



## Information concerning maritime distress beacons (EPIRB)

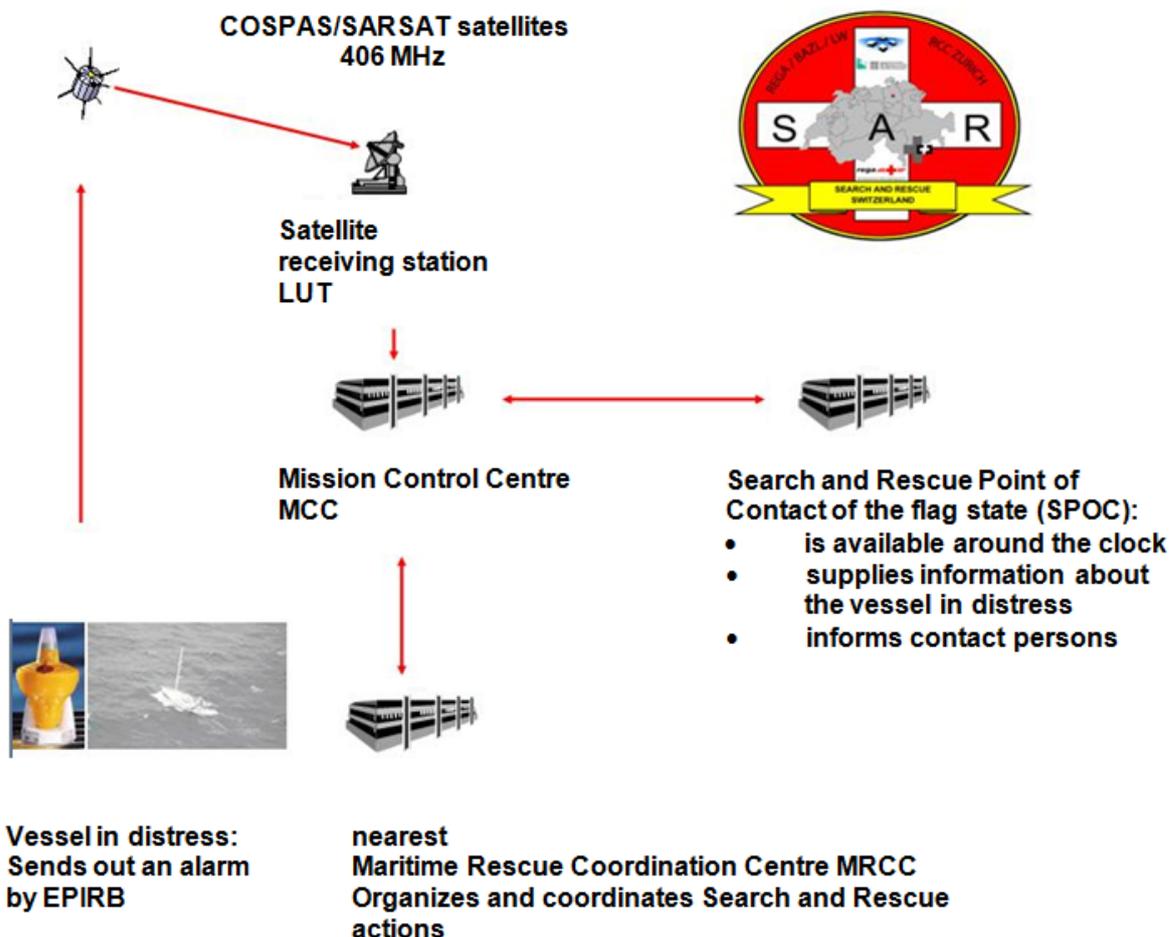
### 1. COSPAS-SARSAT IBRD (International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database)

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 be able to provide immediate information concerning vessel data, ownership and contact persons in case of emergencies.

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 **if the information has been independently and completely stored in the COSPAS-SARSAT database by the ship owner!**

### 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 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 EPIRB<sup>1</sup>. 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.

Via the link **[www.406registration.com](http://www.406registration.com)**, the ship owner creates a personal user account in order to store the technical and personal data so that these are 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 on board 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, a data sheet with all stored information can be generated by the system, saved and printed in PDF format.

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

At regular intervals, the system sends a request for a data check. If the status is set to "OUT OF SERVICE" or "out of operation", "stolen", "sold", "destroyed", "lost" or "replaced", no request will be sent. Please make sure to provide a valid e-mail address.

If a second-hand EPIRB is purchased, the registration process must be the same. The EPIRB must be recoded with the MMSI number assigned by OFCOM. If the previous owner has set the status of this EPIRB in the IBRD to "sold", the data at [www.406registration.com](http://www.406registration.com) can be updated accordingly. Ask for the login data of the previous owner, as an EPIRB with the same HEX\_ID can only be registered once.

EPIRBs may not be carried on loan on another vessel unless they are temporarily registered to that other vessel and recoded accordingly (MMSI must match the vessel on which the EPIRB is carried). In such cases, the information in the IBRD must be updated.

Instructions for registration are available at <https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/smno/de/documents/IBRD-Kurzanleitung-DE.pdf> [only available in German]

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

### 4. Cancellation of a false alarm

If it is discovered on a Swiss-flagged vessel that an EPIRB has been activated by mistake, the SRR (Search and Rescue Region) in whose waters the vessel is located must be informed immediately via the nearest MRCC. The EPIRB must be deactivated. The MRCC must be informed using the available means of communication in accordance with the procedure laid down in the radio regulations (e.g. channel 16). Please inform the MRCC that the alarm is a false alarm so that the rescue can be stopped. Without this message, a rescue will be triggered.

If no contact can be established with the MRCC, please inform the MRCC Switzerland.

The telephone number of the Operations Centre is +41 58 654 39 38 or +41 33 333 33 33

MRCC Zurich requires the following information:

MMSI, call sign, vessel name, current position of the vessel, name of the reporting person.

The MRCC Zurich immediately informs the responsible MRCC in the corresponding Search and Rescue Region (SRR).

