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NORTH AMERICAN, CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN OFFICE

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(19th E/CAR DCA)**

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22/10/04

Agenda Item 3: Air Navigation Developments
3.4 Other Air Navigation Developments

AMENDMENT OF ANNEX 12

(Presented by United States)

SUMMARY

This paper reviews recent amendments to Annex 12 of the Chicago Convention that became effective on July 12, 2004.

1. Introduction

1.1 On February 23, 2004, the ICAO Council adopted extensive amendments to Annex 12, *Search and Rescue*, which became effective on July 12, 2004.

1.2 Many SAR actions require close cooperation of effort between air and sea craft and the coordinating staff who task them. Interoperability of equipment and compatibility of procedures are vital when lives are endangered and time is of the essence. Achieving this end result is possible only if the separate organizations administering aeronautical and maritime SAR, ICAO and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) respectively, align their high level documents to the extent practicable and ensure that all underlying policies and practices are in keeping.

1.3 Contemporary SAR systems are being developed on a regional basis and in cooperation with many inter-acting agencies rather than on the basis of national borders which, from an operational perspective, are entirely arbitrary. Thus aeronautical and maritime agencies, civil and military authorities, communication providers, meteorological services, air traffic service (ATS) providers and aircraft operators (to name a few) combine in multi-lateral agreement to exercise SAR responsibility over a geographic area determined in consideration of needs, facilitation and best risk management strategies. Duplication of effort and facilities can be avoided, service provision can be more uniform across a geographic area and, importantly, proficient services can be provided even near and within States with limited resources. The number of rescue coordination centres (RCCs) necessary to facilitate operations may be reduced and communication databases may be consolidated. Further, the establishment, training and on-going proficiency of staff can be more conveniently and economically managed.

1.4 IMO closely aligned its first SAR Convention with ICAO Annex 12 — *Search and Rescue*. In its final form however, the IMO SAR Convention contains several changes in keeping with contemporary realities and evolving best practice that are not reflected in Annex 12. In order to maximize the benefits stated above, the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on SAR developed a proposed amendment to Annex 12 that harmonized Annex 12 with the IMO SAR Convention to the extent practicable.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 While many amendments to Annex 12 have been adopted, the underlying concepts that they are based upon can be summarized, allowing their application to be more easily discerned. Such a summary is appended to this paper. This **Appendix** is based on explanations prepared by ICAO to assist the Council in reviewing the amendments.

2.2 Annex 12 amendments are mainly based on IMO and ICAO agreeing that harmonized SAR plans and procedures would greatly improve cost efficiency in the provision of both arms of the SAR service. However, it is essential that the aviation industry itself be served as well as possible by sections of the Convention on International Civil Aviation that concern SAR. The first need of Annex 12 is to provide a basis for effective emergency response to aircraft and their occupants when in or threatened by situations of distress.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The meeting is invited to note the information provided in this paper and its Appendix for use as appropriate.

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APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO ANNEX 12

Amendments now ensure gender neutrality throughout.

Chapter 1. - Definitions

Definitions have been made consistent with definitions in the IAMSAR manual which, in turn, are consistent with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) SAR Convention. Those existing Annex 12 definitions, however, that are uniquely aeronautically relevant or which need to be consistent throughout a number of ICAO Annexes, have been preserved in their original form. The approach has been to seek closer harmonization between aeronautical and maritime SAR documents, but only to the extent that aeronautical SAR meanings and procedures are in no way compromised.

The words and phrases *search*, *rescue*, *search and rescue facility* and *search and rescue service* are defined as these terms are basic and are used in subsequent Annex 12 chapters.

Search and rescue service is drafted to reflect the actual components of the service and to indicate, in general terms, the resources used to provide it.

A definition of *vessel* has been added for the sake of consistency with the IMO SAR Convention; its meaning pertains to ships and boats - something perhaps not widely known in the aviation community - and is used in such a way in Chapter 2.

Definitions of *alerting post*, *rescue sub-centre*, *search and rescue unit* and *search and rescue region* have been amended to conform to those in the IAMSAR manual. Regarding the definition of *rescue sub-centre*, (RSC) delegation of responsibilities to RSCs may be along either geographic or functional lines or both. There are numerous States that retain certain functions at the rescue coordination centre (RCC) even though they have an RSC with geographic responsibilities; there are a few States that delegate duties to RSCs solely on a functional basis.

The definition for *search and rescue services unit* has been deleted. It was used twice in Annex 12 but not in any other international document. It ran the risk of being confused with *rescue unit* which has a different meaning.

Radio Direction Finding has been deleted on the basis that it is self-evident.

Rescue unit has been changed to *search and rescue unit* which better describes its function. The ICAO Regional Air Navigation Plans (RANP) and Facilities and Services Implementation Documents (FASID) will need to be updated to use the new term in due course.

A concept deemed to require greater emphasis in Annex 12 is the requirement to make use of all available resources, whether or not dedicated to provision of a SAR service. Thus it was considered that there was a need to define *search and rescue facility*. The title of Volume III of the IAMSAR Manual is *Mobile Facilities*. *Facilities* is also used in the definition of *search*.

