

Use of wrong MMSI number for daughter craft EPIRBs

It has been brought to the attention of the Norwegian Maritime Authority that the Norwegian rescue services cannot receive distress messages from EPIRBs (emergency position-indicating radio beacons) programmed with MMSI 98MIDxxxx, where MID is the country code 257, 258, or 259.

The potential number of vessels with EPIRBs programmed with MMSI 98MIDxxxx is very limited, and most of them will be larger vessels with lifeboats and/or high-speed RIBs or similar vessels associated with a parent ship.

Background

The EPIRB's distress message is a unique hex code, where MMSI ID 98MIDxxxx is part of the code which is processed via Cospas-Sarsat's shore-based SAR system. In such cases, the SAR system interprets the hex code as corrupt, which means that the distress message will not be transmitted to the Norwegian rescue services.

Please note that this problem is not related to the brand or type of EPIRB.

Measures:

The Norwegian Maritime Authority requests vessels and companies that have or suspect that they have this type of EPIRB to check the programmed MMSI number. This number can be found in the radio station license or on the EPIRB unit.

Those who have an affected EPIRB must contact the supplier in order to have their unit reprogrammed as soon as possible, and no later than 1 April 2022. Until the message transmission issue is solved, EPIRBs programmed with MMSI 98MIDxxxx will not be permitted on board Norwegian vessels. Reference is made to section 11 of the Ship Safety and Security Act, which stipulates that "a ship shall be so operated and maintained that it according to its purpose and trade area provides for satisfactory safety concerning life, health, property and the environment". Furthermore, we refer to the fact that both the master and other persons working on board have a duty to participate in ensuring that the operation and maintenance of the ship is carried out safely at all times, cf. section 19 second paragraph (a) and section 20 first paragraph (a).



The examples below show the correct and incorrect programming/markings of the MMSI number of boats (lifeboats, rescue boats, etc.) associated with parent ship.

HEX Code, UIN:	
Vessel name:	
MMSI/Call sign:	257xxxxx-y
Country:	

HEX Code, UIN:	
Vessel name:	
MMSI/Call sign:	98257xxx-y
Country:	



In the upper example, the programming consists of the MMSI number of the parent ship and the “beacon ID” (y), which is normally “0” for float-free, “1” for manual EPIRB, as well as numbers for “craft associated with parent ship”. (xxxxxx are the last 6 digits of the ship’s MMSI)

The programming used in the second example consists of the MMSI number assigned to “craft associated with parent ship” and the “beacon ID” (y), as described above. (xxx is a number allocated to the particular ship by Telenor Coastal Radio)

THIS PROGRAMMING/MARKING OF THE EPIRB IS, HOWEVER, INCORRECT! The correct method is shown above.

Lars Alvestad
Acting Director General of Navigation and Shipping

Leiv Andreas Austreid
Head of Section

This document has been electronically approved, and therefore does not contain handwritten signatures.