

Personal locator beacons (PLBs)

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What is a PLB?

PLBs are designed for personal use in both marine and land environments. PLBs operate on a frequency of 406Mhz and come in 2 basic types – those which provide an encoded (GPS) location and those which do not. When a beacon is activated a satellite system is used to calculate the beacon's location.

PLBs are not a substitutes for EPIRBs and **this information sheet does not aim to discuss EPIRBs.**

What are the advantages of a PLB?

- Locating a distress site is usually much faster if the beacon signal provides a GPS location;
- PLBs operate for a minimum of 24 hours once activated; and
- The key application is risk mitigation on a large commercial vessel with many crew members, limited ability to monitor crew members and confined spaces.

What are the disadvantages of a PLB?

- A PLB is not a replacement for a EPIRB but is a useful adjunct.

Indicative costs

- PLBs transmitters cost approximately \$300.

What is the regulatory status of this technology?

- PLBs are not mandatory for the master or passengers on recreational and small commercial vessels being operated on NSW waters.
- Carriage of a PLB does not satisfy the requirement to carry an EPIRB.

From where can I obtain further information?

- The Australian Maritime Safety Authority has further information on [PLBs](#).