



ICAO/IMO JWG ON HARMONIZATION OF
AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SAR
14th session
Agenda item 3.4

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**PROVISIONS OF CONVENTIONS, PLANS, MANUALS AND
OTHER DOCUMENTS AFFECTING SAR:**

Further work on the IAMSAR manual

AVAILABILITY AND AMENDMENT OF THE IAMSAR MANUAL

(Presented by United Kingdom)

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This paper proposes that the IAMSAR Manual should be made more readily available to users, and that a more streamlined and structured amendment process for the Manual should be adopted by the Organization.
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 3
<i>Related documents:</i>	Draft COMSAR paper attached

INTRODUCTION

1. It is proposed that access to the IAMSAR Manual should be improved, and that its amendment process should be streamlined, so as to make the Manual more readily available to users and to help ensure that copies are kept up to date.

2. Details of the proposal are contained in the draft COMSAR paper attached.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE JWG

3. The JWG is invited to consider the draft COMSAR paper, amending it as necessary. IMO members of the JWG are invited to co-sponsor the paper at COMSAR 12.

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HARMONIZATION OF AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE PROCEDURES, INCLUDING SAR TRAINING MATTERS

Availability and amendment of the IAMSAR Manual

Submitted by [Australia, Canada, Hong Kong China, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom
and the United States]

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This paper proposes that the IAMSAR Manual should be made more readily available to users, and that a more streamlined and structured amendment process for the Manual should be adopted by the Organization

Action to be taken: Paragraph 7

Related documents:

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The three volumes of the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search And Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual are central to the Global SAR Plan, providing guidance to SAR Co-ordinators (Volume I), to SAR Mission Co-ordinators (Volume II), and to seafarers and airmen who become involved in SAR response (Volume III). The Manual is essential to States developing their SAR services; to RCC personnel coordinating SAR; and to the masters and captains of ships and aircraft engaged in SAR operations. It is the core text upon which global SAR is based, enabling strangers to work together effectively in order to save lives.

1.2 It follows that all involved should have ready access to the Manual, and that all should hold the latest information. However, at present the Manual is not freely available, nor can it be downloaded from the IMO website. It is also the subject of frequent amendment and this amendment process is relatively slow. There are therefore risks that people becoming involved in SAR may not be aware of the structure upon which it is based internationally, or that they may be working from out-of-date information.

1.3 This paper proposes that the Organization should consider the following proposals for improving the situation:

- .1 the IAMSAR Manual should be made available for free download from the IMO website, with clear notification of amendments made;
- .2 as an alternative to option 1 above, the Manual could be made available for free download from the 'imodocs' website, with clear notification of amendments there and on the public website; and/or
- .3 a more structured amendment process should be adopted.

1.4 This paper also proposes that the current process of approval of amendments to the IAMSAR Manual should be streamlined at IMO by delegating approval to the COMSAR Sub-Committee.

2. OPTION 1: FREE AVAILABILITY FROM THE IMO WEBSITE

2.1 If up-to-date copies of the three volumes of the Manual were prominently placed on the IMO website, unrestricted and in a commonly available format, they could be read and/or freely downloaded, either as a set or as single volumes, by anyone wishing to use them. This would be a simple but effective contribution to lifesaving. Currently, users may be reluctant to purchase sufficient copies for training or for efficient operational use: this reluctance would be removed if the Manual was freely and readily available.

2.2 At present, amendments are made to the IAMSAR Manual piecemeal. As new information and/or changes to SAR procedures arise, amendments to the Manual are proposed and, if agreed, implemented by the Organization. This is a necessary process – but, lacking a clear structure, it generates uncertainty among users as to whether they have the latest information available. Many users, especially those only occasionally involved in SAR (although it has been noted that the problem exists for SAR experts too), may not keep their copies of the Manual up to date because it is difficult to keep track of changes made. It is understandable, for example, that users should refer to the copy of the Manual they have bought, without being aware that it has been amended since.

