

Guidance for periodic testing procedures of radio equipment on board ships

1. The primary function of the radio equipment is to alert and communicate with rescue authorities and other ships when in an emergency situation (besides other requirements on different types of communication). According to the technical directions outlined by the Danish Maritime Authority on maintenance of the radio equipment, one must take all necessary precautions in order to keep the equipment serviceable so that performance requirements are met. To ensure this, regular testing, inspection, and use of the equipment is necessary.
2. Testing of the equipment should be in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and may be done either by frequent use of the radio equipment or periodic testing while the ship is at sea.
3. Precautionary measures should be taken against transmitting unintended alerts. Thus, testing should never be carried out when radio is in "DISTRESS MODE".
4. Testing may only be carried out by personnel with a requisite radio certificate.
5. Daily testing procedures.

The following should be controlled at least once a day:

- a. DSC (without radiation) – integrated test facility.
- b. Inmarsat equipment, e.g. log-on, signal volume, and ocean region etc.
- c. Control of automatic update of position in DSC and Inmarsat equipment, e.g. from GPS.
- d. Printers – control of paper (Inmarsat – telex – NAVTEX)

6. Weekly testing procedures.

The following should be tested at least once a week:

- a. DSC – make a call to a coast radio station, e.g. a test call (MF/HF).
- b. Inmarsat equipment – make a call via earth station, e.g. a test call.
- c. Portable VHF radio transceiver. Control state of batteries.
- d. ERIRBs to be controlled. Test that container and mounting are clean and intact.
- e. Radio batteries – energy supply back-up. Test state of batteries.

7. Monthly testing procedures.

The following should be tested at least once a month:

- a. SART – integrated test facility. Control expiration date of the battery.
- b. Antenna. Keep them clean, remove salt deposit, and control cables and insulators.

8. Yearly testing procedures.

The following should be tested at least once a year:

- a. EPIRBs (float free and manual activation) should be tested at the yearly radio check. See the Danish Maritime Authority guidelines no. 1, January 10, 2003, on yearly testing of 406 MHz satellite Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs).
- b. Radio batteries – energy supply back-up. Battery capacity to be tested at least once a year, e.g. with a battery tester.

9. Daily use of the radio equipment may replace a testing, e.g. replace test calls to a coast radio station.

10. The test results should be noted in the radio log book or the ship's log book.