



# Safety Equipment Distress Beacons Marine Safety



## Register your distress beacon

You must register your 406MHz distress beacon with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).

Registration is free and simple online process via [www.amsa.gov.au/beacons](http://www.amsa.gov.au/beacons)

Registration gives AMSA vital information to assist in a rescue.

AMSA no longer issues stickers as proof of beacon registration. Vessel owners who are required to carry a registered beacon must provide proof of beacon registration using one of the following methods:

- Carry a printed copy of your email registration confirmation.
- Save your SMS registration on your phone.
- Carry a copy of your registration confirmation that can be sent to you on request from AMSA.
- Provide proof of your registration via the new AMSA mobile phone beacon system.

## Update your details

If you change the information (such as phone number, address, bought a new boat, etc.) you must update your 406 MHz beacon registration details. To change your details visit the AMSA website, email [ausbeacon@amsa.gov.au](mailto:ausbeacon@amsa.gov.au) or phone 1800 406 406.

## When should I activate my distress beacon?

EPIRBs/PLBs should only be used when there is an emergency situation and a person believes they are in imminent danger or when they are told to do so by a rescue authority.

In the event of an emergency, also consider initial communications with others close by using radios and other signalling devices.

## Accidental activation

If a distress beacon is activated by accident, the most important thing to do is to turn it off and let AMSA know as soon as possible on free call **1800 641 792** or free call WA Water Police on 131 444 or contact your nearest volunteer marine rescue group.

## Unauthorised use of distress beacons

Distress beacons have a very serious purpose. Falsely indicating distress rightly carries a severe penalty, but it also wastes a lot of time and resources – possibly weakening the ability to respond to a genuine emergency.

When you are not using your boat, removing your equipment and giving it secure storage will help prevent unauthorised use.

## Testing

Regularly use the test switch as per the manufacturer's user manual to verify power/operation.



## Storage

Store EPIRBs in an accessible place where they can be retrieved easily but away from areas where they might be knocked or accidentally activated. Ensure the EPIRB container is not cracked or showing signs of damage and all on board know where it is and how to activate it.



If carrying a PLB it must be attached to the person on the craft.



Your PLB must not restrict the inflation of your lifejacket.



## Disposal of unwanted Distress Beacons

Distress beacons need to be disposed of responsibly to avoid accidental activation. Do not dispose of a beacon in general waste as it will end up in landfill and could be activated inadvertently. Unwanted beacons can be handed in for safe disposal to any DoT office listed in this brochure.

You could also contact your local Battery World store to check whether they disconnect and dispose of beacons. A small fee may apply. Locations of Battery World outlets can be found on their website: [www.batteryworld.com.au](http://www.batteryworld.com.au)

Alternatively, the manufacturer's instructions often contains information about how to disconnect the beacon battery. Then contact your local waste management facility to ask about disposing of your unwanted beacon in an environmentally friendly way. A small fee may apply.

If in doubt, check with the place you purchased the beacon, the manufacturer or refer to the AMSA website at <http://beacons.amsa.gov.au/>





## What is a distress beacon?

A distress beacon is an electronic transmitter you can use to alert rescuers that you are in a life threatening situation and need to be rescued. Lives are saved when skippers carry beacons.

## Beacon types

Choose a beacon that is suitable to your vessel and activity.

### EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon)

An EPIRB designed for marine use will float and keep the antennae above the water, has a lanyard to secure it to something that's not going to sink and can operate continuously for 48 hours.



**PLB (Personal Locator Beacon)** is a smaller portable beacon and is designed to be worn or carried by an individual. Some PLBs do not float and may not be designed for use in water. A PLB usually has a shorter battery life than an EPIRB and will only operate for approximately 24hrs.



PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons).

### When is an EPIRB/PLB required?

All boats must carry a compliant EPIRB if proceeding more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore or more than 400 metres from an island located more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore. **Note: PLBs do not meet carriage requirements for replacement of EPIRBs on boats.**

Vessel type	EPIRBs are mandatory for boats	PLBs are for personal use only
Yacht	✓	✗
Motor boat		
Personal water craft		



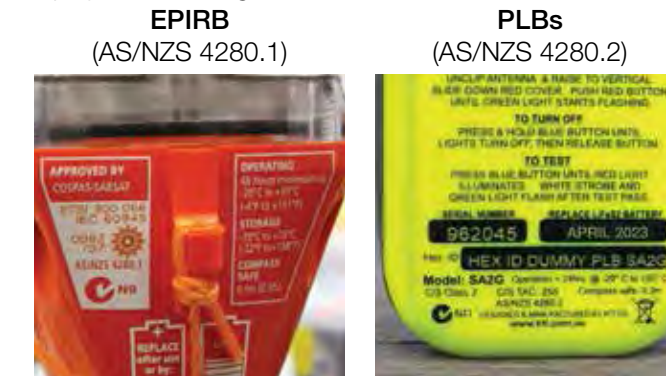
EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons).

Recreational canoes or paddle craft, kayaks, surf skis, inflatables, windsurfers or kitesurfers must carry a compliant PLB or EPIRB if proceeding more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore or more than 400 metres from an island located more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore. If carrying a PLB this must be attached to the person on the craft in case you become separated from your vessel.

Vessel type	PLBs must be worn by the person	EPIRBs can also be used, but make sure you don't become separated from the device
Canoe	✓	✓
Paddle craft		
Kayak		
Surf ski		
Inflatable		
Windsurfer		
Kitesurfer		

### What is a compliant distress beacon?

To be approved for marine use an EPIRB or PLB must display the following standards.



To be compliant a distress beacon must also have an in date battery.

### Global Positioning System used in EPIRBs

For your best chance of survival a Global Positioning System (GPS) distress beacon will provide rescuers with a signal to a location accuracy of 120 metres and the satellite detection time is greatly reduced.

A non GPS distress beacon has a location accuracy of five kilometres and requires a number of passing satellites to detect and pinpoint your location.



### Battery expiry

The distress beacon battery is required by law to be in date. If it expires, replace the unit with a new one from a supplier.

If your distress beacon battery date stamp has expired the distress beacon is non-compliant and you may be fined.



If your distress beacon battery date stamp has expired the distress beacon is non-compliant.

## Contact details

Email: [marine.safety@transport.wa.gov.au](mailto:marine.safety@transport.wa.gov.au)  
 Website: [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine)  
**Marine Safety Hotline: 1300 863 308**

## Police

Water Police: 9442 8600  
 Emergency: 000

## Regional

Albany: 9892 7333  
 Broome: 9192 0200  
 Bunbury: 9792 6666  
 Carnarvon: 9941 6800  
 Esperance: 9076 2100  
 Exmouth: 9949 2079  
 Geraldton: 9956 0111  
 Kalgoorlie: 9022 5999  
 Karratha: 9159 6900  
 Kununurra: 9168 3298

For further information go to [www.transport.wa.gov.au/epirb](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/epirb) or scan the QR code.



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