

NAUTICAL NOTES

NOTE NO 9
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GMDSS INSTALLATIONS



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Now that GMDSS Installations are appearing on vessels in greater numbers it is incumbent on officers to remember that the Ship shore tanker and gas carrier checklists still require the radio installations to have their transmitting aerials earthed.

Surveyors have their problems too, we want answers to questions but we also have to be reasonably satisfied that they are the correct answers and therein lies a difficulty. Of the Ships I have attended recently three could not find any form of aerial switching box, four knew where it was but did not think it applied to GMDSS fits and two did not understand the question! One tried to palm me off with the copper strip from the support structure to the deck.

Some systems however, are switched by menu generated designators within the electronics and can only be accessed via keyboard and multi function switches. Of the letters I have sent out to manufacturers of equipment regarding specific installations it is interesting to report that of the two who did respond one has responded with positive technical advice and another has indicated that earthing is not required on

GMDSS.... hopefully everyone will now check the regulations again and their own installations!

An indication of how the system has changed is given by S.P. Radio A/S of Aalborg in Denmark who responded immediately by fax detailing the method for isolating aerials as follows:

The Sailor 1000B has a specific button to ground the aerial.

The Sailor HF 2000 system uses a control box identified as RE2100 and by pressing Rx and Freq buttons simultaneously the LED read out will show "**Gnd- AE**".

Now, in the good old days anyone could see that the aerials were earthed because there were physical mechanical contacts or switches the size of soup plates. I suggest that it is a little more difficult to be sure nowadays but when asked ship's staff really should know. It is not enough to say when the power is off it is grounded unless you can show chapter and verse to prove it.

I look forward to responses from manufacturers with variations on the theme and from any others who may have observations on different systems.

This Note will be updated as more information is received.