



ICAO/IMO JWG ON HARMONIZATION OF
AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SAR
14th session
Agenda item 4.1

ICAO/IMO JWG-SAR/14-WP/18
17 August 2007
ENGLISH ONLY

SAR OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES, PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES:

Safety of passenger ships

PASSENGER SHIP OPERATIONS IN THE ANTARCTIC

(Presented by United Kingdom)

SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Executive summary:</i> | This paper raises concerns expressed about the problem of response to an emergency involving a passenger ship operating near the Antarctic continent |
| <i>Action to be taken:</i> | Paragraph 6 |
| <i>Related documents:</i> | MSC/Circ.1184 and MSC/Circ.1079. |

INTRODUCTION

1. Passenger ship operations are increasing around the Antarctic continent and concerns have been raised at a recent Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting regarding the potential SAR response in the event of an accident. Advice is being sought from SAR services and the IMO.

EXISTING GUIDANCE

2. MSC/Circ.1079, 'Guidelines for preparing plans for cooperation between SAR services and passenger ships', and MSC/Circ.1184, 'Enhanced contingency planning guidance for passenger ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities' provide relevant advice for ships operating in this area. All should have a SAR co-operation plan, in accordance with SOLAS Regulation V/7.3, and the guidance in MSC/Circ.1184 is directly relevant: an extract is at annex. The provisions of the ISM Code as regards planning for emergencies are also directly relevant.

CONCERNS

3. It is reported that the provisions of MSC/Circ.1184 are not being applied universally. In particular, the exchange of information with relevant RCCs is reportedly incomplete and the concept of voyage 'pairing' – coordinating passenger ship movements so as to enable mutual support in emergencies – is not functioning fully.

4. The concern of some delegates to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting is that, if these basic provisions are not followed, emergency cover is not assured. There is no obligation on passenger ship operators to follow them: MSC/Circ.1184 provides only guidance.

5. It is suggested that the IMO might promote safety in the region by considering regulating some of the provisions recommended in MSC/Circ.1184; by urging Flag States to require these or other suitable precautions in the spirit of the Circular and of the ISM Code; and/or by clarifying the existing guidance, particularly as regards the concept of 'pairing'.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE JWG

6. The JWG is invited to consider the issue and make recommendations to COMSAR if appropriate.

— — — — —

ANNEX

Extract from MSC/Circ.1184

ENHANCED CONTINGENCY PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR PASSENGER SHIPS OPERATING IN AREAS REMOTE FROM SAR FACILITIES

1. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the SOLAS and SAR Conventions and the ISM Code, contingency plans for passenger ships should be prepared for operating in areas considered to be remote from SAR facilities. Factors which may make an area remote from SAR services are set out in the Appendix [to MSC/Circ.1184] and may include:

- .1 the number of people potentially at risk as the result of an accident in the area;
- .2 the total recovery capacity of SAR facilities available to reach the scene of the accident and recover those at risk within survival times (including all additional SAR facilities likely to be available, as well as designated SAR units); and
- .3 whether there is any shortfall between the number to be recovered and the capacity of those SAR facilities available.

2. SAR cooperation planning arrangements should be enhanced for ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities (see Appendix), as follows:

- .1 the Company should give reasonable notice of the arrival of its ship in the remote area to the relevant RCC;
- .2 if not already doing so, the Company should arrange direct exchange of the ship's SAR co-operation plan with the relevant SAR services;
- .3 the relevant SAR services may request a copy of the relevant part of the Company's emergency plan, in addition to the basic SAR co-operation plan, in order to assist their own contingency planning; and
- .4 the Company should keep the RCC informed as to the ship's position and intentions while the ship is operating in the remote area.

3. The risks of remote area operation should be assessed and planned for. The following enhancements should be among those considered:

- .1 voyage 'pairing', i.e., mutual exchange of information that may be available to the SAR Authority or the vessel operator with reference to other passenger ships operating in the same area, so that, if two or more passenger ships are operating in the same general area at the same time, each can be used as a SAR facility in case of accident to another;
- .2 the carriage of enhanced life-saving appliances;
- .3 the provision of additional life-saving resources; and
- .4 other sources of assistance that may be available in the area.

— END —