



# ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

**CIRCULAR N° SOL 019 – Rev.1**

### **ANNUAL TESTING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES OF 406 MHz SATELLITE EPIRBs**

**TO: SHIPOWNERS, SHIPS' OPERATORS AND  
MANAGERS, FLAG STATE SURVEYORS,  
RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

**APPLICABLE TO: ALL VESSELS**

**EFFECTIVE AS FROM: Date of this Circular**

12<sup>th</sup> July 2012

The Maritime Safety Committee of the IMO has approved Guidelines for shore-based maintenance of satellite EPIRBs. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish standardized procedures and minimum levels of service for the testing and maintenance of satellite EPIRBs to ensure maximum reliability whilst minimizing the risk of false distress alerts.

SOLAS CHAPTER IV REGULATION 15 Maintenance requirements

The existing text of paragraph 9 of the above regulation is replaced by the following:

1. Annual test for all aspects of operational efficiency, with a special emphasis on checking the emission on operational frequencies, coding and registration, at intervals as specified below:

(a) on passenger ships, within 3 months before the expiry date of the Passenger Ship Safety Certificate; and

(b) on cargo ships, within 3 months before the expiry date, or 3 months before or after the anniversary date, of the Cargo Ship Safety Radio Certificate.

The test may be conducted on board the ship or at an approved testing station; and

2. MSC/Circ.955 further recommends that annual testing of the EPIRB shall be carried out concurrently with the Annual Safety Radio Survey.

3. The testing should be carried out by persons with the necessary skills and competency and having the required test equipment. Caution should be exercised at all times during the testing to avoid transmitting false distress alerts.

4. The maintenance at intervals not exceeding five years, should be performed at an approved shore-based maintenance facility.

## **Shore based maintenance**

Shore based maintenance of satellite EPIRBs shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of MSC Circular 1039 at an interval not exceeding 5 years or when the battery replacement is due.

At intervals not exceeding five (5) years, the 406 MHz satellite EPIRB should be serviced (i.e. Maintenance Servicing) by a Shore-Based Maintenance (SBM) provider who may be the manufacturer's servicing agent.

This maintenance servicing is counted as an annual testing referred to in the first paragraph. We suggest that the maintenance servicing be scheduled, as far as practicable, to coincide with the time when the satellite EPIRB's battery should be changed.

**The Guidelines for shore-based maintenance of satellite EPIRBs (MSC Circular 1039) and the requirements for annual testing (MSC Circular 1040/Rev.1 and MSC Circular 1123) are attached to this circular.**

## **MSC.1/Circ.1040/Rev.1**

**25 May 2012**

### **REVISED GUIDELINES ON ANNUAL TESTING OF 406 MHz SATELLITE EPIRBs**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninetieth session (16 to 25 May 2012), approved the annexed revised Guidelines on annual testing of 406 MHz satellite EPIRBs, as required by SOLAS regulation IV/15.9.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring these Guidelines to the attention of shipping companies, shipowners, ship operators, equipment manufacturers, classification societies, shipmasters and all parties concerned.

3 This circular supersedes MSC/Circ.1040.

\*\*\*

#### **ANNEX**

##### **GUIDELINES ON ANNUAL TESTING OF 406 MHz SATELLITE EPIRBs**

1 The annual testing of 406 MHz satellite EPIRBs is required by SOLAS regulation IV/15.9.

2 The testing should be carried out using suitable test equipment capable of performing all the relevant measurements required in these guidelines. All checks of electrical parameters should be performed in the self-test mode, if possible.

3 The examination of the installed 406 MHz satellite EPIRB should include:

.1 checking position and mounting for float-free operation;

.2 verifying the presence of a firmly attached lanyard in good condition; the lanyard should be neatly stowed, and must not

be tied to the vessel or the mounting bracket;

.3 carrying out visual inspection for defects;

.4 carrying out the self-test routine;

.5 checking that the EPIRB identification (15 Hex ID and other required information) is clearly marked on the outside of the equipment;

.6 decoding the EPIRB 15 Hexadecimal Identification Digits (15 Hex ID) and other information from the transmitted signal, checking that the decoded information (15 Hex ID or MMSI/callsign data, as required by the Administration) is identical to the identification marked on the beacon;

.7 checking that the MMSI number encoded in the beacon corresponds with the MMSI number assigned to the ship;

.8 checking registration through documentation or through the point of contact associated with that country code;

.9 checking the battery expiry date;

.10 checking the hydrostatic release and its expiry date, as appropriate;

.11 checking the emission in the 406 MHz band using the self-test mode or an appropriate device to avoid transmission of a distress call to the satellites;

.12 if possible, checking emission on the 121.5 MHz frequency using the self-test mode or an appropriate device to avoid activating the SAR system;

.13 checking that the EPIRB has been maintained by an approved shore-based maintenance provider at intervals required by the Administration;

.14 after the test, remounting the EPIRB in its bracket, checking that no transmission has been started; and

.15 verifying the presence of beacon operating instructions.



Ref. T2-NAVSEC/1.4

MSC/Circ.1123  
26 May 2004

### **GUIDELINES ON ANNUAL TESTING OF L-BAND SATELLITE EPIRBs**

- 1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-eighth session (12 to 21 May 2004), approved the annexed Guidelines on annual testing of L-band satellite EPIRBs, as required by SOLAS regulation IV/15.9, which entered into force on 1 July 2002.
- 2 These Guidelines complement those given in MSC/Circ.1040 for annual testing of 406 MHz satellite EPIRBs.
- 3 Member Governments are invited to bring these Guidelines to the attention of shipping companies, shipowners, ship operators, equipment manufacturers, classification societies, shipmasters and all parties concerned.

\*\*\*

**ANNEX****GUIDELINES ON ANNUAL TESTING OF L-BAND SATELLITE EPIRBs**

- 1 The annual testing of L-band satellite EPIRBs is required by new SOLAS regulation IV/15.9 which entered into force on 1 July 2002.
- 2 The testing should be carried out using suitable test equipment capable of performing all the relevant measurements required in these guidelines. All checks of electrical parameters should be performed in the self-test mode, if possible.
- 3 The examination of the installed L-band satellite EPIRB should include:
  - .1 checking position and mounting for float-free operation;
  - .2 verifying the presence of a firmly attached lanyard in good condition; the lanyard should be neatly stowed, and must not be tied to the vessel or the mounting bracket;
  - .3 carrying out visual inspection for defects;
  - .4 carrying out the self-test routine;
  - .5 checking that the EPIRB identification (installed (9-digit) system code and other required information) is clearly marked on the outside of the equipment;
  - .6 decoding the EPIRB installed system code and other information from the transmitted signal, checking that the decoded information is identical to the identification marked on the beacon;
  - .7 checking registration through documentation or through the point of contact associated with that installed system code;
  - .8 checking the battery expiry date;
  - .9 checking the hydrostatic release and its expiry date, as appropriate;
  - .10 checking the emission at L-band using the self-test mode or an appropriate device to avoid transmission of a distress call to the satellites;
  - .11 if applicable, checking emission on the 121.5 MHz frequency using the self-test mode or an appropriate device to avoid activating the satellite system;
  - .12 checking that the EPIRB has been maintained by an approved shore-based maintenance provider at intervals required by the Administration;
  - .13 after the test, remounting the EPIRB in its bracket, checking that no transmission has been started; and
  - .14 verifying the presence of beacon operating instructions.