



Radio & Sea Rescue Log-On Guide

How to log on and off safely, radio call protocols, the phonetic alphabet,
and the Western Australian VHF repeater network.

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Logging On & Off with Sea Rescue

Most Volunteer Marine Rescue and Sea Rescue groups around the Australian coast offer a free log-on / log-off radio service. It's one of the simplest and most effective safety habits any boat owner can build.

The idea is simple: you **log on** before you leave, telling the rescue station who you are, where you're going and when you expect to be back. Then you can get on with your day knowing that if you run into trouble and don't check in on time, someone already has a head start on where to look for you.

When you get back in, **don't forget to log off** — otherwise you'll trigger a search for a boat that's already safely tied up at the dock.

What You'll Need to Log On

When you call up to log on, be ready with:

- Your call sign — usually your boat's name/registration, or your allocated club call sign.
- Where you've departed from.
- Where you're heading to.
- How many people are on board (POB).
- How much fuel you're carrying.
- Your estimated time of return (ETR).

If you're not a regular in the area, the radio operator may also ask for a quick description of your vessel.

Example Log-On Call

Here's roughly how a log-on exchange sounds over VHF radio:

**Boat Owner: Coastal Rescue, Coastal Rescue, Coastal Rescue,
this is vessel Reef Runner, Reef Runner, Reef Runner,
requesting log on on VHF Channel 73.
Do you receive? Over.**

*Coastal Rescue: Reef Runner, Reef Runner, Reef Runner,
this is Coastal Rescue, Coastal Rescue, Coastal Rescue.
Please proceed with your log-on. Over.*

**Boat Owner: Coastal Rescue, this is vessel Reef Runner.
We've departed Sorrento Boat Harbour, heading out to fish around Mettams Pool,
about 2 nautical miles offshore.
There are 4 people on board.
We have 120 litres of fuel.
Our estimated time of return is 1600 hours. Over.**

*Coastal Rescue: Reef Runner, this is Coastal Rescue. Log-on confirmed —
heading to fish around Mettams Pool, 2 nautical miles offshore,
4 persons on board, 120 litres of fuel,
estimated time of return 1600 hours. Is this correct? Over.*

Boat Owner: Coastal Rescue, this is Reef Runner — that is correct. Over.

*Coastal Rescue: Reef Runner, this is Coastal Rescue.
Have a great day on the water — we'll talk to you on your return.
This is Coastal Rescue, clear and standing by.*

Names, call signs and the example scenario above are fictional, created for BoatMe — always use your own boat's real details and the actual rescue station you're calling.

Logging Off

When you're back in, logging off is just as important as logging on — it's a simple call to let the rescue station know you're home safe, so nobody launches a search for a boat that's already back at the dock.

Boat Owner: Coastal Rescue, Coastal Rescue, Coastal Rescue,
this is vessel Reef Runner, Reef Runner, Reef Runner, on VHF Channel 73.
Do you receive? Over.

*Coastal Rescue: Reef Runner, Reef Runner, Reef Runner, this is Coastal Rescue. Please proceed.
Over.*

Boat Owner: Coastal Rescue, this is vessel Reef Runner.
We've returned to Sorrento Boat Harbour and wish to log off. Over.

*Coastal Rescue: Reef Runner, this is Coastal Rescue.
Glad you had a good day on the water — speak to you next time you're out.
This is Coastal Rescue, clear and standing by.*

Extending Your Stay

Having a great day and want to stay out a bit longer? No problem — just call your rescue station back and let them know your new estimated time of return, before your original ETR passes.

Have a great time on the water — and remember: log on, log off, every time.

Phonetic Alphabet

Used to spell out call signs, names and places clearly over the radio, letter by letter.

A	Alpha	B	Bravo	C	Charlie
D	Delta	E	Echo	F	Foxtrot
G	Golf	H	Hotel	I	India
J	Juliet	K	Kilo	L	Lima
M	Mike	N	November	O	Oscar
P	Papa	Q	Quebec	R	Romeo
S	Sierra	T	Tango	U	Uniform
V	Victor	W	Whiskey	X	X-ray
Y	Yankee	Z	Zulu		

Radio Pro-Words

Standard words used to keep radio calls short, clear and unambiguous.

Pro-word	Meaning
Correct	You are correct.
Correction	An error has been made — the correct message follows.
I say again	Used when repeating all or part of a message.
I spell	You're about to spell the next word phonetically.
Mayday	A distress signal — only ever used in a genuine emergency.
Out	Transmission ended, no reply required.
Over	Transmission ended, a reply is expected.
Read back	Asking the receiving station to repeat the message back, to confirm it was received correctly.
Received	Message received and understood.
Say again	Please repeat your entire message — it wasn't understood.
Send	Ready to receive your message.
Sitrep	Situation report.
Verify	Used when asking to confirm part of a message.
Wait	A short pause is needed before continuing.

VHF Repeater Stations — Western Australia

A network of strategically located marine VHF repeater stations extends the range of VHF communications along the WA coast. To check if a repeater is available in your area, switch to the repeater channel and briefly key the microphone — a short burst of noise (a 'tail') confirms you're in range. No burst usually means you're out of range.

Transmissions on repeater channels are often time-limited (commonly 30 seconds) to keep the channel free for others. Treat these channels with the same respect as any other VHF emergency channel — keep calls brief and essential.

Town / Nearest VMR	Repeater Site	VHF Ch.
Wyndham	The Bastion	80
	Lacrosse Island	81
Derby	Koolan Island	81
Broome	The Water Bank Tower	22
	Cape Leveque	80
Christmas Island	South Point	80
	Murray Hill	81
	Irvine Hill	82
Cocos (Keeling) Island	Air Services Site	20
Port Walcott	Cape Lambert — 5 KP Tower	81
Exmouth	Charles Knife Canyon	21
	Harold E Holt Naval Base	22
Coral Bay	Ningaloo Station	82
	Warroora	80
Carnarvon	Cape Cuvier	81
Shark Bay	Steep Point	22
Kalbarri	Red Bluff — Water Corp site	80
Geraldton	Rat Island — Abrolhos Group	81
	Moresby Range	82
Jurien Bay	Mount Lesueur	21
Lancelin	Nilgen	22
Perth Metropolitan	Rottne Island	81
Mandurah	Turner Hill	82
Dunsborough	Mount Duckworth	22
Cape Naturaliste	Radar Hill	80
Augusta	Hillview Golf Course	82
Windy Harbour	Cathedral Rock	81

Town / Nearest VMR	Repeater Site	VHF Ch.
Walpole	Young's Hill	21
Denmark / Peaceful Bay	Mount Shadforth	22
Albany	Eclipse Island	80
	Mount Clarence	82
	Two Peoples Bay	81
Bremer Bay	Bremer Bay	80
Hopetoun	Hopetoun	21
Esperance	Howick Hill	21
	6 Mile Hill	22

Other repeater stations are operated by port authorities and commercial operators; some are shown on Department of Transport marine charts. Always confirm current channel information with your local marine rescue group before relying on a repeater.