Regulations of 1 July 2014 No. 955 on radio communication equipment for Norwegian ships and mobile offshore units

Legal basis: Laid down by the Norwegian Maritime Authority on 1 July 2014 under the Act of 16 February 2007 No. 9 relating to ship safety and security (Ship Safety and Security Act) sections 6, 9, 11, 15, 19 and 20, cf. Formal Delegation of 16 February 2007 No. 171 and Formal Delegation of 31 May 2007 No. 590.
EEA references: EEA Agreement Annex II Chapter XIX point 1 (Directive 98/34/EC).
Amendments: Amended by Regulations of 15 September 2014 No. 1215, 20 December 2017 No. 2379. 16 December 2019 No. 1847 (in force on 1 January 2020), 18 March 2021 No. 815 (in force on 1 April 2021), 24 January 2022 No. 118., 27 March 2023 No. 459, 18 December 2023 No. 2173 (in force on 1 January 2024), 14 February 2024 No. 280, 20 June 2024 No. 1378 (in force on 1 July 2024), 26 June 2025 No. 1372, 16 December 2025 No. 2652 (in force on 1 January 2026).

Section 1. *Scope of application*

These Regulations apply to Norwegian:

a. cargo ships of 24 metres in length (L) and upwards, or of 300 gross tonnage and upwards;
b. ships with Passenger Certificate;
c. ships with Passenger Ship Safety Certificate engaged on foreign voyages;
d. mobile offshore units;
e. recreational craft of 24 metres in overall length and upwards.

Amended by Regulations of 16 December 2019 No. 1847 (in force on 1 January 2020), 16 December 2025 No. 2652 (in force on 1 January 2026).

Section 2. *Required radio communication equipment for cargo ships and passenger ships*

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS) consolidated edition 2020 chapter IV, as amended by MSC.496(105) shall apply as regulation.

The first paragraph shall apply correspondingly to cargo ships of less than 300 gross tonnage engaged on foreign voyages and ships engaged on domestic voyages.

Amended by Regulations of 16 December 2019 No. 1847 (in force on 1 January 2020), 18 December 2023 No. 2173 (in force on 1 January 2024).

Section 3. *Exemptions for cargo ships operating in trade area 2 and lesser trade area*

Cargo ships operating in trade area 2 and lesser trade area need not comply with the radio equipment requirements specified in sections 2 and 3a, cf. SOLAS regulations IV/7 and IV/8, provided that the ship is:

a. provided with VHF-DSC radio installation;
b. provided with two hand-held VHF radios;
c. of 100 tons gross tonnage and above and equipped with SART.

Amended by Regulations of 18 December 2023 No. 2173 (in force on 1 January 2024), 16 December 2025 No. 2652 (in force on 1 January 2026).

Section 3a. *Requirements for SARTs and hand-held VHF radios on cargo ships of less than 300 gross tonnage*

Cargo ships of less than 300 gross tonnage shall be equipped with the following number of SARTs and hand-held VHF radios:

a. two hand-held VHF radios;
b. one SART.

For cargo ships of less than 100 gross tonnage, the requirement in the first paragraph subparagraph b applies only in trade area 3 or a greater trade area.

Added by Regulation of 18 December 2023 No. 2173 (in force on 1 January 2024), amended by Regulations of 14 February 2024 No. 280, 16 December 2025 No. 2652 (in force on 1 January 2026).

Section 4. *Requirements for EPIRB for cargo ships in trade area 3 or greater trade area*

Cargo ships operating in trade area 3 or a greater trade area shall be equipped with a manually activated satellite EPIRB installed on the bridge, so that it can be readily activated and taken to a survival craft.

Amended by Regulation of 16 December 2025 No. 2652 (in force on 1 January 2026).

Section 5. *Exemptions for passenger ships engaged on domestic voyages*

Passenger ships engaged in trade on lakes and rivers are exempt from the requirements of section 2 second paragraph.

Passenger ships operating in trade area 1 and up to small coasting need not comply with the requirements for radio equipment pursuant to SOLAS regulations IV/7 and IV/8, cf. section 2 second paragraph, when the ships are:

a. operating in trade area 1 or greater and provided with a VHF radio installation capable of:
    i. transmitting and receiving DSC on the frequency 156.525 MHz (channel 70);
    ii. initiating transmission of distress alerts on channel 70 from the position from which the vessel is normally navigated; and
    iii. transmitting and receiving radiotelephony on the frequencies 156.300 MHz (channel 6), 156.650 MHz (channel 13) and 156.800 MHz (channel 16);
b. operating in trade area 1 or greater and provided with a hand-held VHF. Passenger ships permitted to carry more than 12 passengers shall be provided with two hand-held VHFs. Passenger ships permitted to carry more than 250 passengers shall be provided with three hand-held VHFs;
c. operating in trade area 2 or greater, is permitted to carry more than 12 passengers and is provided with a radar SART or an AIS-SART;
d. operating in trade area 4 and Small Coasting and provided with a float-free EPIRB;
e. operating in trade area Small Coasting has additional fixed or portable maritime VHF equipment.

Amended by Regulations of 20 December 2017 No. 2379 (in force on 1 January 2018), 16 December 2019 No. 1847 (in force on 1 January 2020), 18 December 2023 No. 2173 (in force on 1 January 2024).

Section 6. *Additional requirements for passenger ships with arrangements for helicopter operations*

Passenger ships with arrangements for helicopter operations shall, in addition to the requirements of section 2:

a. be capable of communicating with helicopters from the ship’s wheelhouse, bridge or the ship’s radio station. The communication shall take place on maritime VHF or aeronautical VHF if permission has been granted for the use of aeronautical frequencies;
b. be capable of operating in three-way communication between the helicopter, the helideck watch and the radio operator; and
c. have a hand-held VHF with headset available for the helideck watch.

