

## WWW Radio Communications Activity Station

Created by Marquette Transportation Company, LLC

**Objective:** To demonstrate how clear, two-way radio communication is essential for the safety on the water. Role playing real-world scenarios using radios, rigging, and teamwork to highlight the importance of asking questions, staying in contact, and using the buddy system.

Participants will:

- Understand how communication directly impacts safety
- Practice using a two-way radio effectively
- Experience the buddy system in action

**Roles:**

- **Wheelman (1 volunteer):** Gives instructions over the radio, guided by a Subject Matter Expert (SME)
- **Deck Crew (2 volunteers):**
  - *Experienced deckhand* (wears PFD with radio)
  - *Inexperienced deckhand* (wears PFD, no radio)

**Materials Checklist:**

- Chalk (to draw a 6-pack barge grid on pavement)
- 2 two-way radios
- Small object to represent rigging (e.g., rope or tool)
- 2 life vests (PFDs)
- Pen and paper (tow diagram for wheelman)
- Picture of vessel with barge (optional visual aid)

**Key Vocabulary to Introduce:**

- Wheelman
- Gunwale
- Rigging
- Deckhands / Deck crew
- Starboard / Port
- Wheelhouse
- Barge

## **Educator/Presenter**

Before leading the activity, be familiar with:

- **Safe zones on barges** (especially the gunwale area)
- **Barge configuration** (a “6-pack” = 6 barges connected in a rectangular shape)
- **Port vs. Starboard** orientation
- **Buddy system** protocol—no one works alone on deck

Physical Setup Instructions

1. **Draw a 6-pack grid** on concrete or blacktop to represent barges
2. **Draw or use a structure** to represent the vessel facing the barges
  - Elevated position preferred to simulate wheelhouse height
3. **Create a paper tow diagram** for the wheelman to reference
4. **Assign roles** and distribute PFDs and radios accordingly

## **Activity Instructions**

(Facilitator Script)

### **1. Welcome & Orientation**

*“Welcome aboard the M/V [Insert Name]! You’re now on a working vessel heading east through the intercoastal waterway toward Houston, TX. You’ve just completed your job safety briefing and are ready to begin your watch.”*

**Briefly explain:**

- Port vs. Starboard
- Gunwale location
- How to use the radio
- Importance of staying in contact with your buddy and the wheelman

### **2. Scenario & Role Play**

*“The wheelman will now give instructions over the radio to the experienced deckhand. Your task is to place the rigging where directed, staying in constant communication.”*

**Facilitator Tips:**

- Encourage deckhands to **ask for clarification** if instructions are unclear
- Reinforce that **over-communication is safer than under-communication**
- Remind them to **check in frequently** with both the wheelman and their buddy

**3. Debrief & Discussion:**

- What made communication easier or harder?
- Why is the buddy system important?
- How does this apply to real-life maritime work?

**Visual Layout Description:**

**[Wheelhouse] ← elevated position or chair**

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**[Boat Drawing or Area]**

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**[6-Pack Barge Grid on Pavement]**

**A1 | A2 | A3**

**B1 | B2 | B3**