



Department of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation Administration**  
Aircraft Certification Service  
Washington, D.C.

**TSO-C126b**

Effective  
Date: 11/26/12

# Technical Standard Order

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**Subject: 406 MHz Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT)**

1. **PURPOSE.** This technical standard order (TSO) is for manufacturers applying for a TSO authorization (TSOA) or letter of design approval (LODA). In it, we (the Federal Aviation Administration, (FAA)) tell you what minimum performance standards (MPS) your 406 MHz ELT must first meet for approval and identification with the applicable TSO marking.
2. **APPLICABILITY.** This TSO affects new applications submitted after its effective date.
  - a. All prior revisions to this TSO are no longer effective. Generally, we will not accept applications for the previous revision after the effective date of this TSO. We may do so, however, up to six months after it, if we know that you were working against the prior MPS before the new change became effective.
  - b. 406 MHz ELTs approved under a previous TSOA may still be manufactured under the provisions of its original approval.
3. **REQUIREMENTS.** New models of 406 MHz ELTs identified and manufactured on or after the effective date of this TSO must meet the MPS qualification and documentation requirements in RTCA Inc. document, RTCA/DO-204A, *Minimum Operational Performance Standards (MOPS) for 406 MHz Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs)*, dated December 6, 2007, sections 2.2 and 2.4. The 406 MHz ELT must include a 121.5 MHz homing beacon. We also require that you obtain a Cospas-Sarsat type approval certificate before applying for this TSO. Additionally, the use of hook and loop fasteners is not an acceptable means of attachment in complying with the Crash Safety requirements of section 2.2.5 of RTCA/DO-204A for automatic fixed (AF) and automatic portable (AP) ELTs.
  - a. **Functionality.** This TSO's standards apply to equipment intended to locate aircraft that terminate flight as a result of an accident.
  - b. **Failure Condition Classifications.**
    - (1) Failure of the function defined in paragraph 3.a resulting in signal outputs not meeting the requirements in paragraph 3 is a minor failure condition.

- (2) Loss of the function defined in paragraph **3.a** is a minor failure condition.
- (3) Design the system to at least these failure condition classifications.

**c. Functional Qualification.** Demonstrate the required functional performance under the test conditions specified in RTCA/DO-204A, Section 2.6. The shock and crash safety tests in RTCA/DO-204A sections 2.3.4.1 and 2.6.3.2 require testing coincident with each orthogonal axes individually. Additionally, to better simulate more realistic aircraft crash scenarios, we recommend shock and crash safety testing be accomplished with simultaneous longitudinal and vertical cross-axis forces.

**d. Environmental Qualification.** Demonstrate the required performance under the test conditions specified in RTCA/DO-204A, sections 2.3 and 2.5 using standard environmental conditions and test procedures appropriate for airborne equipment. RTCA/DO-204A requires the use of RTCA/DO-160E; however, you may use a different standard environmental condition and test procedure than RTCA/DO-160E, provided the standard is appropriate for the 406 MHz ELT.

**Note:** The use of RTCA/DO-160D (with Changes 1 and 2 only, incorporated) or earlier versions is generally not considered appropriate and will require substantiation via the deviation process as discussed in paragraph **3.g** of this TSO.

**e. Software Qualification.** If the article includes software, develop the software according to RTCA, Inc. document RTCA/DO-178B, *Software Considerations in Airborne Systems and Equipment Certification*, dated December 1, 1992 to at least the software level consistent with the failure condition classification defined in paragraph **3.b** of this TSO.

**Note:** The certification liaison process objectives will be considered satisfied after FAA review of the applicable life cycle data.

**f. Batteries.** ELT manufacturers must specify half-life and battery replacement intervals. See also Appendix **1** of this TSO.

**g. Deviations.** We have provisions for using alternate or equivalent means of compliance to the criteria in the MPS of this TSO. If you invoke these provisions, you must show that your equipment maintains an equivalent level of safety. Apply for a deviation under the provision of 14 CFR § 21.618.

#### **4. MARKING.**

**a.** Mark at least one major component permanently and legibly with all the information in 14 CFR § 45.15(b). The marking must include the serial number.

**b.** Also, mark the following permanently and legibly, with at least the manufacturer's name, subassembly part number, and the TSO number:

- (1) Each component that is easily removable (without hand tools); and,
- (2) Each subassembly of the article that you determined may be interchangeable.

c. If the article includes software and/or airborne electronic hardware, then the article part numbering scheme must identify the software and airborne electronic hardware configuration. The part numbering scheme can use separate, unique part numbers for software, hardware, and airborne electronic hardware.

d. You may use electronic part marking to identify software or airborne electronic hardware components by embedding the identification within the hardware component itself (using software) rather than marking it on the equipment nameplate. If electronic marking is used, it must be readily accessible without the use of special tools or equipment.

**5. APPLICATION DATA REQUIREMENTS.** You must give the FAA aircraft certification office (ACO) manager responsible for your facility a statement of conformance, as specified in 14 CFR § 21.603(a)(1) and one copy each of the following technical data to support your design and production approval. LODA applicants must submit the same data (excluding paragraph 5.f) through their civil aviation authority.

a. A Manual(s) containing the following:

(1) Operating instructions and equipment limitations sufficient to describe the equipment's operational capability.

(2) Describe in detail any deviations.

(3) Installation procedures and limitations sufficient to ensure that the 406 MHz ELT, when installed according to the installation or operational procedures, still meets this TSO's requirements. Limitations must identify any unique aspects of the installation. The limitations must include a note with the following statements:

“This article meets the minimum performance and quality control standards required by a technical standard order (TSO).  
Installation of this article requires separate approval.”

