
Emergency Position Indicating Radio beacons (EPIRBs)

Notice to ship owners, managers, Masters, Approved Nautical Inspectors, Recognised Organisations and surveyors

This Notice supersedes BMA Information Bulletin No.6

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Marine Notice (MN) provides instructions for the registration of Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) for Bahamian ships.

2. Application

- 2.1. Applies to all EPIRBs carried on Bahamian ships.

3. Introduction

- 3.1. All flag State Administrations are required to maintain a database for EPIRBs fitted on their ships in order that immediate contact can be made with the Company in the event of an EPIRB being activated.
- 3.2. The EPIRB database for Bahamian vessels is currently maintained by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- 3.3. The Company¹ is required to advise the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) of any changes in the information held on the EPIRB register in order that the database may be amended as necessary.

LIVES MAY BE PUT AT RISK IF THE DATABASE IS NOT KEPT UP TO DATE.

¹ The Company is the entity responsible for the management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships to which the ISM Code does not apply, the Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Merchant Shipping Act.

4. Registering an EPIRB or amending existing EPIRB details

- 4.1. The Company is to complete a Radio Licence Application Form (R108) indicating the new EPIRB details and forward to the Registration department along with the associated fee.
- 4.2. Current fees for the issue of a Radio Licence are as shown in BMA [Marine Notice 50](#).
- 4.3. Upon receipt of the completed form and the associated fee, a new Radio Licence Certificate will be issued to reflect the new EPIRB details. Radio Licences are issued by the BMA on behalf of the Bahamas [Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority \(URCA\)](#).
- 4.4. Confirmation of all new EPIRB details will be forwarded by the BMA to URCA to ensure that the ITU databases are updated.

5. Testing and Maintenance

- 5.1. EPIRBs shall be:
 - i. annually tested, either on board the ship² or at an approved testing station, for all aspects of operational efficiency, with special emphasis on checking the emission on operational frequencies, coding and registration, at intervals as specified below:
 - on passenger ships, within three months before the expiry date of the Passenger Ship Safety Certificate; and
 - on cargo ships, within three months before the expiry date, or within three months before or after the anniversary date, of the Cargo Ship Safety Radio Certificate; and
 - ii. subject to maintenance at intervals not exceeding five years, to be performed at an approved shore-based maintenance facility.³

6. Malfunctions

- 6.1. While all reasonable steps shall be taken to maintain the equipment in efficient working order to ensure compliance with the functional requirements specified in regulation 4 of Chapter IV of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (SOLAS Chapter IV), malfunction of the equipment for providing the

² Refer to *Guidelines on annual testing of emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs)* ([MSC.1/Circ.1040/Rev.2](#)) and *Guidelines for the avoidance of false distress alerts* (resolution [MSC.514\(105\)](#)).

³ Refer to *Guidelines for shore-based maintenance of emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs)* ([MSC.1/Circ.1039/Rev.1](#)).

general radiocommunications required by regulation 4.1.2 of SOLAS Chapter IV shall not be considered as making a ship unseaworthy or as a reason for delaying the ship in ports where repair facilities are not readily available, provided the ship is capable of performing all distress, urgency and safety functions.

- 6.2. The procedure for temporary exemptions, extensions and postponements via the Recognised Organisation or Yacht Survey Organisation are outlined in Marine Notice 08.

7. Queries

- 7.1. Any queries on this notice may be addressed to reg@bahamasmaritime.com (for EPIRB registration), tech@bahamasmaritime.com (for technical queries) or any BMA office.

Revision History

Version	Description of Revision
1.0	First Issue
1.1	Periodic review. Paragraph 4.5 moved to new section 5.1
1.2	Periodic review. New Paragraph 5 on testing and maintenance, new paragraph 6 on malfunctions.