Emergency procedures

It is important that your contacts, especially your coordinator, study these emergency procedures carefully. If you have more than one contact, you should authorize just one person (and a backup) to coordinate things. If there is any way possible for the pilot to contact help, he must do so if there are problems.

If the SPOT goes dead where the pilot cannot send the custom message indicating all is OK, he should do everything possible to let everyone know that he is OK. However, a pilot should always carry spare batteries for the SPOT so this should not happen.

1. If your contacts receive (or see) a "Check in/OK" message but nothing more after about (4) hours (pilots rarely fly longer than that), something has happened – probably not good. Here is what the coordinator should now do:
2. Access the SPOT shared web site of the pilot. Keep any tracking information available. Attempt to determine the time and coordinates of the pilot's last location. Study the tracking information carefully. (At the end of this page is a section on how to read the shared web site.)
3. If the track messages show a continual change in location with no two locations the same, things are probably OK and the pilot is flying a very long time. Everything is OK if the tracking information makes sense = continually moving with no breaks in time and with the location constantly changing. If there are breaks in the location or the location does not change, it may mean that the pilot is not in the air or has crashed. It is critical that rescue contacts know this. If things do not appear normal, proceed.
4. Attempt to contact the pilot via radio, cell phone, or satellite phone. How long should someone attempt to contact the pilot? It is hard to say but probably until contact is made one way or another. If there is someone handy/local, he can go to the last known location of the pilot using the coordinates given by the SPOT and/or a GPS. If all is OK, the pilot can be rebuked for being a hazard and very irritating for causing a false alarm because he did not check in. Attempt to contact friends or the host that the pilot is traveling with. If it is not possible to contact the pilot, proceed.
5. If there are track messages with the same location as the Check in/OK message, there has probably been an accident at launch. Initiate search and rescue (S&R) but only if the pilot does not have a rescue service (e.g. Global Rescue). If he does, contact the service immediately and let them take over the rescue. Global Rescue and firms that do similar things are not search organizations. If they have to search for the pilot, he will be charged accordingly. Be sure to tell the service everything you know. If the pilot has no rescue service, proceed.
6. If the track messages show a change in location and, at some point, show the same location for over 30 minutes, the pilot has crashed. Initiate S&R with the authorities in the pilot's location.
7. If the track messages are as in #3 above but there are time breaks not compatible with orderly movement and the location starts changing again, the pilot has been rescued or, perhaps, seized. Something is wrong. Initiate S&R with the local authorities. They may already be helping and will know about the rescue. It does not hurt to contact them for instructions and other help, if possible.