



Prowords for Avoiding Ambiguity

Welcome to DigiMar videos!

In this video, we will review and practice additional techniques and prowords commonly used to prevent ambiguity in maritime communication, as they are often interchanged. These include:

- read back – to make sure that the message has been correctly understood,
- say again – when the message is not properly heard,
- repeat – when a message requires repetition.

By the end of this video, you will understand these techniques, and use of correct prowords for preventing ambiguity thus ensuring closed-loop communication.

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 begin with the request to read back the received message. DigiMar VTS provides Motor Vessel Sunshine with the coordinates of the anchoring position, and asks them to read back the said position.

VTS	VESSEL
I will now give you coordinates, latitude and longitude for the mentioned anchorage position. Latitude four five degrees three four decimal three minutes North, and longitude zero one three degrees four one decimal seven five minutes East. Read back. Over.	Understood. The coordinates of the anchoring position are latitude four five degrees three four decimal three minutes North, and longitude zero one three degrees four one decimal seven five minutes East. Over.

By asking the vessel to read back the said position, has DigiMar VTS checked if the message has been correctly understood?

The next technique, when the message is not properly heard, is the use of "Say again".

VESSEL	VTS
DigiMar VTS, this is Motor Vessel Sunrise. I request your permission crossing anchorage area, to crossing anchorage area.	Motor Vessel Sunrise, this is DigiMar VTS. Say again.



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In this example, has DigiMar VTS clearly expressed that they did not hear the message properly?

Next, when communication is difficult or interrupted, messages can be transmitted twice. If a part of a message is considered very important, this should be repeated using “repeat”.

VESSEL	VTS
DigiMar VTS, this is Motor Vessel Sunrise. Say again longitude.	Motor Vessel Sunrise, received. Longitude is zero one three degrees four zero minutes East. I repeat. Longitude is zero one three degrees four zero minutes East.

Is the longitude now clear?

These examples show how the use of “read back”, “say again”, and “repeat” can prevent ambiguous communication.

In the VTS Voice Communications and Phraseology published by the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities you will find more suggestions on techniques for preventing ambiguity on pages 17, 19, and 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!