

# VHF Radiotelephone and VHF/MF Broadcast Services

## Coast stations

If you are within VHF range (up to about 35 miles) of the coast of Great Britain, you will probably be able to call one of the coast radio stations operated by BT.

BT's coast stations are staffed or controlled by fully qualified and experienced radio officers, most of whom have served in the Merchant Navy. They will be pleased to help you make your call.

## Convenience

The coast radio stations can put you in touch with any telephone customer in the UK. You can also use BT's facilities to call over 200 foreign countries.

You can send telegrams and make reverse charge calls. Your family, friends or business associates can phone you and send you telegrams.

If the vessel is fitted with Selcall, you can be alerted by the coast station immediately, providing that the Selcall number is quoted. The person contacting you from shore should give Portishead Radio your Selcall number, if known.

Personal calls, Advice of Duration and Charge (ADC) and Premium Calls are also available.

## Free with VHF

The VHF service is extremely cost effective. You have access to broadcast information such as navigational warnings, weather bulletins, gale warnings and casualty messages.

Port and marina calls, as well as all direct communications with other vessels, are normally free with a VHF radio. This is easily the best way of getting on-the-spot information.

## Making a link call

1 If you are making a telephone call, contact the nearest BT coast radio station by first listening in turn to each of its working channels, as shown on the map overleaf.

*Please avoid using the broadcast channel around the scheduled broadcast times.*

2 A free channel is indicated by silence – no speech, dialling tone or 'pips'.

3 Switch to high-power, press the mic-switch and operate your set for at least eight seconds (while calling the coast station three times and giving the name of your vessel or call sign twice). Release the switch. You should then hear the channel engaged signal (the pips) and the coast station radio officer will answer as soon as he is free.

4 The coast station will acknowledge with:  
Vessel calling . . . . Radio on Channel . . . . ?

or:

(Vessel name or call sign), this is . . . . Radio, what have you for me?

5 Press the mic-switch and say:

. . . . Radio this . . . . (call sign). My ship's name is . . . . I spell . . . . My account code is . . . . (YTD) plus area code and telephone number to be debited)

or . . . . (Golf Bravo one four – GB14)

or . . . . (your own account number if different) . . . . I have (state number) telephone calls for you . . . . Release the mic-switch . . . . the (first) number required is (telephone number).

6 The coast station will then connect you if possible.

7 Remember that, with a simplex or semi-duplex set, the mic-switch must be released each time you finish speaking, to enable you to hear your correspondent. The operation of full duplex sets is simpler, when on a two-frequency channel, as reception is retained in the earpiece even when the mic-switch is depressed. Duplex sets operate in the simplex mode when switched to a single-frequency channel.

8 When the shore correspondent replaces their handset, the timer stops and the radio officer will advise you of the duration of the call, if required. Acknowledge and switch your set back to Channel 16.

Coast radio stations are grouped into two regions, northern and southern. Incoming calls through any station in a region will be answered by the radio officer at the first free operating position. This will not necessarily be your nearest staffed station.

*The link call steps are summarised overleaf.*

Remember, the coast station staff are there to help you. Call by telephone or on a free working channel for information or advice.

## How you are billed

If your vessel is licensed in the UK, your radiotelephone calls can be included on your home or business telephone bill by using the Yacht Telephone Debit (YTD) facility. This applies to calls connected on VHF through BT coast stations to telephones in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

To use this facility, quote YTD, followed by your home or business telephone number, instead of an Accounting Authority Identification Code (AAIC). You must remember to give this information each time you use the service, otherwise you will be billed separately for these calls.

However, if your vessel is not UK licensed, you must arrange with an ITU-recognised Accounting Authority, of which BT is one, to bill you direct. Alternatively, you may agree suitable billing arrangements in advance.

Your AAIC is printed with your call sign on your VHF radio licence.

You can also pay for calls with a BT Chargecard.

## Marine call

You can check the latest weather conditions anywhere in the UK, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Simply contact your nearest BT coast radio station and give the Marine Call number for the area required.

Other Premium Call services (identified by code 0898) can also be accessed.

For UK licensed vessels, the charge may be included on your home telephone bill. Just ask for YTD when booking the call. The price is made up of the normal link call charge plus an additional premium for the information providers.

## Medical advice and assistance

To help out in cases of emergency, BT operates a medical call service which is free to the user. This is made available by giving the name of your vessel and call sign, and telling the coast station radio officer you are making a 'Medico' call. This will give you priority over ordinary calls.

If you need advice, you will be connected as soon as possible to a doctor. Alternatively, you may want to ask for advice in the form of a telegram.

If you need help rather than advice, the details will be referred to HM Coastguard.

For a more urgent medical call you can precede the message with the urgency, signal PAN-PAN MEDICO, making your initial call on Channel 16.

## Distress traffic

If you are making a distress call, use Channel 16 and not the working channels.

## Shore to ship

To make a call to a vessel from shore, call Portishead Radio free of charge on 0800 378389 and give the following details: the name of the ship, call sign (if known), the person being called, and the ship's position (if known).

It is helpful if you know which coast station the ship is listening to. Portishead Radio can help establish which coast station is likely to be in range.

The booking will then be passed to the appropriate coast station and the vessel will be called on Channel 16.

If there is no reply from the vessel, it will be called again during regular traffic list broadcasts. If you want to cancel the call please advise Portishead Radio.

The vessel can be alerted immediately if it is fitted with Selcall. If you know the Selcall number, please give this when booking the call. If not, Portishead Radio will be able to help.

## Further information

This card should provide enough information for you to see how you can benefit from our VHF telephone and VHF/MF broadcast services.

However, BT also provides: direct dial ship-to-shore telephone (Autolink RT), the Data-over-VHF facility, Navtex broadcasts, telephone, telegram and automatic radiotelex on MF and HF bands for worldwide coverage and a global satellite service via the Inmarsat system. If you would like further information on any of these services, please contact us at:

## Portishead Radio Station

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Highbridge  
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TA9 3JY

Telephone (0278) 772253

Telex 46506 BTGKA G

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*Offices in  
Europe, North America,  
and the Far East.*

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