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To:	All Surveyors/Auditors
Applicable to flag:	All Flags
Second GMDSS Service Approved	
Reference:	GMDSS -SOLAS

Second GMDSS Service Approved

The **Iridium** network has been approved to provide Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) services, signaling an end to a decades-long satellite communications monopoly by **Inmarsat**.

The IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) has agreed to recognize that the Iridium network meets all the criteria of the IMO needed to provide mobile satellite services in the GMDSS and to adopt the "Statement of Recognition" proposed by the U.S. as a Committee Resolution.

The MSC also agreed that Iridium and the U.S., the delegation sponsoring Iridium's application at the IMO, will work with the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), which will monitor progress in Iridium's implementation of the service. The IMSO will report to the MSC once a Public Services Agreement has been entered between Iridium and the IMSO, likely marking the start of the service.

Iridium formally began the process to become a recognized GMDSS mobile satellite service provider in April 2013 and plans to begin providing GMDSS service in early 2020.

The announcement comes one day before Iridium is scheduled to launch its sixth Iridium NEXT mission with SpaceX, delivering five more Iridium NEXT satellites to low earth orbit as part of the continuing upgrade to its existing satellite network. The Iridium network is a constellation of 66 low-Earth orbit (LEO), cross-linked satellites that provide reliable, low-latency satellite communications

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to the entire world, including the poles.

A bit of history

The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System is the technical, operational and administrative structure for maritime distress and safety communications worldwide. It was established in 1988 by the IMO which adopted a revised text of Chapter IV of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, (SOLAS) - dealing with Radiocommunications - and was implemented globally between 1992 and 1997. The GMDSS establishes the radiocommunications equipment that ships are required to carry, how this equipment shall be maintained and how it is used and provides the context within which governments should establish the appropriate shore-based facilities to support GMDSS communications.

In the days since the very first radio equipment was used at sea, most famously in the sending of a distress message from the *Titanic*, vessels in distress relied almost exclusively on their ability to alert other ships to obtain assistance. The GMDSS, for the first time, changed this procedure and established a new fundamental principle that a ship in distress should send its alert to a shore, which would then accept the responsibility of coordinating the necessary rescue efforts. Thus, the GMDSS became inextricably linked with the parallel implementation of the International Search and Rescue Convention (SAR Convention) and the development of shore facilities within the structure of the World-Wide SAR Plan.

In addition to improving the capability of ships to declare their distress and receive assistance coordinated from the shore, the GMDSS also provided for the broadcast of essential safety-related information – Maritime Safety Information (MSI) – which could be received automatically on-board ships at sea and would offer ships the chance to navigate more safely on a routine basis.

REFERENCES:

- GMDSS -SOLAS- Chapter IV of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, (SOLAS) - dealing with Radiocommunications

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kindest Regards,
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