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5<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Paul Jackson  
Director of Standards  
Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Bay 2/17  
Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
Southampton  
SO15 1EG

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2005 regarding Ofcom's consultation on a proposal to reform ships' radio licensing.

### **1. Search and Rescue**

I can confirm that the ships' radio licence would continue to include a record of all maritime radio equipment, including EPIRBs and PLBs. I can also confirm that it would continue to be a legal requirement for the licensee to keep this information up to date.

### **2. Enforcement**

Noted.

We will meet with you to discuss the best way forward.

### **3. Legal requirements**

Noted.

We will keep you apprised with regard to progress on the fixed penalty fine consultation.

### **4. Integrity of the ships' radio licence database**

I can confirm that Ofcom will continue to provide the MCA with access to the ships' radio licence database for both Search and Rescue purposes and to support radio survey and inspection work.

Ofcom do not accept that the introduction of 'licences for life' would result in the degradation of the accuracy of the ships' radio licence database. We estimate that 20% of ships' radio equipment is currently unlicensed nationally and is therefore not listed on the ships' radio licence database. Ofcom believes that the availability of electronic licences at zero cost to the licensee, together with carefully targeted enforcement campaigns and the appropriate application of fixed penalty fines would encourage greater use of licensed ships' radio equipment and would result in an improvement in the quality of the ships' radio licence database.

We hope to begin detailed discussions with the MCA on how to maintain appropriate quality levels as soon as possible. During this period we would also agree the means by which the database would be made available to the MCA in order to assist SAR operations and to support radio survey and inspection work.

We will not introduce life time ships' radio licences before 30 September 2006 (this being the RLC contract end date) so there will be plenty of time for this planning phase.

## **5. Licence delivery**

I can confirm that should it be decided to implement ships' radio licences for life, the licensing system would either be out-sourced by means of a managed contract or would be implemented in-house by Ofcom.

Vic and I would very much like to meet you within the next few days to discuss these points in more detail and to ensure that we fully understand your views.

Kind Regards

Steve Roper  
Head of Deregulation and Contracting Out