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India - Reinforcing Ban on Thuraya and Iridium Satellite Usage in

Indian Waters

The Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) has issued a new order, [DGS Order No. 09 of 2023](#), reiterating the ban on using Thuraya, Iridium, and other similar satellites in Indian waters. The original ban was imposed through DGS Order No. 02 of 2012 on 17 May 2012.

The DGS has maintained the ban on Thuraya Satellite Equipment in Indian waters due to its non-integral role in the Maritime Radiocommunication system under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety Systems (GMDSS). This decision is in line with Regulation 4.1 of GMDSS Satellite Providers, which states that the Maritime Safety Committee is responsible for determining the criteria, procedures, and arrangements for evaluating and recognising mobile satellite services within the GMDSS, as outlined in SOLAS Chapter-IV.

On the other hand, the Maritime Safety Committee, through Resolution MSC 451(99) dated 24 May 2018, has recognised Iridium Satellite LLC as a provider of essential services for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. Since December 2020, the Iridium Satellite service has been fully operational and acknowledged as one of the recognised mobile satellite services under SOLAS Chapter-IV.

Consequently, the usage of Iridium Mobile Satellite communication equipment within Indian waters is governed by specific conditions outlined below:

- Ships are permitted to have installed and activate Iridium equipment in Indian Territorial waters, provided that the equipment is registered and certified in accordance with the prevailing rules of the ship's Flag State. However, it is strictly prohibited to bring portable Iridium sets ashore and use them on Indian land territory.
- The Iridium Satellite equipment must be used exclusively for GMDSS purposes, which include distress and safety communications, search and rescue operations, and receiving Maritime Safety Information (MSI) from the ship's fixed installations.
- Ships transiting or visiting Indian waters must declare the International Mobile Equipment Identity

(IMEI) number of the equipment and provide details of such satellite phones in the Pre-Arrival Notification on Security (PANS) system before their arrival in Indian waters.

The unauthorised usage of Thuraya, Iridium, and other similar satellite equipment is strictly prohibited and will be prosecuted under Section 6 of the Indian Wireless Act and Section 20 of the Indian Telegraph Act.

The DGS has emphasised the importance of strict compliance with this directive. The latest directive overrides the previous DGS Order No. 02 of 2012, issued on 17 May 2012, and takes effect immediately. Members requiring further guidance should contact the [Loss Prevention Department](#).

Source of Information: The West of England P&I Club