



Search and Rescue Conference

(Saint Denis de La Réunion, 3 – 7 September 2007)

WP/4 – Draft Search and Rescue Plan

[STATE] NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN

OR

Inter-governmental agreement on *[State]* national search and rescue

1. POLICY

It is the policy of the signatory Ministries to provide a national search and rescue plan for coordinating search and rescue (SAR) services to meet domestic needs and international commitments. Implementing guidance for this plan is provided in the *International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual* (IAMSAR Manual) and other relevant directives of the participants to this plan.

2. PURPOSE

This plan provides, by inter-ministerial agreement, for the effective use of all available facilities in all types of SAR missions.

[Could be replaced by “recitals” (whereas ... Ref to the Chicago Convention, the CAA Act and the SAR Act)]

3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Search and rescue region (SRR): an area of defined dimensions, associated with a rescue coordination centre, within which SAR services are provided.

Search and rescue coordinator: one or more persons or agencies within an administration with overall responsibility for establishing and providing SAR services, and ensuring that planning for those services is properly co-ordinated.

Search and rescue services: the performance of distress monitoring, communication, co-ordination and search and rescue functions, including provision of medical advice, initial medical assistance, or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources, including co-operating aircraft, vessels and other craft and installations.

Rescue coordination centre (RCC): a unit responsible for promoting efficient organization of search and rescue services and for coordinating the conduct of search and rescue operations within a search and rescue region.

Rescue subcentre (RSC): a unit subordinate to a rescue coordination centre, established to complement the latter according to particular provisions of the responsible authority.

Joint rescue coordination centre (JRCC): a rescue coordination centre responsible for both aeronautical and maritime SAR operations.

4. OBJECTIVES

Recognizing the importance of cooperation in providing expeditious and effective SAR services, the objectives of this plan are to:

- a) Provide a national plan for coordinating SAR services to meet domestic needs and international commitments, and to document related basic national policies;
- b) Support lifesaving provisions of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Convention on International Civil Aviation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and similar international instruments;
- c) Provide an overall plan for coordination of SAR operations, effective use of all available resources, mutual assistance, and efforts to improve such cooperation and services; and
- d) Integrate available resources which can be used for SAR into a cooperative network for greater cost efficiency in the protection of life and property.

5. SCOPE

This plan covers aeronautical and maritime SAR operations, including provision of initial assistance at or near the scene of a distress situation (e.g., initial medical assistance or advice, medical evacuations, provision of needed food or clothing to survivors, delivery of survivors to a place of safety).

No provisions of this plan or any supporting plan are to be construed in such a way as to contravene responsibilities and authorities of any participant as defined by statutes, executive orders or international agreements, or of established responsibilities of other agencies and organizations which regularly assist persons and property in distress resulting from incidents of a local nature.

6. SIGNATORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The participants to this plan are the following Ministries or their designated agencies:

[To be defined on the basis of each State's particular circumstances; an example is presented here below]

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– **The Ministry responsible for Civil Aviation**

The [Ministry responsible for civil aviation / civil aviation authority (CAA)] is responsible for:

- a) Chairing the National SAR coordinating committee, on rotational basis;
- b) Establishing and providing aeronautical SAR services and ensuring that planning for those services is properly co-ordinated. This responsibility includes providing appropriate legal and funding support, developing SAR policies, co-ordinating SAR training and overseeing the aeronautical SAR system;
- c) The establishment and proper functioning of the aeronautical SAR organisation;
- d) Ensuring that the ARCCs / ARSCs [or JRCC] are properly staffed;

- e) Liaison with the ICAO and with neighbouring states to facilitate SAR operations;
- f) Bearing the cost of modifications, approved by the Ministry responsible for civil aviation, to private civil aircraft to be used in search and rescue operations;
- g) Bearing the cost of fuel, oil and lubricants used by private or state-owned aircraft, vessels and vehicles deployed in an aeronautical SAR or medical evacuation operation upon request by the RCC, and in accordance with previously signed agreements;
- h) Acceptance of liability for injury sustained by, and for payment of compensation to, persons who are not state employees and who have been injured in the course of a search and rescue or medical evacuation operation in which they participated at the request and under the direction of the SMC, provided that these financial responsibilities do not apply to members of a voluntary body which is organised for that purpose;
- i) Payment of an annual grant to voluntary organisations involved in the provision of aeronautical SAR services in *[State]* and with which an agreement has been signed.

