

3.29 Communications Equipment, GPS, Radar, AIS

A submission from Royal Yachting Association

Purpose or Objective

To ensure that yachts can hear transmissions on a VHF in all weather conditions thus reducing pressure on Coastguards and other vessels.

Proposal

MoMu0,1,2,3	3.29.6 If the marine radio transceiver is a VHF:
MoMu0,1,2,3	a) a minimum rated output power of 25 W,
MoMu1,2,3	b) if installed after 2015 be DSC capable,
MoMu0	c) a marine VHF DSC radio covering all international and US marine channels and meeting International Telecommunications Union (ITU) class D.
MoMu0,1,2	d) a masthead antenna not less than 38 cm (15”) in length and co-axial feeder cable with not more than 40% power loss,
MoMu3	e) a masthead antenna and co-axial feeder cable with not more than 40% power loss
MoMu1,2,3	f) DSC capable VHF transceivers shall be programmed with an assigned MMSI (unique to the boat), be connected to a GPS receiver and be capable of making distress alert calls as well as sending and receiving a DSC position report with another DSC equipped station,
MoMu1,2	g) have an external speaker in the cockpit.

Current Position

As above

Reasons

A RORC working party have undertaken a review of the Offshore Special Regulations.

From the Rolex Fastnet Race Review 2023, it is clear from the feedback not just from the coastguard, but importantly from the competitors, that there were difficulties hearing the VHF throughout the first day and evening in the rough weather. Mandatory cockpit speakers will ensure yachts are not relying on HH VHF's or VHF's that are mounted below decks to hear transmissions.

HM Coastguards noted trends across the RFR fleet of a lack of listening watch on VHF Ch16. Assets were deployed to track yachts down with lifeboats, helicopters and planes following boats to try to get in VHF contact with them. Emergency services would have been better deployed if the yachts had been able to hear the transmissions. 27% of competitors that answered the survey reported being unable to hear their VHF's, either fixed or hand held, whilst on deck.
