



TECHNICAL CIRCULAR No. 935 of 7th August 2026

To	All Surveyors/Auditors. All flags
Title	Guidelines for EPIRB Two-Way Communication
Reference	Resolution MSC.471(101)

Development of Guidelines for EPIRB which Implement the Two-Way Communication Service via the SAR/Galileo Return Link service as a Complement to EPIRB Performance Standards (Resolution MSC.471(101))

The Sub-Committee finalized draft amendments to resolution MSC.471(101) to introduce Two-Way Communication (TWC) via the Galileo Return Link Service as an optional feature for float-free 406 MHz EPIRBs. TWC enables the confirmation of distress alert receipt and the bi-directional exchange of predefined messages between the Rescue Coordination Centers (RCC) and the casualty.

Key decisions at this session:

- **Operational Guidelines:** Agreed that the development of guidelines for the operational use of TWC-equipped EPIRBs should continue through the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group (JWG 33) to ensure input from both aeronautical and maritime experts.
- **Human Element and Training:** Concurred that human element and training aspects are crucial but should not be included in equipment performance standards. Instead, these aspects should be addressed by Member States, training institutions, and the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW).

Next Steps: The draft revision of resolution MSC.471(101) will be submitted to MSC 112 (December 2026) for adoption. The MSC will also be invited to inform the HTW Sub-Committee of the revised resolution, once adopted, so HTW can take appropriate action on seafarer training aspects. JWG 33 will consider the development of guidelines for the operational use of TWC EPIRBs.

REFERENCE:

- MSC 112 (December 2026)

ATTACHMENTS: No.

Kindest Regards,
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