

VDR EPIRB

TECHNICAL BULLETIN T01-2024

Use of Tron 40VDR AIS as main EPIRB onboard

Tron 40VDR AIS has many additional model names issued by manufacturers of different brands of VDR systems. All these variants will have two sets of approval documents in accordance with each of IMO performance standards:

- Res. MSC.471(101) Performance standards for float-free satellite emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) operating on 406 MHz.
- Res. MSC.333(90) Revised performance standards for shipborne Voyage Data Recorder (VDRs)

In Europe, according to wheelmark (MED- Maritime Equipment Directive) of the product, Tron 40VDR AIS is wheelmarked under two different MED numbers:

As AIS EPIRB: MED/5.6: 406 MHz EPIRB (COSPAS-SARSAT)
As part of VDR: MED/4.29: Voyage Data Recorder (VDR)

The approval certificate as EPIRB is downloadable from www.jotron.com. The approval document as part of the VDR system is downloadable from the VDR manufacturers web pages. The example below shows two approval documents covering the same product as EPIRB and as part of the VDR system:





Both documents are necessary to show compliance with IMO SOLAS requirements, IMO performance standards, and IEC approval standards. And since Tron 40VDR AIS is approved as an EPIRB, it can be used as the main EPIRB onboard if mounted according to COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.2, chapter 4.10. This is explained in Jotron's "Tron 40VDR AIS Installation manual" and our Online Learning/eLearning course(s). Mounting shall be done according to the above-mentioned circular.

Mounting Location of GMDSS EPIRB:

The Jotron Tron 40VDR AIS is a combined GMDSS EPIRB and float-free VDR storage module compliant with EPIRB and VDR performance standards IMO MSC.471(101) and MSC.333(90). To be compliant as a GMDSS EPIRB, it is essential to follow COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.2.

Tron 40VDR AIS, which protocol and Beacon number to choose:

The main EPIRB onboard would normally be 0, and there is another EPIRB onboard, it will be number 1 if RLS is selected. But there are some cases where it might be difficult to choose what to do; see below examples:

Norwegian newbuilt vessel:

Norway requires both float-free and manual to be installed on most larger vessels. Since these two EPIRBS are often ordered/delivered before any VDR installation, they are expected to be numbered 0 and 1 if RLS protocol is used. When later VDR is installed, there are no vacant numbers in the RLS protocol to be used, so another protocol must be chosen for the VDR EPIRB, for example, "Standard location MMSI", beacon number 15.

It is important that two EPIRBs onboard do not have the same HEX code. The COSPAS-SARSAT system will be unable to process the received data if both EPIRBS are activated at the same time in a distress situation. Also, a Radio surveyor will demand one of them to be reprogrammed. So, a good rule of thumb, especially in these transition times when it comes to EPIRBs, is to check the currently installed EPIRBs before choosing what protocol/beacon number to use.

But please be aware that the final decision on whether **Jotron Tron 40VDR AIS Float-Free Capsule can be used as the main EPIRB** onboard vessels depends on the vessel's flag administration. Tron 40VDR AIS is approved as stand-alone/main EPIRB by:

- EU/EEA (Wheelmarked/MED certification)
- UK (MER certification)
- USA (USCG and FCC approval)
- Canada (IC Canada approval)

Apart from these areas, other flag states may approve the usage of Tron 40VDR as a standalone/main EPIRB, but these must be checked with individual flag administrations.

Larvik, February 2024