The [CAA / Air Navigation Service Provider] is responsible for:

- a) Providing and arranging SAR facilities, establishing, staffing and equipping RCCs and RSCs;
- b) Providing appropriate training for SAR staff;
- c) Assisting in SAR operations (air traffic control service facilities);

The [CAA / airport operator] develops/approves aerodrome emergency procedures (AEP) for licensed aerodromes which interface with search and rescue operation plans.

– **The Ministry in charge of Defence**

The Ministry in charge of Defence is responsible for:

- a) Making Air Force, Army and Naval communication channels available when necessary during a SAR operation;
- b) Providing crew, search aircraft, vessels and equipment when necessary during a SAR operation;
- c) Bearing the cost of all defence staff vehicles, craft and equipment, involved in SAR operations, except when an agreement has been concluded with the Ministry responsible for civil aviation for payment thereof;
- d) Bearing the cost of repairs to military aircraft, vessels, vehicles and equipment which are damaged or become unserviceable as a result of SAR operations.

– **Ministry of Interior/Home Affairs**

The Ministry of Interior/Home Affairs is responsible for:

- a) Providing crew, vessels, aircraft and equipment when available during a SAR operation;
- b) Protecting the accident scene(s);
- c) Taking charge of the deceased and / or personal effects of casualties;
- d) Bearing the cost arising from the use of its staff, vehicle, craft and equipments during a SAR operation;

– **Ministry / Department responsible for Disaster Management**

The Ministry / Department in charge of disaster management is responsible for:

- a) providing and supplying emergency services, crews, vehicles and vessels when necessary, and under the overall coordination of the RCC, during a SAR operation;
- b) making all appropriate communication channels available when required during a SAR and medical evacuation operation;
- c) bearing the costs of its participation in SAR or medical evacuation operations;
- d) providing financial assistance to the SAR system.

– **The Ministry / Agency in charge of Maritime Safety**

The Ministry / Agency in charge of Maritime Safety is responsible for:

- a) Chairing the National SAR coordinating committee, on rotational basis;
- b) Establishing and providing maritime SAR services and ensuring that planning for those services is properly co-ordinated. This responsibility includes providing appropriate legal and funding support, developing SAR policies, co-ordinating SAR training and overseeing the maritime SAR system;
- c) The establishment and proper functioning of the maritime SAR organisation;
- d) Providing and arranging SAR facilities, establishing, staffing and equipping MRCCs and MRSCs [or JRCC];
- e) Liaison with the IMO and with neighbouring states to facilitate SAR operations;
- f) Ensuring that the MRCCs and MRSCs [or JRCC] are properly staffed;
- g) Providing appropriate training for SAR staff;
- h) Bearing the cost of fuel, oil and lubricants used by private or state-owned aircraft, vessels and vehicles deployed in a maritime SAR or medical evacuation operation upon request by the RCC, and in accordance with previously signed agreements;
- i) Acceptance of liability for injury sustained by, and for payment of compensation to, persons who are not state employees and who have been injured in the course of a search and rescue or medical evacuation operation in which they participated at the request and under the direction of the SMC, provided that these financial responsibilities do not apply to members of a voluntary body which is organised for that purpose;
- j) Payment of an annual grant to voluntary organisations involved in the provision of maritime SAR services in [State] and with which an agreement has been signed.

– **Ministry of Health**

The Ministry of health is responsible for:

- a) Providing medical staff, equipment and services during SAR operations;
- b) Taking charge of the injured and deceased;
- c) Bearing the cost arising from the provision of its staff, equipment and services during SAR operations.

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7. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In carrying out SAR support functions with other nations, such as training, exercises and liaison, each participant will coordinate its activities with other participants having SAR expertise with respect to the support function concerned.

To the fullest extent that participants have the authority, they should maintain liaison and cooperate with authorities of other nations that have comparable SAR responsibilities, using the IAMSAR manual as guidance.

For distress situations in international waters or airspace where no SRR exists, or where it appears that the responsible RCC is not responding in a suitable manner, *[State]* RCC or facilities may assist as appropriate. Such assistance will be subject to availability of resources, legal considerations, and other applicable national policies.

Policies on rendering assistance in foreign territories or territorial waters must have the goal of balancing concerns for saving lives, for sovereignty, and for national security. Provisions for territorial entry as necessary should be addressed in international SAR agreements where relevant, as discussed below, and care should be taken to ensure that such agreements are compatible with national policies in this regard.

