

Topic:

Marine Radios

QC-1205

Resource:

[Marine
Radio
Protocols](#)

Basics: A marine radio is your best choice for on-water communications. Most models will give you access to USCG emergency channels, merchant channels and weather channels in addition to facilitating on-water communications for your paddling group. VHF Marine Channels and requirements are described on the [USCG Navigation Center](#) website. Boaters can be fined for improper use of marine VHF communications.

Question: *What is the best channel to use in an emergency?*

Answer: Marine channel 16 (156.800 MHz) is for international emergency hailing. Channel 16 is monitored 24/7/365 by the US Coast Guard. If you have life threatening emergency the hailing call is “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday”. In case of an urgent problem the call is “Pan-pan, Pan-pan, Pan-pan”. To alert boaters to a navigation situation the call is “Securite’, Securite’, Securite’.”

Question: *What channel should I monitor for weather information?*

Answer: US Marine weather channels are maintained by NOAA’s National Weather Service (NWS). Channels range from WX1 (162.550 MHz) to WX7 (162.525 MHz). Their use varies by locality with overlapping coverage. Most Marine Radios have a special button to access weather channels and may allow background monitoring of these channels for “Alerts.”

Advanced Concepts: You may want to get more information on the following:

- What is channel 9 (156.450 MHz) used for?
- When would I use channel 13 (156.650 MHz)?
- When might I use channels 21A – 23A?
- Is it appropriate to use channels 68 & 69 for personal calling?
- Should we ever use a Marine Radio for “chatting”?

For more information contact

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