



MARINE NOTICE NO. 8 OF 2006

Amended: 22/11/2022

Attention: All Masters, Officers, Skippers, Fishermen, Yachtsmen, Seafarers, EPIRB Suppliers, Installers, Port And Harbour Authorities, Shipyards And Scrapyards.

Registration and Care of COSPAS-SARSAT 406 MHz EPIRB's Installed on Irish Vessels

Marine Notice No 22 of 2002 is hereby withdrawn

Introduction

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to draw attention to the problem of Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) false alerts and to offer guidance to seafarers and users so that these alerts can be reduced. Most alerts are due to poor handling, inefficient maintenance or careless disposal of the EPIRB.

One of the objectives of the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) is to keep the radio spectrum clear of interference. In achieving this objective it is necessary to prioritise the investigation of various categories of interference. EPIRB's attract the highest priority of investigation, requiring urgent attention, resulting in a high resource implication for both the Department of Transport and ComReg.

In many cases such investigations could be avoided by greater attention being given to the correct usage and handling of EPIRB by the user or owner.

Programming, Registration and Licensing of EPIRB

1. EPIRB's must be programmed in accordance with the COSPAS-SARSAT Maritime User Protocol as follows; Maritime Identification Digit (MID) for Ireland which is "250" and the Radio Call Sign or the MMSI number of the vessel.
2. GPS EPIRB's must be programmed in accordance with the Maritime Location Protocol using either the MMSI number or the Radio Call Sign
3. An EPIRB must be licensed in accordance with the requirements of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1926. The Ship Station Radio Licence covers the EPIRB.
4. **EPIRBs may be registered using the online Ship Radio Licence and EPIRB Registration system: [Irish Maritime Radio Licence System \(IMRAD\)](#).**

Further information from:

Marine Survey Office

Tel: 01-678 3400

Email: MSO@transport.gov.ie .

5. Confirmation of registration should be received within two weeks. If not the owner should contact the EPIRB registry at the above address.
6. Correct programming and registration will ensure that the Search and Rescue (SAR) authorities have accurate and reliable information about a vessel in the event of an emergency or a false alert.
7. When changes are made in equipment, ownership, name, flag state, or other similar key information concerning a vessel, the owner must inform the EPIRB Registry immediately.

Removal of an EPIRB for servicing or repair

1. When an EPIRB is being removed from a vessel for repair or servicing it should be deactivated in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.
2. It should then be wrapped in two layers of aluminium foil, which provides effective radio frequency screening.
3. If possible the battery should be disconnected before shipping the EPIRB. However, the EPIRB may only be reassembled and the battery reconnected by an authorised agent.

EPIRB False alerts

1. If for any reason an EPIRB is activated inadvertently on board a vessel, contact should be made immediately with the nearest coast radio station or Rescue Co-ordination Centre in order to cancel the false distress alert.
2. Failure to cancel a false alert immediately will result in the deployment of search and rescue units by Rescue Co-ordination Centres in an effort to locate the source of the alert.
3. When an EPIRB is activated, either accidentally or intentionally, it should be left switched on until contact has been made with SAR authorities, in order to avoid attempts being made to respond to an incomplete transmission.
4. The EPIRB can be deactivated by the following methods;
 - (a) Switching it off;
 - (b) Drying the unit thoroughly, especially the area around the salt water contacts;
 - (c) Placing it in its bracket;
 - (d) Disconnecting the battery;
 - (e) Wrapping it in a double layer of aluminium foil.

Care and maintenance of EPIRB

1. The Hydrostatic Release Mechanism (HSR), where fitted as part of the EPIRB installation, must be replaced prior to its expiry date.
2. An authorised agent must replace the EPIRB battery prior to its expiry date.
3. The lanyard attached to the EPIRB must not be tied to its bracket or any part of the vessel. The purpose of the lanyard is to attach the EPIRB to a liferaft or a person in the water.
4. The EPIRB and its bracket should be inspected and tested at least once a month in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.

Director General,
Maritime Safety Directorate,
Department of Transport,
Leeson Lane,
Dublin 2.

5th May 2006

Amended: 22/11/2022

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:
The Marine Survey Office, email: MSO@transport.gov.ie
For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, email:
MaritimeSafetyPolicyDivision@transport.gov.ie
Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:
Dept. of Transport, Maritime Safety Policy Division, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.
email: MarineNotices@transport.gov.ie or visit us at: www.gov.ie/transport