



# NATIONAL COASTWATCH CALL US ON VHF CHANNEL 65

## Channel 65 is the National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) dedicated VHF channel. Here's how to use it effectively:

- Call the NCI station by name on Channel 65 – the correct call sign for an NCI station is its name followed by NCI. For example 'St Alban's Head NCI'. Generic calls to 'NCI' or 'National Coastwatch' may get responses from several stations. This is a Duplex channel so you will not be able to hear other vessels calling on it. NCI stations cannot be contacted by DSC but alerts will be received by the Coastguard.
- Calls to 'NCI' or 'National Coastwatch' on channel 16 should be picked up by the Coastguard. NCI watchkeepers cannot normally transmit on channel 16. However, in exceptional circumstances (eg when the caller has been unable to contact the Coastguard) the watchkeeper will tell the caller to 'stand by', contact the Coastguard by phone and pass on their instructions.
- NCI lookouts can handle radio checks, provide actual weather at their location and re-broadcast the current local Inshore Waters Forecast on request, but not the National Shipping Forecast. Suitably equipped lookouts can also check whether a vessel's AIS transponder is functioning.
- Ch65 users should be aware that their VHF radio must comply with International Marine VHF Channels [set to duplex: ship transmits on 156.275 MHz & shore station on 160.875 MHz].  
The US Coastguard and Canadian Coast Guard use a simplex channel 65A working on simplex 156.275 MHz for port operations, which is not valid outside their waters.
- In an emergency, if a vessel contacts NCI with a problem, the watchkeeper will continue to communicate with it on Ch65, and immediately inform the Coastguard by landline and relay their instructions.
- **NB: The correct procedure in an emergency is to issue a DSC Distress or Urgency alert followed by a MAYDAY or PANPAN message on Channel 16.**

For further information about NCI, please visit [www.nci.org.uk](http://www.nci.org.uk) or email [admin01@nci.org.uk](mailto:admin01@nci.org.uk)