2.3 It is therefore proposed that notifications of amendments should be posted in the same place on the IMO website as the IAMSAR Manual would be under this proposal. The on-line version of the Manual would be updated as amendments are approved by the Organization. Visitors to this part of the site should have their attention drawn to these amendments by a clear notification of changes made and by an explanation of the amendment process when they download. The change notification would include details such as the volume(s) concerned, chapter / page references, subject heading, a brief summary of the amendment, and the date of the change. Users would thus be alerted to read and/or download the amended sections of the Manual.

2.4 This option is the one preferred by the proposers of this paper. There would be no extra cost to the Organization in implementing it. However, it is acknowledged that there would be loss of income as users availed themselves of the free download option instead of purchasing copies. Hard copies and CD-ROM versions of the Manual would remain for sale as before – but it is likely that sales would decrease. Nevertheless, the benefits of free availability must be set against this loss.

2.5 It would be helpful to the Sub-Committee in considering this and the following proposal if the Secretariat could indicate the annual profits made by the Organization from the sale of each of the three volumes, and thus the losses of income likely to be incurred.

3. OPTION 2: FREE AVAILABILITY FROM THE 'IMODOCS' WEBSITE

3.1 As an alternative to the proposal in paragraph 2 above, a similar procedure might be adopted but with the Manual lodged on the password-protected 'imodocs' website instead of the main IMO website. It would thus only be freely available to those with access to the 'imodocs' site. This proposal would reduce the loss of income to the Organization. As carriage of Volume III is mandatory, purchases of this Volume would be unaffected. On the other hand this proposal would be of particular value to those States seeking to develop SAR services, by making up-to-date guidance readily and freely available to them.

3.2 Notification of amendments would be less easy under this option. The process described in paragraph 2 could still be used, but if notifications were limited to the 'imodocs' site, users without access would not see them. It would therefore be beneficial to make the amendments available on the public website as well. Purchasers of the Manual should be made aware of this facility, and encouraged to keep their copies up to date by using it.

4. STRUCTURED AMENDMENT

4.1 The proposals at paragraphs 2 & 3 above would improve access to the IAMSAR Manual by making it freely available, to all or at least to some users. However, whether or not one of these proposals is accepted, the amendment process itself can be better structured than it is at present, enabling users to keep track of amendments made to the Manual more easily. The piecemeal approach leads to natural confusion. The posted notification process suggested above would improve matters, although without the incentive of gaining access to IAMSAR itself users may not visit the site and therefore would not see the notifications of amendments.

4.2 Nevertheless, it is proposed that the notification process suggested above should still be implemented. Purchasers / users of the Manual should have their attention drawn to it by advice placed prominently in each of the three volumes.

4.3 In addition it is suggested that, except when interim amendment is agreed to be urgently required, the Organization should agree that the IAMSAR Manual will be amended on a structured basis rather than piecemeal. If amended according to an advertised schedule, users will know when to visit the website to pick up updates. The schedule would be advertised prominently in each of the three volumes, together with a note to the effect that *urgent* amendments may be made in the interim. The Organization would announce urgent amendments as required, and users would be encouraged to check the website from time to time between scheduled amendment dates.

4.4 It may also be considered beneficial to instigate a structured review process, intended to ensure that all parts of the Manual are kept under regular review according to an agreed programme. Urgent amendments could still be made outwith this programmes if necessary.

5. STREAMLINING THE APPROVAL PROCESS BY THE IMO

5.1 Currently at IMO amendments to the IAMSAR Manual are agreed by the COMSAR Sub-Committee, usually following detailed development work done by the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group. These amendments are then passed to the Maritime Safety Committee for approval before publication.

5.2 It would speed this process up if approval responsibility were to be delegated to COMSAR, as the expert Sub-Committee overseeing the Manual for the Organization. Making it available on the web, and updating it as soon as amendments have been approved, would speed the process still more.

6. CO-ORDINATION WITH ICAO

6.1 As the Manual is jointly owned by IMO and ICAO, the latter should be advised of any action proposed by the Organization as regards making it more readily available and/or improving the amendment process, and ICAO's agreement sought before any such action is taken.

7. ACTION REQUESTED OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

7.1 The Sub-Committee is requested to consider the proposals contained in paragraphs 2 – 5 above, and to decide whether to propose action to ICAO.

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