

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF CODING PROTOCOLS AND GPS INTERFACES

1. ACTION REQUIRED

The Joint Committee is invited to:

- a. note the unauthorized use of coding protocols and interfaces, which are not approved by the Cospas-Sarsat for use with specific beacon models, and
- b. consider initiating appropriate action to ensure adherence to Cospas-Sarsat type approval guidelines.

2. COMMENTS

It has come to the notice of INMCC that some of the vendors have sold ELTs to Indian users, which are not approved by the Cospas-Sarsat for GPS interface and coding with location protocol. Some of the users approached INMCC for testing, qualification and approval for coding schemes for such beacons. The ELTs were initially tested without GPS interface and later with external GPS interface coded with the national location protocol.

During testing of the external GPS interface with national location protocol, a couple of technical problems were faced, such as the non-functioning of beacons with an external GPS interface, incorrect encoding of GPS location information, intermittent signal radiation, etc. Later on investigation by INMCC, it was determined that the particular ELT model was not approved for having a GPS interface and not authorized by the Cospas-Sarsat for coding with location protocol. This was informed to the vendor through users, and further testing was terminated. Before this anomaly was detected, the vendor had already signed a contract with the users for the supply of ELTs with GPS interface. The vendor kept on assuring the users that this model is approved for use of location protocol and GPS interface, and would soon produce the Cospas-Sarsat Type Approval certificate, but failed to do so. Now the users have initiated an action to reject the GPS interface and asked the vendor to supply the ELTs without GPS interface.

This type of anomaly is detected only for those cases where users interacted with INMCC. In many cases, due to lack of awareness and understanding, users do not approach INMCC, and are kept in dark by the vendors about Type Approval regulations. It is suspected that there may be some more cases, where ELTs are sold in India without having type approval certification for external interfaces and coding protocols.

The Vendors should know it very clearly that the ELTs are life saving devices, and no compromise is acceptable as far as technical performance is concerned. Joint Committee

may workout a suitable action plan and appropriate checking mechanism to avoid such anomalies in future.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- India recommends that administrations should require Cospas-Sarsat Type Approval for all beacons sold within their jurisdiction. Furthermore administrations should enforce requirements that beacons should only be authorised to operate with the protocols and external interfaces approved during the type approval testing, as the beacons not approved for specific coding protocol and external interface may not work as per Cospas-Sarsat specifications.
- The Joint Committee request the Council to write to the beacon vendors/manufacturers about this issue as to strictly adhere to only those coding protocols and interfaces, which are type approved by the Cospas-Sarsat for specific beacon models.