

30 Emergency Position Indicating Radiobeacons (EPIRBs) on Ships

1 Regulations

- 1.1 *Regulations concerning the carriage of emergency position indicating radiobeacons (EPIRBs) have been in effect since October 25, 1989. Expanded carriage requirements came into force on October 28th 2020 for vessels operating outside sheltered waters. The carriage requirements are contained in the Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020. In addition to the carriage requirements, there are technical requirements that every EPIRB must meet and important testing and inspection requirements.*

Consult Section 209, 228, 229, 230 and 239 of the *Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020* for more details

| | < 8 m in Length | 8 m to 12 m in Length | More than 12 m in Length |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| Near Coastal I and beyond | Float Free EPIRB | Float Free EPIRB | Float Free EPIRB |
| Near Coastal II | Float Free EPIRB Manual EPIRB 406 MHz PLB; or Portable waterproof VHF with DSC* | Float Free EPIRB Manual EPIRB; or 406 MHz PLB | Float Free EPIRB |

*If operated exclusively in sea area A1.

2 Voluntary Carriage

- 2.1 The Canadian Coast Guard encourages the voluntary carriage of EPIRB on all vessels that are not required to carry this equipment.

Your EPIRB and SAR Services

Since 2009, only 406 MHz beacons are detected by the Cospas-Sarsat satellite system.

If a 406MHz beacon is sold or otherwise transferred to another operator or vessel, both parties must inform the Canadian Beacon Registry (CBR) immediately. Contact CBR at:

Canadian Beacon Registry
CFB Trenton, PO Box 1000 Stn Forces
Astra, ON, K0K 3W0
Telephone: 1-877-406-SOS1 (7671)
Fax: 1-877-406-FAX8 (3298)
Visit the [Canadian Beacon Registry Website](#)
E-mail: CBR@sarnet.dnd.ca

3 Emergency Beacon Registries

- 3.1 The *Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020* require Canadian vessel owners to register every beacon. Owners must also ensure that the information is up to date. It is advised that Owner / Operators verify and update their beacon registrations on a yearly basis.
- 3.2 These registries contain information about the beacon, the vessel it is on, the person who owns the beacon and their emergency contacts. This information is used for search and rescue purposes and will greatly assist in the speedy resolution of any beacon alarm incident. The responsibility of ensuring the accuracy of registry data rests with the beacon owner. Since lives may depend on this information, it is in the owner's best interests to ensure the initial and continuing accuracy of registered information.

- 3.3 In order to be registered the emergency beacon must be coded for Canada. EPIRB encoding guidelines are set out in the Cospas-Sarsat Handbook of Beacon Regulations for Canada (C/S S.007 CANADA) and is available under the following website [Handbook of Beacon Regulations \(C/S S.007\) - International COSPAS-SARSAT](#).
- 3.4 EPIRBs must be registered with the Canadian Beacon Registry before the beacon is installed on the vessel.
- 3.5 Should any 406MHz beacon be retired from service, it must be disposed of with the batteries removed and as per the local electronics recycling regulations. The Canadian Beacon Registry must be advised if a beacon has been removed from service, placed into storage and / or disposed of.

4 Safe Transportation

- 4.1 The power source for EPIRBs is a long-life lithium battery. There are federal and provincial regulations governing the transportation of equipment containing these batteries, by land, sea or air.
- 4.2 Users should consult an EPIRB agent, a transportation company or the appropriate government transportation authority for guidance prior to the shipment of an EPIRB for any purpose other than normal use.

5 Warning

- 5.1 Investigations by the Canadian Coast Guard have determined that the Category 1 float-free, 406 MHz EPIRB on board some vessels have not been properly installed or armed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Such equipment would therefore not function automatically in an emergency situation. It is imperative that mariners ensure that this float-free EPIRB is properly installed on board their vessel and set for automatic operation.
- 5.2 Regardless of a beacon passing a self-test, operators should not continue to utilize beacons beyond their battery expiration date and should follow the manufacturer's maintenance guideline. Should a beacon transmit in distress mode with an expired battery, there is no guarantee that said beacon will function as designed and this could lead to significant delays during an emergency.

6 Maintenance

- 6.1 Users should ensure that EPIRBs or PLB are inspected and tested at least once every six months in accordance with the *Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020*.
- 6.2 Users should read all instructions carefully and refer to the user manual for the manufacturer's recommendations on periodic maintenance.
- 6.3 Users should ensure that the label with the beacon's UIN (Hexcode) is firmly affixed and displayed on the beacon

7 False Alarms

- 7.1 In order to minimize the impact on SAR resources, in the event of accidental activation of an EPIRB, SAR authorities request that users:
 - .1 deactivate the beacon by turning the switch from ON to ARMED (or SAFE) position in certain models; and,
 - .2 call the Canadian Mission Control Centre at 1-800-211-8107 or (613) 965-7265 or the nearest JRCC/MRSC office to report the situation.
 - .3 Ensure that all beacons are registered with up-to-date contact information. Should a beacon activate in a non-distress situation, the JRCC/MRSC handling the case can utilize this information to quickly resolve false alarms without the unnecessary dispatching of limited resources.

Authority: Canadian Coast Guard (Search and Rescue, Ottawa)