

Information re Emergency Locator Beacons

New distress beacon rules - comply or risk your life!

There is evidence many pilots and aircraft owners are not complying with the new requirements for emergency locator transmitters – or distress beacons. In February this year it became mandatory for almost all aircraft to carry a digital 406 MHz distress beacon, replacing the old analogue system which has been turned off. There is an international agreement to replace the analogue system with digital beacons due to their greater accuracy, reliability and speed. It is a regulatory requirement that the new digital beacons are registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. Registration of the beacons is important because it makes the job of finding an aircraft in distress much easier. Once a beacon is registered, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority can identify a range of information about the owner or operator of the aircraft - such as aircraft registration details, owner contact information and up to three nominated emergency contacts. Beacons can be easily registered on-line with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Anyone buying a portable digital distress beacon needs to be aware that devices purchased from overseas may not meet the Australian/New Zealand standard. Under Civil Aviation Regulation 252a a portable beacon must meet the Australian/New Zealand standards, be a type authorised by the United States Federal Aviation Administration or satisfy CASA that it meets these standards. Buying a portable beacon from overseas means the device may not operate properly and cannot be registered, putting lives at risk.

[Find out more about digital distress beacons and register your beacon now.](#)

<http://beacons.amsa.gov.au/gps.html>

Ultralight warning: make sure you're licensed

Owners and operators of ultralight aircraft are being warned they face tough penalties for flying without a pilot licence or aircraft registration. The warning follows a number of recent cases of people found to be flying ultralights without appropriate authorisations. This can attract penalties of up to two years imprisonment for each offence. CASA investigates cases where people may be operating without the correct authorisations and enforcement action is taken where appropriate. This may include a recommendation for prosecution. Ultralight aircraft meeting defined criteria are required to be registered with Recreation Aviation Australia or the Hang Gliding

Federation of Australia – the peak bodies that administer this sector of sport aviation. Pilots operating these aircraft must hold authorisations from Recreation Aviation Australia or the Hang Gliding Federation. They obtain a pilot certificate, which is the equivalent of a licence.

CASA's Director of Aviation Safety, John McCormick, says all pilots have a responsibility to ensure they hold the appropriate authorisations before flying. "It is very concerning that some people have been taking to the air in ultralight aircraft with no pilot certificate and minimal or even no training," he says. "Obviously they are putting their own lives at grave risk and potentially the lives of others as well. I can assure these people that if they are caught CASA will take appropriate action and that can include prosecution that could lead to a jail sentence."

Human Factor Training

At the time of writing, RAA require all pilot certificate holders to complete training and an exam in Human Factors before September 2010. Further details can be obtained from the July and August 2009 RAA magazine. It is expected that if you have a BFR due, you complete the exam at the time of undertaking your BFR. If your BFR is due after September 2010, then you need to make arrangements prior to September to sit the exam to keep your Pilot Certificate current. Training in GA Human Factors does not give exemption