GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course

12 – 16 April 2027
Amsterdam (Netherlands)



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Ref: 30_239598 **Date:** 12 – 16 April 2027 **Location:** Amsterdam (Netherlands) **Fees:** 5200 GBP

Introduction:

The GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course provides maritime radio personnel with the operational competence required to operate terrestrial and satellite radiocommunication equipment within the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. This one-week course prepares deck officers and maritime communication watchkeepers to execute emergency alerting and validate a GMDSS Radio Station Emergency Operation and Logbook Protocol. Delivered at practitioner depth through a time-pressured simulation practical mode, delegates navigate distress traffic under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea Chapter IV. Maritime professionals master distress, urgency, and safety communications by attending the GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course with Blackbird Training Centre.

Course Objectives:

- Distinguish between Sea Area A1 VHF coverage and Sea Area A3 Recognized Mobile Satellite Service architectures under modernised SOLAS Chapter IV regulations.
- Apply International Telecommunication Union Radio Regulations Article 55 operational procedures across digital selective calling frequencies and radiotelephony distress channels.
- Select appropriate terrestrial and satellite distress alerting mechanisms based on vessel position, equipment status, and urgency criteria.
- Interpret Maritime Safety Information broadcasts received via international NAVTEX services and Enhanced Group Call satellite receivers.
- Compare false distress alert cancellation procedures under MSC.1/Circ.861 against standard distress relay acknowledgement protocols to avoid coastal rescue disruption.
- Justify radio installation maintenance strategies and reserve power testing schedules in accordance with international maritime convention requirements.

Target Audience:

- Watchkeeping deck officers responsible for bridge radiocommunications who must decide between digital selective calling distress alerts and direct voice urgency broadcasts.
- Marine operations watchkeepers responsible for offshore fleet communications who must select terrestrial or satellite frequencies based on operational sea area boundaries.
- Vessel traffic and coastal monitoring personnel responsible for maritime distress monitoring who must evaluate emergency traffic priorities and search and rescue coordination channels.
- Offshore support vessel supervisors responsible for bridge safety equipment compliance who must verify battery reserve capacities and radio installation survey readiness.



Course Outline:

Day 1: GMDSS Regulatory Framework and Sea Area Architectures

- SOLAS Chapter IV Regulations: Establishing Global Carriage Requirements for Cargo and Passenger Ships
- Sea Area A1 vs Sea Area A3 Architectures: Evaluating Coastal VHF Ranges Against Satellite System Coverage
- STCW Regulation IV/2 Standards: Defining Mandatory Competency Frameworks for Certified Radio Operators
- ITU Radio Regulations Article 55: Regulating Marine Radio Operator Certifications and Watchkeeping Mandates
- Non-SOLAS Guidelines MSC.1/Circ.803/Rev.1: Integrating Offshore Service Craft into Maritime Communications

Day 2: Terrestrial Radiocommunications and Digital Selective Calling

- VHF DSC Channel 70 Operations: Automating Distress Alerts and Ship to Shore Watchkeeping
- MF 2187.5 kHz vs HF Distress Frequencies: Selecting Terrestrial Frequencies Based on Atmospheric Wave Propagation
- Simplex vs Duplex Voice Communication: Managing Channel 16 Distress Sequences and Port Operations
- Narrow-Band Direct-Printing Telegraphy: Operating High-Frequency Marine Radio Telex Under ITU Procedures
- Antenna Tuning Units and Power Supplies: Verifying Transmitter Matching and Emergency Battery Cutover

Day 3: Recognised Mobile Satellite Services and Maritime Safety Information

- Inmarsat-C Systems vs Iridium Maritime Terminals: Comparing Recognised Mobile Satellite Service Bridge Configurations
- Enhanced Group Call Systems: Receiving Coordinated SafetyNET Fleet Broadcasts and Meteorological Warnings
- NAVTEX 518 kHz Service: Configuring International Receiver Frequencies and Broadcast Station Rejection Settings
- Ship Earth Station Distress Buttons: Initiating Priority Satellite Alerts to Rescue Coordination Centres
- Maritime Safety Information Message Routing: Processing Navigational Warnings Navarea Bulletins and Meteorological Alerts



