

Question: Does the recent announcement by the US Coast Guard that they are de-commissioning the 121.5 satellite affect the use of 121.5 as a standard for search and rescue or its use with man over board systems?

Answer

Point 1.

Cospas- SARASAT had the same question above and Cheryl Bertoia of Cospas- SARASAT added to their website

From: Cheryl Bertoia [mailto:Cheryl.Bertoia@cospas-sarsat.int]

Sent: 22 May 2008 22:01

To: Andrew Brown

Cc: Michael Ritchie; Deraspe, Marie-Jo; Daniel Levesque

Subject: RE: [SPAM] - RE: MSLD 121.5MHz Confusion - Found word(s) list error in the HTML body

Andrew,

We have updated the website in four languages: <http://www.cospas-sarsat.org/FirstPage/121.5PhaseOut.htm>

However, other devices (such as man overboard systems and homing transmitters) that operate at 121.5 MHz and do not rely on satellite detection will not be affected by the phase-out of satellite processing at 121.5 MHz.

Point # 2 The recent announcement (USCG press release)

<https://www.piersystem.com/go/doc/786/139352/>) is directly related to four types of equipment that provide alerts **via satellite** are the following:

1. **EPIRBs** or Emergency Position-indicating radio beacons for maritime use
2. **ELT's** for the aviation environment
3. **PLBs** for use on land or in multiple environments
4. **SSASs** for ship security alerting systems for systems aboard vessels at sea.

See the third paragraph, "The regulation applies to all Class A, B, and S 121.5/243 MHz EPIRBs.

"It does not affect 121.5/243 MHz man overboard devices which are designed to work directly with a base alerting unit only and not with the satellite system."

The man overboard system that is locally managed (by an alert and a base unit) is called an MSLD or Maritime Survivor Locating Device.

Point #3 The 121.5 MHz is not obsolete, in fact the 121.5 frequency continues to be the standard world wide for distress and homing signal. A little know fact is the 406 PLB (non GPS or GPS unit that does not get an adequate satellite fix) provides a point or position within a 25 nautical mile square area. This is a huge area (especially at night). **The 406 PLB also pulses a 121.5 MHz signal so that search and rescue can use their receivers or direction finders and locate them.**