

Active radar reflectors

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What is an active radar reflector?

- An active radar reflector emits a signal to nearby radar receivers.
- An active radar reflector is different from a passive radar reflector because it absorbs the radar signal emitted from a transmitting vessel, amplifies that signal and returns it to the transmitting vessel.

What are the advantages of active radar reflectors?

- There is an international standard, Ships and marine technology – Marine radar reflectors – Part 2: Active Type, ISO 8729-2: 2009, which certain manufacturers meet.
- They make vessels more visible on radar receivers and visible at greater distances.
- This may reduce the chances of being involved in an incident but also aids rescue operations in the event of an incident.

What are the disadvantages of active radar reflectors?

- They need to be mounted high enough on the vessel to be effective (eg on a mast).
- They require a power source.
- Consequently they may not be suitable for some smaller vessels such as “tinnies”, kayaks and the like.

Indicative costs

- Range from approximately \$1,000 to \$1,500.
- DIY installation is possible in some cases.

What is the regulatory status of this technology?

- Active radar reflectors are not mandatory for vessels being operated on NSW navigable waters.