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**COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE LOCATING, TRACKING
AND EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION DEVICES**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its eighty-seventh session (12 to 21 May 2010), recognizing the recent proliferation of non-406 MHz locating, tracking and emergency notification devices and the challenges these devices present to SAR services, approved the information on the availability of commercially available locating, tracking and emergency notification devices and services, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR), at its fourteenth session, as set out in the annex.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed guidance to the attention of all parties concerned.

ANNEX

COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE LOCATING, TRACKING AND EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION DEVICES

RECOGNIZING the recent proliferation of non-406 MHz locating, tracking and emergency notification devices, and

CONSIDERING the challenges these devices present to SAR services, ICAO and IMO wish to provide the following information to IMO Member Governments and ICAO Contracting States.

These commercially available locating, tracking and emergency notification devices are not compliant with internationally accepted performance standards and operational criteria for global distress alerting and therefore may be ineffective in emergency situations.

The following information may be made available to providers, users¹ and potential users of emergency notification devices by ICAO Contracting States and IMO Member Governments, and may be included in State public relations campaigns on the subject.

1 Users subject to IMO/ICAO regulations carry as a minimum a 406 MHz distress beacon that is compatible with the established international Cospas-Sarsat system and compliant with ICAO and IMO provisions.

2 Non-regulated users may, as a matter of choice and in lieu of a 406 MHz distress beacon, carry emergency notification devices. These devices, and the services offered in conjunction with them, should meet performance standards and operational criteria equivalent to 406 MHz beacons if they are expected to provide equivalent functionality.

3 If an emergency notification device or service falls short of these performance standards and operational criteria, transparency would require that the limitations are clearly indicated to the user by the manufacturer. These limitations may include, but not be limited to reduced, diminished or lack of:

- .1 global coverage;
- .2 timeliness of alert to the responsible SAR authority;
- .3 location accuracy and homing signal;
- .4 automatic activation and survivability in the aeronautical and maritime environments; and
- .5 distressed user identifier capability.

¹ The "provider" is the commercial operator marketing the emergency notification device or service. The "user" is the person buying/leasing the device or service.

4 In order to ensure seamless, timely and effective alert notification to the responsible SAR authority², States may require providers of non-406 MHz emergency notification devices and services to:

- .1 establish and maintain a user database that can be correlated with the transmitted data;
- .2 establish and maintain reliable contacts with relevant SAR authorities;
- .3 agree to procedures and protocols with the State concerned, including but not limited to test procedures, provision of SAR and user data on demand, acceptable information format and efficient resolution of false alerts;
- .4 demonstrate that they can alert the relevant SAR authorities 24/7/365 within 5 minutes of a confirmed distress situation, with positive confirmation of receipt by the responsible SAR authority; and
- .5 demonstrate that they have robust processes and effective procedures for distribution of alert notifications. This would appropriately include training processes and backup systems to ensure resilience.

5 In order to give users a clear indication of actual effectiveness in emergency situations in specific areas, States may require providers of non-406 MHz emergency notification devices and services to provide potential users with a list of those States with which systemized arrangements have been made and in whose territories claims of coverage have been made.

² "SAR authority" is the organization with State-recognized responsibility for aeronautical, maritime and/or terrestrial response coordination. This includes a JRCC, ARCC, or MRCC as appropriate and if available.