MERCURY

GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course

11 – 15 October 2027
Kigali (Rwanda)



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GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course

Ref: 49_1082743 **Date:** 11 – 15 October 2027 **Location:** Kigali (Rwanda) **Fees:** 5300 Euro

The GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course is a one-week course for deck watchkeeping officers, offshore radio operators, and vessel operations supervisors responsible for maritime communications across sea areas A1 through A4. Working with distress alerting protocols, satellite terminals, and terrestrial frequencies, you assemble a Shipboard GMDSS Watchkeeping and Communications Dossier. Mercury Training Center delivers this course to develop dependable watchkeeping and emergency signaling capability.

About This Course

Operational oversights, misconfigured digital calling equipment, and improper distress transmissions create search and rescue failures and regulatory non-compliance on commercial vessels. To follow this course, you must already understand basic navigation watchkeeping principles, fundamental maritime terminology, and shipboard bridge layouts. Through simulated station watchkeeping and structured message handling, you practice terrestrial DSC calling, satellite communications, and alert cancellation.

Who It Is For

- Deck watchkeeping officers responsible for maintaining radio watches, logging transmissions, and handling routine or safety communications.
- Offshore vessel radio operators responsible for monitoring DSC distress frequencies, running satellite terminals, and acknowledging coastal broadcasts.
- Maritime safety superintendents responsible for verifying shipboard communications compliance, logbook accuracy, and bridge emergency readiness.
- Port operations coordinators responsible for exchanging navigational warnings, search coordination data, and weather bulletins with commercial fleets.

This course is not for shore-based electronics maintenance technicians responsible for physical component soldering and antenna hardware repairs, who need specialized marine electronics engineering courses, nor is it for leisure boaters operating solely within sheltered harbors, who are better served by basic coastal radio telephony training.

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Competencies You Will Build

- Terrestrial DSC Operation: Conducting selective calling, routine polling, and emergency distress sequences across marine VHF, MF, and HF frequencies.
- Satellite Terminal Messaging: Managing recognized mobile satellite service terminals for priority distress alerts, fleet messaging, and MSI reception.
- Distress Alert Cancellation: Executing mandatory cancellation protocols across coastal stations and rescue coordination centers following accidental transmissions.
- Maritime Safety Monitoring: Configuring NAVTEX and SafetyNET receivers to capture navigational warnings, meteorological forecasts, and urgent bulletins.
- Emergency Beacon Management: Testing and verifying 406 MHz EPIRBs and radar or AIS Search and Rescue Transponders for operational readiness.
- Radio Log Administration: Recording compulsory daily, weekly, and monthly watchkeeping tests, battery condition reports, and operational traffic details.

What You Will Be Able to Do

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- From standard distress scenarios, transmit and acknowledge priority alerts using marine VHF, MF, and HF Digital Selective Calling controllers.
- Using shipboard satellite communications terminals, establish priority shore-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications through recognized mobile satellite service networks.
- Given an accidental distress broadcast, complete the step-by-step transmission cancellation procedure across terrestrial voice frequencies and satellite circuits.
- From coastal broadcasts and safety schedules, configure NAVTEX and SafetyNET receivers to capture relevant maritime safety information bulletins without data loss.
- Using equipment inspection checklists, conduct operational readiness and battery continuity verifications on 406 MHz EPIRBs and search and rescue transponders.
- From operational watchkeeping events, complete accurate entries in the official bridge radio logbook in compliance with international carriage requirements.

Course Content

Day 1: Terrestrial Radio and Digital Selective Calling Systems

- SOLAS Chapter IV Radiocommunications Architecture Across Defined Sea Areas
- VHF DSC Controller Operation, Channel 70 Monitoring, and Routine Ship-to-Ship Calling
- MF and HF DSC Frequency Management for Medium and Long-Range Watchkeeping
- Voice Distress Procedures, Urgency Pan-Pan Calls, and Securite Traffic Management
- Watchkeeping Handover Protocols and False Alert Prevention in Terrestrial Systems

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Day 2: Satellite Communications and Maritime Safety Information

- Recognized Mobile Satellite Services Terminal Operations and Priority Alerting Protocols
- SafetyNET and NAVTEX Programming for Regional Navigational Warnings
- Enhanced Group Call Management and Meteorological Broadcast Filtering
- Routine Commercial Data Exchange and Telephony Protocols via Satellite Systems
- Managing False Alert Cancellation Across Satellite Ground Stations and MRCC Networks