Day 4: Emergency Equipment, Search and Rescue, and Incident Response

- COSPAS-SARSAT 406 MHz EPIRBs: Deploying Hydrostatic Release Units and Conducting Operational Self-Tests
- Radar SART vs AIS-SART: Differentiating 9 GHz Responders from Automatic Identification Transponders
- Accidental Alert Cancellation MSC.1/Circ.861: Executing Standardized Retraction Procedures Across DSC Frequencies
- On-Scene SAR Coordination: Facilitating Radiocommunication Between Surviving Craft and Aircraft Coordinators
- Emergency Reserve Energy Checks: Measuring Battery Specific Gravity Voltages and Charger Load Performance

Day 5: Simulation Distress Scenarios and Station Logbook Protocol

- Simulated Mayday Traffic Response: Relaying Distress Traffic and Coordinating Rescue Operations Against Clock
- Pan-Pan and Securite Urgency Management: Prioritising Medical Evacuation Messages and Maritime Hazards
- Stationary Radio Auditing: Validating Radio Station Licensing Documentation and Operator Logbook Entries
- Equipment Failure Response vs Secondary Alerting: Activating Redundant Transceivers Under System Malfunction
- Final Deliverable Formulation: Validating the GMDSS Radio Station Emergency Operation and Logbook Protocol

Skills You Will Gain:

- VHF DSC Alerting
- MF/HF Radio Telex Operation
- Recognised Mobile Satellite Configuration
- NAVTEX Message Filtering
- EPIRB Testing and Deployment
- SART Operational Verification
- False Distress Alert Cancellation
- GMDSS Radio Logbook Administration



Why Attend This Course:

- From uncertain radio frequency selection to precise operation of terrestrial and satellite digital selective calling transceivers during emergencies.
- From risk of improper false alert cancellations to executing standard retraction procedures under MSC.1/Circ.861.
- From fragmented bridge record-keeping to maintaining compliant radio logs aligned with SOLAS Chapter IV regulations.
- From unstructured emergency response to delivering a validated GMDSS Radio Station Emergency Operation and Logbook Protocol.

Conclusion:

The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System establishes a coordinated worldwide radio network ensuring rapid assistance during maritime emergencies. This course clarifies critical distinctions between VHF coastal networks, terrestrial high-frequency wave propagation, and modern multi-provider recognised satellite services. Designed for navigational officers, fleet supervisors, and marine communications specialists operating at practitioner depth, the curriculum delivers hands-on familiarity with emergency alerting, maritime safety broadcasting, and distress traffic management under international conventions.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What is the GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course?

The GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course is a one-week operational training programme covering maritime radio communication equipment. It prepares seafarers to manage distress, urgency, and routine traffic across terrestrial and satellite networks in full compliance with international maritime conventions.

What is the difference between Sea Area A1 and Sea Area A3 in GMDSS training?

Sea Area A1 is defined by the radiotelephone coverage of at least one coastal VHF station with continuous digital selective calling alerting, whereas Sea Area A3 encompasses global coverage provided by Recognised Mobile Satellite Services excluding the extreme polar regions.

Which international standard governs the GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course?

This course aligns with Chapter IV of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, the International Maritime Organization Model Course 1.25, STCW Regulation IV/2, and the International Telecommunication Union Radio Regulations Article 55.



Is the GMDSS General Operator Certificate Training Course appropriate for deck officers at practitioner depth?

Yes, it is designed for deck officers and marine watchkeepers seeking operational fluency in distress alerting, false alert cancellation procedures, satellite safety terminals, and maritime safety information receivers through hands-on simulation.

