

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)

Joint Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Meetings

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

This paper provides information about ongoing multilateral efforts for search and rescue (SAR) throughout the Caribbean on a regional and sub-regional level. The intent of these meetings is to build upon the existing capability and cooperative spirit to improve SAR services throughout the Caribbean. These sessions would be of interest to all Caribbean States.

1. Introduction

1.1 Several SAR conferences and workshops have been held in the Caribbean. The intent of many of these meetings is to build upon existing capabilities and cooperative spirit to improve SAR services. Some of these efforts are joint aeronautical and maritime meetings and some of the maritime SAR venues may be expanded to include aeronautical SAR participants in the future. Since aeronautical and maritime authorities have similar SAR responsibilities and often depend upon the same SAR facilities, there can be benefit in holding recurring joint aeronautical and maritime SAR meetings.

2. Discussion

2.1 Recent SAR meetings and other planned sessions that include SAR are briefly outlined below. Typically, such sessions benefit by including participation of both aeronautical and maritime SAR authorities.

2.1.1 The regional organization Corporacion Centroamericana de Servicios de Navegacion Aerea (COCESNA) chaired a highly successful regional joint aeronautical and maritime SAR workshop in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in July 2002. Other participants included representatives from Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the U.S. Work focused on management and operations issues to enable continued growth of self-reliant SAR services for Central America. Due to the progress and enthusiasm created during the workshop, follow-on sessions are planned. The majority of Central American participants requested Miami, Florida, U.S., for the next meeting site due to ease of transportation arrangements. The U. S., pending funding approval, offered to sponsor the next meeting in cooperation with COCESNA in March 2003 or later. Potential agenda items could include review of progress since the last workshop, sharing operational insights gained, and discussions of the report of the special project on SAR in Central America conducted by a Brazilian SAR expert in 2002.

2.1.2 The British Virgin Islands hosted a two-day maritime SAR conference in September 2002 as part of an annual SAR program sponsored by U.S. Coast Guard operational forces in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Participants were mostly from the eastern Caribbean States but also included other States such as Jamaica and the Bahamas. Tentative plans are to convene the next workshop in July 2003, or a bit later in the off-season for tourism. The meeting will be held in a State willing to host the event in conjunction with sponsorship by the U.S. Coast Guard in San Juan. Subject to available funding, more States and aeronautical SAR participants may be invited.

2.1.3 The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is organizing a 2-3 day event entitled "Caribbean Volunteer SAR Conference" to be held around 5-8 December 2002 in Miami, Florida. This is the initial session of a long-term effort for development and growth of volunteer SAR capabilities in the Caribbean. The Coast Guard Auxiliary has both a maritime and an aeronautical component and would like to be able to work with maritime and local airport authorities near the coast, and possibly local disaster preparedness officials that work with volunteer organizations. The list of organizations and agencies to invite is being developed. Questions on participation and the meeting in general can be addressed to Mr. Everette (Ev) Tucker at 757.898.8151 or etucker@erols.com.

2.1.4 Initial planning has begun for a United Nations-United States sponsored workshop for Central America on use of satellites for peaceful purposes. The U.S. organizer is the lead U.S. agency for the Sarsat Program, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The U.S. Coast Guard will discuss operational use of the Cospas-Sarsat system for detecting satellite distress beacons. The session will be similar to a successful UN-India sponsored session held in the Pacific Ocean region. Tentative date and location are October or November 2003 in Miami.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Directors of Civil Aviation of the Caribbean are invited to note the information herein provided. Any comments regarding the meetings discussed above or any other meetings concerning search and rescue may be addressed to Mr. Dave Edwards at 202.267.1552 or dedwards@comdt.uscg.mil.