



Information concerning maritime distress beacons (EPIRB)

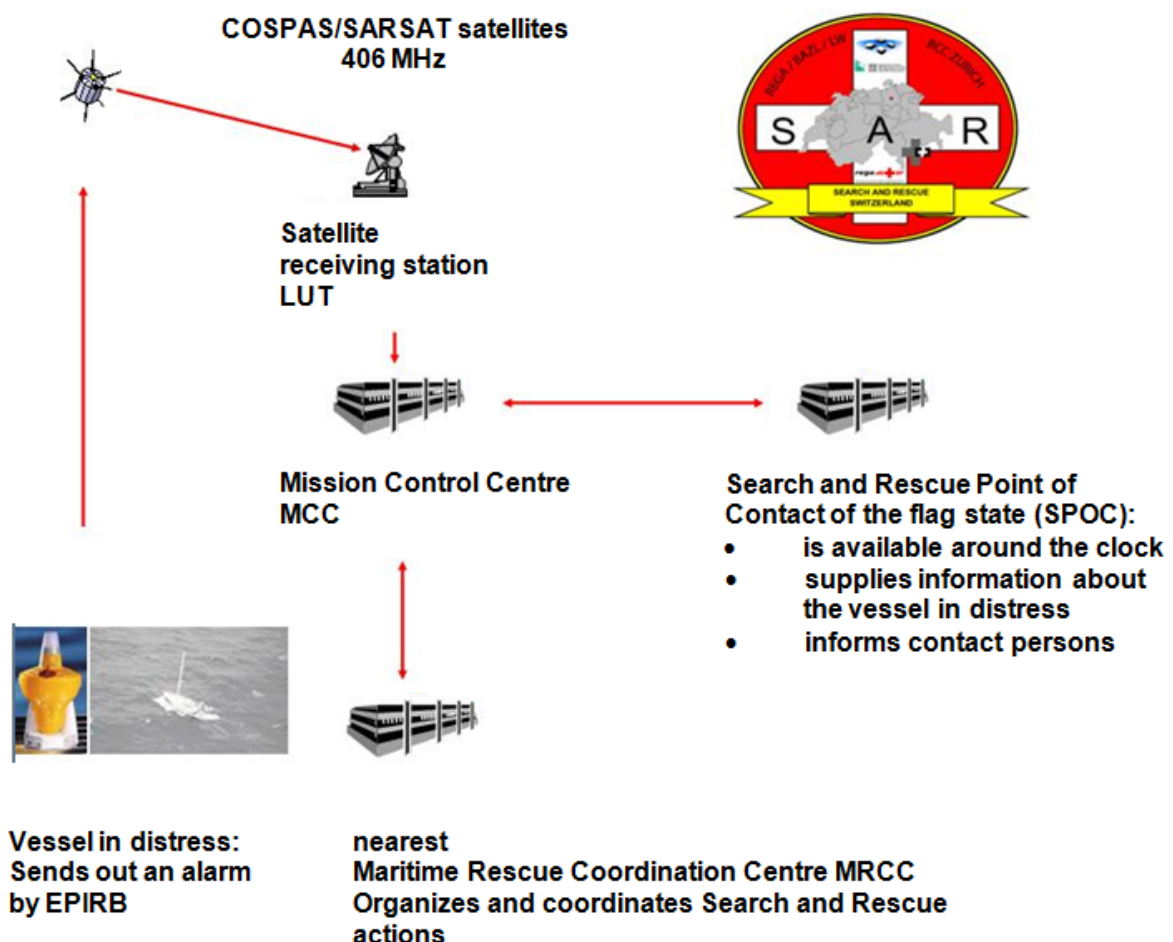
1. COSPAS-SARSAT IBRD International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database

According to a resolution of the Assembly of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), each country should establish or designate a database for the registration of EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons – maritime distress beacons) carried on vessels under their flag. These databases must, in the case of emergencies, be able to provide immediate information concerning vessel data, ownership and contact persons.

Furthermore, states must maintain a reporting centre which operates 24 hours a day. On behalf of the Swiss Maritime Navigation Office in Basel, this task is performed by the MRCC (Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre) Zurich, which is operated by REGA, the Swiss Air-Rescue service. This centre is manned around the clock.

Switzerland has designated the COSPAS-SARSAT IBRD international database as the database in accordance with the resolution. This ensures unrestricted access to EPIRB data for all agencies involved in a search and rescue operation.

