



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Media Release

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Updated disposal options for unwanted beacons

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is urging owners of emergency beacons to dispose of their unwanted beacons correctly.

AMSA spokesperson Lisa Martin said emergency beacons can inadvertently activate if they are not correctly disposed, which often occurs when beacons are thrown in the rubbish and end up in tips.

“When a beacon is activated, AMSA is alerted and a search and rescue response may be initiated,” Ms Martin said.

“Search assets and personnel tasked to look for beacons which are inadvertently activated may then be unavailable for a real emergency,” she said.

Beacon owners should be aware that there has been a change in beacon disposal arrangements with Battery World. Free disposal is no longer available at Battery World stores and a small fee will now apply.

Battery World marine spokesperson Vince Petruzzella said the company started collecting the unwanted beacons in 2007 as part of the transition to the 406MHz digital beacon.

“Our relationship with AMSA and the importance of correct beacon disposal is still very important to us but due to the increasing number of beacons being disposed and associated labour involved, stores will now charge a small fee,” he said.

Australia has the highest usage of beacons per capita in the world with over 350,000 beacons registered in AMSA’s database.

Beacon owners can still dispose of unwanted beacons responsibly in the following ways:

- Contact your local battery store. A small fee may apply.
- Contact your local maritime safety agency. They may be able to provide disposal advice.
- Disconnect the beacon battery according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Then contact your local waste management facility to ask about environmentally friendly disposal options. A small fee may apply.

Anyone who disposes of their unwanted beacon should update their details with AMSA to de-register their beacon. Details can be updated online at www.amsa.gov.au/beacons or by phoning AMSA on 1800 406 406.