

SUB-COMMITTEE ON NAVIGATION,
COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND
RESCUE
1st session
Agenda item 18

NCSR 1/18/2
28 March 2014
Original: ENGLISH

CONSIDERATION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN INMARSAT AND COSPAS-SARSAT

Draft amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1210

Submitted by COSPAS-SARSAT

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides draft amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1210 on the COSPAS-SARSAT International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database (IBRD)

Strategic direction: 5.2

High-level action: 5.2.4

Planned output: 5.2.5.4

Action to be taken: Paragraph 3

Related document: MSC.1/Circ.1210

1 The existing circular MSC.1/Circ.1210 on "Cospas-Sarsat International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database" includes in its appendix a sample letter to request IBRD log in credentials (user identifications and passwords), which is currently out of date. Additionally, some of the explanatory information in the annex to the circular is incomplete or out of date. MSC.1/Circ.1210 should, therefore, be amended to remedy the incomplete and incorrect information, in particular, referencing a link to current information on the COSPAS-SARSAT website.

2 The annex to this document provides proposed draft amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1210. In the annex new text is shown in *Italics* and a ~~strikeout~~ is used for deleted text.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

3 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the draft amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1210 to provide the most accurate and up to date information about the COSPAS-SARSAT International Beacon Registration Database, and take action, as appropriate.

ANNEX

GUIDANCE ON THE COSPAS-SARSAT INTERNATIONAL 406 MHz BEACON REGISTRATION DATABASE

Need for EPIRB registration and associated databases

1 Emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) perform distress alerting and other functions to support search and rescue (SAR) services covered by the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, as amended, for any person in distress at sea, and the 1974 International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), as amended, requires EPIRB carriage (chapter IV, regulation 7.6) and registration.

2 The provisions relevant to EPIRB registration in chapter IV, regulation 5-1 apply to all ships on all voyages, and are as follows:

"Each Contracting Government undertakes to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for registering global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS) identities and for making information on these identities available to rescue coordination centres on a 24-hour basis. Where appropriate, international organizations maintaining a registry of these identities shall be notified by the Contracting Government of these assignments."

3 It is crucial that 406 MHz EPIRBs be registered, and that the registration data be available to SAR authorities at all times. Experience has shown that EPIRB registration data is either critically important or ~~somehow~~ otherwise often helpful in the majority of SAR cases involving an EPIRB alert.

4 406 MHz EPIRBs should be registered regardless of whether they are carried aboard ships or other marine craft, and registrations should be reinforced by national requirements.

5 It is essential that IMO Member States ~~arrange for~~ *provide a readily-accessible mechanism (preferably one that is available by internet, as well as other conventional means) registration of EPIRBs* to enable EPIRB owners to ~~fulfil~~ fulfill their obligation to register the beacons, and to ~~provide access to~~ make this data *by available for SAR authorities on a 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week for use in an emergency.* Such arrangements can be ~~made~~ implemented nationally, *on a regional basis* in cooperation with other Administrations, or by other suitable means. *The COSPAS-SARSAT International Beacon Registration Database is a facility available free of charge to enable beacon owners to directly register their beacons and/or to allow Administrations to upload their national registration data to ensure that it is available to SAR authorities worldwide on a 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week basis.*

International Beacon Registration Database

6 *The International COSPAS-SARSAT, the international Programme that processes 406 MHz EPIRB alerts and routes them to the identified SAR authorities, has developed an It also operates the International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database (IBRD) for 406 MHz beacons, operational since that became operational on 16 January 2006.*

7 The IBRD is hosted on the internet at www.406registration.com, with online help capabilities.

8 COSPAS-SARSAT provides the IBRD as a *readily-available means for beacon owners to register their beacons unless an alternative method of registration is required by their national Administration. The registration information contained in the IBRD, whether directly entered by beacon owners or uploaded from national registration databases maintained by Administrations, is available 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week for solely* ~~for the purpose of assisting SAR Services in SAR operations. The IBRD is available free of charge to individuals directly registering beacons and to Administrations uploading or retrieving registration data. users with no access to national registration facilities.~~

9 Administrations that ~~already have~~ maintain their own national registers ~~should consider using~~ are encouraged to upload their registration data to the IBRD to make their national beacon registration data ~~more readily~~ available as *quickly and easily as possible* to SAR personnel on a 24-hour basis.

10 The IBRD can be used not only for registering 406 MHz EPIRBs, but also 406 MHz emergency locator transmitters (ELTs) carried on board aircraft, and personal locator beacons (PLBs) designed for personal use.

