

IMO Circular, MSC.1/Circ. 1460/ Rev.5 Reg. Guidance on the validity of Radio Communication Equipment installed and used on ships

Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators/ Surveyors/ Auditors

URC25028 06 November 2025

This circular is to advise all stakeholders regarding important guidance issued by the IMO on the validity and required updating of VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on ships.

The 2012, 2015, and 2019 ITU World Radio Communication Conferences introduced extensive changes to Appendix 18 of the Radio Regulations (RR). While these changes do not affect the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), they significantly alter the frequencies used for:

- Vessel Traffic Services (VTS)
- Port Operations
- VHF meteorological, navigational, and urgent marine information broadcasts

Mandatory Requirements

In response, the IMO has issued Circular MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5 ('Guidance on the validity of radio communication equipment installed and used on ships').

This guidance mandates that all VHF radiocommunication equipment required by SOLAS regulations (specifically IV/7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.6, and duplicated equipment under IV/15.6, 15.7) must comply with the latest channel arrangements specified in Appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations.

Compliance Deadline: Compliance must be achieved by the first radio survey scheduled on or after 01 January 2028.

We also note that existing IMO circulars (MSC.1/Circ.1389) and performance standards (MSC.511(105)) already require that shipborne radio equipment be kept updated to meet changing regulatory requirements.

The full text of Resolution MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5 is provided in the appendix to this circular for your detailed reference.

Operational Risk and Early Adoption

A critical point for operators is that many Port State Control (PSC) authorities and VTS centers may transition to these new VHF frequencies before the 01 January 2028 deadline.

Waiting until the deadline may result in a vessel's inability to communicate with VTS or port authorities in regions that have already adopted the new frequencies.

To ensure safe navigation and proper communication, Masters and Radio Operators are advised to review the specific radio channel requirements for their vessel's area of operation prior to any passage.

Action Required

Ship Owners and Managers are strongly urged to take note of these requirements. It is highly recommended to:

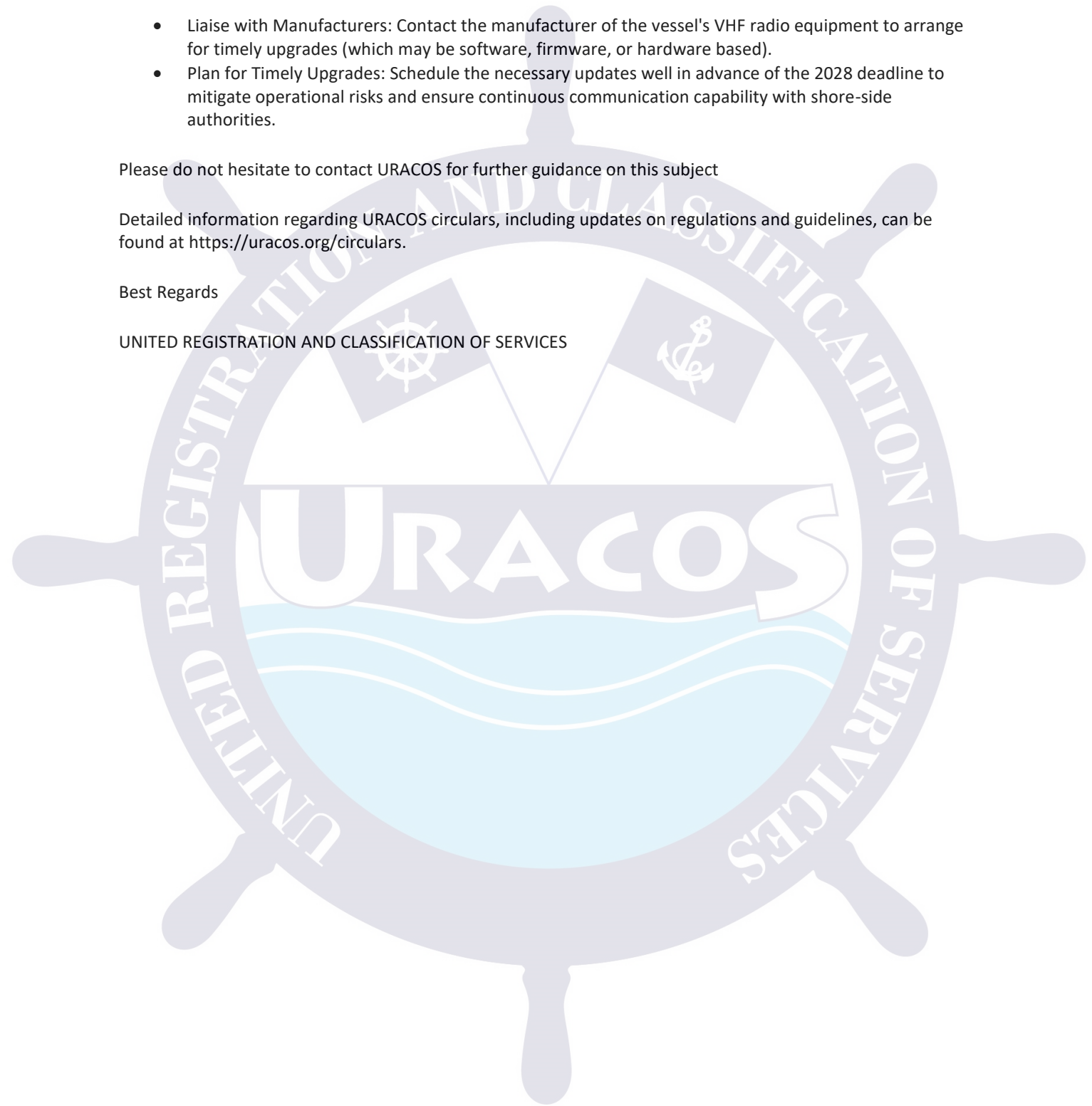
- Liaise with Manufacturers: Contact the manufacturer of the vessel's VHF radio equipment to arrange for timely upgrades (which may be software, firmware, or hardware based).
- Plan for Timely Upgrades: Schedule the necessary updates well in advance of the 2028 deadline to mitigate operational risks and ensure continuous communication capability with shore-side authorities.