The definition of *pilot in command* has been brought into line with ICAO Annex 6.

Chapter 2. - Organization

In several places, the words *individually or in cooperation with other States* have been inserted after the words *Contracting State* to provide for a regional approach to SAR system establishment. This is the strategy being advanced by both IMO and ICAO and soon to be applied in a major SAR rehabilitation project on the African continent. A regional developmental approach ensures greater cost effectiveness and relieves the unnecessary sense of obligation otherwise imposing on some States unable to provide a State-wide service.

Greater detail of SAR service components is included because fundamental building blocks are necessary for some States to come to terms with the effort and method necessary to establish services.

Allowance is made for SAR regions to be unaligned with territorial boundaries where, for some practical reasons, higher-level arrangements may apply. The emphasis throughout the Annex is away from territorial boundaries with their connotations of sovereignty and towards regional SAR areas, to facilitate the most effective coverage of areas of greatest risk and need.

Some historic tendency to use SAR region boundaries to justify national borders has been a problem which now maybe minimized as a result. In this regard, use of the word *boundary* has been avoided in all of Annex 12, the IMO SAR Convention and the IAMSAR Manual.

A requirement for RCC staff to be proficient in the use of the English language has been added. While it might be argued that the Standard lacks definition, practical implementation of a closely defined Standard cannot be realistically expected in the near future. The embodiment of the provision as a Standard, however, raises the issue to one of importance, gives impetus to States to give it serious attention, and clears the way for continuing input by international entities and supporting agencies.

The establishment of joint aeronautical and maritime RCCs (JRCCs) has been established as a Recommendation. The concept is given more emphasis in the IAMSAR Manual.

Wording has been changed to provide for coordination between all RCCs within the global SAR system rather than simply between neighbouring RCCs.

The term *on-scene* has replaced *scene of action* in conformity with prevailing contemporary usage and its appearance elsewhere in Annex 12.

The common availability of frequency 4125 kHz on both ships and aircraft, and the fact that most ships are now required by IMO to be able to communicate with aircraft on 121.5MHz for purposes of mutual assistance and joint SAR operations were both noted.

Information on droppable survival equipment has been deleted, in keeping with the subject matter being deleted from the IMO SAR Convention. These details are considered more appropriate to inclusion in the IAMSAR Manual where they are now published.

Chapter 3.- Cooperation

Changes focus attention on the need for agreements and coordination of both policies and operations between States and between aeronautical and maritime SAR services.

Wording of the recommendation for agreements between States for strengthened cooperation and coordination seeks to establish a balance between concerns for sovereignty and concerns for lifesaving.

These changes bring Annex 12 into closer conformity with the tone of the IMO SAR Convention.

Reference to ship reporting systems was deleted due to expanded references on the topic in chapter 4.

Chapter 4. - Preparatory Measures

Emphasis is added to ensure the ready availability of essential intelligence data to RCC staff.

An amendment acknowledges the fact that ships are increasingly contacted using means of identification other than call signs.

Inclusion of more comprehensive information regarding shipping movements is included to present a more balanced treatment of search *and* rescue, acknowledging that most of the globe is covered by water and that, frequently, rescue is accomplished by ships. It is considered important that State aeronautical SAR authorities make tight arrangements with maritime authorities for ready information regarding ship availability and means for their alert. This section is a condensation of parallel text in chapter 5 of the IMO SAR Convention.

Reference to *a large-scale map* was deleted since many RCCs now retain and display intelligence data electronically.

Contemporary RCCs commonly develop a series of contingency plans designed to cope with a wide range of potential disaster scenarios, rather than, as the existing text suggests, a single plan. The new text provides for a plurality of plans.

A new recommendation allows for aeronautical SAR services to benefit from and assist in provision for emergencies of a more general kind that may involve mass casualties or mass rescues. Demands on SAR services in such circumstances can be overwhelming and the aeronautical SAR services should share in meeting this responsibility.

A recommendation is included that SAR plans should be integrated with airport emergency plans. There is potential for confusion with various services responding to incidents in the vicinity of airports.

The existing Recommendation that States should engage in SAR training is now a Standard.

Chapter 5. - Operating Procedures

The new text differentiates between plans of operation that address SAR scenarios and plans of action that are developed for actual cases. This conforms to the treatment given in the IMO SAR Convention.

Careful attention has been paid to the section dealing with termination and suspension of SAR operations. It is important that there be consistency in international law on these topics. As drafted, Annex 12 is now consistent with the IMO SAR Convention.

Provision has been made for the now common practice that RCCs designate an on-scene commander or aircraft coordinator to exercise aircraft coordinating authority at distress sites. Until such time as a designated aircraft arrives on-scene, provision is included for the assumption of these duties by the first suitable aircraft to arrive in the vicinity.

Appendix A

Reference to and inclusion of Appendix A has been deleted. Air to ground and ground to air visual signals are published in Volume III of the IAMSAR Manual with an accompanying explanation where their inclusion is considered more appropriate.

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