

False Distress Alarms from 406 Mhz EPIRB belonging to ships

M.S. Notice 5 of 1998

Subject: False distress alarms from 406 MHz EPIRB belonging to ships

In recent past, a large number of false distress alerts have been received under GMDSS mainly from EPIRBs. Since such distress alert is of global nature, all search and rescue machinery has to be alerted. This includes readiness and deployment of aircraft(s), surface crafts for locating and rescuing the survivors.

As stated earlier, in most of such cases, activation of EPIRB distress alarm proved to be inadvertent. This has resulted in substantial wastage in operational time, effort and expenditure. Indian Coast Guard has reported that a large number of such false alarms were received during the last three months alone.

This Directorate has decided to exercise following measures in order to avert such false activation of EPIRB. All ship owners, operators, masters, crew and service stations are requested to comply with the following:

1. EPIRBs placed on board on or after 23.11.96 should be tamper proof and free of accidental transmission as required by IMO Resolution No.A.810(19) (copy enclosed).
2. EPIRB should be located in protected location away from areas exposed to water spray in bad weather condition. Special precaution should be exercised while cleaning operations are being carried out in this vicinity.
3. GMDSS (GOC) courses are now readily available. Dispensation from GOC certificate will be considered only if the ship owners produce evidence that the employed operator was denied admission in at least two of the approved institutes. In any case from 1.8.1998, at least one officer on board every Indian ship has to have undergone GMDSS(GOC) course and obtained certification and only then exemption for vessel to sail without Second GMDSS (GOC) Operator will be considered. After 1.2.1999, no further dispensation will be considered.
4. Ship Owners/Operators are required to ensure that on board training manual includes topic of inadvertent activation of EPIRB. The responsibility of training and educating the crew on above subject directly rests with the Master of the vessel including cancellation of false activation of EPIRB
5. A suitable warning may be pasted on EPIRB itself and on carton in case EPIRB is being transported when in transit to/from service station to/from vessel for the benefit of outside officer of Customs etc. on duty at check posts.
6. All ship owners are hereby cautioned that when a distress alert is received and on investigation it is found that the false distress alert has been transmitted due to insufficient precaution or negligence, and INMCC, Bangalore or INMCC covering the vessel's area of operation is not immediately informed, then recovery of actual costs involved in pressing into service of Coast Guard and/or aircraft may have to be borne by shipping company in addition to any fine that may be imposed.
7. In case of Indian vessels, incidents involving false alert should also be informed to this Directorate without any delay by fax/telex/telephone.

All those concerned may take cognizance of above notice.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(Capt. S.K. Shukla)

Nautical Surveyor

Encls:

- 1.Contact Fax/Telephone/Telex numbers of INMCC, Bangalore.**
- 2.Contact Fax/Telephone/Telex numbers of D.G. Shipping, Mumbai.**
- 3.[Copy of IMO Resolution No.A.81O\(19\) with annexures.](#)**

Contact Fax / Telex / Telephone numbers of INMCC and the D.G. Shipping.

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