

SAR Information Leaflet



.....

Testing of emergency beacons (ELT/EPIRB/PLB)

.....

As the owner of an emergency beacon it is understandable that you want to be sure that your device works when it is activated in an emergency. So what is involved in testing whether your device is working?

Activation takes no time at all - but the consequences are often not well known.

When you switch on the device, it **immediately** transmits a dataset (a burst). This is **immediately received** and relayed by a geostationary satellite. Depending on the manufacturer of the equipment, **after 30 to 40 seconds, but in some cases immediately, a modulated signal is generated, as in an emergency.**



The satellites in orbit around the earth receive this alert and relay it to the ground stations (LUT). Then forwarding to the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) and the search and rescue operation begins.

30% of all alerts are false alarms!

False alarms are difficult to clarify and may result in a **delay in processing a «genuine» emergency.**

Many emergency beacons have the option **of checking the device by means of a self-test.** The battery, antenna connections and modulation are checked. A successful self-test means that you can be almost 100% sure **that your device will also work in emergency.**

“Real tests” are forbidden. The common view that tests can be carried out on the hour and up to 5 minutes afterwards **is outdated and applied only to beacons, which had transmitted exclusively on the 121.5 MHz frequency.**

Only test your device in self-test mode in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Or arrange for your maintenance company to test the device.

Further information can be found on the [COSPAS SARSAT](http://www.cospas-sarsat.org) homepage.

Contact:
elt@bazl.admin.ch