



SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

Bulletin No.: 26/2022
RDIMS No.: 18816422
Date: 2022-11-03
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Subject: Guidance for carriage requirements of EPIRBS on small fishing vessels

Scope

This bulletin is for anyone who owns or operates a Canadian fishing vessel that is:

- not more than 24.4 m in length; and
- not more than 150 gross tonnage.

Purpose

This bulletin clarifies requirements for carrying an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) on board a small fishing vessel in compliance with the *Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020* (NSR, 2020) and the *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations* (FVSR).

Background

Section 209 of the NSR, 2020, requires that

- 1 a float-free EPIRB be fitted:
 - (a) on all Canadian vessels engaged on an unlimited voyage or near coastal voyage, Class 1, and
 - (b) on all Canadian vessels more than 12 metres in length engaged on an inland voyage or a near coastal voyage, Class 2
- 2 either a float-free EPIRB, a manually activated EPIRB, or a personal locator beacon operating in the 406 MHz band (PLB) be fitted,
 - (a) on all Canadian vessels 12 metres or less in length engaged on a near coastal voyage, Class 2 or on an inland voyage on the waters of the Great Lakes, their connecting and tributary waters or the waters of the St. Lawrence River, or

Keywords:

1. EPIRB
2. Small Fishing Vessel

Questions concerning this Bulletin should be addressed to:

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- (b) in the case of a vessel that is less than 8 metres in length and operates exclusively in sea area A1, a waterproof portable VHF handheld radio capable of DSC may be fitted.

In addition, for small fishing vessels, subsection 3.28(1) of the FVSR requires that, unless a vessel is carrying on board an EPIRB required under the NSR, 2020, an EPIRB be fitted:

- 1 on vessels more than 12 metres in length engaged on near coastal voyages, Class 2; or
- 2 as an alternative to the required fitting of life rafts or recovery boats, on vessels less than 12 metres in length, engaged on near coastal voyages, Class 2, or vessels of any length engaged on sheltered waters voyages or near coastal voyages, class 2, restricted to 2 nautical miles.

What you need to know

Both the *Navigation Safety Regulations, 2020* and *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations* require small fishing vessels to carry Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB).

The FVSR, in no case, requires an EPIRB in addition to one already fitted in compliance with the NSR, 2020. Therefore, a single EPIRB fitted on a small fishing vessel meets the requirements of both regulations.

When equipping a small fishing vessel to meet the requirements of 3.28(1) of the FVSR, be aware that an EPIRB fitted as per the NSR, 2020 may be the same EPIRB used to meet the FVSR requirement.

For the Table of subsection 3.28(1) of the FVSR:

- Item 3(b) is satisfied for all small fishing vessels it applies to, as all vessels on a near coastal voyage, Class 2 that are more than 12 metres now require an EPIRB to meet the NSR, 2020.
- Item 4(b)(i) is satisfied where a small fishing vessel is fitted with an EPIRB or where the vessel is less than 8 metres, a waterproof portable VHF handheld radio capable of DSC, as per subsection 209(3) of the NSR, 2020.

However, a small fishing vessel fitted with a PLB will need to also be fitted with an EPIRB or a means of two-way radio communication to meet Item 4(b)(i).

- Item 5(b)(i) is satisfied where a small fishing vessel is fitted with an EPIRB or where the vessel is less than 8 metres, a waterproof portable VHF handheld radio capable of DSC as per subsection 209(3) of the NSR, 2020.

However, a small fishing vessel fitted with a PLB will need to be fitted with an EPIRB or a means of two-way radio communication to meet Item 5(b)(i).

More Information

[SSB 23/2020 New Navigation Safety Regulations](#)