

## CAYMAN ISLANDS SHIPPING REGISTRY

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### Shipping Notice 02/05

#### SHIP RADIO LICENCES AND PROGRAMMING OF EPIRB's

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TO: OWNERS, OPERATORS, MANAGERS AND MASTERS

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#### 1 BACKGROUND:

This Notice advises of the procedures for obtaining a Radio Licence and registering an EPIRB for Cayman Islands ships and yachts. **This Shipping Notice replaces CISN 11/2004 which is now withdrawn.**

#### 2 SHIP RADIO LICENCES

The Information & Communications Technology Authority (ICTA) is responsible for Radio Licensing and associated matters. Contact details are:

ICTA  
PO Box 2502 GT  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Alista Towers  
85 North Sound Road  
George Town  
Cayman Islands

Tel: (345) 945 8283  
Fax: (345) 945 8284  
Email: [licensing@icta.ky](mailto:licensing@icta.ky)  
Contact Kevin Washington

They should be contacted for all matters concerning marine and air radio communications in the Cayman Islands including Inmarsat applications and issue of Maritime Mobile Selective call Identity (MMSI) Codes, Selcall numbers and Inmarsat Satcom for new registration vessels

When making initial applications for ship station radio licences ship owners, managers, operators or their representatives should deal directly with the above and copy all communications to their Cayman Island representative's office who will be expected to process the applications,

prepare all the required paperwork, arrange payment of the small fee involved and collection of the licence.

In the case of renewals:

- Where there has been no change to the installed equipment it will be sufficient to provide a copy of the previous licence issued together with a statement from an authorised officer that there have been no changes, and the appropriate fee.
- Where changes have been made to the radio installation then a new application form should be completed.

### 3 PROGRAMMING AND REGISTERING AN EPIRB

#### BACKGROUND

EPIRBs are programmed using one of three main protocols, agreed internationally.

- Maritime User protocol,
- Radio Call Sign protocol,
- *Serialised User* protocol. – **Which is utilised by Cayman Islands ships**

#### USE OF *SERIALISED PROTOCOL* DATABASE BY THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

The Cayman Islands does not have its own dedicated EPIRB registration database but instead has an agreement to utilise the UK database maintained by the MCA and the United States database. This is seen as the most effective means of providing coverage for Cayman Islands registered EPIRBs. Other, equally effective, systems may be accepted on a case by case basis when necessary.

Under the *serialised protocol*, the country of EPIRB registration determines how the EPIRB is to be programmed and includes:

- The first three digits( or the country identifier known as the Marine Identifier Digits (MID)) refer to **the country holding the database** and not necessarily to the country whose flag the ship is entitled to fly;
- A special number (the “serialised number”), again assigned by the country holding the database.

One major advantage of the *serialised protocol* is that for a vessel already registered under this system, a change of owner or ship’s name will not

necessitate re-programming of the EPIRB. The submission of a new registration card to the organisation maintaining the EPIRB database showing the changes with respect to the vessel is all that is required.

## **USE OF *SERIALISED PROTOCOL* DATABASES BY THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

The Cayman Islands does not have its own dedicated EPIRB registration database and has agreement to utilise the UK database maintained at MCA, Falmouth and also the United States database as the most effective means of providing coverage for EPIRB's. Other equally effective systems would however be accepted on a case-by-case basis where necessary.

### **4 PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY SHIPS NEWLY FLAGGING IN TO THE CAYMAN ISLANDS (UK DATABASES)**

#### **1 COSPAS/SARSAT 406 MHZ EPIRBs**

##### **a) EPIRB already registered under the UK Serialised Protocol system**

- If the EPIRB is already entered in the UK database, there should be no need to re-programme it.
- However, in such circumstances it is **essential** that a new UK registration form be completed **by the owners or operators of the vessel** and forwarded to the EPIRB Registration Centre at Falmouth.
- This will need to be done after the vessel has been removed from her previous register and before sailing under the Cayman Islands flag.
- **A copy of the registration form should also be forwarded to the Cayman Islands Ship Registry (CISR) in Grand Cayman.**
- It would be prudent to check with the radio technician and/or the manufacturer of the EPIRB to confirm that re-programming is not necessary.

##### **b) EPIRB registered in another database**

- Owners should contact the manufacturer of the existing EPIRB alerting them to the change of flag.
- The manufacturer of the EPIRB should assign a UK "serialised number". (The UK MCA allocates such numbers to manufacturers in blocks for programming EPIRBs at the manufacturing stage).
- The EPIRB Registration Centre at Falmouth can provide contacts for the manufacturer, if required, and allocate a number where a manufacturer has not been given or has exhausted a pre-assigned block.

