

I. ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL

303/78. PRIVATE RADIO TELEPHONE CALLS TO HM SHIPS (U)

[D/CNSO/57/7]

1. The procedure for making private radio telephone calls to HM ships at sea has been revised and is promulgated for information.

2. The caller should ask the local Post Office exchange for 'Ship's Telephone Service, Portishead Radio', as all calls will be connected through the Post Office Radio Station at Portishead. When connected to Portishead, the caller should ask for a ship's radio telephone call, giving the name of HM ship concerned and the name (or designation) of the person required. Having noted these, the operator will take the caller's number for telephoning back when the radio link with the ship has been established. No charge is made for this initial call. If the caller experiences any difficulties with the local exchange, the operator should be referred to the Maritime Services chapter in the External Telecommunications Section of the Post Office Guide.

3. Portishead Radio will advise Commcen Whitehall of the booking. The Duty Officer, Commcen Whitehall, will request approval from the Fleet Operations Officer (during working hours) or the Fleet Duty Staff Officer (at other times), for the call to be placed. If approved, he will signal (precedence PRIORITY) the ship concerned that a radio telephone call awaits connection at Portishead Radio. If the Fleet Operations Officer/Fleet Duty Staff Officer is unable to approve the call, Portishead will be informed by Commcen Whitehall and the subscriber advised accordingly.

4. It is emphasized that the problem of connection of a shore telephone call to a ship is greater than that of calls made in the reverse direction and callers will always have to wait until the ship is able to make the necessary equipment available, which could cause a considerable delay. Because HM ships do not keep radio watches with Portishead, the initial notice of a call has to be routed to the ship through the naval communication system. Even then, a ship will only be able to accept a call if exercise or operational conditions allow and if the equipment or manpower can be spared for this purpose. Consequently, a radio telephone call should only be made in extreme urgency and when a radio telegram would be inadequate.

5. Costs for a three-minute call together with additional rates are as follows:

a. Ship within 50 miles of UK coast station	54p plus 18p for each additional minute.
b. Ship within 250 miles of UK	90p plus 30p for each additional minute.
c. All other areas	£2.10 plus 70p for each additional minute.

These are the current (April 1978) rates and may be changed at any time and the services modified, added to or withdrawn.