

## 33CFR26 - BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE RADIOTELEPHONE REGULATIONS



*Note: The Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act is applicable on the navigable waters of the United States which include the territorial sea (the waters, 12 nautical miles wide, adjacent to the coast of the United States and seaward of the territorial sea baseline), internal waters that are subject to tidal influence, and, those not subject to tidal influence but that are used or are determined to be capable of being used for substantial interstate or foreign commerce (see 33 CFR §§ 2.22(a)(1) and 2.36).*

### Section

26.01 Purpose.

26.02 Definitions.

26.03 Radiotelephone required.

26.04 Use of the designated frequency.

26.05 Use of radiotelephone.

26.06 Maintenance of radiotelephone; failure of radiotelephone.

26.07 Communications.

26.08 Exemption procedures.

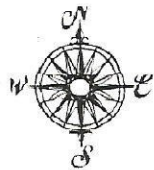
26.09 List of exemptions.

### **§ 26.01 Purpose.**

(a) The purpose of this part is to implement the provisions of the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act. This part:

- (1) Requires the use of the vessel bridge-to-bridge radiotelephone;
- (2) Provides the Coast Guard's interpretation of the meaning of important terms in the Act;
- (3) Prescribes the procedures for applying for an exemption from the Act and the regulations issued under the Act and a listing of exemptions.

(b) Nothing in this part relieves any person from the obligation of complying with the rules of the road and the applicable pilot rules.



**§ 26.02 Definitions.**

For the purpose of this part and interpreting the Act:

"**Act**" means the "Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act", 33 U.S.C. sections 1201-1208;

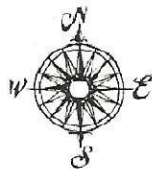
"**Towing vessel**" means any commercial vessel engaged in towing another vessel astern, alongside, or by pushing ahead;

**§ 26.03 Radiotelephone required.**

<u><b>Bridge to Bridge Act</b></u>	
Applicability. The Bridge-to-Bridge Act and the regulations of this part apply to the following vessels in the navigable waters of the United States:	<u>VHF Channels:</u> 13 / 22A / Possibly 67
(a) <b>Every power-driven</b> vessel of 20 meters or over in length while navigating;	X
(b) Every vessel of 100 gross tons and upward carrying one or more passengers for hire while navigating;	X
(c) Every <b>towing vessel</b> of 7.8 meters (26 feet) or over in length, measured from end to end over the deck excluding sheer, while navigating; and	X
(d) Every dredge and floating plant engaged, in or near a channel or fairway, in operations likely to restrict or affect navigation of other vessels.	X
Voluntary Vessels: All other vessels i.e. <20m Commercial & Recreation, Sailing vessels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USCG recommends: ALL commercial vessels carry a Marine VHF radio</li> <li>• Voluntarily Equipped, No FCC Inspection, No Station License, No Operators License</li> </ul>

(a) Unless an exemption is granted under §26.09 and except as provided in paragraph (a) (4) of this section, this part applies to:

- (1) **Every power-driven vessel of 20 meters or over in length while navigating;**
- (2) **Every vessel of 100 gross tons and upward carrying one or more passengers for hire while navigating;**
- (3) **Every towing vessel of 26 feet or over in length while navigating; and**
- (4) **Every dredge and floating plant engaged in or near a channel or fairway in operations likely to restrict or affect navigation of other vessels except for an unmanned or intermittently manned floating plant under the control of a dredge.**



**Best Practice:** *The USCG recommends that any professionally operated vessel (and even pleasure craft) have a radio on board in order to report emergency conditions and to communicate intentions with other boaters.*

(b) Every vessel, dredge, or floating plant described in paragraph (a) of this section must have a radiotelephone on board capable of operation from its navigational bridge, or in the case of a dredge, from its main control station, and capable of transmitting and receiving on the frequency or frequencies within the 156-162 Mega-Hertz band using the classes of emissions designated by the Federal Communications Commission for the exchange of navigational information.