(4) For each unique configuration of software and airborne electronic hardware, reference the following:

- (a) Software part number including revision and design assurance level;
- (b) Airborne electronic hardware part number including revision and design assurance level; and,
- (c) Functional description.

(5) A summary of the test conditions used for environmental qualifications for each component of the article. For example, a form as described in RTCA/DO-160G, *Environmental Conditions and Test Procedures for Airborne Equipment*, Appendix A.

(6) Schematic drawings, wiring diagrams, and any other documentation necessary for installation of the 406 MHz ELT.

(7) List of replaceable components, by part number, that makes up the 406 MHz ELT. Include vendor part number cross-references, when applicable.

b. Instructions covering periodic maintenance, calibration, and repair, for the continued airworthiness of 406 MHz ELT. Include recommended inspection intervals and service life, as appropriate.

c. If the article includes software: a plan for software aspects of certification (PSAC), software configuration index, and software accomplishment summary.

d. A drawing depicting how the article will be marked with the information required by paragraph 4 of this TSO.

e. Identify functionality or performance contained in the article not evaluated under paragraph 3 of this TSO (that is, non-TSO functions). Non-TSO functions are accepted in parallel with the TSO authorization. For those non-TSO functions to be accepted, you must declare these functions and include the following information with your TSO application:

(1) Description of the non-TSO function(s), such as performance specifications, failure condition classifications, software, hardware, and environmental qualification levels. Include a statement confirming that the non-TSO function(s) don't interfere with the article's compliance with the requirements of paragraph 3.

(2) Installation procedures and limitations sufficient to ensure that the non-TSO function(s) meets the declared functions and performance specification(s) described in paragraph 5.e.(1).

(3) Instructions for continued performance applicable to the non-TSO function(s) described in paragraph 5.e.(1).

(4) Interface requirements and applicable installation test procedures to ensure compliance with the performance data defined in paragraph 5.e.(1).

(5) Test plans, analysis and results, as appropriate, to verify that performance of the hosting TSO article is not affected by the non-TSO function(s).

(6) Test plans, analysis and results, as appropriate, to verify the function and performance of the non-TSO function(s) as described in paragraph 5.e.(1).

f. The quality system description required by 14 CFR § 21.608, including functional test specifications. The quality system should ensure that you will detect any change to the approved

design that could adversely affect compliance with the TSO MPS, and reject the article accordingly. (Not required for LODA applicants.)

**g.** Material and process specifications list.

**h.** List of all drawings and processes (including revision level) that define the article's design.

**i.** Manufacturer's TSO qualification report showing results of testing accomplished according to paragraph **3.c** of this TSO.

**j.** Cospas-Sarsat type approval certificate.

**6. MANUFACTURER DATA REQUIREMENTS.** Besides the data given directly to the responsible ACO, have the following technical data available for review by the responsible ACO:

**a.** Functional qualification specifications for qualifying each production article to ensure compliance with this TSO.

**b.** Article calibration procedures.

**c.** Schematic drawings.

**d.** Wiring diagrams.

**e.** Material and process specifications.

**f.** The results of the environmental qualification tests conducted according to paragraph **3.d** of this TSO.

**g.** If the article includes software, the appropriate documentation defined in RTCA/DO-178B including all data supporting the applicable objectives in RTCA/DO-178B *Annex A, Process Objectives and Outputs by Software Level.*

**h.** If the article contains non-TSO function(s), you must also make available items **6.a** through **6.g** as they pertain to the non-TSO function(s).

**7. FURNISHED DATA REQUIREMENTS.**

**a.** If furnishing one or more articles manufactured under this TSO to one entity (such as an operator or repair station), provide one copy or on-line access to the data in paragraphs **5.a** and **5.b** of this TSO. Add any other data needed for the proper installation, certification, use, or for continued compliance with the TSO, of the 406 MHz ELT.

**b.** If the article contains declared non-TSO function(s), include one copy of the data in paragraphs **5.e.(1)** through **5.e.(4)**.

**8. HOW TO GET REFERENCED DOCUMENTS.**

**a.** Order RTCA documents from RTCA Inc., 1150 18th Street NW, Suite 910, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone (202) 833-9339, fax (202) 833-9434. You can also order copies online at [www.rtca.org](http://www.rtca.org).

**b.** Order copies of 14 CFR parts 21 and 45 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197. Telephone (202) 512-1800, fax (202) 512-2250. You can also order copies online at [www.access.gpo.gov](http://www.access.gpo.gov). Select "Access," then "Online Bookstore." Select "Aviation," then "Code of Federal Regulations."

**c.** You can find a current list of technical standard orders and advisory circulars on the FAA Internet website Regulatory and Guidance Library at <http://rgl.faa.gov/>. You will also find the TSO Index of Articles at the same site.



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### **Appendix 1. Battery Standards Requirements**

**1.** The battery used in the 406 MHz ELT authorized under this TSO must be appropriate for the intended operational environment, not pose a hazard to the aircraft, meet the requirements of acceptable battery standards and be approved by the Administrator.

**a.** If you use nickel-cadmium or lead acid batteries, the battery must comply with TSO-C173, *Nickel-Cadmium and Lead-Acid Batteries*.

**b.** If you use rechargeable lithium cells and lithium batteries, the battery must comply with TSO-C179a, *Permanently Installed Rechargeable Lithium Cells, Batteries and Battery Systems*.

**c.** If you use non-rechargeable lithium cells and batteries, the battery must comply with TSO-C142a, *Non-Rechargeable Lithium Cells and Batteries*, for guidance.

**d.** If you use a battery with a different chemistry, use an appropriate battery standard and identify that standard in your TSOA application or in a notification of a change in design.

**2.** See RTCA/DO-188, *Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) Batteries Guidance and Recommendations*, for guidance and recommendations to solve ELT battery problems.