

Activating a distress beacon

It's a great idea to carry an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon known as an EPIRB or Personal Locator Beacon known as a PLB at all times on the water, even if you are not heading more than two nautical miles offshore.

If you are in danger on the water and other two-way communications are not available, you should activate a distress beacon such as an EPIRB or PLB.

These devices will alert rescue services that you need to be rescued and help guide a crew to you.

An EPIRB equipped with GPS to provide your accurate location gives you the best chance to be rescued quickly.

Make sure these devices are always within easy reach.

Use your EPIRB's lanyard to attach it to a person or life raft – or something else that won't sink or float away.

Your EPIRB is designed to float vertically in the water, so if you are sitting in a life raft, ensure the aerial is always pointing straight up and that the beacon isn't covered by anything.

Attach your Personal Locator Beacon to the upper portion of your lifejacket or clothing, where it will sit above the water.

PLBs do not float vertically in the water but the aerial must be pointing straight up towards the sky.

If at all possible, do not hold the PLB as you might mistakenly cover the GPS transmission and prevent rescue organisations from receiving your alert.

Be sure to read the instructions on these devices and register your EPIRB with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Links

- Australian Maritime Safety Authority – Distress beacons:
<https://beacons.amsa.gov.au/about/index.asp>