



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

MSN 1924 (M+F) EPIRB and PLB registration requirements

Notice to all Shipowners, Masters, Skippers and Operators

This notice should be read with The Merchant Shipping (EPIRB and PLB Registration) (Radiocommunications) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. MGN 665 (M+F) Amendment 1 provides guidance about the application and effect of those Regulations and this MSN.

Summary

In accordance with international requirements, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency maintains an online portal for registration of UK coded 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs). This MSN sets out details in relation to the registration requirements.

1. Introduction/background

1.1 The Merchant Shipping (EPIRB and PLB Registration) (Radiocommunications) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 give effect in UK law to the requirement to register specified information about EPIRBs and PLBs with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

1.2 In this MSN:

1.2.1 "HEX ID" means hexadecimal identity which are 15 characters for first generation beacons and 23 characters for second generation beacons, and provides a unique code transmitted by 406 MHz beacons

1.2.2 "MID" means Maritime Identification Digits, being the three digits within the MMSI that identify the country where the ship is registered

- 1.2.3 “MMSI” means Maritime Mobile Service Identity, being a nine-digit identification number made up of the three-digit MID followed by a six-digit identification number
- 1.2.4 “radio installation” means any radio installation provided on board a ship, including its associated antennas, interconnecting circuits and, where appropriate, sources of electrical energy
- 1.2.5 “survival craft” means a craft capable of sustaining the lives of persons in distress from the time of abandoning the ship

2. Requirements for EPIRB Registration

2.1 The registered particulars are—

- 2.1.1 ship name;
- 2.1.2 MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity, being a nine-digit identification number made up of the three-digit MID followed by a six-digit identification number);
- 2.1.3 radio call sign;
- 2.1.4 EPIRB manufacturer’s serial number and any locating frequencies and identifiers;
- 2.1.5 brief description of ship, including its type, gross tonnage, ship superstructure, deck colours and identifying marks;
- 2.1.6 HEX ID;
- 2.1.7 Beacon owners name, address, telephone number and email;
- 2.1.8 Up to three alternative 24-hour emergency contacts including name and telephone number (alternative contact ashore);
- 2.1.9 capacity of ship to carry persons on board (passengers and crew);
- 2.1.10 radio installations carried on board the ship and survival craft;
- 2.1.11 type and number of survival craft; and
- 2.1.12 date of last modification of registered particulars.

3. Requirements for PLB Registration

3.1 The registered particulars are—

- 3.1.1 ship name;
- 3.1.2 radio call sign;
- 3.1.3 PLB manufacturer’s serial number and any locating frequencies and identifiers;
- 3.1.4 brief description of ship (if applicable), including its type, gross tonnage, ship superstructure, deck colours and identifying marks;
- 3.1.5 HEX ID;
- 3.1.6 Beacon owners name, address, telephone number and email;
- 3.1.7 Up to three alternative 24-hour emergency contacts including name and telephone number (alternative contact ashore);

- 3.1.8 capacity of ship to carry persons on board (passengers and crew);
- 3.1.9 radio installations carried on board the ship and survival craft (if applicable);
and
- 3.1.10 date of last modification of registered particulars.

More information

UK Technical Services - Navigation
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/24
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Telephone: +44 (0)203 81 72000

Email: navigationsafety@mca.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/mca

Please note that all addresses and telephone numbers are correct at time of publishing.

Published: **Month Year**

© Crown Copyright