

Rescue 21

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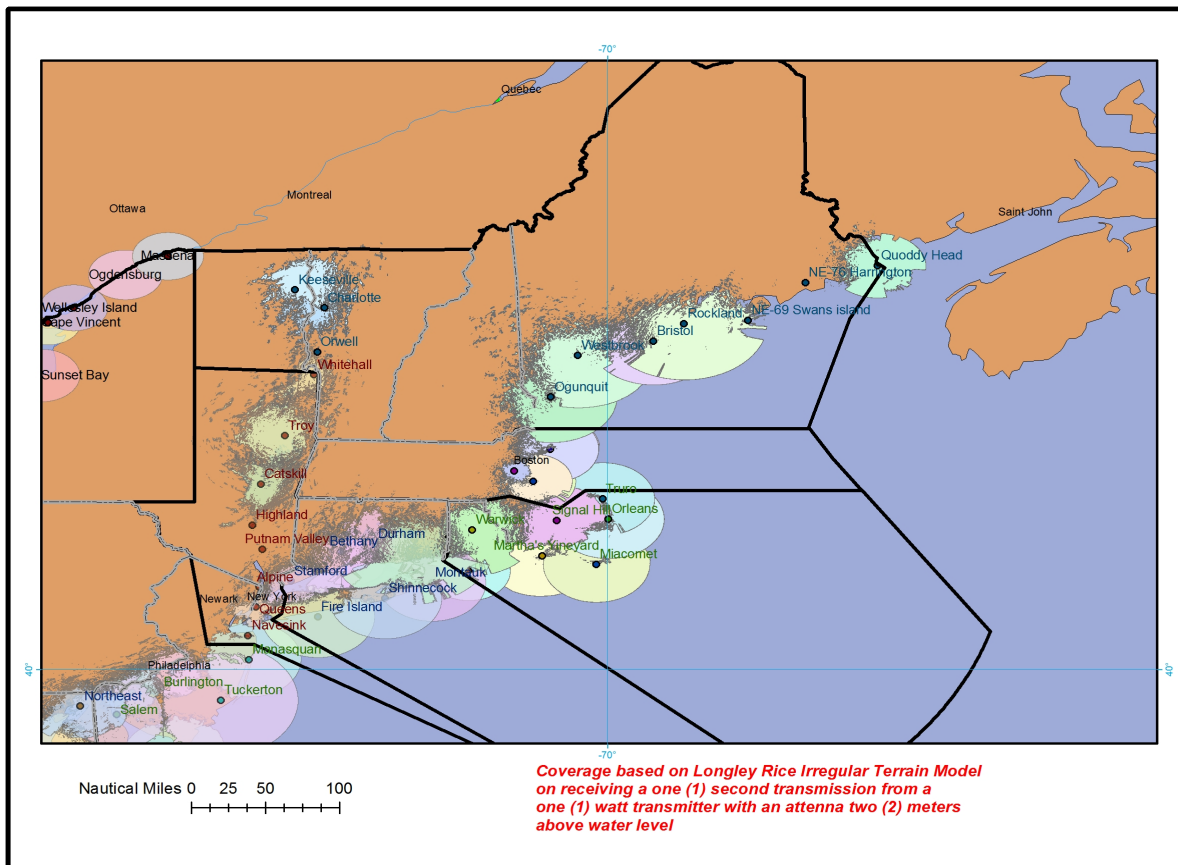
Rescue 21 is the United States Coast Guard's advanced command, control, and direction-finding communications system. Rescue 21 replaces the National Distress and Response System and was created to accurately locate mariners in distress and save lives and property at sea and on navigable rivers. Rescue 21 also has a sub-system titled, Digital Selective Calling (DSC), which uses a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number to associate the boat owner and his or her location and contact information for automated distress calls.

With the push of a button, your DSC radio will send an automated digital distress alert containing your Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number, position, if interfaced with GPS, and the nature of distress to other DSC-equipped vessels and rescue facilities. As a result, the Coast Guard is able to respond more quickly and to more accurately identify the location of the distress call.

In order to take advantage of your DSC/VHF radio, you will need 5 things.

1. A DSC/VHF radio
2. A registered MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity) Number
3. A GPS
4. A Two wire connection to your GPS (NMEA In and Out)
5. A knowledge of your DSC Radio

The coverage for Coast Guard District One is shown below.



Maritime Mobile Service Identities (MMSIs) are nine digit numbers used by maritime digital selective calling (DSC), automatic identification systems (AIS) and certain other equipment to uniquely identify a ship or a coast radio station. MMSIs are regulated and managed internationally by the [International Telecommunications Union](#) in Geneva, Switzerland, just as radio call signs are regulated.

Recreational boaters who remain in U.S. waters can obtain an MMSI through approved organizations such as [BOAT US](#) 1-800-563-1536, [SEA TOW](#) 1-800-4SEATOW, or the [U.S. Power Squadron](#). If you plan to use your radio in foreign waters you are legally required to obtain a Ship Station License from the [FCC](#). They will issue an appropriate MMSI with the License.

A survey has shown that relatively few boaters have obtained MMSI numbers for their DSC radios. Without a registered MMSI number the DSC function will not work. Once your MMSI number is programmed into the radio and the radio and the GPS are linked, you will be able to see the MMSI number displayed on the radio display and you will be able to see your Lat/Long position displayed on your radio as well.

You can't just press the distress button to test it. You'll need to get the MMSI number for either a friend's radio or a shore station. Enter that number into your radio. Choose a working channel, but NOT channel 16. Select Routine Call from your radio. Now press either enter or send. Your radio should indicate the call was sent and indicate that whomever you called received your call. Finally, it will switch to the working channel you chose. You can now communicate with the other station to ensure that everything is working properly.