



Media Release

20 January 2009

DO NOT RISK GOING WITHOUT A 406!

Analogue 121.5 MHz beacons will no longer be detected by satellite from **1 February 2009**. The internationally owned satellites will be switched off and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority that coordinates all aviation and maritime search and rescue across Australia's 53 million square kilometre search and rescue region, will no longer have the ability to detect an analogue distress beacon via satellite. Australia has no capacity to delay the switch off date of the satellites, however, AMSA and State/NT agencies have been informing the public of this date since the announcement was made in 2000.

To ensure your life and the lives of your family are safe during recreational activities on land, sea or in the air, **it is essential to switch to a 406 MHz distress beacon immediately.**

While the 1 February 2009 cessation date has been widely known for some considerable time, the last minute rush by consumers to purchase a 406 MHz beacon has resulted in some shortage of supplies. If you are having difficulty purchasing a distress beacon, you should ensure your name is placed on a waiting list.

Digital technology provides AMSA with a faster notification and more accurate location, enabling a quicker response to your distress situation. These include EPIRB (Emergency Positioning Indicating Radio Beacons) for use on water, PLB (Personal Locator Beacons) for land use, and ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitters) in aircraft.

If you continue to rely upon a 121.5 MHz analogue beacon in a distress situation rescue authorities may never hear you.

406 MHz beacons must be registered with AMSA. Registration is free and can be done on-line at the AMSA web site.

When upgrading to a 406 MHz distress beacon it is essential that old analogue models are appropriately disabled and **disposed of responsibly** so that they do not trigger false alarms. Battery World shops provide free disposal.

More advice about distress beacons is available from the AMSA web site: www.amsa.gov.au/beacons or by calling 1800 406 406.

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