

Emergency Locator
Beacon Guidance for
Offshore Rescue Crews



Michael Cowlam, Seacroft Marine Consultants Limited

Marine Safety Forum All Members Meeting

Aberdeen Airport Thistle Hotel

27th May 2010

Purpose & Content



To raise awareness of the new '*Emergency Locator Beacon Guidance for Offshore Rescue Crews*' written by Seacroft on behalf of Oil & Gas UK

To provide a background and reasoning as to why this guidance has been produced

To provide an overview of what information the document contains

To inform duty holders and vessel operators of what should be done to ensure compliance

Provide feedback on some issues and questions that have been raised

Why was the document produced?

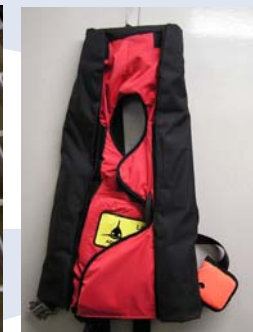
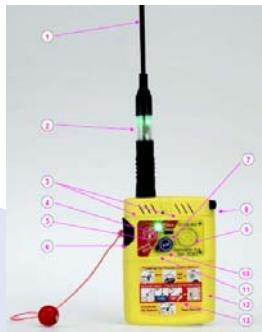


Risk Assessments relating to the reintroduction of PLBs following the ETAP Helicopter Ditching (G-REDU) identified the following issues: -

- No formal training of ERRV crews in the operation and identification of PLBs or Aircraft Beacons (i.e. not included in OPITO standards)
- Oil & Gas UK ERRV Guidelines state:
 - ERRVs should carry “documented procedure for PLB system operations” *and*;
 - that “adequate training should be provided to the ERRV crew prior to utilisation of the equipment”
- How many do?
- Is this documentation properly controlled managed, reviewed or audited?
- Does it include Aircraft Beacons, Liferaft Beacons, Passenger or Flight Crew Beacons?.....

Why was the document produced? (Cont'd)

- ...Is the PLB locating equipment regularly tested and if so who by?
- Can rescue crew correctly operate DF Equipment?
- How does the DF equipment react to multiple signals?
- Can the rescue crew identify PLBs or Aircraft Beacons?
- Do the rescue crew understand the importance of deactivating the PLB upon recovery?
- Do the rescue crew know how to deactivate the PLB or Aircraft Beacon?
- Do the rescue crew know how to ensure the deactivation has been successful?



What is in the document?

The document provides guidance on the following: -

- An overview of Emergency Locator Beacons and where they are or may be fitted
- Equipment testing and crew familiarisation
- Recovery Procedures

And most importantly...

- Single page information sheets with pictures and instructions to aid in the identification and deactivation of the beacons in use offshore.
- **Note: This does not include TEMPSC or Installation Liferaft Beacons.**

Oil & Gas UK Emergency Locator Beacon Guidance 2010
Oil & Gas UK
HR Smith Series 500-12 - Multi Function Locator Beacons
(Contained in helicopter liferafts and also worn by some helicopter pilots)



Summary
The HR Smith Series 500-12 beacon transmits modulated homing signals on both 121.5MHz (Civil) and 243.0 (Military) distress frequencies together with 406.025 MHz for satellite location.
Deactivation
The HR Smith Series 500-12 beacon is off or deactivated when the sliding switch on the front left hand side of the unit is set to OFF in the central position. No more lights or sounds should come from the handset.

Oil & Gas UK
CPT-900 - Helicopter Emergency Locator Transmitter



'Power' and 'Transmit' Indicators

- Summary for deactivation of CPT-900
1. Remove from water
 2. Flick 'ARM' Switch to OFF
 3. Press TST/RST button

The beacon is no longer transmitting when the green power LED and the amber transmit (XMT) LED are both off.

Compliance



Duty holders and vessel operators should do the following to ensure compliance: -

- Circulate and raise awareness of this guidance.
- Provide rescue vessels with test beacons (more than one) to allow them to train and exercise in the use of all associated equipment on a regular basis.
- Conduct annual independently witnessed trials using test beacons (more than one) and DF equipment to verify the correct use and operation of associated equipment – Can be conducted at the same time as other assurance activities to minimize disruption to vessel.
- Ensure information on any beacons fitted to TEMPSC / Lifeboats or Installation Liferrafts is available to the rescue crews (*These beacons are not mandatory but many are fitted. Too many to include in these guidelines.*)

Feedback, Issues & Questions



- Comments received from rescue crews has generally been very positive.
- Some concerns over the inclusion of the Kannard Helicopter Beacon that is mounted in the Aircraft Baggage Hold. Some concerns that this may encourage rescue crews to attempt enter this compartment to deactivate this unit. **Feedback from attendees required.**
- Some issues surrounding the OFCOM licence application required to transmit on the test frequency (121.65 MHz) for exercises.
- Some DF equipment cannot receive on the test frequency or cope with multiple signals. Only fully understood if trialled.

PLEASE SEND ANY FEEDBACK OR COMMENTS YOU HAVE TO ME AT:

michael.cowlam@seacroftmarine.com

Or via the MSF Secretary

secretary@marinesafetyforum.org