

difference in range. Switch between bands and begin to get a feel for how the ionosphere causes signals to skip long distances, and sometimes short distances.

Marine telephone shore stations make it easy to predict the best band to establish rock-solid communications. Every four hours they read a traffic list (calls being held for vessels at sea) as well as ocean weather conditions. They simultaneously transmit this information on each one of the authorized bands. Simply switch bands while they are transmitting and determine which band offers the best reception. Where you hear them loudest is where they will hear you best. After they finish with their traffic list, give them a short call and you have now established communications, thanks to sky waves and Mother Nature's reflective ionospheric mirror.

CHAPTER 6

Band and Channel Selection

It's easy to program additional frequencies and channels with today's modern, high-frequency, marine single-sideband transceivers. You don't need to purchase expensive plug-in crystal elements. Everything is synthesized, and your modern ICOM marine SSB receives from .5 MHz through 29.999 MHz, and transmits from 1.6 MHz to 27.500 MHz.

The marine single-sideband service uses specific channels to identify specific frequencies between 4 MHz and 27.5 MHz. This book has a listing of channels and frequency assignments in the appendix. On the 2 MHz band, we use actual frequencies not International Telecommunications Union (ITU) channel designators. We use ITU channel designators on frequencies between 4 MHz and 27.5 MHz.

Most mariners will use about 10 frequencies in each marine band. New ICOM marine SSB transceivers offer over 300 channels that are synthesized, for voice, and an additional 600 channels for electronic

e-mail. ICOM marine transceivers also offer over 100 channels that are user-programmable, perfect for ham frequencies, shortwave broadcasting stations, weather facsimile frequencies, and just about any other frequency that you might want to tune in and listen.

You can add, change, or delete frequencies yourself by entering the proper numbers on the keypad. Most ICOM marine electronic dealers can custom program local frequencies to save you the time of entering them into memory using the key pad.

Did You Know?

Your ICOM marine SSB can also work in any mode, including lower sideband or ham channels on 40 meters and 80 meters, without the need to buy an expensive lower sideband filter.

Plan your communications range by selecting the appropriate bands. If you're not going to be communicating halfway around the world, then don't program many channels above 16 MHz. If you are only going to Mexico, or to the Caribbean, load up on 4 MHz, 8 MHz, and 12 MHz frequencies and channels. More than likely, these frequencies and channels are already loaded into your equipment.