



Using Prowords

Welcome to Digimar videos!

In this video, we will demonstrate the use of the so-called prowords, or procedural words, in VHF communication. After watching this video, you will be able to use procedural words in VHF communication to ensure clarity and avoid misunderstandings.

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.

What are prowords?

Prowords or procedural words are used to make communication easier by conveying information in a standard form. They indicate the nature and content of the message to the receiver. They can also be used to check mutual understanding.

We will now go through the prowords used in VHF communication and see what their function is.

Prowords

We will hear a part of the conversation between a vessel and a VTS station. The speakers used several prowords to facilitate communication and ensure understanding.

Digimar VTS, Digimar VTS. Motor Vessel Sunrise calling you on one four. How do you read?
Over.

Motor Vessel Sunrise, this is Digimar VTS. Good evening. Over.

Good evening, Sir. Entering area, Sir. Over.

Do you have cargo on board? Over.

No, Sir. We are now in ballast condition. Over.

Your bunker condition: fuel oil, diesel oil, lube oil? Over.

Ok, stand by.

In this part of the conversation, the speakers used the proword “Over” to indicate turn-taking. Another proword used was “No” to indicate that something is not correct. The proword “Stand by” asks the other station to wait and remain on the channel.



Prowords

At the end of the conversation the VTS operator said:

Received. Thank you for your report. Keep watch one six one four. Good watch. Out.

In this turn the VTS operator also used prowords. First, “Received” to say that the information given previously was received and understood. In the end, he uses “Out” to indicate that the transmission is being terminated. The conversation is ending and no response is expected.

It is important to note here that sometimes VTS operators use prowords “Copy”, “Roger” and “OK” instead of “Received”. The use of these alternatives is not recommended. “Received” should be used instead.

Prowords

There are prowords used to say that an error has been made in the transmission and the speaker wants to correct it, as shown in the following example.

Our destination is Port Sandybay, ETA tomorrow at twelve o'clock.

Received, Moonshine. Stand by on channel one zero. Correction. Stand by on channel one four and one six, one four and one six. Have a good watch. Out.

In this case, the VTS operator used the proword “correction” to correct the mistake he made.

Prowords

When a speaker does not understand or hear the message or a part of the message, the proword “Say again” is used, as shown in the following example.

Digimar VTS, can we stay for a little while because we have to prepare engine, waiting for engine crew to prepare the engine so we can proceed going south? Over.

You can stay no more than one hour. So in one hour time move to the south. Over.

Digimar VTS. Say again. I cannot hear you.

You can stay one hour more. After one hour move to the south. Over.

In this way, speakers make sure that they understand each other.

There are also other prowords used in VHF communication.



Co-funded by
the European Union



NOTHING MORE	I have finished my message.
READ BACK	Read back to me the information that I have just given.
SPELL	Spell using the international phonetic alphabet.
STAY ON	Do not terminate this conversation or change the subject because I have more to say.

In the VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology published by the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities you will find more suggestions on how to use prowords on pages 20–21.

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.