

A signal to depend on

FogMate automatically announces your boat's location

By Michael Crowley

Thick, wet fog that drops a shroud on the world around you is one condition that makes most people on a boat a little nervous. That anxiety level goes up the closer you get to shipping lanes or areas where you know there are a lot of boats fishing.

Sure, you should sound the horn and send out fog signals at the prescribed intervals. But how many people do, especially if you are short-handed and the guy in the wheelhouse is looking out the window — listening — monitoring his controls and checking the radar every now and then?

What every wheelhouse needs is an automatic device that activates the horn. You get that with FogMate, which has four automated horn-blast patterns: the international fog signal for being underway, stopped, restricted maneuverability, and the SOS distress signal.

You just hook up FogMate to the existing fog and navigation light

switches. "It takes about 15 minutes," says Richard Ellis, the marketing director for C-Map, which is a distributor for FogMate. Once you turn on FogMate, it continues to send out signals until you turn it off.

Measuring 3" x 1.5" x 1" and weighing 3 1/2 ounces, FogMate is small enough to fit anywhere in the wheelhouse.

The idea for FogMate came from David Vogel, president of TSX Products of Norwood, Mass.

TSX Products is in the business of designing and developing electronics and software for the medical industry. But Vogel and engineers at the company put together the FogMate package during company spare time.

An interesting feature of FogMate is the randomized nature of the fog signal. Instead of going off every two minutes, sometimes the fog signal will go off at 2 minutes and 1 second, which keeps the horn blasts from synchronizing with the fog signal on another boat. That might avoid an accident like the one Vogel says took place a number of years ago off



In foggy conditions, FogMate will automatically sound your boat's horn system in the Coast Guard approved sequence. This leaves the guy at the wheel with one less thing to worry about.

Massachusetts when two boats collided in the fog. Both boat operators swore they were sounding a fog signal and both swore they didn't hear the other signal. The conclusion, Vogel says, is that the signals were synchronized.

FogMate comes in both 12-volt and 24-volt versions. The 12-volt unit costs \$129 and the 24-volt model is priced at \$159. Contact: C-Map, 133 Falmouth Road, Mashpee, MA 02649; tel. (800) 424-2627; info@c-map.com.

What your radar is really seeing at night

Thermal imaging transforms a standard display

By Michael Crowley

Recent advances in electronic charting features prove that seeing is believing. It used to be sufficient to plot a heading on an electronic chart that would safely take you into a harbor. Now charting software comes with photos of the harbor to help you visualize the entrance you're threading. Some charts have elevated three-dimensional perspectives, providing yet another view of the two-dimensional chart display.

Now, integrating night-vision equipment with a radar display transforms the image on the radar screen — which has long been the guiding view for seagoing vessels in narrow, night-darkened straits and ship-congested waters — into a black and white picture on a monitor next to the radar. It doesn't matter if it's a mountain, a container floating in the water or a small boat streaking across a bay, you will know exactly what the radar is picking up.

You get the option of a picture view when you buy either the 5000 or 6000

series night-viewing camera from Night Vision Technologies, as well as the interface package.

Both models come with a thermal imaging camera that can be used in daylight or night to locate an object. It detects differences in infrared radiation between the object and the background. There's also an ultra-low-light camera that works well around the lights of a town or harbor, a light intensifier feature if you're offshore in moonlight conditions, and a color zoom camera.

When the camera is interfaced with the radar, it will automatically swing to a target on the radar screen. The 6000 series has an optional tracking feature, so the camera will follow a target on the radar display.

Currently, the 5000 and 6000 series cameras for radar integration are programmed to work with Furuno radars. But they also work with any other radar



that has ARPA tracking and can output an NMEA tracking sentence. Night Vision Technologies technicians just need to know the format of the sentence the radar is sending out, so it can be programmed into the camera's listening board.

You can use any monitor for a display, as long as it has a video input.

The mystery is taken out of radar's nighttime view of land when night imaging equipment is matched up with a radar display.

Prices for the enhanced 5000 and 6000 series cameras start at \$72,999. Contact Night Vision Technologies, 303 N. Nursery Road, Irving, TX 75061; tel. (866) 444-8628; www.nvti-usa.com.