



McMurdo Fastfindplus Personal Locator Beacon

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## SMD Telecommunications CC

Head Office:  
53 Paardeneiland Road  
Parden Eiland  
Cape Town 7405  
Tel: +27-21-5110556  
Fax: +27-21-5112886

336 Umbilo Road  
Durban 4001  
Tel: +27-31-2051122  
Fax: +27-31-2050999

7 Moonfish  
Meerensee  
Richards Bay 3901  
Tel: +27-35-7534911  
Fax: +27-35-7534271

[sales@smd-marine.co.za](mailto:sales@smd-marine.co.za)  
[www.smd-marine.co.za](http://www.smd-marine.co.za)

## McMurdo Fastfind PLB, Top Performer During Vermont Trials

In a recent system check of the Personal Locator Beacon Emergency Response System in Vermont, the McMurdo Fastfind Plus PLB turned in the best performance among the PLBs tested in terms of time needed to fix on the target and locate the beacon. McMurdo is a leading manufacturer of Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs).

In early August, a complete system check of the Vermont segment of the U.S. National Personal Locator Beacon Emergency Response System was conducted by the state of Vermont in cooperation with the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), and manufacturers of PLBs and related tracking equipment. The U.S. National PLB plan is being implemented on a state-by-state basis and Vermont is the first to come on line. This system check was an opportunity to test all the facets of the system from the activation of a PLB and the automated alert processing through the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite system and mission control center to the AFRCC and ultimately to search and rescue personnel on the ground.

Each team activated their PLB and waited for a Vermont State Patrol response team to locate them. The McMurdo team activated their PLB at 9:45 am and acquired a GPS fix in 1 minute, 19 seconds. The Fastfind Plus recorded a "hit" on the NOAA geo-stationary satellite and was received by the mobile command post at 9:49 am. This signal had the GPS location coordinates encoded into the signal and the rescue response team was notified. Within a minute, the response team had picked up the 121.5 MHz homing signal from the Fastfind Plus. At 10:00 am, the position of the McMurdo team was confirmed and the response team was dispatched at 10.20 am.

Once they arrived at the general location, the Vermont State Troopers used direction-finding equipment to follow the Fastfind Plus homing signal. Fifteen minutes later at 10:42 am, the search and rescue team found the McMurdo PLB in a small clearing surrounded by trees. Total rescue time from the first alert received was 53 minutes.

### About the Fastfind Plus PLB

When activated in an emergency, the Fastfind Plus transmits a satellite distress signal to geo-stationary and low earth orbit COSPAS-SARSAT satellites, providing worldwide coverage. The signal is then routed through the AFRCC to the relevant search and rescue authority. With its built-in GPS, the Fastfind is totally self-contained and eliminates the need for any external plug-in connections or additional add-on equipment. The GPS data can provide search and rescue personnel with LAT/LON information. To further assist rescue personnel, the Fastfind Plus transmits a 121.5 MHz homing frequency. It also transmits its unique ID number, which can be matched to the user through registration.

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