2. Process of an alert initiated by a 406 MHz EPIRB



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The signals transmitted by an EPIRB which are received by the COSPAS/SARSAT satellites are relayed via a Local User Terminal (LUT) and Mission Control Centre (MCC) to the competent Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) nearest to the distress position.

The alert essentially contains only the MMSI number which is programmed into the EPIRB and the distress position. No other indications are available to the MRCC in an alert report. The Search and Rescue Point of Contact (SPOC) of the MRCC responsible for the rescue action can then acquire all information from the password-protected database. The MRCC in the flag state offers support if clarification is required and supports the MRCC which leads the rescue action.

If the alert is transmitted from a Swiss flagged vessel, the FMCC in Toulouse relays the alert to the MRCC which is responsible for the sea region concerned and also to MRCC Zurich (flag state Switzerland). The latter can make contact with the contact person, acquire supporting information and details and forward them to the MRCC which is responsible for search and rescue.

In order for the alerting process to function properly and effectively, it is essential that vessel's owners register the EPIRB on board their vessels in full in the IBRD and keep the data recorded in it up to date.

The details in COSPAS-SARSAT are naturally treated as highly confidential; they are used exclusively to ensure a rapid and effective process in the case of an alert with an EPIRB.

3. Process of registering an EPIRB by the owner / keeper

In accordance with the decision of the Swiss Maritime Navigation Office (SSA) in Basel, owners of EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons) must register these emergency radio beacons in the IBRD (International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database) under their own responsibility.

The MMSI number allocated by OFCOM must be programmed into the EPIRB¹. When an emergency radio beacon is purchased, the vessel owner receives programming instructions from the EPIRB provider. The data therein ensure that the EPIRB can be easily identified (a unique 15-character code).

Via the link **www.406registration.com** the vessel owner creates a personal user account in order to save the technical and personal data so that this is available to the MRCC. Updates and/or changes, as well as recording of routes or temporary deployment locations, are also possible.

If there is a satellite telephone onboard the vessel, it is also advisable to register this information in the database under the relevant section. If necessary, the vessel can be contacted directly by the emergency organisation.

After registration is completed, a data sheet with all saved data can be generated by the system and saved in PDF format or printed.

This registration, as well as data administration, is free of charge.

At regular intervals the system sends a request for verification of the data. If the status is set to "OUT OF SERVICE" or "out of operation", "stolen", "sold", "destroyed", "lost" or "replaced", no such request is made. Please ensure, therefore, that you provide a valid email address.

If a second-hand EPIRB is purchased, the registration process is exactly the same. The EPIRB must be reprogrammed with the MMSI allocated by OFCOM. If the previous owner has set the status of this EPIRB to "sold" in the IBRD, the data can be updated accordingly at www.406registration.com. Request the previous owner's log-in data, since an EPIRB can only be registered once with the same HEX_ID.

An EPIRB may not be carried on loan on another vessel, unless it is temporarily registered for this other vessel and reprogrammed accordingly (the MMSI must correspond to the vessel on which the EPIRB is carried). In such cases the data in the IBRD must be updated.

A guide to entering data is available at <https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/smno/de/documents/IBRD-Kurzanleitung-DE.pdf> [only available in German]

¹ <http://www.cospas-sarsat.int/en/documents-pro/beacon-regulations-handbook>

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4. Cancellation of a false alarm

If it is realised on a Swiss-flagged vessel that an EPIRB has been activated in error, the SRR (Search and Rescue Region) in whose waters the vessel is located must be informed about the nearest MRCC without delay. The EPIRB must be deactivated. The information must be provided to the MMRC using the means of communication available in accordance with the Radio Regulations procedures (e.g. channel 16). Please state that it is a case of a false alarm, so that the search and rescue action can be stopped. In the absence of this message, a search and rescue action will be initiated.

If contact cannot be established with the MRCC in which the vessel is located, please inform MRCC Switzerland.

The telephone number of the operations centre is: +41 58 654 39 38

The e-mail address is: ops@rega.ch

MRCC Zurich requires the following information:

The MMSI, the call sign, the vessel's name, the current position of the vessel and the name of the reporting person.

MRCC Zurich immediately informs the responsible MRCC in the corresponding Search and Rescue Region

5. Any questions?

We are at your disposal if you require additional information:

Swiss Maritime Navigation Office:

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E-mail: dv-ssa@eda.admin.ch

Licencing - OFCOM:

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Operational matters – MRCC Zurich:

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