



Swiss Time

"WHERE WATCHMAKERS WORK"

86 Exchange Street
 Portland, Maine 04101
 (207) 773-0997
 www.myswisstime.com
 info@myswisstime.com

Understanding the Bells of Your Ship's Clock

Mariners have used a unique bell code to tell time at sea for hundreds of years. The code is based on the crew's typical routine while the vessel is at sea. A ship, at sea, requires constant attention throughout the day's twenty-four hours. The day is therefore divided into six four-hour periods, each called a "watch." Similarly, the crew is segmented into three divisions. Division members then stand their individually assigned duties on two watches per day.



Each Watch is set up as follows:

First Watch	8:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.
Mid-Watch (aka Black Watch)	12:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m.
Morning Watch	4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Forenoon Watch	8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Afternoon Watch	12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Evening Watch	4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
First Dog Watch	4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Second Dog Watch	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The watch officer strikes the ship's bell every half hour to notify the crew of the time. A single bell denoted the end of the first half hour and one bell was added each half hour. Eight bells therefore signaled the end of a four-hour watch. Like centuries of seafarers before, you'll soon know the time when the clock chimes, even if you can't see it!

8 Bells	12:00	4:00	8:00
1 Bell	12:30	4:30	8:30
2 Bells	1:00	5:00	9:00
3 Bells	1:30	5:30	9:30
4 Bells	2:00	6:00	10:00
5 Bells	2:30	6:30	10:30
6 Bells	3:00	7:00	11:00
7 Bells	3:30	7:30	11:30

