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**COSPAS-SARSAT
INTERNATIONAL 406 MHz BEACON REGISTRATION DATABASE**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-first session (10 to 19 May 2006), recognizing the importance of 406 MHz EPIRB registration databases to be available to SAR Authorities at all times, approved the guidance on COSPAS-SARSAT International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database (IBRD) prepared by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR), at its tenth session, as set out in the annex.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed guidance to the attention of all parties concerned.

ANNEX

GUIDANCE ON THE COSPAS-SARSAT INTERNATIONAL 406 MHz BEACON REGISTRATION DATABASE

Need for EPIRB registration and associated databases

1 Emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) perform distress alerting and other functions to support search and rescue (SAR) services covered by the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, as amended, for any person in distress at sea, and the 1974 International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), as amended, requires EPIRB carriage (Chapter IV, regulation 7.6) and registration.

2 The provisions relevant to EPIRB registration in Chapter IV, regulation 5-1 apply to all ships on all voyages, and are as follows:

“Each Contracting Government undertakes to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for registering global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS) identities and for making information on these identities available to rescue co-ordination centres on a 24-hour basis. Where appropriate, international organizations maintaining a registry of these identities shall be notified by the Contracting Government of these assignments.”

3 It is crucial that 406 MHz EPIRBs be registered, and that the registration data be available to SAR authorities at all times. Experience has shown that EPIRB registration data is either critically important or somewhat helpful in the majority of SAR cases involving an EPIRB alert.

4 406 MHz EPIRBs should be registered regardless of whether they are carried aboard ships or other marine craft, and registrations should be reinforced by national requirements.

5 It is essential that IMO Member States arrange for registration of EPIRBs to enable EPIRB owners to fulfil their obligation to register the beacons, and to provide access to this data by SAR authorities. Such arrangements can be made nationally, in co-operation with other Administrations or by other suitable means.

International Beacon Registration Database

6 COSPAS-SARSAT, the international programme that processes 406 MHz EPIRB alerts and routes them to the identified SAR authorities, has developed an International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database (IBRD) that became operational on 16 January 2006.

7 The IBRD is hosted on the Internet at <https://www.406registration.com> with online help capabilities.

8 COSPAS-SARSAT provides the IBRD solely for the purpose of assisting SAR Services in SAR operations. The IBRD is available free of charge to users with no access to national registration facilities.

9 Administrations that already have national registers should consider using the IBRD to make their national beacon registration data more readily available to SAR personnel on a 24-hour basis.

10 The IBRD can be used not only for registering 406 MHz EPIRBs, but also 406 MHz emergency locator transmitters (ELTs) carried on board aircraft, and personal locator beacons (PLBs) designed for personal use.

Background

11 The COSPAS-SARSAT 406 MHz system provides distress alerts that include the unique 15-character hexadecimal identification of the transmitting beacon. This beacon identification can be decoded to obtain information including:

- .1 the type of beacon, i.e. ELT, EPIRB or PLB;
- .2 the country code and identification data which form the unique beacon identification; and
- .3 the type of auxiliary radio locating (homing) device.

12 If a beacon is properly registered, the 15-character hexadecimal identification of the beacon can be used to access additional information. Beacon registration databases can provide information of great use to SAR personnel, including:

- .1 specific identification information;
- .2 the make/model of aircraft or vessel in distress;
- .3 communications equipment available;
- .4 the total number of persons onboard; and
- .5 emergency contact information.

13 Such information can be made available to support SAR services only if the required information is provided to the registration authority.

14 Registration of 406 MHz beacons is required in accordance with international regulations on SAR established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and by the SOLAS Convention. In addition, some countries have made 406 MHz beacon registration mandatory and maintain national 406 MHz beacon registration databases.

IBRD Concept of Operations

15 The IBRD is designed to support:

- .1 beacon owners who wish to register their beacons;
- .2 Administrations to make registration data available for SAR; and
- .3 SAR authorities that need to efficiently access beacon registration data to assist persons in distress.

16 COSPAS-SARSAT has configured the IBRD to accept by default beacon registrations from beacon owners, unless the Administration associated with the beacon's country code(s) has advised COSPAS-SARSAT that it:

- .1 operates a national database with a 24-hour point of contact and does not want EPIRBs with its country code(s) included in the IBRD; or
- .2 wishes to control the inclusion of beacons with its country code(s) in the IBRD.

