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CIRCULAR Amendments to the Performance Standards for VDR, S-VDR & EPIRB

The Marine Safety Committee (MSC), at its 101st and 104th session, approved amendments to the performance standards for Voyage Data Recorders, Simplified Voyage Data Recorders, and float-free Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons.

[Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators | Surveyors/Auditors | Service Suppliers](#)

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Voyage Data Recorders (VDRs)

The Marine Safety Committee (MSC), at its 104th session, adopted through [MSC.494\(104\)](#), the amendments to the performance standards for shipborne voyage recorders, set out in the annex to the Resolution MSC.333(90), as amended.

Governments should ensure that VDRs:

- If installed on or after the **01st of July 2022**, shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex of Resolution MSC.333(90), as amended by the present Resolution;
- If installed on or after 01st of July 2024, and before 01st of July 2022, shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex of Resolution MSC.333(90);
- If installed on or after 01st of June 2008, but before 01st July 2014, shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex of Resolution A.861(20), as amended by Resolution MSC.214(81); and
- If installed before the 01st of June 2008, shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex of Resolution A.861(20).

Simplified Voyage Data Recorders (S-VDR)

The Marine Safety Committee (MSC) adopted through Resolution [MSC.493\(104\)](#) the Amendments to the Performance Standards for shipborne Simplified Voyage Data Recorders, set out in the annex to the Resolution.

Governments should ensure that S-VDRs:

- if installed on or after the **01st of July 2022**, shall conform to performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to resolution MSC.163(78), as amended by Resolution MSC.214(81) and the present resolution;
- if installed on or after the 01st of June 2008, but before the 01st of July 2022, shall conform to performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to resolution MSC.163(78), as amended by Resolution MSC.214(81); and
- if installed before the 01st of June 2008, shall conform to performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to resolution MSC.163(78).

Paragraph 5.1.3.3 is replaced by the following:

The float-free type protective capsule should:

- be fitted with means to facilitate grappling and recovery;
- be so constructed as to comply with the requirements specified in resolution MSC.471(101) and to minimize the risk of damage during recovery operations; and
- the device should be capable of transmitting initial satellite distress alerting signal and further locating and homing signals over a period of not less than seven days/168 hours.

Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs)

The Marine Safety Committee (MSC), at its 101st session, adopted through **MSC.471(101)**, the amendments to the performance standards for EPIRBs, aiming to improve further the capability of this equipment to assist in distress alerting and locating.

The main updates in the new performance standard are mandatory requirements for the beacon to include a global navigation satellite system (GNSS) receiver (e.g. GPS, GLONASS) and an Automatic Identification System (AIS) transmitter so that the beacon's emergency signal includes a position fix and AIS locating signal.

Member States should ensure that float-free EPIRBs operating on the Frequency 406 MHz, which form part of the GMDSS should:

- if installed on or after the **01st of July 2022¹**, shall conform to performance standards and type-approval standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to the present resolution; and
- if installed before the 01st of July 2022, shall conform to performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to resolution A.810(19), as amended by resolutions MSC.56(66) and MSC.120(74), and type-approval standards not inferior to those specified in resolution A.696(17).

As a result of the revised performance standard, the IMO has revised the following guidance documents relating to testing and maintenance of EPIRBs to include requirements for the new GNSS/AIS enabled EPIRBs:

- MSC.1/Circ.1039/Rev.1 - Guidelines for Shore-Based Maintenance of EPIRBs
- MSC.1/Circ.1040/Rev.2 - Guidelines for Annual Testing of EPIRBs

Act Now

Ship Owners / Managers / Operators should consider the above amendments to the performance standards for VDR, S-VDR, and EPIRB, and ensure that the equipment installed onboard on or after the 01st of July 2022 conforms and is approved according to the latest amended performance standards.

¹ Installed on or after 01st of July 2022, has been interpreted by IACS as follows:

- For ships for which the building contract is placed on or after 1 July 2022, or in the absence of the contract, constructed on or after 1 July 2022, "installed on or after 1 July 2022" means any installation on the ship; And
- for ships other than those ships prescribed in (1) above, "installed on or after 1 July 2022" means a contractual delivery date for the equipment or, in the absence of a contractual delivery date, the actual delivery of the equipment to the ship on or after 1 July 2022.