Section 7. *Required radio communication equipment on mobile offshore units*

Mobile offshore units shall follow the requirements for cargo ships of section 2, with the exception of the requirements in SOLAS chapter IV regulations 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6

The number and location of VHF radiotelephone apparatuses (VHF), radar-SARTs and AIS-SARTs for lifeboats and liferafts shall comply with section 11.6 of the MODU Code. The term "should" in the MODU Code shall be replaced by "shall".

Fast rescue boats shall be equipped with VHF.

VHF in lifeboats and fast rescue boats shall be provided with a headset. The master shall be able to use the VHF and operate the boat simultaneously.

If the VHF in the lifeboat is hand-held, it shall be connected to an additional antenna which is permanently fitted in the lifeboat.

Amended by Regulations of 20 June 2024 No. 1378 (in force on 1 July 2024), 26 June 2025 No. 1372.

Section 8. *Exemptions for non-self-propelled mobile offshore units*

Non-self-propelled mobile offshore units are exempt from the radio equipment requirements of section 7 first paragraph, cf. SOLAS regulations IV/8, IV/9, IV/10 and IV/11, provided they satisfy the requirements of the MODU Code (Code for the Construction and Equipment of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units, 2009) sections 11.4 and 11.5.

Amended by Regulation of 20 June 2024 No. 1378 (in force on 1 July 2024).

Section 9. *Additional requirements for mobile offshore units with helideck*

Mobile offshore units with helidecks shall, in addition to the requirements of section 7, cf. section 2, be provided with:

a. two fixed VHF/AM radiotelephony stations capable of being operated from a position with a clear view of the entire helideck and a portable VHF/AM radiotelephone apparatus for each member of the helideck crew for communication with helicopters within the frequency range 118-137 MHz. One of the fixed stations shall be connected to batteries having a capacity to operate the station for at least 6 hours, or batteries for equipment connected to the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) when the batteries have sufficient capacity to operate both types of equipment at the same time;

b. aeromobile radio beacon for the transmission of position-finding signals. The radio beacon shall satisfy the International Civil Aviation organisation's (ICAO) provisions concerning the operation and service of Non-Directional Radio Beacons (NDB). On/off switch for the radio beacon shall be located in a room satisfying the requirements of SOLAS regulation IV/6.2.

Amended by Regulation of 18 March 2021 No. 815 (in force on 1 April 2021).

Section 10. *Requirements for duplication of equipment and maintenance of radio equipment*

The radio equipment on board ships and mobile offshore units shall have shore-based maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

The maintenance of EPIRBs on ships and mobile offshore units shall be performed by the equipment manufacturer or a service station approved by the manufacturer. The battery shall be disconnected before the EPIRB is sent for service or periodical maintenance.

EPIRBs shall be marked with the date of the most recent periodical maintenance.

Ships and mobile offshore units in sea areas A3 or A4 shall have duplicated equipment. On mobile offshore drilling units, the radio equipment required pursuant to the first sentence shall be placed as far away as possible from the primary radio equipment required by section 7.

The batteries used as a reserve source of energy, cf. SOLAS regulation IV/13, cf. section 2, shall be replaced at the first sign of reduced capacity. Lead accumulators shall nonetheless be replaced every five years at the latest.

Section 11. *Documentation*

The company shall be able to document compliance with the requirements of the Regulations for equipment and placement thereof. At the request of the Norwegian Maritime Authority, the company shall present the information necessary to decide whether the requirements of the Regulations are satisfied.

Section 12. *Radio records*

Radio records shall be made in a dedicated radio logbook or in the ship’s deck logbook.

Ships and mobile offshore units shall comply with the rules regarding the keeping of radio records pursuant to the Regulations of 27 April 1999 No. 537 on watchkeeping on passenger ships and cargo ships, Appendix A No. 87-89.

Section 13. *Exemptions*

The Norwegian Maritime Authority may upon written application permit other solutions than those required by these Regulations when it is established that such solutions are equivalent to the requirements of the Regulations.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority may exempt a ship engaged on domestic voyages, a cargo ship of less than 300 gross tonnage engaged on foreign voyages or a mobile offshore unit from one or more or the requirements of these Regulations if the company applies in writing for such exemption and one of the following conditions is met:

a. it is established that the requirement is not essential and that the exemption is justifiable in terms of safety;
b. it is established that compensating measures will maintain the same level of safety as the requirement of these Regulations.

Section 14. *Entry into force*

These Regulations enter into force on 15 September 2014.

Section 15. *Transitional provisions*

Passenger ships engaged on domestic voyages shall comply with the requirements of section 5 second paragraph (b) of the Regulations by 1 July 2015.

Amended by Regulation of 24 January 2022 No. 118.

Section 16. *Repeal of and amendments to other regulations*

From the date of entry of force of these Regulations, the following are repealed:

a. Regulations of 11 November 1991 No. 731 concerning radio communication on passenger ships;
b. Regulations of 15 September 1992 No. 693 concerning the form and keeping of logbooks for ships and mobile offshore units sections 14 and 19;
c. Regulations of 16 December 1993 No. 1200 concerning the installation and use of radio equipment on board mobile offshore units;
d. Regulations of 27 January 1999 No. 149 concerning radio installations and radio services on passenger ships and cargo ships to which the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS 1974) applies;
e. Regulations of 12 November 2002 No. 1314 concerning conditions for periodical maintenance of float-free emergency position-indicating beacons;
f. Regulations of 17 December 2004 No. 1856 concerning radio communication for cargo ships;
g. Regulations of 15 January 2008 No. 72 concerning helicopter decks on mobile offshore units sections 33 and 34.