



# ICAO

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**Tenth Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Technical Group Meeting (E/CAR/CATG/10)**  
Fort-de-France, Martinique, 15 to 17 July 2026

**Agenda Item 4: Follow-up of the activities of the E/CAR/CATG**  
**4.4 Progress report of the Search and Rescue (SAR) Committee**

**BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR SAR PROVISION IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| This Paper provides information about the basic requirements for the provision of search and rescue services in the context of the eastern Caribbean for States to comply with their responsibilities as signatories to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Every Flight is Safe and Secure</li><li>• Aviation is Environmentally Sustainable</li><li>• Aviation Delivers Seamless, Accessible, and Reliable Mobility for All</li><li>• No Country Left Behind</li><li>• The International Civil Aviation Convention and Other Treaties, Laws and Regulations Address All Challenges</li></ul> |
| <i>References:</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convention on International Civil Aviation – Doc 7300</li><li>• Annex 12 – Search and Rescue</li><li>• International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR) – Doc 9731</li><li>• CAR/SAM Regional Air Navigation Plan (RANP CAR/SAM)</li></ul>                                                                |

**1. Introduction**

1.1 As signatories to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention), States undertake, to the extent practicable, to provide the air navigation services and facilities required to enable international air navigation, in accordance with the Standards and Recommended Practices established under the Convention. States also commit to cooperating in achieving the highest practicable degree of uniformity in regulations, standards, procedures, and organizational arrangements, airways, and auxiliary services, where such uniformity facilitates and improves air navigation.

1.2 For Search and Rescue (SAR) services, these commitments are set out in Annex 12 – Search and Rescue, supported by the guidance provided by the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual – Doc 9731.

1.3 At the regional level, the CAR/SAM Regional Air Navigation Plan (RANP CAR/SAM) establishes a set of agreed responsibilities regarding the SAR coordination and response.

## **2. Basic Building Block Framework.**

2.1 The Basic Building Block (BBB) framework outlines the foundation of any robust air navigation system. It is nothing new but the identification of the essential services to be provided for international civil aviation in accordance with ICAO Standards.

2.2 These essential services are defined in the areas of aerodromes, air traffic management, search and rescue, meteorology and information management. In addition to essential services, the BBB framework identifies the end users of these services as well as the assets (communications, navigation, and surveillance (CNS) infrastructure) that are necessary to provide them.

## **3. SAR Responsibilities for the Eastern Caribbean**

3.1 The CAR/SAM Regional Air Navigation Plan (RANP) divide the SAR services in the eastern Caribbean into two distinct Search and Rescue Regions (SRR): San Juan SRR and Piarco SRR. Responsibilities for the establishment of Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) are assigned to Puerto Rico (United States) for the San Juan SRR and Trinidad and Tobago for the Piarco SRR.

3.2 The San Juan Joint Rescue Subcentre (JRSC) assumes the SAR coordination responsibilities for the San Juan SRR.

3.3 The Piarco RCC assumes the SAR coordination responsibilities for the Piarco SRR. To fulfill its SAR coordination activities, the CAR/SAM ANP also requires that, under Piarco RCC, six Rescue Subcentres (RSC) need to be in operation: Antigua RSC (Antigua and Barbuda), Bridgetown RSC (Barbados), Fort-de-France and Point-a-Pitre RSC (France), Point Salinas RSC (Grenada), Saint Vincent and The Grenadines RSC (Saint Vincent and The Grenadines).

3.5 SAR response capabilities for each State/Territory shall be reflected in the corresponding RCC SAR Plan, regularly reviewed, and published in the corresponding Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP).

## **4. Basic building blocks for search and rescue services**

4.1 Basic requirements for the establishment of services.

4.1.1 Contracting States shall, individually or in cooperation with other States, arrange for the establishment and prompt provision of search and rescue services within their territories to ensure that assistance is rendered to persons in distress. Such services shall be provided on a 24-hour basis.

