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12 February 2004

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE MSN 1779**

1. Following publication of MSN 1779 (M+F) and at the request of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), a representative group of EPIRB manufacturers and Shore-based Maintainers met in October 2003 to agree a basis under which Shore-based Maintenance of Satellite EPIRB's should be carried out in the UK.
2. The purpose of the guidelines in annex 1 is to:
  - Establish standardised procedures and minimum levels of service for the testing and maintenance of satellite EPIRB's to ensure maximum reliability whilst minimising the risk of false distress alerting.
  - Ensure that Shore-based maintenance is carried out, in accordance with the requirements of MSC/Circ 1039, at an interval not exceeding five years or when battery replacement is due.

The guidelines in annex 1 should be read in conjunction with the UK MCA Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1779 (M+F) - Changes in the Requirements to SOLAS Chapter IV: Radiocommunications and apply to ships as described in the UK Merchant Shipping (Radio Installation) Regulations 1998.



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## ANNEX 1

### Guidance Notes

#### 1) Accreditation of Shore-based Maintainers

Shore-based Maintainers (SBM's) shall have a quality control system audited by a competent authority in respect of their servicing operation. The Shore-based Maintainer shall either operate a quality system that is approved to the requirements of ISO 9000 (or equivalent) or shall operate a quality system that has been audited and approved by an EPIRB manufacturer. In the later case the SBM is required to obtain separate accreditation from each EPIRB manufacturer whose products they wish to maintain.

#### 2) Approval of Shore-based Maintainers

In addition to operating an accredited quality control system all SBM's shall be approved to carry out Shore-based Maintenance of EPIRB's by each manufacturer whose products they wish to maintain.

EPIRB manufacturers shall not unreasonably refuse to approve a Shore-based Maintenance organisation that meets the appropriate standards. In the event of a manufacturer turning down a request by an SBM for approval on commercial grounds, an opinion on the validity of the decision may be sought from MCA.

#### 3) Shore-based Maintenance Facilities in the UK

It is the responsibility of each individual EPIRB manufacturer to make whatever arrangements they feel appropriate to ensure that their beacons are adequately supported in ports around the UK. This may be by means of factory based maintenance by the manufacturer themselves, by the supply of a service exchange EPIRB or by the use of an approved SBM who may or may not be local to any particular port or have a territory covering all or part of the UK. The SBM may in turn offer either service exchange EPIRB's or shore-based maintenance of EPIRB's or both as their approval permits.

Each manufacturer shall maintain and publish an up to date list with details of its accredited Shore-based Maintenance providers in the UK. This information shall be made readily available to ship owners and agents by any suitable means chosen by the manufacturer (e.g. Web site, Paper publication).

#### 4) Shore-based Maintenance Documentation

EPIRB Manufacturers will issue each SBM with a dated Certificate stating that they are approved to carry out SBM on behalf of the manufacturer. The certificate will clearly state which models of EPIRB that it applies to. The manufacturer will issue a separate certificate for each SBM site that it has approved.



If the EPIRB Manufacturer has also accredited the SBM's quality system (as opposed to it being ISO 9000 (or equivalent) approved), then it will issue a separate certificate to the SBM to cover its accreditation of their quality system.

The manufacturer will provide all its approved SBM's with appropriate technical documentation to enable them to carry out the Shore-based Maintenance required by MSC Circ. 1039.

The Shore-based Maintainer shall fill out an SBM Certificate that is either provided by or approved by the Manufacturer. The Shore-based Maintainer shall complete the Certificate and provide it to the ships master, owner or agent as proof of the satisfactory completion of the SBM work.

The Shore-based Maintainer will keep available for inspection by a competent authority for a minimum period of 5 years all of the following:

- The Manufacturers SBM Approval Certificate
- Evidence of its accredited quality system
- A copy of each SBM Certificate issued for each EPIRB
- A report on each EPIRB detailing the SBM activity carried out and listing any defects found and parts replaced.

In addition each SBM and Manufacturer shall set up a system of traceability whereby the manufacturer can if necessary, obtain access to the SBM's records of each EPIRB that a SBM Certificate has been issued for.

#### 5) Test Equipment and Facilities required to carry out SBM

Each SBM shall have available a complete set of test equipment and other facilities as recommended by the EPIRB manufacturer in order to satisfactorily carry out SBM work on its EPIRB's. If the SBM already has an equivalent item of test equipment, then the manufacturer will accept this as meeting this requirement, provided that it is suitable.

#### 6) Spare Parts Availability and Authenticity

The SBM shall use either original equipment spare parts as provided by the EPIRB manufacturer or third-party manufactured spare parts approved by the EPIRB manufacturer. The manufacturer shall not unreasonably refuse to approve the use of directly equivalent spares sourced from a third party.

It shall be possible to establish the authenticity of all spare parts used and the SBM shall maintain records showing from where all such parts were purchased or obtained.

#### 7) Evidence of Satisfactory Completion of SBM

The SBM provider shall affix a manufacturer approved or provided SBM label to the EPIRB on completion of the work, this shall identify the SBM provider and the date that the next SBM is due.



## 8) Liability Insurance

All SBM providers shall have adequate liability arrangements and / or insurance in the unlikely event of claims being made against them.

### *Information note:*

#### Obsolete and Orphan Products

If a manufacturer has declared a product obsolete and spare parts (especially batteries) are no longer available for it, then at the SBM interval the ship owner should be informed that a certificate cannot be issued and advised that it must be removed from the vessel and a new EPIRB fitted in its place.

If the manufacturer of a particular make and / or model of EPIRB no longer exists and arrangements have not been made to transfer the rights to the product legally to a third party, then it is considered to be an 'orphan product'. If this is the case then again at the SBM interval the ship owner should be informed that a certificate cannot be issued and advised that it must be removed from the vessel and a new EPIRB fitted in its place.

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January 2004

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