

Fast man overboard alert and location

– with Sea Marshall 121mHz personal locator beacon

Sea Marshall man overboard alert and locator systems manufactured by Marine Rescue Technologies of Hull have been chosen by owners of five vessels at Selsey in Sussex as being most suitable for their small inshore boats.

They chose the Sea Marshall unit after a lot of thought and research because of its low running costs, robust and simple design and the ability to self recover the man overboard using the light fitted to the PLB (personal locator beacon) or the 121.5mHz location signal which can be tracked from the alerter unit onboard.

Tony Delahunty of *Robert Louise* says: "During the trial we conducted on one of the single-handed open vessels the fisherman was asked to wear the PLB for a week. Three weeks later he was still wearing it without really noticing it was there."

"With no annual contract and able to be tracked by us and rescue vessels and helicopters it is ideal for us inshore fishermen. Sea Marshall have also been outstanding, they were always ready to help."

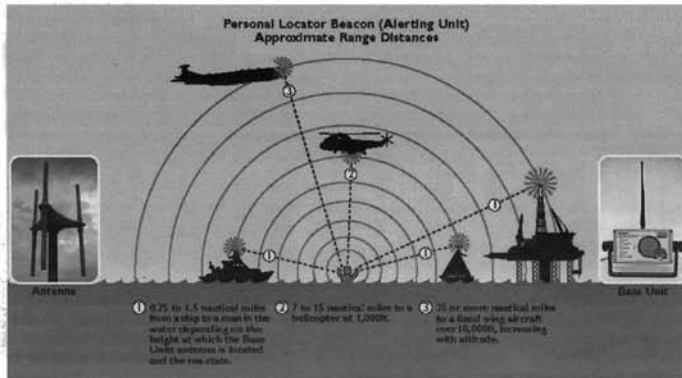
Robert Greenwood of the Selsey Fishermen's Association said: "Working as a safety instructor for Southern Fish Training Association, I am amazed at how many fishermen had not heard of or applied for grant aid. The more that we went into this application the more obvious it became that the grant aid system does not work well."

"All non-mandatory safety equipment should be easy to purchase and any grants to allow this should be simple to apply for."

He advocates a simple application form giving the applicant's name, boat name and registration, tonnage and length, and says that there should be no requirement to supply a business plan or accounts because the equipment is solely to improve crew safety and will not affect economic performance.

"Our biggest issue was convincing the MFA that we would prefer to pay money for another MOB system rather than the MOB Guardian from McMurdo, which we had decided was not suitable for our purpose."

"What we were looking for was something that protected us from the minute we went afloat to the moment we came ashore. As we moor our vessels at sea the Sea Marshall system suited us best. We went to the coastguard at Lee on Solent and discussed their



20% discount! and first sale north of Aberdeen

SEA MARSHALL is giving a 20% discount on the prices of its full range to support fishermen, in the current absence of grants.

The firm points out that if the 40%-70% grants were available, the extra discount would make the cost of the system minimal.

As well as being particularly suitable for small inshore boats the system is equally effective on much larger vessels, and Sea Marshall has sold the 'special price' system to a big Scottish trawler, Skipper Ian Harcus of Orkney's *Aalskere*.

This is the first sale to a vessel north of

Aberdeen and was made through Blue Anchor Fire and Safety of Fraserburgh, which has been appointed the exclusive Scottish dealer for Sea Marshall's products to the fishing industry, including Orkney and Shetland.

Blue Anchor boss Scott Skinner said the *Aalskere* has a total crew of 14, and although four or so are ashore at any time the total cost of units for all the crew and the onboard equipment was therefore not insignificant.

"We were hoping to get a grant, but when we found this wasn't possible the skipper went ahead anyway with just the 20% discount," he said.

"We are really pleased to have been appointed dealers for the Sea Marshall products. We have sold various PLBs for a while but this is the best system we have seen."

response to an incident and the opinion in the operations room was that this could only improve the chances of survival."

When deciding on the system, the Selsey fishermen looked at the MAIB accident reports. One that influenced their decision was an incident at Shoreham, further east along the Sussex coast, in which a crewman was lost as a beam trawler returned to port in poor weather.

The key element was that the weather was rough and

the coastguard search failed to find the crewman. The Selsey fishermen realised that with the PLB on he would have had a much greater chance of being found quickly and therefore surviving.

Sea Marshall chief Dave Marshall says his firm's PLB has the backing of HM Coastguard, which says: "A 200sq mile area could be searched by a helicopter for a person wearing a beacon in 20 minutes or less, day or night. Searching for a survivor with no surface

location aid would take hours and is all too often sadly a fruitless expensive exercise."

He points out that the recent loss of a Bridlington fisherman occurred within some 50 miles of the Sea Marshall factory near Hull "that manufactures personal location beacons in the thousands for Spanish fishermen who are required to wear a lifejacket with a location beacon as standard safety kit by law, generously subsidised by the European Union".

Independent of satellite coverage

THE SEA Marshall man overboard alerting/personal locator beacon (PLB) transmits on 121.5mHz. This frequency integrates with the coastguard and search and rescue services and so enables the wearer to be located very quickly and precisely.

Satellite monitoring of the 121.5mHz frequency is due to end in February 2009, but Sea Marshall says this will not affect its equipment as it is 'self managed' and operates independently of satellite coverage.

Any signal from boats fishing in inshore waters will be picked up by coastguard 121.5mHz monitoring, or civilian aircraft, in most circumstances.

The range of the alerting unit is from 0.75 to 1.5 nautical miles, depending on the height of the antenna on the base unit, up to 35 or more miles to a fixed wing aircraft flying at 10,000ft or higher (see diagram left).

The basic system is the Crewguard, which is a locator system only and consists of the small unit worn by the crewmen and a base unit on the vessel.

The second system is the Searfinder, which is a combined locator and alert system and also has a base unit on the vessel. The onboard units can be surface, flush or bracket mounted.

The unit worn by the crewman can be activated automatically on contact with water or manually, and is very compact (73mm x 70mm x 29mm) and weighs only 200g. The unit is operated by a 9V lithium battery that has a five-year life, can be replaced by the user and will transmit for 20-30 hours.

It is robust and fully waterproof and the battery has a self test facility and state of charge indicator.

There is no limit to the number of PLBs and no limit to the size of vessel to which it can be fitted.

The PLB can easily be fitted into a lifejacket and Sea Marshall can also supply a lifejacket designed to accommodate any of its PLB range.

Prices start from £299 for the basic Crewguard and base unit, less Sea Marshall's 20% discount.



Crewman Micky aboard the Selsey boat *Robert Louise* wearing a PLB from Sea Marshall.