- During the change-over but prior to the vessel sailing under the Cayman Islands flag, the EPIRB should be re-programmed for the UK database. This will include the programming of the UK MID as well as the UK issued serialised number. The radio technician should be aware of any other programming requirements, but if they appear unsure the MCA in Falmouth should be consulted.
- A UK EPIRB registration form should be completed and forwarded to Falmouth, by fax in the first instance, prior to the vessel sailing under the Cayman Islands flag, with a copy to the CISR. At the same time, owners must ensure that the EPIRB details are deleted from its previous registration system.

## **2 INMARSAT L-BAND EPIRBs**

- L-Band (1.6GHz) EPIRBs operate under the INMARSAT system rather than the COSPAS/SARSAT system. For these beacons, INMARSAT retains its own database.
- In general terms, an L-Band EPIRB is programmed at manufacture.
- INMARSAT assigns a unique 9-digit code to the EPIRB, and the Routing Organization (i.e. the flag state's telecommunications department) will issue a 9-digit ship identification number, which would normally be the vessel's MMSI number.
- An L-Band EPIRB is to be registered with INMARSAT, together with the appropriate details for the vessel. A copy of the registration should also be submitted to the CISR.
- Further information on how to proceed may be obtained from INMARSAT, contact details for which are given below.
- L-Band EPIRBs are currently much less common than their 406MHz counterparts.

## **EXISTING SHIPS ON THE CAYMAN ISLANDS REGISTER**

- Whilst the ultimate aim is to have the EPIRBs of all Cayman Islands registered vessels under an appropriate serialised database, proposals are under discussion, in the UK, with respect to acceptance within the serialised database of EPIRBs already programmed with other than the serialised protocol. Until a conclusion is reached, it would be premature to require existing vessels to change.
- In the event that an EPIRB needs replacing however, the opportunity should be taken to change to the serialised system. Similarly, voluntary change to the serialised system would be encouraged, though it is emphasised that the

procedures outlined above for vessels flagging in should be followed in all cases.

- Further information regarding existing EPIRBs not programmed under the serialised system will be promulgated in due course.

### **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Earlier 406MHz EPIRBs models can be more difficult to re-programme and in extreme cases it may be necessary to obtain a new EPIRB. The new beacon should be ready programmed, but check with the manufacturers to confirm.

Under the serialised protocol system, detailed information on the ship and shore based contacts required in the event of a distress alert will be held in the underlying database. When the EPIRB is triggered, the signal will automatically alert the database centre and link the alert to the information for the EPIRB and the ship concerned. This will enable the EPIRB Registration Centre to contact the appropriate people ashore as well as alert the most appropriate SAR centre in the vicinity of the distress. It is therefore crucial that the movement of an EPIRB from one ship, owner or flag, to another is properly notified and recorded.

There may be cases where the EPIRB is already programmed for a “holding country” other than the UK or the USA, using the serialised protocol. It may be possible in such a case, depending on whether or not the holding country is agreeable, to retain the registration in that database and simply submit a new registration card, in a similar manner to that for an EPIRB already in the UK database. However, given the uncertainty as to whether or not another outside country would in fact be agreeable to retaining the EPIRB registration under the Cayman Islands flag, it is preferable to transfer to the UK database as outlined above. If another holding country’s database is used, that country will need to be similarly advised of the change of flag, and a new registration form submitted prior to the vessel sailing under the Cayman Islands flag. A copy of the registration form should also be forwarded to the CISR.

These instructions and guidelines relate primarily to registering an EPIRB with the UK Registration Centre. The Cayman Islands also accepts EPIRB registrations under the US serialised system, and the steps to be followed are similar, but more detailed information will be promulgated in due course. In the meantime, additional information for registering with the US database can be obtained from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

## CONTACT DETAILS

### UK

#### **Inmarsat**

99 City Road  
London EC1Y 1AX  
Tel: +(44) 20 7728 1777  
Fax: +(44) 20 7728 1142  
Email: [customercare@inmarsat.com](mailto:customercare@inmarsat.com)  
[www.inmarsat.com](http://www.inmarsat.com)

#### **Falmouth EPIRB registration Centre:**

HM Coastguard (Falmouth)  
Pendennis Point,  
Castle Drive  
Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4WZ  
Tel: +(44) 1326211 569  
Fax: +(44) 1326 319 264  
Application forms available from:  
[www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga-hmcg/mcga-hmcg-sar.htm](http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga-hmcg/mcga-hmcg-sar.htm)

### USA (NOAA)

United States Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service  
Washington, D.C. 20233

Chief, SARSAT Operations Division  
NOAA/NESDIS/SARSAT-E/SP3  
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