Please do not hesitate to contact URACOS for further guidance on this subject

Detailed information regarding URACOS circulars, including updates on regulations and guidelines, can be found at <https://uracos.org/circulars>.

Best Regards

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MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5
27 January 2025

GUIDANCE ON THE VALIDITY OF RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT INSTALLED AND USED ON SHIPS

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 109th session (2 to 6 December 2024), approved the guidance set out in the following paragraphs, taking into account concerns over the availability of VHF radiocommunication equipment compatible with the frequencies and channelling arrangements set out in appendix 18 of the ITU Radio Regulations (RR) – Edition 2020. This guidance recognizes that incompatibility may exist between VHF radiocommunication equipment installed on ships and on shore, and the revised frequencies and channelling arrangements in appendix 18 of the RR.

2 This circular replaces MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.4, which indicated the need for updating existing VHF radiocommunication equipment following the first radio survey after 1 January 2028.

3 The ITU World Radiocommunication Conferences in 2012, 2015 and 2019 made extensive changes to appendix 18 of the RR. While these changes do not affect the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), they do affect the use of other frequencies used for VHF meteorological, navigational and urgent marine information broadcasts, port operations and Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). According to the *Performance standards for shipborne VHF radio installations capable of voice communication and digital selective calling* (resolution MSC.511(105)), VHF radiocommunication equipment should comply with the RR.

4 The *Guidance on procedures for updating shipborne navigation and communication equipment* (MSC.1/Circ.1389) notes that updates to application software and firmware to meet changes in IMO and ITU regulatory requirements are needed.

5 To ensure radiocommunication capability in the ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore and shore-to-ship directions, all VHF radiocommunication equipment on board ships required by SOLAS regulations IV/7.1.1, 7.1.2 and 7.1.6, including the duplicated equipment in accordance with regulations IV/15.6 and 15.7, should comply with the latest channel arrangements in appendix 18 of the RR, by the first radio survey scheduled on or after 1 January 2028, or earlier, as appropriate.

6 Ships should be capable of transmitting and receiving VHF radiotelephony with the shore facilities in their area of operation, noting that some administrations may have already implemented the new available channels prior to 1 January 2028.

7 Member States are invited to bring this information to the attention of the appropriate national authorities and all other parties concerned.