



THANKS TO DAMIEN LACY at BENDIGO AUTO SOUND we now have a 406mhz with GPS Emergency Locator Beacon for Club use.

Below is a brief explanation of the change in Emergency Beacon Frequency to 406mhz the SHORT EXPLANATION is that in our case BIU is required to carry the new 406mhz beacon on any flights beyond 50nm of the airfield. And for safety reasons it would be a good idea to carry one in the Tecnam for cross country flights (although this is not mandatory for RAA) THE GOOD NEWS is we have been DONATED FREE a new top of the line 406mhz beacon with integrated GPS by Damien Lacy who is a member of the club and the Manager of Bendigo Auto Sound (see Sponsor page on web site for more details) this portable PLB is for use in both club aircraft free of charge. It may be hired by club members, for use in their own aircraft when not in use with the club aircraft.

Regulation 252A of the Principal Regulations contains requirements associated with the carriage of emergency locator transmitters (ELTs). The previous requirements, in part, mandated the carriage of an ELT for most aircraft operations, excluding a specified list of exempted aircraft and types of operations.

Background

ELTs are distress beacons which are activated following an accident either automatically by embedded electronics, or manually by a pilot or other person. An active beacon is detected by orbiting satellites which transmit a signal to search and rescue coordinators. An international distress alert detection and information distribution system, Cospas-Sarsat, is currently used in Australia to provide satellite-based ELT monitoring services.

Older analogue ELTs operate on frequencies 121.5/243 MHz, while newer digital devices operate in the 406.0 – 406.1 MHz frequency band, and are commonly known as 406 MHz beacons.

The Cospas-Sarsat system will cease processing the 121.5/243 MHz signals from distress beacons on 1 February 2009. Hence, only 406 MHz beacons will be identified by the Cospas-Sarsat system after 1 February 2009.

Cospas-Sarsat made the decision to cease satellite processing at 121.5/243 MHz in response to guidance from International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). These United Nations organisations mandate safety requirements for aircraft and maritime vessels and have recognised the

limitations of 121.5/243 MHz beacons and the superior capabilities of the 406 MHz alerting system where the position of the distress can be relayed to rescue services more quickly, more reliably and with greater accuracy, especially when coupled with GPS position data. While the 406 MHz transmission will be essential for satellite monitoring beyond 1 February 2009, a 121.5 MHz component of the transmission is still necessary to assist with the final locating of an activated beacon by search and rescue personnel.

The proposed changes

As part of CASA's Regulatory Reform Program, a suite of new operational regulations have been in development since 1996. These new regulations form part of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASRs), and will replace the Principal Regulations and the Civil Aviation Orders. However, at this point in time, the operational suite of regulations, centred around CASR Part 91 – General operating and flight rules, is yet to be finalised and will not become law until after the 1 February 2009 “switchover” of ELT satellite monitoring services.

The joint CASA/industry Standards Consultative Committee has been briefed and notified of CASA's intention to require 406 MHz ELTs to be carried on all aircraft for which the carriage of an ELT is currently required from 1 February 2009, ahead of the making of the operational suite of CASRs. The Government's policy in regard to ELTs has also been promulgated to industry by means of website content, and material in the Flight Safety Australia publication since early 2008.

The Regulations continue to allow for the carriage of portable devices (though of the digital 406 MHz variety) such as an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) or personal locator beacon (PLB) in lieu of a fixed device.

A Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) Exemption, reference 9618, has been obtained from the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR); the amendments are expected to result in only a low cost to industry.