The following table compares 406 MHz and 121.5 MHz beacons in these critical areas:

	406 MHz Beacons	121.5 MHz Beacons
Coverage:	**Global**	**Ground station dependent; ground stations have an effective radius of about 1800 nm. Current coverage is about one-third of the world.**
Reliability; False Alerts/ False Alarms:	**All alerts come from beacons.** Satellite beacon transmissions are digital, coded signals. **Satellites process only coded data, other signals are rejected.**	**Only about 1 in 5 alerts come from beacons. Satellites cannot discern beacon signals from many non-beacon sources. Beacons transmit anonymouosly.**
	About 1 in 10 alerts are actual distress.	**Fewer than 3 in 1000 alerts and 3 in 100 composite alerts are actual distress.**
	Beacon-unique coding/registration allow rapid incident corroboration. Registration mandatory 9/13/94. 90% beacons are registered. About 80% of false alarms are resolved by a phone or radio call to registration POCs prior to launching SAR assets.	**Since 121.5 MHz beacons transmit anonymously, the only way to ascertain the situation is to dispatch resources to investigate -- a costly disadvantage.**
Alerting:	**First alert confidence sufficient to warrant launch of SAR assets. Earlier launches put assets on scene earlier -- Average 2.5 hrs saved in maritime, 6 hrs in inland.**	**High false alarm rate makes first-alert launch unfeasible.** Absent independent distress corroboration, RCCs must wait for additional alert information.
	Average intial detection/alerting by orbiting satellites is about 45 minutes -- worst case 60 minutes.	Same as 406 MHz.
	Average subsequent satellite passes every 60 minutes.	Same as 406 MHz.
	Vessel/aircraft ID, point of contact information provided with alerts allows rapid corroboration or stand-down.	**Alerts are anonymous. 121.5 MHz technology not capable of transmitting data.**
	Allows false alarm follow-up to	No capability.

	continuously improve system integrity/reliabiltiy.	
	Near instantaneous detection by geostationary satellites. System provides world-wide coverage.	**No capability.**
Position Information:	**1-3 nm (2-5 km) accuracy** on average. Position calculated by doppler shift analysis.	**12-16 nm (15-20 km) accuracy** on average. Position calculated by doppler shift analysis.
	100 yard accuracy with GPS-equipped beacon. GPS position processed with initial alert. System infrastructure now available.	**No capability**
Locating the Target:	**Superior alert (non-GPS) position accuracy limits initial search area to about 12.5 sq nm (20 sq km).**	**Initial poistion uncertainty results in 450 sq nm (700 sq km) search area on average.**
	GPS-equiped beacons reduce search area to a negligible area.	**No GPS capability.**
	121.5 MHz homing signal facilitates target location by radio direction finder equipped search units.	Same as 406 MHz.
Power Output:	**5.0 Watts**	**0.1 Watt**
Average Cost:	**$750.00 - $1000.00 (EPRIB)** **$2500.00 (GPS-equipped EPIRB)** **$2200.00 - $3500.00 (ELT)**	**$200.00 - $500.00 (EPIRB)** **$600.00 - $1500.00 (ELT)**