



World's First Truly Global, Real-Time Maritime Emergency Service Launched by Iridium

The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) now covers 100% of the globe with real-time satellite connectivity for the first time

MCLEAN, Va., Dec. 15, 2020 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Iridium Communications Inc. (NASDAQ: IRDM) today announced a historic achievement with the launch of the Iridium® Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) service. The system commenced operation on Friday, December 11th and with it, for the first time in history, Iridium has given seafarers a real-time emergency response and rescue service that works everywhere in the world. No other maritime emergency response system matches the coverage and real-time communications capability of the Iridium GMDSS service. The announcement came during a virtual press conference held featuring Iridium leadership, industry officials and experts.

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GMDSS is an internationally regulated service, governed by the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention. It provides life-saving assistance to seafarers in distress and has required equipment on board more than 60,000 ships today, with many ships carrying multiple terminals. Iridium's service functions much like an international SOS button, however, unlike other options it includes as standard real-time

emergency voice calling service, distress alert (SOS button) and maritime safety information with Iridium's unmatched truly global coverage.

Iridium's GMDSS service is built on the company's upgraded \$3 billion satellite network, completed in 2019, and utilizes the company's valuable L-band satellite spectrum. This spectrum serves as a weather-resilient complement to other satellite broadband capabilities on ships, aircraft and vehicles and is also a requirement for GMDSS terminals on SOLAS-class vessels. With over 1.4 million subscribers around the world, including communications systems on tens of thousands of ships and aircraft today, Iridium's GMDSS service launch epitomizes the company's commitment and tradition of creating a safer environment for the approximately 85% of the world that lacks any or reliable cell phone coverage.

The press event included remarks from Iridium CEO Matt Desch; International Maritime Organization Director of Maritime Safety Heike Deggim; International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO) Director General Captain Moin Ahmed; MAERSK Master Mariner and Senior Marine Specialist Captain Brian Soberg Petersen and Rescue Coordination Center of New Zealand (RCCNZ) Watch Leader and Senior Search and Rescue Officer David Wilson.

"This is a historic moment in both the satellite and maritime industries," said Matt Desch, CEO of Iridium. "It is not every day that you get to announce the launch of a service that will most certainly save lives and is bringing innovation to this important maritime service."

IMO Director of Maritime Safety Heike Deggim shared, "On behalf of the International Maritime Organization, I extend my sincere congratulations to Iridium for announcing the formal launch of its GMDSS services."

Captain Moin Ahmed, Director General of IMSO, regulator of the GMDSS system, provided some additional context regarding the qualification process for Iridium noting, "Overall, our formal evaluation of Iridium took more than four years, and at each step Iridium successfully demonstrated that its Safety Voice, Distress Alert and Iridium SafetyCastSM maritime environment broadcasts not only met all IMO requirements but in many cases exceeded them. I am proud to be a part of this event and this historic moment."

Master Mariner and Senior Marine Specialist for MAERSK Captain Brian Soberg Petersen shared his experience as part of the testing process and stated, "At Maersk, we have been very satisfied with the capabilities of the Iridium system and are presently analyzing our future communications plans, where we believe Iridium GMDSS could serve an additional function as a backup data connection as well, in lieu of our existing system."

Speaking from the Rescue Coordination Center perspective, Watch Leader and Senior Search and Rescue Officer for RCC New Zealand Dave Wilson spoke towards their experience with the new system; "Having played a significant role in the developmental testing of the Iridium GMDSS, both from shore-to-ship and the ship-to-shore pathway, this new system is the type of technological advancement that will"

snip and the snip-to-snore pathways, this new system is the type of technological advancement that will enhance GMDSS. Our team at the Rescue Coordination Center of New Zealand, and the crew of the New Zealand research vessel that has been assisting with the testing, have been very impressed with the Iridium GMDSS system."

As the successor to safety measures originally established after the sinking of the RMS Titanic, the technological capabilities of the GMDSS have now reached a new pinnacle with voice, data, and maritime safety information (MSI) all available through one affordable terminal. The first terminal available is the Lars Thrane LT-3100S, which combines the three key GMDSS services – distress alert, distress voice and MSI. It can be used for both primary and emergency ship communications. The combination of all three services in one cost-effective terminal is a first for the industry and one that makes the GMDSS even more accessible to smaller vessels that may not otherwise be able to afford the equipment.

Desch continued, "When we started this process, there was no process. No company had ever tried to do what we have now achieved. In partnership with the IMO, U.S. Coast Guard and IMSO, a system to allow for Iridium to provide GMDSS service had to be invented."

"Developing and qualifying a GMDSS system was extremely challenging, so we didn't want to just do the minimum or what has been done before. We wanted to make our system more accessible, affordable and feature-rich," Desch stated.

Here's how it works:

Once a vessel holds down the red 'distress' button, indicating that it needs assistance, a signal is immediately routed through the Iridium satellite network and delivered in moments to a designated Rescue Coordination Center (RCC). Unique to the Iridium system, this is then followed automatically by a distress phone call, allowing the vessel to immediately speak with the RCC. The RCC then can quickly understand the nature of the emergency, while also alerting nearby vessels and local search and rescue authorities to provide the required immediate assistance.

Iridium started the process to become a GMDSS service provider in 2013 and had to meet several objectives before formally ending what was a decades-long monopoly held by another satellite company. After being [recognized by the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee](#) to provide GMDSS service, Iridium has worked closely with its regulator, IMSO, to meet all conditions required for service introduction. Aside from technical integrations around the world, this has included the [signing of a Public Services Agreement with IMSO](#) in April of 2019, which details the conditions for IMSO to act as regulator and maintain oversight of Iridium's GMDSS services and a [Letter of Compliance in December 2019 stating](#) that Iridium was authorized to begin providing service when ready.

A full recording of the event will be made available at Iridium.com
For more information about Iridium GMDSS visit: www.iridium.com/gmdss

About Iridium Communications Inc.

Iridium® is the only mobile voice and data satellite communications network that spans the entire globe. Iridium enables connections between people, organizations and assets to and from anywhere, in real time. Together with its ecosystem of partner companies, Iridium delivers an innovative and rich portfolio of reliable solutions for markets that require truly global communications. In 2019, the company completed a generational upgrade of its satellite network and launched its new specialty broadband service, Iridium Certus®. Iridium Communications Inc. is headquartered in McLean, Va., U.S.A., and its common stock trades on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the ticker symbol IRDM. For more information about Iridium products, services and partner solutions, visit www.iridium.com.


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