

## VHF MARINE RADIO CHANNELS FOR RECREATIONAL BOATERS

It's important that boaters use the correct channel when communicating on a VHF (very high frequency) marine band radio.

Here are VHF-FM non-commercial channels recreational boaters may use in specific situations. Federal Communications Commission regulations require boaters having VHF radios to maintain a watch on either channel 9 or channel 16, whenever the radio is turned on and not communicating with another station. All non-emergency traffic should be communicated on another channel (not channels 9 or 16).

New Channel Number	Old Channel Number	Ship Transmit MHz	Ship Receive MHz	Use
09	09	156.450	156.450	Boater Calling. Commercial and Non-Commercial. VDSMS
13	13	156.650	156.650	Intership Navigation Safety (Bridge-to-bridge). Ships >20m length maintain a listening watch on this channel in US waters.
16	16	156.800	156.800	International Distress, Safety and Calling. Ships required to carry radio, USCG, and most coast stations maintain a listening watch on this channel.
1022	22A	157.100	157.100	Coast Guard Liaison and Maritime Safety Information Broadcasts. Broadcasts announced on channel 16.
68	68	156.425	156.375	Non-Commercial. VDSMS
69	69	156.475	156.475	Non-Commercial. VDSMS
70	70	156.525	156.525	Digital Selective Calling (voice communications not allowed)
71	71	156.575	156.575	Non-Commercial. VDSMS
72	72	156.625	156.625	Non-Commercial (Intership only). VDSMS

Please note, channel numbers previously designated by a two-digit channel number ending with the letter A are now recognized internationally by a four-digit channel number beginning with a “10.” For example, channel 22A is now 1022. For a complete list of U.S. VHF marine radio channels, please visit [The Navigation Center for Excellence](#).

### **VHF-FM Channels 9 and 16**

The FCC established VHF-FM channel 9 as a supplementary calling channel for noncommercial vessels (recreational boaters) at the request of the U.S. Coast Guard. A ship or shore unit wishing to call a boater would do so on channel 9, and anyone (boaters included) wishing to call a commercial ship or shore activity would continue to do so on channel 16. Recreational boaters would continue to call the Coast Guard and any commercial facility on channel 16. The purpose of the FCC regulation was to relieve congestion on VHF channel 16, the distress, safety and calling frequency.

Since the Coast Guard generally does not have the capability of announcing an urgent marine information broadcast or weather warning on channel 9, use of channel 9 is optional. The Coast Guard recommends boaters normally keep tuned to and use channel 16 in those waters unless otherwise notified by the Coast Guard.

### **More Information**

[Federal Communications Commission](#)

[The Navigation Center for Excellence](#)

[USCG's Division of Boating Safety](#)

Updated: March 2017