
GENERAL AVIATION NEWS

FCC cancels 121.5 MHz ELT prohibition

Posted by [Janice Wood](#) · January 12, 2011

The Federal Communications Commission has formally stayed its rule on the prohibition on the certification, manufacture, importation, sale or use of emergency locator transmitters (ELTs) that transmit distress alerts on frequency 121.5 MHz.

The FCC took this action at the request of the FAA. FCC officials are planning a new Notice requesting public comment on the future of legacy 121.5 ELTs to be released sometime in early 2011.

[On June 15, the FCC proposed the ban on the 121.5 MHz ELTs, which was followed by an uproar in the GA community.](#) On July 14, the FAA asked the FCC not to implement the rule, noting that the current supply of 406 MHz ELTs is not sufficient to replace all existing 121.5 MHz ELTs in the short term, so, given that most general aviation aircraft are required to carry ELTs, a prohibition on 121.5 MHz ELTs would effectively ground most GA aircraft.

In the stay, filed Jan. 10, 2011, the FCC notes that the FAA “further asserts that 121.5 MHz ELTs can continue to provide a beneficial means of locating missing aircraft even without satellite monitoring of frequency 121.5 MHz, because the frequency is still monitored by the search and rescue community, including the Civil Air Patrol.” The FAA is also concerned about the cost of equipping aircraft with 406 MHz ELTs.

“Under these circumstances, we believe it would be in the public interest to further consider what actions the Commission should take in light of the termination of satellite monitoring of frequency 121.5 MHz, with the benefit of an augmented record,” the FCC stay reads.