



სსიპ საზღვაო ტრანსპორტის
სააგენტო

LEPL MARITIME TRANSPORT
AGENCY



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TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND
OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED
ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: Frequency, Identification Numbers, Testing and Disposition of Satellite EPIRBs.

References:

(a) IMO MSC/Circ.1040/Rev.1, Revised Guidelines on Annual Testing for 406 MHz Satellite EPIRBs, dated 25 May 2012

(b) COSPAS-SARSAT Guidelines on 406 MHz Beacon Coding, Registration and Type Approval (<http://www.cospas-sarsat.int/en/documents-pro/system-documents>)

PURPOSE:

This Circular describes the frequency and unique identification code assigned to satellite Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) to enable Rescue Coordination Centers (RCCs) responsible for Search and Rescue (SAR) operations to detect and identify vessels in distress and how they differ from Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) numbers. This Circular reflects the updating of COSPAS-SARSAT Guidelines on 406 MHz Beacon Coding, Registration and Type Approval as referenced above to include the website address where the latest issue may be found and the addition of new section 5.0 on the issues particular to the disposition of EPIRBs.

APPLICABILITY:

This Notice applies to all Georgian flagged vessels outfitted with EPIRBs.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. It has been determined by the COSPAS-SARSAT Council that:

“A unique beacon identification code, including the 3-digit MID (Maritime Identification Digits) followed by either:

(a) the trailing 6 digits of the ship station identity, or

(b) a unique serial number, or

(c) a radio call sign

should be part of all messages.”

2. Taking this into consideration, that MTA Georgia has decided to use alternatives (a) or (c) incorporating the vessel's MMSI or unique radio call sign. This would be preceded by the Maritime Identification Digit Code assigned to the Georgia by the International Telecommunication Union, Geneva. This three (3) digit code is 213.

Those concerned should ensure that the above instruction is followed by the supplier of satellite EPIRBs being installed on board Georgian flagged vessels.

3. Please note that this unique identification code is not to be confused with the MMSI number that is assigned to ships for satellite communications purposes. MMSI numbers are constructed differently, consisting of nine (9) digits. The first three (3) digits are the Maritime Identification Digits for Georgia (213).

Example: Vessel Official Number 12345 – MMSI = 213012345

4. To assure that the EPIRBs are transmitting the correct identification number on the correct frequency, an annual test conducted by a qualified technician, in accordance with the guidelines provided in MSC/Circ.1040/Rev.1, as referenced above, is required. With each such test a certificate authenticating the test results must be attached to the EPIRB. It is essential that this test be performed and the certificate made available for both flag State and port State inspections.

5. Issues Particular to the Disposition of EPIRBs

5.1 Due to the increased restrictions on battery transportation, most vessels are unable to replace the EPIRB battery and prefer to replace the entire unit which is much more convenient, however, this has resulted in an increase of false alerts from 406 Satellite EPIRBs due to such factors as improper disposal, stolen units, unauthorized handling or failure of reprogramming of the units due to change of flag, etc. Following are procedures for EPIRB disposal that would eliminate these factors:

5.2 If the old EPIRB is handed over to shore personnel, then maintain a record to which personnel and authorized workshop the EPIRB was handed over for proper disposal. The vessel could obtain a certificate from the Shore agency that the EPIRB has been handed over for proper disposal. This could be a record onboard and also for the personnel taking over.

5.3 If the old EPIRB is to be stored as junk onboard the vessel, then the Master should take the following actions:

- .1. Remove the battery from the old unit and have the battery appropriately disposed of as instructed by the maker.
- .2. Open the unit and destroy the Main PCB by breaking/cracking the board completely to render it beyond use.
- .3. Confirm to the Administrator by email (fsi@mta.gov.ge) that such has occurred, providing the 15-digit Hex ID of the old/destroyed EPIRB along with the serial number of the unit.
- .4. In case of false activation fill form in accordance COMSAR/Circ.29 dated 27 May 2002 and send by email on following address mrcc@mta.gov.ge

5.4 All of the above is necessary to avoid false alerts from the vessel/EPIRB, particularly when the vessel is scrapped, resold or if the EPIRB was stolen and the unit falls into unauthorized hands.

Agency Director

SIGNED/SEALED
ELECTRONICALLY 

Tamar Ioseliani