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Ref. T2/6.06

COMSAR/Circ.29  
27 May 2002

**GUIDANCE FOR THE VOLUNTARY USE OF THE STANDARDIZED  
QUESTIONNAIRES AND FORMATS FOR REPORTING FALSE  
ALERTS IN COLLECTING DATA ON FALSE ALERTS**

1 The Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR), at its sixth session (18 to 22 February 2002), agreed to standardized questionnaires and formats for reporting false alerts, as given in annexes 1 to 6 hereto, and also agreed that they should be issued for voluntary use.

2 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-fifth session (15 to 24 May 2002), concurred with the Sub-Committee's view and encouraged the use of the annexed forms in collecting data on false alerts for further analysis and actions to be taken to eliminate the problem of false alerts.

3 Member Governments are invited to bring this circular to the attention of all parties concerned.

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## ANNEX 1

## QUESTIONNAIRE ON DSC ALERT

**Example:**

DTG: 20 1230 UTC NOVEMBER

FROM: JOINT RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRE SOUTHERN NORWAY,  
(JRCC STAVANGER)  
PHONE +47 51517000 FAX +47 51652334 TELEX 56 33163

TO.....: MASTER MV.....

SUBJECT..: DSC FALSE DISTRESS ALERT

1. A (insert type of alert) ALERT WAS RECEIVED AT TIME .....UTC FROM YOUR SHIP  
MMSI: ....., FREQUENCY:.....TYPE OF DISTRESS:.....  
POSITION:.....N/S.....E/W, COURSE:.....SPEED:....AT TIME:.....UTC  
ACTIVATION BY OPERATOR (yes / no), (DISTRESSED VESSEL: ..(insert/delete)).
2. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE IS USED TO INVESTIGATE WHAT CAUSED THE ACTIVATION OF THE DISTRESS ALERT, AND TO MONITOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GMDSS. ANSWERS GIVEN WILL UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE USED AGAINST THE MASTER OF THE SHIP.
3. PLEASE REPLY TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:
  - A- CONFIRM YOUR SHIP'S NAME, CALLSIGN, FLAG AND MMSI NUMBER.
  - B- WAS THE POSITION UPDATED AUTOMATICALLY OR ENTERED?
  - C- ACTUAL POSITION, COURSE AND SPEED AT TIME THE ALERT WAS SENT.
  - D- TYPE , MODEL AND SOFTWARE VERSION OF ALERTING EQUIPMENT, AND LAST INSPECTION DATE
  - E- WAS THE OPERATOR OF THE DSC A QUALIFIED OPERATOR?
  - F- STATE REASON FOR ACTIVATION, SUCH AS;
    - MISHANDLING HUMAN ERROR I.E.:  
IMPROPER -USE, -INSTALLATION, -TESTING AND MAINTENANCE.  
ACTIVATED WHEN UPDATING POSITION, COURSE AND SPEED, IMPROPER USE OF DSC WHEN ACKNOWLEDGING, OR OTHER
    - TECHNICAL REASON, I.E.:  
ALERT ACTIVATED WHEN READING TROUGH RECEIVE-MENU, OR WHEN SWITCHING BETWEEN GENERATORS. IMPROPERLY PROGRAMMED TO AUTOMATICALLY SEND RELAY ALERT OR TRANSFERRING RECEIVED MESSAGE TO RELAY ALERT MODE.
    - MOUNTING FAILURE, I.E:  
EQUIPMENT EXPOSED TO ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERFERENCE. NON APPROVED TYPE DSC BEING USED.
    - ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS I.E.:  
LIGHTNING, EQUIPMENT EXPOSED TO WATER
  - H- ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION
4. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR REPLYING, AND HAVE A GOOD VOYAGE  
BT

DUTY CONTROLLER  
NNNN

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## ANNEX 2

## QUESTIONNAIRE ON INMARSAT ALERTS

**Example:**

DTG: 20 1230 UTC NOVEMBER

FROM: JOINT RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRE SOUTHERN NORWAY,  
 (JRCC STAVANGER)  
 PHONE +47 51517000 FAX +47 51652334 TELEX 56 33163

TO.....: MASTER MV.....

SUBJECT.: INMARSAT FALSE DISTRESS ALERT

1. A FALSE DISTRESS ALERT WAS RECEIVED FROM YOUR SHIP, INMARSAT ID:.....  
 VIA .....LES, IN THE ..... OCEAN, AT .....UTC.

2. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE IS USED TO INVESTIGATE WHAT CAUSED THE ACTIVATION OF THE DISTRESS ALERT, AND TO MONITOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GMDSS. ANSWERS GIVEN WILL UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE USED AGAINST THE MASTER OF THE SHIP.

3. PLEASE REPLY TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

- A- CONFIRM YOUR SHIP'S NAME, CALLSIGN, FLAG AND INMARSAT NUMBER.
- B- WAS THE POSITION IN THE ALERT FORMAT UPDATED AUTOMATICALLY?
- C- ACTUAL POSITION, COURSE AND SPEED AT TIME THE ALERT WAS SENT.
- D- TYPE, MODEL OF ALERTING EQUIPMENT, AND SOFTWARE VERSION.
- E- THE LAST INSPECTION DATE.
- F- WAS THE OPERATOR OF THE EQUIPMENT A QUALIFIED OPERATOR?
- G- STATE REASON FOR ACTIVATION, SUCH AS;
  - MISHANDLING / HUMAN ERROR, I.E.:  
 IMPROPER, -USE , -TESTING AND MAINTENANCE. ACTIVATED WHEN UPDATING POSITION COURSE AND SPEED, OPERATOR UNFAMILIAR WITH EQUIPMENT, OR OTHER.
  - TECHNICAL REASON, I.E.:  
 ALERT ACTIVATED VIA THE TERMINALS KEY-BOARD, OR ACTIVATED WHEN READING TROUGH THE RECEIVE-MENU, -WHEN SENDING ROUTINE MESSAGE (EXPLAIN WHY), -OR ACTIVATED WHEN SWITCHING BETWEEN GENERATORS. UNINTENDED ACTIVATION WHEN LOGGING OF THE SATELLITE, OTHER
  - INSTALLATION PROBLEM, I.E:  
 IMPROPER MOUNTING, UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL HAD ACCESS TO THE TERMINAL, OTHER
  - ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS I.E.:  
 LIGHTNING, EQUIPMENT EXPOSED TO WATER, IF OTHER EXPLAIN.
- H- ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

4. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR REPLYING, AND HAVE A GOOD VOYAGE  
 BT

DUTY CONTROLLER  
 NNNN

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## ANNEX 3

## QUESTIONNAIRE ON COSPAS-SARSAT EPIRB ALERT

**Example:**

DTG: 20 1230 UTC NOVEMBER

FROM: JOINT RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRE SOUTHERN NORWAY,  
(JRCC STAVANGER)  
PHONE +47 51517000 FAX +47 51652334 TELEX 56 33163

TO.....: MASTER MV.....

SUBJECT.: EPIRB FALSE DISTRESS ALERT

1. A FALSE DISTRESS ALERT WAS RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM YOUR SHIP, WITH MMSI/CALL SIGN/SERIAL NUMBER (delete as required):.....AT TIME ....UTC.
2. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE IS USED TO INVESTIGATE WHAT CAUSED THE ACTIVATION OF THE DISTRESS ALERT, AND TO MONITOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GMDSS. ANSWERS GIVEN WILL UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE USED AGAINST THE MASTER OF THE SHIP.
3. PLEASE REPLY TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:
  - A. CONFIRM SHIP'S NAME, CALLSIGN, MMSI OR SERIAL NUMBER AND FLAG.
  - B. ACTUAL POSITION, COURSE AND SPEED, AT TIME THE ALERT WAS SENT.
  - C. TYPE , MODEL OF ALERTING EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE VERSION.
  - D. EXPIRY-DATE FOR THE BATTERY, AND THE LAST INSPECTION DATE
  - E. WAS THE OPERATOR OF THE EQUIPMENT A QUALIFIED OPERATOR?
  - F. STATE REASON FOR ACTIVATION, SUCH AS;
    - MISHANDLING / HUMAN ERROR I.E.:  
IMPROPER -USE , -INSTALLATION, -TESTING AND MAINTENANCE, -DISPOSAL (BATTERY INSTALLED), -OPERATION PROCEDURE, OR OPERATOR UNFAMILIAR WITH EPIRB, OTHER.
    - TECHNICAL REASON, I.E.:  
FAULTY ACTIVATION SWITCH, WATER INGRESS, TRANSMITTED DISTRESS SIGNAL WHILE IN TEST POSITION, OR OTHER..
    - MOUNTING FAILURE, I.E:  
STRAP OR BRACKET FAILURE, FAULTY RELEASE MECHANISM, IMPROPER MOUNTING, OTHER.
    - ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS I.E.:  
EXTREME WEATHER WITH WASH-OVER, LIGHTENING, THE EPIRB WAS WASHED OVERBOARD, OTHER.
  - G- ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION
4. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR REPLYING, AND HAVE A GOOD VOYAGE  
BT