4.1.2 Those portions of the high seas or areas of undetermined sovereignty for which search and rescue services will be established shall be determined on the basis of regional air navigation agreements. Contracting States having accepted the responsibility to provide search and rescue services in such areas shall thereafter, individually or in cooperation with other States, arrange for the services to be established and provided in accordance with the provisions of this Annex.

4.1.3 Basic elements of search and rescue services shall include a legal framework, a responsible authority, organized available resources, communication facilities and a workforce skilled in coordination and operational functions. Where separate aeronautical and maritime rescue coordination centres serve the same area, States shall ensure the closest practicable coordination between the centres.

#### 4.2 Plans of operation

4.2.1 Each RCC shall prepare detailed plans of operation for the conduct of SAR operations within its SRR.

4.2.2 The plans of operation shall specify arrangements for the servicing and refueling, to the extent possible, of aircraft, vessels and vehicles employed in SAR operations, including those made available by other States.

#### 4.3 SAR Coordination

4.3.1 Contracting States shall coordinate their SAR organizations with those of neighboring States.

4.3.2 Subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by its own authorities, a Contracting State shall permit immediate entry into its territory of SAR units of other States for the purpose of searching for the site of aircraft accidents and rescuing survivors of such accidents.

#### 4.4 SAR Training

4.3.1 As of 26 November 2026, to achieve and maintain maximum efficiency in search and rescue, Contracting States shall provide for regular training and exercises for their search and rescue personnel, which include both land and maritime environments as appropriate, containing both search and rescue elements, remote from an aerodrome.

#### 4.5 Requirements for RCC, RSC and SAR units

4.4.1 Contracting States shall establish a rescue coordination centre in each search and rescue region. Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue subcentre, shall be staffed 24 hours a day by trained personnel proficient in the use of the language used for radiotelephony communications.

4.4.2 Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue subcentre shall maintain up-to-date contact details in the OPS Control Directory. Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue subcentre shall subscribe and maintain access to the location of an aircraft in distress repository (LADR).

4.4.3 Each rescue coordination centre shall have means of rapid and reliable two-way communication with:

- a) associated air traffic services units;
- b) associated rescue subcentres;
- c) appropriate direction-finding and position-fixing stations;
- d) where appropriate, coastal radio stations capable of alerting and communicating with surface vessels in the region;

- e) the headquarters of search and rescue units in the region;
- f) all maritime rescue coordination centres in the region and aeronautical, maritime or joint rescue coordination centres in adjacent regions;
- g) a designated meteorological office or meteorological watch office;
- h) search and rescue units;
- i) alerting posts; and
- j) the Cospas-Sarsat Mission Control Centre servicing the search and rescue region.

4.4.4 Each rescue subcentre shall have means of rapid and reliable two-way communication with:

- a) adjacent rescue subcentres;
- b) a meteorological office or meteorological watch office;
- c) search and rescue units; and
- d) alerting posts.

4.4.5 Contracting States shall designate as SAR units elements of public or private services suitably located and equipped for SAR operations.

**Note.**— The minimum units and facilities necessary for provision of SAR operations within a SRR are determined by regional air navigation agreements and are specified in the appropriate Air Navigation Plan and Facilities and Services Implementation Document publications.

4.4.6 Contracting States shall designate as parts of the SAR plan of operation, elements of public or private services that do not qualify as SAR units but are nevertheless able to participate in search and rescue operations.

#### **4. Conclusions**

4.1 Clearly defining SAR responsibilities remains the main challenge to implementing and conducting SAR operations in the Eastern Caribbean, particularly within the Piarco SRR. Although several regional conclusions and decisions have been approved, no progress has been achieved in this area.

4.2 Similarly, and as a direct consequence of the previous issue, the region lacks formal SAR agreements. Within the Piarco SRR, no agreements have been signed between the RCC and its associated RSCs, or with neighboring RCCs.

4.3 ICAO USOAP audit results show that several States have not fulfilled their SAR responsibilities, with some findings remaining unresolved for more than ten years.