Day 3: Emergency Locating Equipment and Survival Craft Systems

- Operation, Testing, and Hydrostatic Release Inspections of 406 MHz EPIRBs
- Radar Search and Rescue Transponders Deployment and Interrogation Testing
- AIS Search and Rescue Transponders Integration with Electronic Chart Systems
- Two-Way VHF Survival Craft Radio Verification, Storage, and Battery Care
- Secondary Emergency Reserve Power Supplies, Inverter Checks, and Battery Charging

Day 4: Search and Rescue Coordination and Bridge Administration

- Search and Rescue Coordination Center Notification Paths and Relay Messages
- On-Scene Commander Radio Protocols and Search Pattern Communications
- Compulsory Bridge Radio Logbook Administration and Record Retention Standards
- Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Radio Equipment Operational Readiness Checks
- Ship Safety Radio Certificate Equipment Schedules and Inspection Preparations

Day 5: Integrated Watchkeeping Drills and Dossier Completion

- Exercise on Terrestrial MF and HF DSC Distress Alerting and Relay Sequences
- Exercise on Inadvertent Satellite Alert Cancellation and Coordination Follow-Up
- Exercise on NAVTEX Message Categorization and Bridge Safety Logging
- Exercise on Bridge Radio Logbook Auditing and Reserve Power Source Inspections
- Final Assembly and Validation of the Shipboard GMDSS Watchkeeping and Communications Dossier

Case Studies and Exercises

These suggested activities provide practical application of communication protocols and watchkeeping standards across different marine operations:

- Case study: A commercial container carrier suffering an onboard cargo hold fire, where you assess sea area coverage, transmit emergency DSC traffic, and establish satellite communications with a rescue coordination center.
- Case study: An offshore support vessel experiencing an accidental EPIRB release during maintenance, where you evaluate notification pathways and formulate the required cancellation message to maritime authorities.
- Exercise: An ocean towing operation crossing between coastal and remote sea areas, where you program NAVTEX and SafetyNET receivers, schedule routine radio checks, and log navigational warnings.

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- Exercise: A merchant bridge team preparing for an annual safety survey, where you inspect battery reserve voltages, verify survival craft radios, and assemble complete radio logbook audit records.

What You Take Back

The Shipboard GMDSS Watchkeeping and Communications Dossier provides standardized operational checklists, emergency message templates, and maintenance tracking sheets to guide your bridge communications and inspections during your first month back at work. You will use it to audit radio logs, verify safety equipment, and standardize bridge response protocols.

- Distress alerting and emergency message formulation templates for terrestrial and satellite systems
- Inadvertent distress transmission cancellation procedures for VHF, MF, HF, and satellite terminals
- Radio equipment operational check sheets for daily, weekly, and monthly battery and transmitter tests
- NAVTEX and SafetyNET receiver programming reference cards and logbook verification matrices

Quick Answers FAQ

What background is required before attending the GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course?

You must understand standard bridge watchkeeping practices, basic maritime navigational terminology, and general marine safety concepts. Experience as a bridge watchkeeper, deck cadet, or offshore operations technician provides the necessary grounding for operating communication equipment and logging procedures.

How does this course differ from restricted operator radio training?

This course covers long-range terrestrial HF equipment, global satellite communication terminals, and oceanic distress coordination across sea areas A1 through A4. Restricted training focuses primarily on short-range coastal VHF DSC operation within sea area A1 for nearshore vessels.

What causes the majority of false maritime distress alerts?

Equipment testing errors, improper testing of emergency beacons, operator unfamiliarity with DSC controllers, and accidental activation during maintenance account for most false alerts. Standardized cancellation procedures and disciplined watchkeeping minimize these operational disruptions.

What work product do you take back from the GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course?

You complete and take back the Shipboard GMDSS Watchkeeping and Communications Dossier. It contains emergency calling templates, step-by-step false alert cancellation procedures, routine watchkeeping checklists, and equipment inspection logs for shipboard application.

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For Your Manager

Your team member will develop reliable skills in operating marine terrestrial and satellite communications equipment, managing maritime safety information broadcasts, and executing distress protocols. They return with the Shipboard GMDSS Watchkeeping and Communications Dossier, which provides immediate value on board when auditing bridge radio logs, testing emergency beacons, and maintaining vessel communication compliance.