

Sector Northern New England
South Portland, Maine

**U.S. Department of
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News Release

Coast Guard Moves Forward with Sound Signal Changes

SOUTH PORTLAND, Maine – The Coast Guard is moving forward with their plan to install Mariner Radio Activated Sound Signals (MRASS) at 17 lighthouses across Maine.

In November, the Coast Guard released its plans to convert the aging automatically-activated sound signals with MRASS devices that can be activated on demand by waterway users with a marine radio. Extensive outreach has been conducted throughout the maritime community and with local stakeholders along the Maine coast.

Some stakeholders raised concerns about how recreational boaters will be notified of the changes and how they will deal with the alterations, considering many small vessels don't carry VHF-FM radios.

“Based on the important feedback we received from the maritime community, we will continue with our best efforts to educate mariners, especially recreational and seasonal boaters, on the new way to activate these sound signals.” said Capt. Michael Baroody, commander of Coast Guard Sector Northern New England. “We will continue our outreach leading up to and throughout the upcoming boating season to make sure we reach as many boaters as possible.”

All conversions will be completed within the next six weeks with a completion date set for the week of February 15-18, provided there are no significant delays due to weather. The Coast Guard will announce the changes as they occur with a Broadcast Notice to Mariners and will also conduct direct outreach to harbormasters and other waterway users. The changes will also be published in the weekly 1st District Local Notice to Mariner publication and eventually will be made on nautical charts. In addition, the Coast Guard will continue to meet directly with mariners and local community members following the conversion to ensure the system is operating properly.

“In addition to wearing your lifejacket, a handheld marine radio is a critically important piece of safety equipment that can save your life during an emergency on the water,” said Lt. David Bourbeau, the waterways management chief of Coast Guard Sector Northern New England. “We urge all recreational boaters to consider carrying a radio not only to contact the Coast Guard in emergency, but also as a tool to activate the new sound signals.”

The Coast Guard will conduct additional media events in the spring to notify seasonal boaters of the change in activation method and work with local marinas, harbor masters, and other waterfront business entities throughout the summer to educate the boating public.

The change is part of a larger Coast Guard initiative involving fog signals at lighthouses across northern New England and the rest of the United States. The purpose of this modernization initiative is to replace the less reliable and less efficient VM-100 fog detectors with a Coast Guard-designed, radio-controlled system.

Mariners who have questions, comments, or concerns about the proposed sound signal activation changes are encouraged to contact Lt. David Bourbeau, Coast Guard Sector Northern New England, waterways management division chief, at NNEwaterways@uscg.mil or (207) 347-5015.

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Enclosure: MRASS Information Sheet