Background

11 The COSPAS-SARSAT 406 MHz system provides distress alerts that include the unique 15-character hexadecimal identification of the transmitting beacon. This beacon identification can be decoded to obtain information *that includes* ~~ing~~:

- .1 the type of beacon, i.e. ELT, EPIRB or PLB;
- .2 the country code and identification data which form the unique beacon identification; and
- .3 the type of auxiliary radio locating (homing) device, *e.g. 121.5 MHz transmitter.*

12 If a beacon is properly registered, the 15-character hexadecimal identification of the beacon can be used to access additional information. Beacon registration databases can provide information of great use to SAR personnel, including:

- .1 specific *owner* identification information;
- .2 the make/model *and identification* of aircraft or vessel in distress;
- .3 communications equipment available;
- .4 the total number of persons onboard; and
- .5 emergency contact information.

13 *To have this valuable information available to SAR authorities in an emergency, it must be available from either a national database available 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week maintained by a national Administration and/or from the IBRD provided that the national Administration allows direct registration in the IBRD by beacon owners or the Administration uploads its registration data to the IBRD for access by other SAR authorities.* ~~Such information can be made available to support SAR services only if the required information is provided to the registration authority.~~

14 Registration of 406 MHz beacons is required in accordance with international regulations on SAR established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and by the SOLAS Convention. In addition, some countries have made 406 MHz beacon registration mandatory and maintain national 406 MHz beacon registration databases.

IBRD concept of operations

15 The IBRD is designed to support:

- .1 beacon owners who wish to *directly* register their beacons;
- .2 Administrations to make *their* registration data *easily* available ~~for~~ to other SAR authorities in an emergency by uploading that information to the IBRD; and
- .3 SAR authorities that need to efficiently access beacon registration data to assist persons in distress.

16 COSPAS-SARSAT has configured the IBRD to accept by default beacon registrations from beacon owners, unless the Administration associated with the beacon's country code(s) has advised COSPAS-SARSAT that it:

- .1 operates a national database with a 24-hour point of contact and does not want EPIRBs with its country code(s) included in the IBRD; or
- .2 wishes to control the inclusion of beacons with its country code(s) in the IBRD.

Establishing an IBRD point of contact

17 Each Administration should provide COSPAS-SARSAT with a National IBRD point of contact for coordinating use of the IBRD. This contact will *decide the settings in the IBRD related to beacons with its country code* and help to resolve problems arising with registration of beacons with ~~the~~ that Administration's country code(s).

18 The National IBRD point of contact should be officially identified to the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat using a letter of the form that may be found at the COSPAS-SARSAT website (www.cospas-sarsat.int – on the "Cospas-Sarsat Professionals" page choose the "Documents" tab, then "Document Templates, and select the "IBRD" tab) ~~annexed to this circular~~. This letter must be signed by the Administration's IMO representative, or by its representative to COSPAS-SARSAT or to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and sent to the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat. Based on the letter, the Database Administrator (i.e., the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat) will allocate the requested user identifications and passwords to the Administration's National IBRD point of contact.

19 The request should specify whether user identification and passwords *to be issued to the Administration's IBRD point of contact* are required ~~for~~ to:

- .1 *enable the Administration to upload registration data about its beacons to the IBRD National Data Providers for registration of beacons with their country code(s);*

- .2 *enable its SAR Services for to access IBRD registration data in an emergency queries; and/or*
- .3 *make IBRD registration data available to authorized shore-based service facilities and vessel inspectors.*

20 Passwords and user identifications will be sent via ~~regular~~ post to the ~~National~~ IBRD point of contact, *The national IBRD point of contact* who must then forward the user identifications and passwords to *those entities authorized by its Administration to access national SAR Services, Data Providers and authorized maintenance facilities and inspectors to enable their use of the IBRD.*

21 It is critical that, at a minimum, passwords be requested for SAR Services to access beacon registration information ~~held~~ in the IBRD *during an emergency.*

Providing details of your national beacon registry

22 If an Administration maintains its own national beacon registry and decides not to allow beacons with its country code(s) to be registered in the IBRD, the Administration should review the information *provided on the COSPAS-SARSAT website to the public (such as beacon owners) relating to national-its beacon-registrations policies (please see the information contained on www.cospas-sarsat.int on the "Cospas-Sarsat Professionals" page choose the "Contact Lists" tab and select "406 MHz Beacon Register").* ~~in documents C/S A.001 and C/S S.007 (available from www.cospas-sarsat.org) and~~ *Please provide the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat immediately with any updates, as appropriate. This is a source very commonly used by beacon owners to learn where to register their beacons and, therefore, it is critically important that accurate information is provided to the Secretariat in order to keep these documents web pages up to date.*

