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Closing the Communication Loop

Welcome to DigiMar videos!

In this video, we will focus on the importance of closing the communication loop in maritime routine communications. Closed-loop communication is a pattern of communication used to prevent misunderstandings. In this communication process, the sender conveys a message, and the receiver repeats the relevant portion of the whole message back to the sender to confirm accurate understanding.

This cycle is used to ensure clear and successful communication.

Sender → Message → Receiver → Feedback → Sender (Verification)

After watching this video, you will be able to get familiar with the ways indicating that the communication loop was closed as well as with linguistic signals used by VTS personnel to ensure that message was correctly acknowledged and understood by the ship's crew.

This video uses examples from real-life scenarios. They may have been kept in their authentic form to support learning, even when they include mistakes or deviate from maritime communication standards.

Let us first have a look at an example of a closed communication loop. Motor Vessel Sunrise and DigiMar VTS talk about the anchorage position.

VESSEL	VTS
DigiMar VTS. My ETA to anchorage area Charlie is one zero zero zero. Give me anchor position? Understood, I can choose my anchorage position. Thank you.	Motor Vessel Sunrise. VTS. Understood. You can proceed to Charlie anchorage and drop the anchor. Anchorage is empty. Over. Received. Out.

However, in some situations the communication loop is not closed and VTS must ensure that the ship did understand the sent message, or more significantly, that ship did not misunderstand the communicated message. Misinterpretations in received messages can arise from partially heard words or assumptions about numbers heard. The consequences of misunderstanding may be such that they can lead to numerous types of ship accidents. Let us have a look at the examples in which VTS prompts ships to read back the message to check if they understood the message correctly.



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The vessel did not understand the message given by Digimar VTS regarding the anchorage position.

VESSEL	VTS
<p>(silence) Digimar VTS, Good morning, Sir. We need anchorage.</p> <p>Copy that. Err ... we proceed to, Charlie buoy, one decimal miles distance ...uh, to the ...</p> <p>(silence)</p>	<p>Sunrise. Understood. Proceed North to Charlie anchorage, eleven miles from the main Delta buoy.</p>

Digimar VTS wants to make sure that Sunrise properly understood the information and requests a readback.

VESSEL	VTS
<p>Digimar VTS. Proceeding to Charlie anchorage, one decimal one from Delta buoy.</p>	<p>Sunrise. No, that is not correct. Proceed to Charlie anchorage, one decimal one miles from the main Delta buoy. Read back. Over.</p> <p>Yes. That is correct. Out.</p>

As we can see, the VTS uses different options to close the communication loop, that is to make sure that the message is properly understood. Other examples include the use of prowords such as REPEAT, SAY AGAIN, CONFIRM, and READ BACK. These will be examined in another video. Therefore, VTS needs to verify some important information as in the following example:

Sunrise, Sunrise, Sunrise, Digimar VTS. **Confirm** your arrival to Digimar VTS area at zero six hundred ours. Over.



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In the VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology published by the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities you will find more suggestions on how to close the communication loop on page 19.

We hope that this video has been useful and that it will help you to successfully complete the chatbot exercises available at: <https://digimar.si/category/digital-tools/chatbots/>

Thank you for watching and stay tuned for more DigiMar videos on effective maritime communication!