

## EMERGENCY POSITION INDICATING RADIO BEACON (EPIRBS)

EPIRBs are a lifeline to survival in the event of an accident at sea. Upon receiving notification of an EPIRB activation, the Search and Rescue (SAR) system and resources are thrown into action.

In recent months, the Canadian SAR system has been activated unnecessarily due to improper disposal of EPIRBs, as well, incorrect registration information has caused difficulties in locating emergency contacts.

## REGISTRATION OF YOUR EPIRB

The Canadian Coast Guard recommends that EPIRBs be properly registered. Upon purchasing an EPIRB the owner is responsible for the proper registration of the beacon and the updating of the information, including emergency contacts. This is also true when purchasing a vessel that already has an EPIRB onboard. SAR coordinators use the registration information to determine the course of action required for the response available within minutes. Knowing the name of the vessel and emergency contact information allows the coordinator an opportunity to quickly establish the location and degree of urgency.

To verify your beacon is properly registered contact the **Canadian Coast Guard Beacon Registry** at: **1-877-406-7671** or online at: **[www.cbr-rcb.ca](http://www.cbr-rcb.ca)**

## DISPOSAL OF YOUR EPIRB

Once an EPIRB has reached its expiry date, the proper disposal of the EPIRB is very important; an improperly disposed EPIRB can result in the unnecessary response of the SAR system. Once an expired EPIRB has been replaced, the old beacon needs to be unregistered, and the new one registered. The expired EPIRB should be returned to the retail outlet where it was purchased for proper disposal, or the battery removed from the unit immediately and the circuit board inside destroyed. The battery should be recycled. To unregister the beacon, contact the Canadian Beacon Registry at the telephone number provided above. It is imperative that all these steps be followed:

1. Deactivate the EPIRB Hex Code with the Canadian Beacon Registry Office.
2. Disconnect and remove the battery from the EPIRB.
3. Take the battery to a battery recycling facility.
4. Dispose of the EPIRB body in the garbage.

The Canadian Coast Guard treats all EPIRB signals as distress alerts and acts accordingly. When SAR resources are responding to “false alerts”, response time for real incidents are impacted. The proper and effective response of the SAR system depends on you.

## SAFETY FACT SHEET

### DEFINITIONS:

**EPIRB:**

An Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon is used to alert search and rescue services, in the event of an emergency, by transmitting a coded message on the 406 MHz distress frequency via satellite and earth stations to the nearest rescue coordination centre.

**Hull Length:**

Means the distance measured on a vessel from the forward end of the foremost outside surface of the hull shell to the aft end of the aftermost outside surface of the hull shell. Hull length must also include any deck extensions, pulpits, anchor rollers, etc. that extend beyond the hull shell and cannot be removed with hand tools.

### MINIMUM CARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS:

As summarized from the Navigation Safety Regulations 2020 (Section 209) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2020-216.pdf> and the Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations (Section 3.28) [https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/C.R.C.,\\_c.\\_1486.pdf](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/C.R.C.,_c._1486.pdf)

Vessel Size (Hull Length)	Within 25 nm from shore		Beyond 25 nm from shore
	If Life Raft carried	If no Life Raft	
Less than 8 m (26'3")	1 EPIRB or PLB* or Hand Held VHF with DSC	1 EPIRB	1 Float-free EPIRB
More than 8 m (26'3") Not more than 12 m (39'4")	1 EPIRB or PLB* *406 MHz Personal Locator Beacon	1 EPIRB	1 Float-free EPIRB
More than 12 m (39'4")	1 Float-free EPIRB		1 Float-free EPIRB

A fishing vessel of any length on Sheltered Waters\*\* voyages MAY carry an EPIRB in lieu of the requirement under the Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations to carry a Life Raft or combination of a Life Raft and Recovery Boat.

\*\* NOTE: Sheltered Waters are defined and users should make sure the waters they operate in are indeed identified as Sheltered Waters prior to considering substituting equipment or determining if specific equipment is required. Should you need further assistance on determining if your body of water is considered Sheltered Waters, please contact your nearest Transport Canada Marine Safety & Security Office - <https://tc.canada.ca/en/corporate-services/atlantic-region>

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. It is mandatory for all 406 MHz EPIRBs and PLBs to be registered with the Canadian Beacon Registry. Ensuring that EPIRB and PLB is registered, as well as updating the information regularly, will facilitate the task for search and rescue personnel in the event of a distress situation.  
Contact the Canadian Beacon Registry on the Internet or at 1-877-406-7671 or via email to [cbr@sarnet.dnd.ca](mailto:cbr@sarnet.dnd.ca).
2. EPIRBs and PLBs must be tested at regular intervals. The Manufacturer and/or the Retailer of the EPIRB or PLB provides instructions on how to do self tests of the EPIRB.
3. Batteries located in the EPIRB must be replaced every 5 years from date of manufacture.
4. The Hydrostatic Release mechanism located on a 'float free' EPIRB canister or mounting bracket must be replaced every 2 years from date of manufacture.

NOTE: This Fact Sheet is being provided for information purposes only and requirements should be confirmed with a local Transport Canada Marine Safety and Security Inspector before making any modifications to a vessel or purchases of safety equipment. Some information provided on Regulatory Requirements and/or Carriage Requirements may be edited, summarized or somewhat generalized for the purpose of this Fact Sheet or for space in the document. Please refer to the Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations and any other Regulations referenced for full text.

