

## CELLULAR PHONE LIMITATIONS IN AN EMERGENCY

Cell phones have several shortcomings in the maritime environment that can delay search and rescue authorities. During a search and rescue (SAR) case, the Coast Guard attempts to broadcast as much information as possible about the case. These broadcasts provide information to mariners that may be in the vicinity of the SAR case so that they can respond appropriately.

A cell phone limits communications between the Coast Guard and the mariner in distress, because other possible rescuers in the area are not immediately made aware of the SAR case. In contrast, a marine radio call allows all other mariners in the area to overhear the distress call and respond if possible.

Most cellular phones are designed for a land-based service. Their offshore coverage is limited and may change without notice. Locating a cellular caller can be difficult. If you don't know your position precisely, the Coast Guard may have difficulty locating you.