

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VESSEL OWNERS, OPERATORS, CREW, & SAFETY PERSONEL SAFETY & BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE CERTIFICATES

Many offshore service vessels fall into the classification of Small Passenger Vessel when it comes to issues with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and therefore must comply with certain requirements of the Communications Act. Compliance requires that vessels maintain a valid Communications Act Safety Radiotelephony Certificate as well as a Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephony Certificate.

By Definition, small passenger vessels are vessels less than 100 gross tons that carry more than six passengers for hire. The radio requirements depend on the area of operation as specified on the Coast Guard's Certificate of Inspection (COI). Typically, the areas of operation are: inland waters adjacent to open ocean or open ocean not more than 20 nautical miles - open ocean more than 20 miles but less than 100 - more than 100 miles but less than 200 - or more than 200 miles.

Requirements and regulations are available in FCC Rules & Regulations Part 80 but for the sake of reference and simplicity, we have prepared a “Check List” to aid vessel owners and operators. Periodically reviewing this list may very well enhance the safety of the vessel and if used in the preparation for inspections, could save both time and money.

The process of completing proper inspections and issuing the appropriate certificates is a serious responsibility for the licensed electronics technician. They are not authorized by the FCC or Coast Guard to issue any exceptions or exemptions. Requesting or expecting them to do so only jeopardizes the safety of your vessel, the crew, and the FCC license of the technician. Always have a vessel and/or company representative present during inspections to assist with documentation and to verify that all procedures meet your requirements as well as those of the controlling authorities.

BASIC EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

(condensed)

- **Less Than 20 Miles:**
VHF radio - Navigation receiver – EPIRB
- **Less Than 100 Miles:**
VHF radio - Navigation receiver – EPIRB - SSB radio
- **Less Than 200 Miles:**
VHF radio - Navigation receiver – EPIRB - SSB radio or an INMARSAT satellite station - NAVTEX receiver - Reserve power source
- **More Than 200 Miles:**
2 VHF radios - Navigation receiver – EPIRB - SSB radio w/alarm generator, watch receiver & a separate SSB DSC/AMVER receiver (or) an INMARSAT - NAVTEX receiver - Reserve power source

** This paper and the "Small Passenger Vessel Electronics Check List" are provided as a quick reference guide only. Always defer to the appropriate USCG and FCC rules and regulations for details and precise requirements.*