

**RESOLUTION A.616(15)**

*Adopted on 19 November 1987  
Agenda item 12*

**SEARCH AND RESCUE HOMING CAPABILITY**

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING Article 15(j) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Assembly in relation to regulations and guidelines concerning maritime safety,

RECALLING ALSO that the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended, requires by regulation V/12(q) that all new ships of 1,600 tons gross tonnage and upwards when engaged on international voyages be fitted with radio equipment for homing on the radiotelephone distress frequency,

RECALLING FURTHER that resolution A.221(VII) recommends Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1960, to encourage the fitting of ships of less than 1,600 tons gross tonnage with radio equipment for homing on the radiotelephone distress frequency,

FURTHER RECALLING that resolution A.225(VII) strongly recommends that all search and rescue aircraft be equipped with direction-finders of sufficient sensitivity and frequency coverage to permit homing on radio transmissions on all distress frequencies and transmissions of emergency position-indicating radio beacons using internationally approved frequencies,

BEARING IN MIND that the radiotelephone distress frequency 2,182 kHz will not be used for homing in the global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS),

NOTING that the Maritime Safety Committee has decided that a 9 GHz radar transponder should provide the main means for locating in the system,

NOTING FURTHER that:

- (a) there will be a need for locating or determining the bearings of ships in distress by rescue units, as defined in the 1979 SAR Convention, participating in rescue operations and engaged in on-scene communications,
- (b) some homing equipment can be modified relatively easily to permit homing on satellite emergency position-indicating radio beacons transmitting on the frequency 406 MHz,
- (c) the VHF/FM 156 MHz system will be a primary radio system in the GMDSS for on-scene communications in all sea areas,
- (d) the VHF/FM 156 MHz system is a recognized radio system in the GMDSS for communication with survival craft,
- (e) there will be a need to locate ships to which chapter IV of the 1974 SOLAS Convention does not apply that are in distress and which are generally equipped with at least VHF radiotelephony,

- (f) the VHF/AM 121.5/243 MHz aeronautical system is presently widely used for ships' emergency position-indicating radio beacons and aircraft emergency locating transmitters to enable aircraft to locate ships and aircraft so equipped when in distress,
- (g) such use by ships and aircraft of the 121.5/243 MHz aeronautical system is likely to continue for a considerable time after the implementation of the GMDSS,
- (h) there will be a consequent need for rescue units to be able to home on transmissions on appropriate VHF/FM frequencies specified in appendix 18 of the Radio Regulations, and channel 16 in particular, as well as on the VHF/AM frequency 121.5 MHz,

HAVING CONSIDERED the recommendation made by the Maritime Safety Committee at its fifty-fourth session,

RECOMMENDS Member Governments to:

- (a) consider the need and, if appropriate, equip rescue units under their jurisdiction with devices suitable for homing or direction-finding on the appropriate VHF/FM frequencies specified in appendix 18 of the Radio Regulations and the VHF/AM 121.5 MHz frequency;
- (b) consider the need and, if appropriate, equip the SAR aircraft under their jurisdiction with devices suitable for homing on satellite EPIRB transmissions in the 406 MHz band;
- (c) equip rescue units under their jurisdiction with radar compatible with the 9 GHz search and rescue radar transponder;
- (d) encourage voluntary carriage by ships and other craft entitled to fly their flag of direction-finding or homing devices suitable for transmission on the appropriate VHF/FM frequencies specified in appendix 18 of the Radio Regulations or the VHF/AM 121.5 MHz frequency or on all such frequencies; and
- (e) consider the need and, where necessary, establish facilities for VHF direction-finding on their coasts.