



Volunteer Marine Rescue Brisbane Inc

Providing a Safer Marine Environment for Our Community

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Use of EPIRB

1.0 Introduction

This document provides a description of the GME MT400 EPIRB that is installed in each of our rescue vessels and guidelines for the use of them.

2.0 References

GME Electrophone Instruction Manual for the EPIRB

3.0 Detailed Information

The signal from an EPIRB is regarded by authorities as an indication of distress and is given an appropriate response. It is the responsibility of every Master on our rescue vessels to ensure that it is not activated unintentionally or in situations that do not justify its use.

If you suspect that your EPIRB has been activated inadvertently, you **MUST** turn it off and report it immediately to prevent an unnecessary search. Within Australian waters, phone the Australian Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) in Canberra on 1-800-641-792 (24 hours).

3.1 Location

The location of the EPIRB in **Sandgate 1** is on the inside of the bulkhead which separates the cockpit deck from the cabin area and is on the Port side.

The location of the EPIRB in **Sandgate 2** is on the lower front of the Starboard side helm seat.

3.2 In an Emergency

If an emergency occurs, you should first try to use your radio to summon assistance. Distress procedures should only be used when grave and imminent danger threatens your craft and assistance is required. If contact is made, it may not be necessary to use the beacon.

Use the beacon as a last resort, if dire emergency threatens life and you have been unable to make radio contact, use the beacon. The distress signal transmitted by your beacon identifies you as a craft in distress and will initiate an air/sea search and rescue.

3.3 Removing and Refitting the EPIRB from its Bracket

To Remove:

- a) With one hand, press down on the tab marked "RELEASE" at the base of the bracket.
- b) Grasp the EPIRB with the other hand and pull it outwards and downwards.
- c) The antenna will release automatically and spring to the upright position.

To Refit:

- a) Insert the EPIRB, antenna first, upwards into the bracket.
- b) Press the tip of the antenna against the bottom of the three ridges in the antenna slot and slide the EPIRB upwards into the frame of the bracket so that the antenna folds over.
- c) Press downwards on the "RELEASE" lever and push the EPIRB base firmly into the bracket until the lever clicks upwards.



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Manual Activation

- a) Remove the beacon from the bracket.
- b) Lift the switch cover marked "LIFT".
- c) Slide the "ON" slider switch fully forward in the direction of the arrows. The unit will initially self test, then after two seconds the flashing strobe and beeps will indicate the beacon is operating.
- d) Close the cover to secure the switch.

3.4 Deploying the EPIRB

Unwind the cord and secure the EPIRB to prevent loss. When activated, the beacon will transmit the strongest signal to the satellites when:

- it is floating in water.
- It is well clear of surrounding and overhanging objects.
- The antenna is vertical.

In extreme sea conditions, you should not float the EPIRB free of the vessel if there is a possibility of loss or damage to the EPIRB. By observing the following guidelines satisfactory operation should still be achieved when operating the EPIRB out of water.

- a) The EPIRB signal will not pass through metal but will pass through fibreglass, wood or fabric with some loss when wet.
- b) The body of the EPIRB can be attached to metal fittings, but the antenna must be vertical and clear of the metal.
- c) If the cabin is metallic (such as steel or aluminium), the EPIRB should be mounted on a clear space outside with the antenna vertical and clear of surrounding objects.

NOTE: Normal operation of the beacon will cease once the battery capacity is depleted. Special circuitry within the MT400 however, directs any remaining power capacity towards extended operation of the homing transmitter. Although the beacon may otherwise have appeared to cease functioning it is likely that a homing signal is still being transmitted. The battery duration of the MT400 is a minimum of 48 hours.

3.5 Turning the EPIRB Off

It is important that you turn the EPIRB off as soon as possible after being rescued. If you leave the EPIRB running when it is no longer needed it may make it difficult for the satellites to detect other beacons that may be transmitting in the area.

- a) Remove the beacon from the water.
- b) Lift the switch cover marked "LIFT".
- c) Slide the yellow slider switch fully towards the "OFF" position.
- d) Close the cover to secure the switch.



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- e) Check that both the strobe light and the “beep” have stopped.

3.6 Registration and Transfer of Ownership

Each beacon has been programmed with a unique identifying code which will be transmitted by the beacon in an emergency. Our beacon/s and its code (by Law) has been registered with the Australian Maritime Rescue Authority in Canberra. This gives the Australian Maritime Rescue Authority immediate access to our details when the beacon is detected. This means they will know who we are, who our emergency contacts are and what type of vessel we are in. In situations of accidental activation they can also immediately eliminate our beacon as an emergency situation by contacting us. If our beacons are sold with the vessel notification of the new owners details must be submitted to the Australian Maritime Rescue Authority.

4.0 Summary

By following these guidelines, you will be able to successfully use the EPIRB in an emergency situation.