



How to Install an MMSI Number on your Marine Radio – Marine Safety

Are you going fishing this year? Then make sure you have an MMSI number installed on your VHF Radio! A Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) is a nine-digit number that identifies your boat, similar to a cell phone number. It's programmed into your maritime radio and used to contact other boats directly and can also send a signal for help in an emergency. Getting an MMSI number is free.

Why Are MMSI Numbers Important?

The most important reason for having a VHF-DSC radio with an MMSI is the capability to automatically send a distress call that includes the details of your boat and its position to nearby vessels and the Coast Guard. Perhaps more importantly, if you as the captain are incapacitated and need your shipmate(s) to handle a distress call, you can easily teach them how to do it. All DSC-enabled radios have a red flap over the distress button. Press and hold the distress button for 5 seconds, and an alarm noise and a distress call with all the pertinent details of your vessel is sent. Once the distress call is received, you or your shipmates can answer any follow-up questions that the responding party may have on channel 16. DSC-enabled radios will continue to automatically send the distress call every four minutes until a response is received.

So, suppose you're in distress, and you have an MMSI number on your VHS-DSC radio. In that case, you can tell the Coast Guard who you are, the name of your vessel, and the nature of your emergency while simultaneously sending a distress message to every vessel within line of sight - all with the push of a few buttons. Even if you are injured or knocked overboard, the DSC signal can continue transmitting. Your EPIRB and your satellite phone can't do that.



How do you get one?

To obtain an MMSI number, you need to:

- Follow the steps below, OR
- contact us directly at info@haoom.ca or 604-719-2506, and we will help you get your MMSI number!


Step 1: Make Sure Your Radio Was Manufactured in the Last 15 Years

Look at the buttons on the radio. If one of them is marked “distress” (usually protected by a red cover), you have a DSC-enabled radio. If you don’t see it, check the back of the mic; that’s where the button is on older radios. If you can’t find the distress button, you will need a new radio to install an MMSI number and to be safer on the water.

If you need help getting a new radio, please contact us at info@haoom.ca or send us a message at (250) 266 2004.


Step 2: Get an MMSI Number by Filling Out Form AB

To obtain an MMSI, you must complete [Form AB](#). The Form AB can be completed online here: <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/smt-gst.nsf/frm-eng/TPHM-AP5KFJ>.



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Form AB – Ship station with VHF/DSC only, unlicensed or licensed radio

*Indicates mandatory fields.

[Return to CPC-2-3-07, Obtaining Identities in the Maritime Mobile Service.](#)

i **Note:**
Form A – Ship station with VHF/DSC only, unlicensed radio
Form B – Ship station with a radio licence
 Forms A and B have been combined into **Form AB – Ship station with VHF/DSC only, unlicensed or licensed radio**, which is provided below.

i Once you have completed the form, click **Submit** at the bottom of the page. The form will be directed to the appropriate district office based on the applicant’s address. For inquiries regarding MMSIs, contact your nearest ISED [district office](#).

i **IMPORTANT:** Radio equipment must be certified under the applicable Canadian Radio Standard Specifications for use in Canada.

MMSI information

* MMSI type (**required**)

Licensed
 Not licensed

How to Fill Out Form AB

On the online application form, you must fill out six different sections.

Section 1: MMSI Information

a) For the MMSI type:

Please select:

- **“Not Licensed”** for a vessel that does not require a radio licence and is fitted with only a VHF/DSC radio, or
- **“Licensed”** for a vessel that requires a radio licence or is fitted with additional equipment.

Note: Do you require a licence for your marine radio? If your radio is installed on a boat and you stay **in Canadian waters**, you do not need a radio licence. Complete [Form AB](#) and choose the option “Not Licensed”.

If your radio is installed on a boat and you **might leave Canadian waters**, you must apply for a radio licence. Please refer to the CPC-2-3-07, *Obtaining Identities in the Maritime Mobile Service* document and complete form [IC-3020](#). Then complete [Form AB](#) and choose the option “Licensed”.

Please select:

- **“Assign a new MMSI”** if you don’t have an MMSI number, or
- **“Modify an existing MMSI”** if you already have one MMSI number.

Section 2: INMARSAT Information

Please select if your vessel:

- is equipped with an INMARSAT mobile terminal standard **B, C or M (Type 0 MMSI)**, or
- is, or soon will be, fitted with an INMARSAT mobile terminal standard **C (Type 1 MMSI)**, or
- is, or soon will be, fitted with an INMARSAT mobile terminal standard **B or M (type 3 MMSI)**

Note: What is an INMARSAT mobile terminal?

INMARSAT is a two-way store and forward communication system transmitting messages from ship-to-shore and ship-to-ship. Its primary function is to share position data from fishing vessels. If you are unsure whether your boat has an INMARSAT mobile terminal, then it is most likely that your vessel is not equipped with it.



Example of an INMARSAT mobile terminal

Section 3: Vessel Information

Fill out the form with the information of the vessel that will have the radio onboard.

Section 4: Applicant information

Fill out the form with the vessel owner's information.

Section 5: Emergency contact information

Fill out the form with your emergency contact information. If you don't have a contact person you can use in case of an emergency, you can use Ha'oom Fisheries Society as an emergency contact information. For our email, please use info@haoom.ca, and for our phone number, please enter these two numbers in the application form: (250) 725-2802 and (250) 266 2004.

Section 6: Radio information

For the radio equipment on board (VHF/DSC GPS LORAN), look at the buttons on the radio. If one of them is marked "distress" (usually protected by a red cover), you have a DSC-enabled radio. If you don't see it, check the back of the mic; that's where the button is on older radios. If you can't find the distress button, we strongly advise you to get a new radio.

Step 3: Update Your Radio with Your New MMSI Number

After you've submitted the online form, you should receive an email response with your new MMSI number from Industry Canada within two to three days. Be sure to check your spam or junk folder for the email from Industry Canada.

Once you receive your number, you must enter your MMSI number into your radio. You will need to refer to your radio's manual for specific steps to enter your new MMSI number. If you have lost the manual for your radio, you can find it online, and we can help! Or you can contact us at info@haoom.ca or send us a message at (250) 266 2004, and we will enter your MMSI number into your radio.

For most VHS-DSC radios, press and hold the CALL/MENU button for 1 second to enter DSC SETUP. Then, select USER MMSI and proceed to input your number.

Most DSC radios have a DSC Test option that allows you to send a DSC call to another vessel. For example, you can use a friend's MMSI number to send the test call to their radio, and then they can acknowledge it. In addition, you can likely set up your radio to auto reply to DSC test calls so that no intervention is required on your end to respond.

Step 4: Connect Your VHS-DSC Radio with Your GPS

Your radio's manual will also include instructions on how to connect your radio with your vessel's GPS. It's just a couple of wires and won't require advanced training, but you can always contact us at info@haoom.ca or send us a message at (250) 266 2004, and we will connect your GPS to your radio for you. This will ensure that your position is automatically sent out with your distress signal. Rescuers will immediately know your exact location, and assistance will arrive sooner.

Conclusions:

If you are in doubt about how you should specify any details on the application form or how to enter your MMSI number into your radio, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are here to help!

Once you have your MMSI installed, both you and your boat will be much more prepared in the event of an emergency.

For more information, please contact us at info@haoom.ca or at 604-719-2506.