(c) The radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section must be carried on board the described vessels, dredges, and floating plants upon the navigable waters of the United States.

(d) The radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section must be capable of transmitting and receiving on VHF FM **channel 22A** (157.1 MHz).

(e) While transiting any of the following waters, each vessel described in paragraph (a) of this section also must have on board a radiotelephone capable of transmitting and receiving on VHF FM **channel 67** (156.375 MHz):

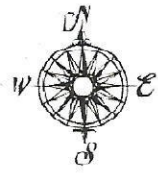
(1) The lower Mississippi River from the territorial sea boundary, and within either the Southwest Pass safety fairway or the South Pass safety fairway specified in 33 CFR 166.200, to mile 242.4 AHP (Above Head of Passes) near Baton Rouge;

(2) The Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet from the territorial sea boundary, and within the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet Safety Fairway specified in 33 CFR 166.200, to that channel's junction with the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal; and

(3) The full length of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal from its junction with the Mississippi River to that canal's entry to Lake Pontchartrain at the New Seabrook vehicular bridge.

(f) In addition to the radiotelephone required by paragraph (b) of this section, each vessel described in paragraph (a) of this section while transiting any waters within a Vessel Traffic Service Area, must have on board a radiotelephone capable of transmitting and receiving on the VTS designated frequency in Table 26.03(f) (VTS Call Signs, Designated Frequencies, and Monitoring Areas) . (Located on pages 214 and 215.)

**Note:** *A single VHF FM radio capable of scanning or sequential monitoring (often referred to as "dual watch" capability) will not meet the requirements for two radios.*



#### § 26.04 Use of the designated frequency.

(a) No person may use the frequency designated by the Federal Communications Commission under section 8 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1207(a), to transmit any information other than information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels or necessary tests.

(b) Each person who is required to maintain a listening watch under section 5 of the Act shall, when necessary, transmit and confirm, on the designated frequency, the intentions of his vessel and any other information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels.

(c) Nothing in these regulations may be construed as prohibiting the use of the designated frequency to communicate with shore stations to obtain or furnish information necessary for the safe navigation of vessels.

(d) On the navigable waters of the United States, **channel 13** (156.65 MHz) is the designated frequency required to be monitored in accordance with §26.05(a) except that in the area prescribed in §26.03(e), channel 67 (156.375 MHz) is an additional frequency.

(e) On those navigable waters of the United States within a VTS area, the designated VTS frequency is the designated frequency required to be monitored in accordance with §26.05.

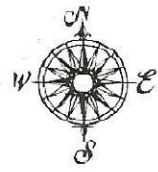
*Note: As stated in 47 CFR 80.148(b), a VHF watch on Channel 16 (156.800Mhz) is not required on vessels subject to the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act and participating in a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) system when the watch is maintained on both the vessel bridge-to-bridge frequency and a designated VTS frequency.*

#### § 26.05 Use of Radiotelephone.

Section 5 of the Act states that the radiotelephone required by this Act is for the exclusive use of the master or person in charge of the vessel, or the person designated by the master or person in charge to pilot or direct the movement of the vessel, who shall maintain a listening watch on the designated frequency. Nothing herein shall be interpreted as precluding the use of portable radiotelephone equipment to satisfy the requirements of this Act.

#### § 26.06 Maintenance of radiotelephone; failure of radiotelephone.

Section 6 of the Act states that whenever radiotelephone capability is required by this Act, a vessel's radiotelephone equipment shall be maintained in effective operating condition. If the radiotelephone equipment carried aboard a vessel ceases to operate, the master shall exercise due diligence to restore it or cause it to be restored to effective operating condition at the earliest practicable time. The failure of a vessel's radiotelephone equipment shall not, in itself, constitute a violation of this Act, nor shall it



obligate the master of any vessel to moor or anchor his vessel; however, the loss of radiotelephone capability shall be given consideration in the navigation of the vessel.

### **§ 26.07 Communications.**

No person may use the services of, and no person may serve as, a person required to maintain a listening watch under section 5 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1204, unless the person can communicate in the **English** language.

