



# PUBLIC NOTICE

**Federal Communications Commission**  
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DA 01-698  
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## **WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATION BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON REQUEST BY MARITEL, INC. TO ASSIGN MARITIME MOBILE SERVICE IDENTITIES (MMSIs) TO VESSEL THAT ARE REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED**

**Comment Date: April 18, 2001**

**Reply Date: May 3, 2001**

On March 6, 2001, Maritel, Inc. (Maritel), filed an informal request to permit private entities to assign MMSIs to vessels required by FCC rules and international regulations to obtain FCC authorization.<sup>1</sup>

An MMSI is a unique nine-digit number assigned to commercial and recreational vessels participating in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). Vessel owners need to obtain an MMSI prior to using a digital selective calling (DSC) radio or an INMARSAT ship earth station. The MMSI serves as a "phone number" for the ship and must be programmed into the DSC radio by the user. MMSIs will also be used for shipborne universal automatic identification system (AIS) transponders. Presently, the Commission assigns MMSIs to licensed vessels through the ship station licensing process. As required by treaty, the Commission assigns MMSIs in accordance with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations, and periodically notifies the ITU of assignments made to vessels traveling or communicating internationally.

On March 6, 1997, the Commission released a *Public Notice* announcing that it was considering revising its procedures for the assignment of maritime mobile service identities (MMSIs) by providing blocks of MMSIs to qualified entities for distribution to certain vessel operators.<sup>2</sup> On January 17, 2001, the Commission released a *Public Notice* announcing that the Commission and the United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard) developed a standard agreement to implement with private entities desiring to issue MMSIs.<sup>3</sup> The Commission and the Coast Guard entered into Memoranda of Agreement with BoatUS and Maritel on November 16, 2000, and January 4, 2001, respectively, to distribute MMSIs. Vessels covered by the revised procedures are vessels that are not required by law to carry a radio and do not make international voyages or communications, so are no longer required to obtain an individual license.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maritel Informal Request for Commission Action (filed March 6, 2001) (Request).

<sup>2</sup> FCC Seeks Comment Regarding Revision of Procedures for Assigning Maritime Mobile Service Identities, *Public Notice*, 13 FCC Rcd 9177 (1997).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Announces Revision Of Procedures For Assigning Maritime Mobile Service Identities, *Public Notice*, DA 01-115, (rel. January 17, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> See Amendment of Parts 80 and 87 of the Commission's Rules to Permit Operation of Certain Domestic Ship and Aircraft Radio Stations Without Individual Licenses, *Report and Order*, WT Docket No. 96-82, 11 FCC 14849 (1996). Such vessels will be referred to herein as "exempt" vessels.

Maritel now seeks authority to issue MMSIs to vessels that are required to obtain an individual license as well as exempt vessels, and believes that the public interest will be served by reducing administrative burdens and processing delays for both the maritime community and the Commission.<sup>5</sup> For licensed vessels, Maritel proposes that private entities would ensure that vessels operators have the proper FCC license before an MMSI is issued and would notify the FCC of assignment of MMSIs to licensed vessels so that Commission records can be updated. Maritel believes that sufficient procedures for privatizing the assignment of MMSIs to licensed vessels can be implemented to avoid concerns of potential multiple MMSIs being issued to the same ship station, or assigning an MMSI to a vessel required to have a license but not licensed.

Interested parties may file comment on Maritel's request on or before April 18, 2001. Parties interested in submitting reply comments must do so on or before May 3, 2001. All comments should reference the subject request including the DA number of this *Public Notice*, and should be filed with the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street, SW, TW-325, Washington, D.C. 20554. A copy of each filing also should be sent to 1) International Transcription Services, Inc. (ITS), 1231 20<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 857-3800; 2) Jim Shaffer, Federal Communications Commission, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room 4-C342, Washington, D.C. 20554; and 3) Maria Ringold, Federal Communications Commission, Consumer Information Bureau, Reference Information Center, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room CY-B529, Washington, D.C. 20554.

The full text of the Informal Request, comments and reply comments will be available for inspection and duplication during regular business hours in the Reference Information Center (RIC) of the Consumer Information Bureau (CIB), Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., Room CY-A257. Copies may also be obtained from ITS. For further information regarding the public reference file for these waiver requests contact Maria Ringold, Chief, Wireless Branch, RIC, (202) 418-1355.

Unless otherwise provided, requests for Commission action are subject to treatment by the Commission as restricted proceedings for *ex parte* purposes under Section 1.1208 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1208. Because of the policy implications and potential impact of this proceeding on persons not parties to Maritel's request, we believe it would be in the public interest to treat this case as a permit-but-disclose proceeding under the *ex parte* rules. See Sections 1.1200(a), 1.1206 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1200(a), 1.1206. Therefore, subsequent to the release of this *Public Notice*, *ex parte* presentations that are made with respect to the issues involved in the subject waiver requests will be allowed but must be disclosed in accordance with the requirements of Section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206(b).

For further information, contact Jim Shaffer of the Public Safety and Private Wireless Division of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau at (202) 418-0687, TTY (202) 418-7233 or via email to [jshaffer@fcc.gov](mailto:jshaffer@fcc.gov).

By the Chief, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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Request at 4.