DUTY CONTROLLER  
NNNN

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ANNEX 4

REPORT ON ACTIVATION OF FALSE DSC ALERTS

Report within: .....SRR for year:.....

		Activation		VHF	MF	HF	Model DSC alerting							
Categories	Sub-total no.	Causes	Sub-total no				Ref.no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mishandling / Human Error	...	Improper use, operator unfamiliar with equipment												
		Improper installation												
		Improper testing and maintenance												
		Activated when updating position, course and speed												
		Activated when cancelling an received alarm												
		Use of DSC in stead of radiotelephony when acknowledging												
		Other												
Technical	...	Activated when reading through receive menu												
		Activated when switching between generators												
		Improperly programmed to automatically send relay alert												
		Improperly transferring received message to relay alert mode												
		Other												
Mounting Failure	...	Equipment exposed to electromagnetic interference												
		Non approved type DSC being used												
		Other												
Environmental Conditions	...	Lightening												
		Exposed to water												
		Other												
Unknown	...	No feedback received on why alert was transmitted												
		Investigation into cause for activation of alert was inconclusive												
<b>Total no. of false alerts&gt;</b>	...	Number of causes / frequency >												

Model ref. no	Manufacture	Type / description of alerting DSC	Percentage of false alerts
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			



ANNEX 5

REPORT ON ACTIVATION OF FALSE INMARSAT ALERTS

Report within: .....SRR for year:.....

Categories	Sub-total no.	Activation		A	B	C	E	Inmarsat model alerting										
		Causes	Sub total no.					Ref.no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Mishandling / human error	.....	Improper use																
		Improper testing and maintenance																
		Activated when updating position course and speed																
		Operator unfamiliar with equipment.																
		Other																
Technical	.....	Alerted via the terminals key-board																
		Activated when reading trough the receive menu																
		Activated when sending a routine message																
		Activated when switching between generator																
		Unintended activation alert when logging off the satellite																
		Other																
Mounting Failure	.....	Improper mounting																
		Unauthorized personnel had access to the terminal																
		Other																
Environmental Conditions	.....	Lightening																
		Equipment exposed to water																
		Other																
Unknown	....	No feedback received on why Inmarsat alert was activated																
		Investigation into cause for activation of alert was inconclusive																
<b>Total no. of false alerts</b>		Number of causes / system >																

Model ref. no	Manufacture	Type / description of Inmarsat terminal	Percentage of false alerts
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			



## ANNEX 6

## REPORT ON ACTIVATION OF FALSE COSPAS-SARSAT ALERTS

Report within: .....SRR for year:.....

Categories	Sub-total no.	Activation		121.5 MHz	243 MHz	406 MHz	EPIRB model alerting													
		Causes	Sub total no.				Ref.no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8					
Mishandling / Human Error	...	Improper use.																		
		Improper installation																		
		Improper testing and maintenance																		
		Improper disposal (battery installed)																		
		Improper operation procedure																		
		Operator unfamiliar with EPIRB																		
		Other																		
Technical	...	Faulty activation switch																		
		Water ingress																		
		Transmitting distress signal while in test position																		
		Other																		
Mounting Failure	...	Strap or bracket failure																		
		Faulty release mechanism																		
		Improper mounting																		
		Other																		
Environmental Conditions	...	Extreme weather with wash-over																		
		Lightening																		
		The EPIRB was washed over board																		
		Other																		
Unknown	...	No feedback received on why EPIRB activated																		
		Investigation into EPIRB activation cause was inconclusive																		
<b>Total no. of false alerts</b>	....	Number of causes / frequency >																		

Model ref. no	Manufacture	Type / description of alerting EPIRB	Percentage of false alerts
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			