### **§ 26.08 Exemption procedures.**

(a) The Commandant has redelegate to the Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, with the reservation that this authority shall not be further redelegate, the authority to grant exemptions from provisions of the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act and this part.

(b) Any person may petition for an exemption from any provision of the Act or this part;

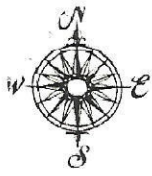
(c) Each petition must be submitted in writing to U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Safety and Environmental Protection, 2100 Second Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20593-0001, and must state:

(1) The provisions of the Act or this part from which an exemption is requested; and (2) The reasons why marine navigation will not be adversely affected if the exemption is granted and if the exemption relates to a local communication system how that system would fully comply with the intent of the concept of the Act but would not conform in detail if the exemption is granted.

### **§ 26.09 List of Exemptions.**

(a) All vessels navigating on those waters governed by the navigation rules for the Great Lakes and their connecting and tributary waters (33 U.S.C. 241 et seq.) are exempt from the requirements of the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act and this part until May 6, 1975.

(b) Each vessel navigating on the Great Lakes as defined in the Inland Navigation Rules Act of 1980 (33 U.S.C. 2001 et seq.) and to which the Vessel Bridge-to-Bridge Radiotelephone Act (33 U.S.C. 1201-1208) applies is exempt from the requirements in 33 U.S.C. 1203, 1204, and 1205 and the regulations under §§26.03, 26.04, 26.05, 26.06, and 26.07. Each of these vessels and each person to whom 33 U.S.C. 1208(a) applies must comply with Articles VII, X, XI, XII, XIII, XV, and XVI and Technical Regulations 1-9 of "The Agreement Between the United States of America and Canada for Promotion of Safety on the Great Lakes by Means of Radio, 1973."



## § 184.510 Recommended emergency broadcast instructions.

The following emergency broadcast instructions, when placed on a placard, will satisfy the requirement contained in §184.506 for an emergency broadcast placard:

### (a) Emergency Broadcast Instructions.

- (1) Make sure your radiotelephone is on.
- (2) Select 156.8 MHz (channel 16 VHF) or 2182 kHz. (Channel 16 VHF and 2182 kHz on SSB are for emergency and calling purposes only.)
- (3) Press microphone button and, speaking slowly—clearly—calmly, say:
  - (i) “MAYDAY—MAYDAY—MAYDAY” for situations involving Immediate Danger to Life and Property; or
  - (ii) “PAN—PAN—PAN” for urgent situations where there is No Immediate Danger to Life or Property.
- (4) Say: “THIS IS (INSERT VESSEL'S NAME), (INSERT VESSEL'S NAME), (INSERT VESSEL'S NAME), (INSERT VESSEL'S CALL SIGN), OVER.”
- (5) Release the microphone button briefly and listen for acknowledgment. If no one answers, repeat steps 3 & 4.
- (6) If there is no acknowledgment, or if the Coast Guard or another vessel responds, say: “MAYDAY” OR “PAN”, (INSERT VESSEL'S NAME).”
- (7) DESCRIBE YOUR POSITION using latitude and longitude coordinates, LORAN coordinates, or range and bearing from a known point.
- (8) STATE THE NATURE OF THE DISTRESS.
- (9) GIVE NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AND THE NATURE OF ANY INJURIES.
- (10) ESTIMATE THE PRESENT SEAWORTHINESS OF YOUR VESSEL.
- (11) BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR VESSEL: (INSERT LENGTH, COLOR, HULL TYPE, TRIM, MASTS, POWER, ANY ADDITIONAL DISTINGUISHING FEATURES).
- (12) Say: “I WILL BE LISTENING ON CHANNEL 16/2182.”
- (13) End message by saying: “THIS IS (INSERT VESSEL'S NAME & CALL SIGN).”
- (14) If your situation permits, stand by the radio to await further communications with the Coast Guard or another vessel. If no answer, repeat, then try another channel.