



Up Top In Operations

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Effect of Hoax Calls

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It is unfortunate that the subject of hoax calls never disappears. We have written about this subject enumerable times, and yet it comes back to haunt us.

One of the most recent cases occurred in Salinas, California. A helicopter crew from Coast Guard Station San Francisco located a hoax caller transmitting a false mayday from his home. The hoax caller claimed his vessel was taking on water. Because of the reported situation, the Coast Guard promptly responded. After a lengthy search from a 47-foot motor lifeboat (MLB) and a C-130, they were unable to locate the hoax vessel. The Coast Guard HH-65

helicopter was able to locate the signal and alerted the Salinas Police Department and the Federal Communications Commission to the whereabouts of the hoax caller.

The most disturbing factor was that this hoax mayday interrupted an *actual* mayday call from a sinking vessel off the coast of Santa Cruz, California. Fortunately, the true mayday was located and the two crew members were saved. The vessel sank shortly after the crew members were rescued. The cause of the sinking was unknown.

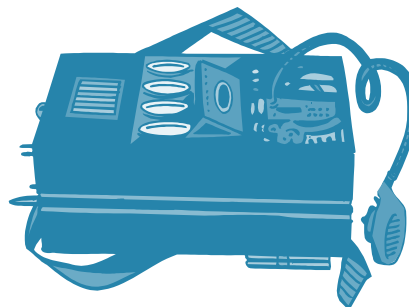
I emphasize, knowingly and willfully transmitting a hoax call is a **felony!** It is punishable with up to six years in

prison, a \$250,000 fine and repaying the Coast Guard for all costs. The maximum civil penalty is \$5,000.

Proper emphasis cannot be placed on the effect that hoaxes have. Lt. Commander Jeff Carter, Public Affairs Officer for the Coast Guard Pacific Area, states, "They place unnecessary risk on the rescuers responding to the calls, they interfere with legitimate search and rescue cases and they cost the American taxpayer hundreds of thousands of dollars annually."

LT. John Debok, Operations Officer of Group Mayport, said the Coast Guard takes hoax and false distress calls very seriously. "False mayday or distress calls not only tie-up valuable resources and are waste of taxpayer dollars, but they are also illegal."

We, as Auxiliaries, have the opportunity when in contact with the boating public, to emphasize the importance that hoax calls have and their effects.



Why buy when you can rent?

EPIRB Rental Program

For recreational boaters, a marine radio is not required to be carried on the vessel. Boat U.S. has offered a safety suggestion that costs very little, considering the benefits it provides. They have offered an affordable rental program for boaters who go offshore infrequently and don't wish to spend the \$800.00 to purchase an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), which is potentially a life-saving device.

When the EPIRB is activated, a signal is sent which is picked up by satellites and relayed to the Coast Guard. The encoded signal includes the boat's description and emergency information.



The cost for renting an EPIRB from BOAT U.S. is \$45 per week, and it is available on a first-come, first served basis.

This offer should reduce any reason for recreational boaters not to be protected when they travel a distance offshore.

Maritime Survivor Locating Device

The Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) has discussed the usage and purpose of the Maritime Survivor Locating Device (MSLD).

The MSLD is intended to be carried by individuals who work on the deck of vessels, or in activities on shore where falls into the water are a risk, or in other water activities where the location of individuals in the water may be required.

The purpose of the MSLD is to send an alert locally to the vessel the person is from, and possibly to other vessels close by. The MSLD does not replace the functions of an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon).

The MSLD consists of a transmitter module, an integral antenna, and, finally, a power source — all contained in a watertight wearable case.

The MSLD is manually activated and may also be automatically activated. The MSLD operates on a radio frequency authorized for this type of service.

The RTCM knows the importance of this safety factor and they will continue to work on this project until it is perfected.

**PLEASE DON'T FORGET
THE 63rd ANNIVERSARY HF
RADIO CELEBRATION,
05 OCTOBER, 2002, FROM
THE ISAR COMPETION IN
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN !**

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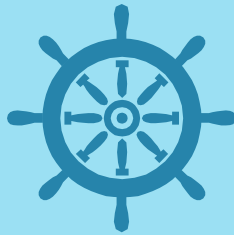
Shore Power Cords

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All shore power cords should be rated suitable for marine use, or even better, "UL-Marine" listed for marine shore power applications.

- **CAUTION**—Never use ordinary "outdoor use" extension cords to provide electrical shore power to the boat or any equipment, such as a battery charger on board the boat. These cords are not rated for and are not suitable for the severity of a marine environment. They can deteriorate and/or overheat causing electrical shock, a short circuit or a fire.
- All shore power cords should have male (plug) and female (connector) ends of the locking type. Make sure that the plugs and connector are turned to the full locked position by pulling on them. If they are locked they will not pull out. A plug or connector not properly locked may become loose, causing arcing (sparks) on the contacts, resulting in a failure, and possibly a fire.
- All male plug ends must be molded on or have weatherproof boots in order to provide a weatherproof seal when plugged into a receptacle.
- All female connectors must have a locking ring to secure the power cord to the inlet on the boat and provide a weatherproof seal.

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- Adapters, if needed, should always be used at the shore end of a power cord.
- The "Main" breaker on the boat should be turned "OFF" before connecting or disconnecting the shore power cord.
- Always connect the female end of the cord to the boat before plugging the male end to the shore power receptacle. Always disconnect the male end from the shore power receptacle before disconnecting the female end from the boat.



- Never leave a shore power cord on the dock with the male end connected to power unless in use. A live cord end is dangerous, especially if it accidentally falls in the water.
- Periodically check shore power cords for the following:
 - ✓ Cuts, cracks or severe abrasion on the shore power cord yellow covering.
 - ✓ Bent, broken or loose plug blades.
 - ✓ Plug blades or connector

slots that show signs of overheating or arcing as indicated by:

- ✘ Brown or black discoloration around blades or slots.
 - ✘ Discoloration and/or erosion of blades
- Faulty locking rings due to cracking or damaged threads.
 - Do not allow cords to be pinched by a closed door or hatch. Pinch points create resistance and generate heat that can result in a fire.
 - Never coil a cord tightly on the dock while in service. A coil can generate heat by induction and can cause a fire. Hang the cord loosely on a hook or pin or lay it out in a loose coil of only a few turns.
 - Spray all contacts monthly with an electric contact cleaner, corrosion inhibitor and lubricant.
 - If a shore power cord should become immersed in salt water it should immediately be washed with fresh water, thoroughly dried, and blades and contact slots sprayed with a moisture displacement compound before reusing.

(This information was adapted from BOATING SAFETY CIRCULAR 81, December, 1999)