Establishing an IBRD Point of Contact

17 Each Administration should provide COSPAS-SARSAT with a National IBRD Point of Contact for co-ordinating use of the IBRD. This Contact will help to resolve problems arising with registration of beacons with the Administration's country code(s).

18 The National IBRD Point of Contact should be officially identified to the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat using a letter similar to that annexed to this circular. This letter must be signed by the Administration's IMO representative, or by its representative to COSPAS-SARSAT or to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and sent to the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat. Based on the letter, the Database Administrator (i.e., the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat) will allocate the requested user identifications and passwords to the Administration's National IBRD Point of Contact.

19 The request should specify whether user identification and passwords are required for:

- .1 National Data Providers for registration of beacons with their country code(s);
- .2 SAR Services for IBRD queries; and/or
- .3 authorized shore-based service facilities and inspectors.

20 Passwords and user identifications will be sent via regular post to the National IBRD Point of Contact, who must then forward the user identification and password to national SAR Services, Data Providers and authorized maintenance facilities and inspectors to enable their use of the IBRD.

21 It is critical that, at a minimum, passwords be requested for SAR Services to access beacon registration information held in the IBRD.

Providing Details of Your National Beacon Registry

22 If an Administration maintains its own national beacon registry and decides not to allow beacons with its country code(s) to be registered in the IBRD, the Administration should review the information relating to national beacon registries in documents C/S A.001 and C/S S.007 (available from www.cospas-sarsat.org) and provide the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat with any updates as appropriate. It is critically important that accurate information is provided to the Secretariat in order to keep these documents up to date.

23 Beacon owners who attempt to register beacons with an Administration's country code(s) will be advised through a "pop up" window of contact information regarding the applicable national beacon registry based on information provided to COSPAS-SARSAT by the Administration.

24 If no information is available regarding the details of a national beacon registry for an Administration, COSPAS-SARSAT will assume that no such registry exists and will allow the direct registration of beacons with the Administration's country code(s) in the IBRD.

Controlling Beacon Registration at a National Level

25 If an Administration has elected to use the IBRD but wishes to control inputs to the IBRD at a national level, the national IBRD Point of Contact should so notify the COSPAS-SARSAT IBRD Database Administrator, and provide a description of the details of the national authority responsible for EPIRB registration.

26 The Administration will be able to upload in bulk its beacon registration data and, if desired, keep sole control of inputs or updates. In that case, beacon owners who attempt to register beacons with the Administration's country code(s) will be advised through a "pop up" window of national contact information for beacon registration.

27 The IBRD Database Administrator will provide national user identification and a password that will allow only the National Data Provider to register and modify existing registrations of beacons with the Administration's country code(s).

Means of Registration

28 COSPAS-SARSAT will only accept beacon registrations submitted via the online facilities provided by the IBRD. Beacon registrations submitted in paper format or via other communication facilities will not be accepted.

APPENDIX

Sample Letter for Contacting the COSPAS-SARSAT Database Administrator

Notification of Intent to use the IBRD and/or Request for IBRD
User Identification and Password

(Please modify this form as appropriate and fax or mail to the address below)

TO: COSPAS-SARSAT IBRD Administrator
COSPAS-SARSAT Programme, 700 de la Gauchetière West, Suite 2450
Montreal, Quebec H3B 5M2 Canada
Fax: +1 514 954 6750

I would like to request access to the COSPAS-SARSAT International Beacon Registration Database (IBRD) on behalf of [*country*] for the following purposes (*select as appropriate*):

- bulk uploading of data by our National Data Provider,
- IBRD queries by our authorized national SAR services,
- IBRD queries by our authorized ship and aircraft inspectors and maintenance facilities.

I request that a user identification and password be issued for each of the user categories selected above.

I understand that:

- each user identification and password provided is associated with a different level of access to the IBRD as specified in document C/S D.001, and that it is the responsibility of our National IBRD Point of Contact to appropriately distribute this information nationally; and
- it is the responsibility of the National Data Provider to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data provided.

I designate the following to be [*country's*] National IBRD Point of Contact:

Name	
Full Mailing Address	
Telephone	
Facsimile	
E-mail	

Sincerely,

IMO or ICAO or COSPAS-SARSAT Representative
