

# **AQEC MEMORANDUM 2014-004**

## **PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACON (plb) TESTING**

### **QUESTION:**

*“Is every Personal Locator Beacon (plb) required to be tested within the first 5 minutes of the hour?”*



### **AQEC/SNC RESPONSE:**

*There are different PLB's being used in the USCG Auxiliary. Since each PLB has specific manufacturer recommendations, you should follow the manufacturer recommendations for testing.*

*Bosn4 Gale W. Howerton, D5SR OTO states the following:*

*“As far as the PLB testing... As per the NOAA site and the MPC for the PLB testing there is no longer any mention of required testing times because it is not required with some types of PLBs. But, it does state to follow your manufacturer's handbook and the MC Murdo Fastfind clearly states: "Conduct self-test in first five minutes of hour"... Again, this does not apply to other brands and the NOAA emergency Beacon Testing page states: "There are no restrictions on any user operating the "Self-Test" mode for their beacon as long as it is done in accordance with manufacturer's instructions" and "Why doesn't the test signal get interpreted as a distress by the satellites or ground stations, and how do you know that your unit worked? Every beacon has a unique digital code, made up of bits (1's and 0's). In a self test, the beacon alters the code by swapping two designated bits. The Cospas-Sarsat ground stations know to ignore the test, and stop the chain of events that normally occur to notify a Rescue Coordination Center (RCC)". So the bottom line is... Follow manufacturer's instructions, McMurdo requires testing first five minutes of hour.”*

*The goal for testing a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is to make certain the PLB is working properly so when you need it, the PLB will function properly.*

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