
4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

MSC.1/Circ.1040/Rev.2
18 October 2021

**GUIDELINES ON ANNUAL TESTING OF EMERGENCY POSITION-INDICATING
RADIO BEACONS (EPIRBs)**

- 1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 104th session (4 to 8 October 2021), approved the revised *Guidelines on annual testing of emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs)*, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), at its eighth session (19 to 23 April 2021), as set out in the annex.
- 2 Member States are invited to bring these Guidelines to the attention of shipping companies, shipowners, ship operators, radio surveyors, equipment manufacturers, classification societies, shipmasters and all other parties concerned.
- 3 This circular supersedes MSC.1/Circ.1040/Rev.1.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES ON ANNUAL TESTING OF EMERGENCY POSITION-INDICATING RADIO BEACONS (EPIRBs)

1 These Guidelines are applicable to the annual testing of emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) that are approved to comply with the provisions of SOLAS regulation IV/15.9.

2 The testing should be carried out by appropriately trained and approved personnel using suitable test equipment capable of performing all the relevant measurements required in these Guidelines (this testing normally will be done by a radio surveyor as part of the annual radio survey). All tests of electrical parameters should be performed in the self-test mode, if possible.

3 If a distress signal is transmitted accidentally, the transmission should immediately be stopped, and the local rescue coordination centre (RCC)¹ should be contacted immediately and informed. The nearest Cospas-Sarsat mission control centre (MCC) should also be informed (see also *Guidelines for the avoidance of false distress alerts* (resolution A.814(19), as may be updated)).

4 The examination of the installed EPIRB should include:

- .1 checking position and mounting of the bracket to ensure unimpeded float-free operation;
- .2 carrying out visual inspection of the EPIRB and the bracket for defects, any signs of damage, degradation or cracks to the casing, or of water ingress;
- .3 carrying out the beacon self-test routine, including the GNSS self-test, if applicable;
- .4 checking that the EPIRB identification (15 Hex ID for first-generation beacons and 23 Hex ID for second-generation beacons and other required information, including, if applicable, the AIS identity (User ID)) is clearly marked on the outside of the equipment;
- .5 decoding the EPIRB hexadecimal identification digits (15 Hex ID for first-generation beacons and 23 Hex ID for second-generation beacons) and other information from the transmitted signal, including, if applicable, the AIS identity (User ID), checking that the decoded information (Hex ID or MMSI/call sign data, as required by the Administration) is identical to the identification marked on the beacon;
- .6 verifying that the MMSI number or radio call sign, if encoded in the beacon, corresponds with that assigned to the ship;²

¹ Contact information is available at: <https://cospas-sarsat.int/en/contacts-pro/contacts-details-all>

² See the ship's radio licence, the national database or the ITU Maritime Mobile Access and Retrieval System (MARS) (<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/terrestrial/mars/Pages/default.aspx>), as appropriate.

- .7 verifying registration in an appropriate beacon registration database³ through documentation or through the point of contact associated with that country code;
- .8 checking the battery expiry date;
- .9 checking the hydrostatic release and its expiry date, as appropriate;
- .10 verifying the emission in the 406 MHz band using the self-test mode or an appropriate device to avoid transmission of a distress call to the satellites;
- .11 if possible, verifying emission on the 121.5 MHz frequency using the self-test mode or an appropriate device to avoid activating the SAR system;
- .12 verifying emission on the appropriate AIS frequencies, if applicable, using the self-test mode or an appropriate device to avoid creating false alerts;
- .13 verifying that the EPIRB has been maintained by an approved shore-based maintenance provider at intervals required by the Administration, in accordance with the most recent revision of MSC/Circ.1039;
- .14 after the test, remounting the EPIRB in its bracket, checking that no transmission has been started;
- .15 verifying the presence of a firmly attached lanyard in good condition; the lanyard should be neatly stowed, and should not be tied to the vessel or the mounting bracket;
- .16 checking the presence of beacon operating instructions manual; and
- .17 checking the presence of pictorial instructions for manual operation visible at the location of the beacon.

³ A national database or the International Beacon Registration Database (<https://www.406registration.com>), as appropriate.