the Coast Guard's coastal VHF modernization program, "Rescue 21" will not be completed until about 2006, the Task Force strongly advocates that recreational boaters upgrade to VHF-DSC now since all large ships and many voluntarily equipped smaller vessels are currently watching the VHF-DSC calling and distress channel and can receive your DSC alert to be passed to the Coast Guard for action.

This video training product will also introduce other GMDSS systems such as the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), the Inmarsat Satellite Systems, and the addition of DSC to traditional Medium and High Frequency terrestrial radio systems. The use of Search and Rescue Transponders (SARTs) are also described. These systems may be of interest to recreational boats that venture farther offshore. Recreational boaters may learn more about the GMDSS by visiting the Task Force website at [www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms) (click on GMDSS, then on GMDSS Task Force).

My best wishes as you launch this valuable training aid,

  
JACK FUECHSEL