With respect to implementation of international SAR agreements, RCCs should have explicit authority to:

- a) Request assistance via other RCCs/RSCs including those of other nations;
- b) Promptly respond to requests for assistance from other RCCs/RSCs, including those of other nations as discussed below;
- c) Grant permission for entry into the *[State]* of SAR facilities of other countries; and
- d) Make arrangements with appropriate customs, immigration, health or other authorities to expedite entry of foreign SAR facilities as appropriate.

8. SAR AGREEMENTS

Bilateral or multilateral SAR agreements with other *[State]* agencies or organizations, or with authorities of other nations, may be of practical value to SAR, and beneficial for purposes including:

- a) Helping to fulfil *[State]* domestic or international obligations and needs;
- b) Enabling more effective use of all available resources;
- c) Better integrating *[State]* SAR services with the global SAR system;
- d) Building commitment to support SAR;
- e) Resolving SAR procedures and sensitive matters in advance of time-critical distress situations; and
- f) Identifying types of cooperative matters and efforts which may enhance or support SAR operations, such as access to medical or fuelling facilities; training and exercises; meetings; information exchanges; use of communications capabilities, or joint research and development projects.

States which develop any agreement dealing with SAR shall ensure that such efforts are coordinated with other interested participants.

9. NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The national search and rescue coordinating committee, consistent with applicable laws and executive orders, shall:

- a) Coordinate implementation of this plan;
- b) Review matters relating to the plan affecting more than one agency, including recommendations for plan revision or amendment;

- c) Encourage national, local and private agencies to develop procedures and acquire equipment to enhance national capabilities for implementing the plan; and
- d) Promote a coordinated acquisition and development of all national resources for SAR purposes.

10. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Each participant will fund its own activities in relation to this plan unless otherwise arranged by the participants in advance, and will not allow a matter of reimbursement of cost among themselves to delay response to any person in danger or distress.

11. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The participants will seek to keep political, economic, jurisdictional, or other such factors secondary when dealing with lifesaving matters, i.e., where possible, issues of lifesaving will govern their decisions.

Consistency and harmonization will be fostered wherever practicable among plans, procedures, equipment, agreements, training, terminology, etc., for the various types of lifesaving and recovery operations, taking into account terms and definitions adopted internationally as much as possible.

If there is any evidence that a distress situation may exist, rescue or similar recovery efforts will be based on the assumption that a distress situation does actually exist until there is positive confirmation to the contrary.

Assistance will always be provided to persons in distress without regard to their nationality, race, religion, status, or circumstances.

No provision of this plan or any supporting plan is to be construed as an obstruction to prompt and effective action by any agency or individual to relieve distress whenever and wherever found.

11.1. Coordination of Operations

Each agency responsible for operations under this plan will keep:

- a) Information readily available on the status and availability of key SAR facilities and other resources which may be needed for operations; and
- b) Each other fully and promptly informed of operations of mutual interest.

Recognizing the critical role of communications in receiving information about distress situations and coordinating responses, and noting that such responses sometimes involve multiple organizations and jurisdictions, the participants will work actively to develop suitable SAR provisions for:

- a) Interoperability;
- b) Means of sending and receiving alerting messages;
- c) Effective provisions for equipment registration, including emergency locator transmitters, and continual access to registration data by SAR authorities;
- d) Rapid, automatic, and direct routing of emergency communications;
- e) High system reliability; and
- f) Pre-emptive or priority processing of distress communications.

11.2. Suspension or Termination of Operations

SAR operations shall normally continue until all reasonable hope of rescuing survivors or victims has passed.

The responsible RCC, in consultation with designated officers in the appropriate Ministry, shall normally decide when to discontinue SAR operations.

12. ENTRY INTO FORCE, AMENDMENT, OR TERMINATION

This plan:

- a) shall enter into force effective _____;
- b) may be amended by written agreement among the participants; and
- c) may be terminated or superseded by a new plan or by written agreement among the participants.

For the Ministry in charge of Aviation	Name, signature :	Date :
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For the Ministry in charge of Maritime safety	Name, signature :	Date :
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For the Ministry in charge of Defence	Name, signature :	Date :
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For the Ministry in charge of Interior	Name, signature :	Date :
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For the Ministry / Department in charge of Disaster Management	Name, signature :	Date :
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For the Ministry in charge of Health	Name, signature :	Date :
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