

**INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION**  
**FIRST MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE**  
**CARIBBEAN REGION (CAR/DCA/1)**

(Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, 8-11 October 2002)

**Agenda Item 7: Search and Rescue/Mass Casualty Incidents (SAR/MCI)**

**Study Group Work on Annex 12, Search and Rescue**

(Presented by the United States)

**SUMMARY**

This paper is intended to provide information about an ongoing project to accomplish a major update to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Annex 12, Search and Rescue. This project would be of interest to all Caribbean States.

**REFERENCES :**

1. Convention on International Civil Aviation, Annex 12, Search and Rescue
2. Report of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (JWG/8)

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Annex 12 is being reviewed by a Study Group that is a cooperative forum between ICAO and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Study Group was tasked to consider search and rescue (SAR) matters that relate in any way to the harmonization of aeronautical and maritime SAR procedures and techniques. This Group, commonly called the ICAO/IMO Joint SAR Working Group, was responsible for development of the three-volume International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual, which is well established around the world. The sixteen-member Group is divided equally between aeronautical and maritime SAR experts. Advisers and observers also participate in its meetings.

1.2 While Annex 12 has been updated in numerous relatively minor ways, it is basically the same as when it initially became effective on 1 December 1950, and entered into force on 1 March 1951. However, general SAR concepts and principles have matured substantially since 1951.

1.3 The revised Annex to the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (the IMO SAR Convention) entered into force in January 2000. The revised maritime SAR Convention clarifies the responsibilities of Governments and puts greater emphasis on the regional approach and co-ordination between maritime and aeronautical SAR operations. Its terms and definitions were updated and the responsibilities of Governments made clearer. It requires Parties, either individually or in co-operation with other States, to establish basic elements of a search and rescue service, and describes how SAR services should be arranged and national capabilities developed. Parties are required to establish rescue co-ordination centers and to operate them on a 24-hour basis with trained staff having a working knowledge of English. Parties are also required to "ensure the closest practicable co-ordination between maritime and aeronautical services". Other chapters in the revised maritime SAR Convention deal with co-operation between States, operating procedures, preparatory measures and use of ship reporting systems for SAR. This update was a major improvement to the maritime SAR Convention, but also brought it into closer alignment with Annex 12 of the Convention on International Aviation.

1.4 The changes being developed to Annex 12 are intended both to introduce substantial improvements, and to bring it into closer harmonization with the maritime SAR Convention. A draft revision of Annex 12 that has been coordinated among States and international organizations will be debated at the next ICAO/IMO Joint SAR Working Group meeting during the first week of October 2002. Pending approval at this meeting, the draft revised Annex 12 will be forwarded to ICAO Headquarters to begin the amendment process through its Air Navigation Commission and the Council. There is no firm time line for completion of this Annex 12 review process but it may be reasonable to see Annex 12 amended by late 2003.

## **2. Discussion**

2.1 The following is a list of highlights of draft changes under consideration for Annex 12:

- Retains the aeronautical character of the current Annex while at the same time increasing the emphasis on co-operation and harmonisation with maritime services to enable aeronautical SAR services to be more effective
- Provides for a regional approach to providing search and rescue (SAR) co-ordination and services
- Identifies the basic elements of a SAR service
- States the purpose and objectives of establishing SAR regions
- Adds an emphasis on the rescue function to balance the current Annex emphasis on searching
- Certain recommended practices are changed to standards
- Requires English language proficiency for rescue co-ordination center (RCC) staff
- Requires establishment of SAR registration databases and registration of certain aircraft communications equipment
- Recommends establishment of joint (aeronautical and maritime) RCCs where practicable

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- Recommends taking into account the size and passenger capacity of modern aircraft when selecting and equipping SAR facilities
- Recommendation concerning inter-State agreements (3.1.5) amended to strengthen cooperation and coordination and to support IAMSAR Manual principle of balance between concerns for sovereignty and concerns for lifesaving
- Expands text pertaining to on-scene co-ordination, which is currently not addressed
- Improves the provisions for terminating and suspending SAR operations and harmonises them with provisions of the maritime SAR Convention
- Definition for "search and rescue service" has been incorporated to reflect the actual components of the service and to indicate, in general terms, the resources used to provide it.
- Promotes ship reporting systems with RCCs (Ch 4).
- Includes Recommendation that SAR plans be coordinated with aerodrome emergency plans (4.2.5.)
- Upgrades provision for regular training from a Recommended Practice to a Standard

### **3. Conclusion**

3.1 The Directors of Civil Aviation of the Caribbean are invited to note the information herein provided.

3.2 Decisions made on Annex 12 at the October 2002 session of the ICAO/IMO Joint SAR Working Group can be provided by Mr. Dave Edwards at 202.267.1552 or [dedwards@comdt.uscg.mil](mailto:dedwards@comdt.uscg.mil).

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