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# ADVISORY CIRCULAR

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY LOCATOR TRANSMITTERS**

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1. **PURPOSE.** This circular provides information concerning the battery replacement requirements of Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR), section 91.52, Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs).
  2. **BACKGROUND.** Recent meetings between representatives from industry and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have revealed an unawareness, by the aviation community, of the battery replacement requirements associated with ELTs. Data received from ELT manufacturers further substantiates that the half-life (50% of useful life) dates of some ELT batteries in service have already expired.
  3. **REQUIREMENTS.** Fixed base operators, holders of inspection authorization (IAs), repair stations, aircraft owners and operators, and airframe and powerplant (A and P) mechanics should be aware of the following:
    - a. FAR 91.52 requires that batteries used in ELTs be replaced when:
      - (1) The transmitter has been in use for more than one cumulative hour, or
      - (2) Fifty percent of the useful life of the battery has expired, or for rechargeable batteries, after 50% of their useful life of charge has expired. This does not apply to water-activated batteries. The half-life of the battery as established by the transmitter manufacturer under FAR 37.200(g)(2) may be found in the manufacturer's operating instructions and equipment limitations.
      - (3) The new expiration date of the replacement (or recharged) battery must be marked on the outside of the transmitter.
    - b. Over-the-counter batteries of the type that are generally sold for flashlights, portable radios, etc., are not recommended for use as replacement batteries in an ELT since their condition and useful life are generally unknown. They may not meet the power supply requirements of the ELT and therefore conflict with Technical Standard Order C91 and may not be in accordance with FAR 91.52.
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- c. Replacement batteries may be obtained from ELT manufacturers, aircraft manufacturers, and other acceptable battery suppliers.
- d. Proper battery replacement may be made by certificated pilots under the preventive maintenance provisions of FAR 43.3(h), except those battery replacements requiring the soldering of cells together.
- e. Aircraft owners/operators are responsible for compliance with the ELT battery requirements of FAR 91.52.
- f. During routine maintenance or an annual/100-hour inspection, if maintenance personnel find the ELT battery half-life date has expired, or will soon expire, they should notify the aircraft owner/operator of this condition.

4. REPLACEMENT BATTERY PROCUREMENT. Aircraft owners and operators should program the procurement of ELT replacement batteries to assure that the maximum useful life of the battery can be obtained. Advance planning and timely procurement of replacement batteries will preclude a shortage of batteries from the suppliers.

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