



Maritime Mobile Service Network

# Press Release

“Where Emergency Communications is a Commitment”

Maritime Mobile Service Network  
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## Maritime Mobile Service Network Aids Disabled Sailing Vessel off San Francisco Coast

On August 3, 2025, at approximately 0000 UTC, Maritime Mobile Service Network (MMSN) net control operator John McGowan (K2JBX) was contacted on 14.300 MHz by Captain Dennis Dickenson (KI6KQJ), operating from the sailing vessel *Windchaser*. The vessel was located off the coast of San Francisco but too far offshore to access cellular service.

Captain Dickenson reported that *Windchaser*'s propeller had become entangled in a rope, rendering the vessel unable to make headway as winds diminished. Effectively dead in the water, the vessel was adrift. He confirmed that the four crew members aboard were safe and in no immediate danger.

Captain Dickenson stated that they would attempt to paddle toward shore and planned to conduct repairs once they reached land. He also arranged a scheduled check-in with net control on August 4 at approximately 1100 UTC on 14.300 MHz.

At the scheduled time, contact was successfully re-established with K2JBX. McGowan had managed to reach a park ranger at the Point Reyes Marine Reserve, just north of San Francisco. Given the area's status as a sensitive wildlife zone, the ranger was initially hesitant to allow the vessel to land. However, after McGowan explained the situation, *Windchaser* was granted special permission to come ashore and perform necessary repairs.

Unfortunately, due to changing radio propagation conditions on the 20-meter band, K2JBX was unable to relay the message directly to *Windchaser*. Instead, he left the traffic with the MMSN for any available net control operator to pass along to *Windchaser*.

Later that day, at approximately 1635 UTC, MMSN net control operator Jeff Savasta (KB4JKL) successfully made contact with Captain Dickenson and relayed the permission from the marine reserve. *Windchaser* reached shore safely and was able to carry out the needed repairs.

Reflecting on the incident, K2JBX noted that "this was a rare emergency situation, as most MMSN traffic typically involves routine mariner weather updates or position reports. He emphasized that in this case, the network fulfilled its core mission: providing critical communication support to mariners in need.”

Jeff Savasta, MMSN Net Manager, echoed the sentiment, highlighting the value of amateur radio in times of need. “With all the sophisticated communication systems available today, it's the simplest ones that prove to be the most reliable. Amateur radio continues to succeed where other networks fail. We just get it done.”

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