23 *Based on the information that Administrations provide, Ba beacon owners who attempts to register a beacons on the IBRD with an Administration's country code(s) will be advised through a "pop up" window on the IBRD website of how and/or where to register the beacon (based on the country code programmed into the beacon and the polices of that Administration reported to the COSPAS-SARSAT Secretariat). contact information regarding the applicable national beacon registry based on information provided to COSPAS-SARSAT by the Administration.*

24 If no information is available regarding ~~the details of~~ a national beacon registry for an Administration, COSPAS-SARSAT *policy is to will* assume that no such registry exists and ~~will~~ allow the direct registration *in the IBRD by owners* of beacons with that Administration's country code(s) ~~in the IBRD~~ (www.406registration.com).

National Administration controlling of beacon registration in the IBRD at a National Level

25 If an Administration has elected to *prohibit direct registration by owners of their beacons in use* the IBRD, but wishes to ~~control inputs upload to the IBRD at a some or all of its national beacon registration records level,~~ *the a national IBRD Point of Contact should be designated as described above so that the necessary arrangements can be made to enable the uploading of records. so notify the COSPAS-SARSAT IBRD Database Administrator, and provide a description of the details of the national authority responsible for EPIRB registration.*

26 The Administration will be able to upload in bulk its beacon registration data ~~or and~~, if desired, keep sole control of *individual record* inputs or updates. In that case, beacon owners who attempt to register beacons with that Administration's country code(s) will be ~~directed by the IBRD website to the Administration's~~ advised through a "pop-up" window of ~~national website or point of contact information~~ for beacon registration.

~~27 The IBRD Database Administrator will provide national user identification and a password that will allow only the National Data Provider to register and modify existing registrations of beacons with the Administration's country code(s).~~

Means of registration

~~287 Beacon registrations allowed on the IBRD COSPAS-SARSAT will only will be accepted~~ beacon registrations submitted via the online facilities of www.406registration.com and, under no circumstances can ~~provided by the IBRD.~~ Beacon registrations be accepted submitted in paper format nor by telephone, facsimile or any ~~via~~ other communication facilities will not be accepted.

Other supported beacon types

28 In addition to EPIRBs, the IBRD supports two other types of beacons:

- .1 Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs), for use in aircraft; and
- .2 Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs), small beacons for individuals to carry or wear; these beacons sometimes may be used for purposes similar to an EPIRB or ELT, as allowed by local regulations and, therefore, sometimes may be coded to transmit distress messages that have the same content as an EPIRB or ELT, and/or registered as an EPIRB or ELT in the IBRD.

Further Information

29 Further information can be found at www.cospas-sarsat.int, or by e-mail at dbadmin@406registration.com .

APPENDIX

Sample Letter for Contacting the COSPAS-SARSAT Database Administrator

~~Notification of Intent to use the IBRD and/or Request for IBRD
User Identification and Password~~

~~(Please modify this form as appropriate and fax or mail to the address below)~~

~~TO: — COSPAS-SARSAT IBRD Administrator
COSPAS-SARSAT Programme, 700 de la Gauchetière West, Suite 2450
Montreal, Quebec H3B 5M2 Canada
Fax: +1 514 954 6750~~

~~I would like to request access to the COSPAS-SARSAT International Beacon Registration Database (IBRD) on behalf of [country] for the following purposes (select as appropriate):~~

- ~~— bulk uploading of data by our National Data Provider,~~
- ~~— RD queries by our authorized national SAR services,~~
- ~~— RD queries by our authorized ship and aircraft inspectors and maintenance facilities.~~

~~I request that a user identification and password be issued for each of the user categories selected above.~~

~~I understand that:~~

~~each user identification and password provided is associated with a different level of access to the IBRD as specified in document C/S D.001, and that it is the responsibility of our National IBRD Point of Contact to appropriately distribute this information nationally; and it is the responsibility of the National Data Provider to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data provided.~~

~~I designate the following to be [country's] National IBRD Point of Contact:~~

Name	
Full Mailing Address	
Telephone	
Facsimile	
E-mail	

~~Sincerely,~~

~~IMO or ICAO or COSPAS-SARSAT Representative~~
