

TOP GEAR FOR 2015

Ocean Signal – small for safety

What is it? An AIS-enabled man overboard alarm that is small enough to slip into a pocket. **Contact:** www.adecmarine.co.uk

As smartphones bizarrely continue to get larger, to the point where today's 'phablets' are almost too big to fit in a trouser pocket without attracting odd looks, the majority of us still want portable electronics to be compact. This particularly applies to personal rescue devices: the more portable they are the more likely they will be carried.

Ocean Signal may only be four years old, but the UK company already has impressive market traction in the safety sector owing to one small point: its products are very small.

Two years ago it launched the world's smallest personal locator beacon (PLB), and has now followed up with the smallest AIS man overboard (MOB) device and the most compact EPIRB on the market. Both products, featured here, represent a 30 per cent reduction in size compared with competitors, according to Ocean Signal.

rescueMe MOB1

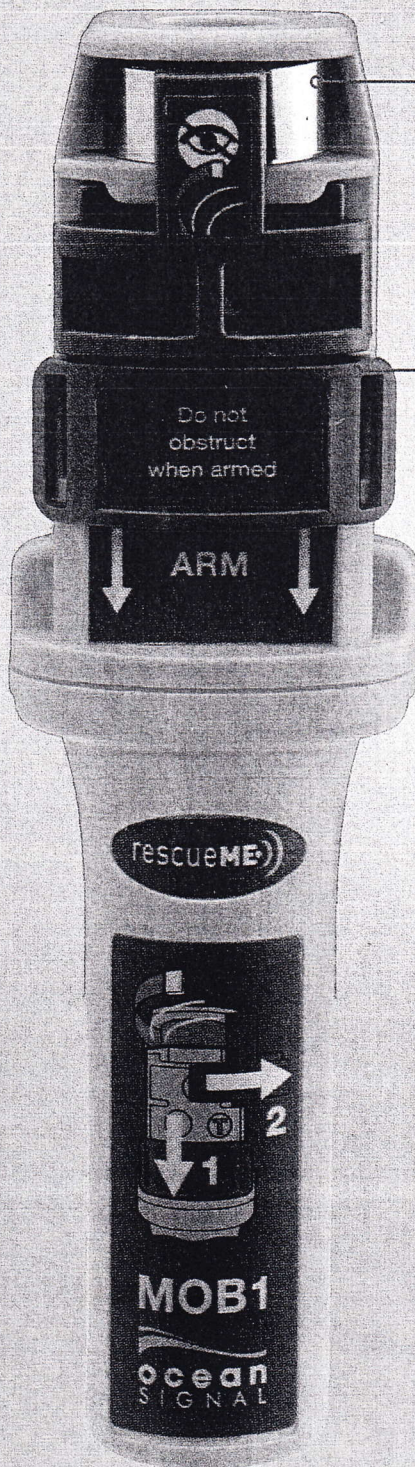
AIS-enabled MOB alarms are of broad appeal because they can alert any AIS-equipped vessels in the vicinity to the precise location of a casualty in the water. So there is unsurprisingly a spate of new AIS MOB devices coming out in 2015.

Ocean Signal's MOB1 model should be attractive again because of its size, but also its functionality and ability to fit onto any inflatable lifejacket's oral tube. It has DSC alerting (subject to national regulations), which means it can both pinpoint an MOB's location via AIS and trigger the yacht's own VHF alarm.

The device will automatically activate when the lifejacket inflates by using an activation tape that encompasses the bladder. As the bladder fills the tape pulls the activation pin. The aerial deploys automatically, a light flashes and the MOB1 transmits an AIS signal – plus a DSC message if the MMSI number of the mothership is programmed in.

"The philosophy of the personal rescue device is hitting a nerve at the moment," says Ocean Signal's managing director Alan Wrigley. "For solo sailors a PLB is still best, but for crewed boats, it's an AIS MOB."

We agree.



The antenna coils neatly inside and the unit comes with a key to wind it back in after operation

An integrated 66-channel GPS receiver helps transmit accurate position data for a minimum of 24 hours to any AIS-equipped vessels in VHF range



The MOB1 clips to the oral tube of a lifejacket. An activation tape surrounds the deflated bladder, so it automatically pulls the activation pin on inflation