



Maritime &  
Coastguard  
Agency

## MARINE GUIDANCE NOTE

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# **MGN 665 (M+F) Amendment 1 Mandatory registration of Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) and 406 MHz Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) used in the maritime environment.**

Notice to all Owners, Masters, Skippers and Operators of vessels that carry EPIRBs and PLBs in a maritime environment.

This notice should be read with **SI 2025 No. XXXX** - The Merchant Shipping (EPIRB and PLB Registration) (Radiocommunications) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 and replaces MGN 665 (M+F).

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## **1. Summary**

This Notice draws attention to and gives guidance regarding The Merchant Shipping (EPIRB and PLB Registration) (Radiocommunications) (Amendment) Regulations 2025.

Key Points –

1.1 406 MHz beacons (EPIRBs and PLBs) fitted to a United Kingdom flagged vessel must be registered with the UK 406 MHz Beacon Registry.

1.2 Changes to registered beacons must be notified promptly using the online, customer self-service or, for offline users or where accessibility assistance is required, via the Beacon Registry.

1.3 It is an offence by the owner, master and/or the PLB holder (whichever applies) not to follow these requirements.

## 2. Introduction/background

2.1 This Marine Guidance Note relates to The Merchant Shipping (EPIRB and PLB Registration) (Radiocommunications) (Amendment) Regulations 2025. It draws attention to the requirements of those Regulations, namely the mandatory registration of all EPIRBs and PLBs carried on UK registered ships and hovercraft.

2.2 The Regulations ensure that details held on the database are as accurate as possible for Search & Rescue (SAR).

## 3. Need for accurate and timely registration details

3.1 The effectiveness of a 406 MHz beacon as a SAR aid during an activation incident depends upon correct details being readily available. If inaccurate or out of date, there is the potential to jeopardise SAR operations, including looking for the wrong vessel, or stopping a search because it might appear that the vessel associated with that beacon registration is not in distress.

## 4. Procedure for Registration

4.1 406 MHz beacons must be registered with the UK Beacon Registry, part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), by using the online customer self-service at: [www.gov.uk/register-406-beacons](http://www.gov.uk/register-406-beacons)

4.2 Offline customers or those requiring assistance, can contact the Beacon Registry for advice and support.

The UK 406 MHz Beacon Registry

[UKBeacons@mca.gov.uk](mailto:UKBeacons@mca.gov.uk)

Tel +44 (0)20 381 72006

Fax +44 (0)1326 319264

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (except public holidays), or write to us at:

The UK 406 MHz Beacon Registry

Falmouth MRCC

Castle Drive,

Pendennis Point

Falmouth

Cornwall

TR11 4WZ

## 5. Beacon Coding

5.1 The UK only accepts beacons coded with country codes (MID codes) 232 233 234 or 235, using protocols as listed in the UK section of S.007, Cospas-Sarsat Handbook of Beacon Regulations, downloadable at:

<https://www.cospas-sarsat.int/en/documents-pro/system-documents>

UK Serialised – where the beacon has a unique serial number  
UK Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) – allocated to the vessel  
UK Location protocols – for GNSS models

Further programming advice can be provided by the Beacon Registry or the beacon manufacturer.

## 6. Frequent transfer of a Beacon

6.1 For those who regularly transfer beacons from one vessel to another, such as beacon hire companies, yacht delivery companies, programmer's spare service beacons and race competitors, changes to the registration details are to be made online as described in paragraph 3.1 by the beacon registration account holder as soon as practicable. Offline customers may use the procedure outlined in paragraph 3.2.

## 7. Proof of Registration

7.1 Once registration details have been entered onto the self-service system, the beacon owner will be sent an automatic acknowledgement by email.

You will also be sent by post:

- Beacon registration certificate
- Waterproof registration 'sticky' labels to put onto your beacon  
note: labels should not cover the battery housing that may be replaced during servicing

7.2 Existing customers must confirm their beacon details on the new service by logging in using the email with which they registered their beacon. If this registration occurred between 2013 and 2021, the Beacon Registry will be in contact by email or letter with advice as to how to do this and how to manage their data in the future.

## 8. Change of Details

8.1 It is essential that any changes are registered as in paragraph 3.1. Offline customers or those requiring assistance may use the procedure outlined in paragraph 3.2.

## 9. Penalties for Offences

9.1 The penalties are:

9.2 A maximum of an unlimited fine (England and Wales) or fine not exceeding the statutory maximum (Scotland and Northern Ireland) and/or imprisonment for 2 years for contravention of Regulations 5(1) and (3), and 6(1) and (4)(a); requirement that the owner or master register a EPIRB and/or PLB carried on a ship.

9.3 A maximum of an unlimited fine (England and Wales) or fine not exceeding the statutory maximum (Scotland and Northern Ireland) and/or imprisonment for 2 years for contravention of Regulation 6(2) and (4)(b): requirement that the holder register a PLB carried on a ship.

## More information

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Spring Place  
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Southampton  
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Website: [www.gov.uk/mca](http://www.gov.uk/mca)

General enquiries: [infoline@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:infoline@mcga.gov.uk)

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

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