



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

SAR/CM — WP/03
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**NAM/CAR Search and Rescue (SAR) Implementation and Civil-military Coordination Meeting
(SAR/CM)**

Mexico City, Mexico, 5 – 7 November 2018

Agenda Item: 3

Civil/military Coordination

3.4 Need for Civil/Military Coordination (ICAO Doc 9554 and Circular 330)

SEARCH AND RESCUE MATTERS IN CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION

(Presented by United States)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Working Paper provides information on the inclusion of SAR matters relevant to civil-military coordination in airspace management.

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| Action: | The suggested actions are presented in Section 3 |
| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety |

1. Introduction

1.1 It is a common practice for the military to conduct or have a major role in SAR operations to fulfil or assist in fulfilling the State's obligation to provide SAR services. From the perspective of providing SAR services, civil-military coordination takes on many forms. This includes coordination during an actual SAR response, national coordination with other agencies to determine the military role, part of an international agreement or set of procedures with a neighbouring State to assist in SAR response, or other types of coordination. However, ICAO Circular 330 – *Civil/Military Cooperation in Air Traffic Management*, which is being upgraded into ICAO Document 10088, is focused on airspace management. In the Appendix to this paper is text in the draft ICAO Document 10088 to now include SAR matters relevant to civil-military coordination in airspace management.

2. Civil-Military Coordination in airspace management for SAR

2.1 National authorities need to oversee civil-military coordination and cooperation in many different forms. Discussion in this paper is limited to aspects relevant to airspace management. The 2019 edition of the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR (*IAMSAR*) Manual, Volume II, Chapter 7 *Multiple Aircraft Operations* will have guidance on establishing areas of SAR action. SAR authorities should make arrangements to establish temporary airspace reservation, danger areas, restricted areas or other suitable categories of area through appropriate State authorities. In the Appendix to this paper is proposed text to be included in ICAO Document 10088. This text will provide other specific information relevant to airspace management for SAR response. The combination of guidance in the *IAMSAR* Manual and ICAO Document 10088 should enable a State to have good civil-military coordination and cooperation for efficient and effective SAR response.

3. Suggested Actions

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note and discuss the information provided in the Appendix to this paper on airspace management for SAR; and
- b) encourage national SAR services to be familiar with airspace management guidance for SAR as discussed within the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR Manual and in ICAO Document 10088 when it is published.

APPENDIX

Text proposed for ICAO draft Document 10088 on Civil-Military Coordination

6.4 SAR Response

SAR is the search for and provision of aid to people who are in distress or imminent danger, with the primary aim of saving lives. It is a common practice for the military to conduct or have a major role in SAR operations to fulfil or assist in fulfilling the State's obligation to provide SAR services.

Efficient, effective SAR response is typically a result of prior cooperation among civil and military authorities as part of their national SAR coordinating committees, and also, SAR arrangements with neighboring States. SAR response may involve controlled airspace, airspace with limited air traffic services available, such as over the high seas or uncontrolled airspace.

Basic guidance on airspace management for SAR operations is provided by the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual. The IAMSAR Manual is jointly published by ICAO and the International Maritime Organization. Specific guidance is provided in Volume II for the SAR mission coordinator (SMC) and Volume III for mobile facilities. The safe conduct of aircraft performing SAR operations should be considered a major concern. If airspace reservations are not provided, SAR aircraft are responsible for complying with all ATSU and ICAO requirements. Routinely all aircraft within the SAR area will maintain their own VFR separation.

Aircraft SAR operations are normally conducted at lower altitudes (typically 1,000 to 3,000 feet above ground level); but, aircraft are sometimes used at medium altitudes as airborne relay units or as an airborne on-scene coordinator. Civil/military cooperation is often a key factor when it comes to ensuring the safe operation of aircraft at low level and at times, low visibility. This is a process typically managed by policies set by the high level airspace policy body, and managed by information sharing and flight briefing practices during SAR events.

SAR operations have practices and procedures that are not common to many civil and military authorities. For example, the term "area of SAR action", derived from ICAO Procedures for Air Navigation Services, would be used to establish a SAR airspace reservation. State aircraft (military in particular), may be requested to fulfil the role of "aircraft coordinator" to help maintain flight safety and coordinate when there are multiple aircraft being utilized in a SAR operation. Whether civil or military, SAR aircraft should use the word "rescue" in their call signs when requesting priority handling or when within a restricted area.

The aircraft types involved include helicopters and multi-engined aircraft which, during actual SAR response, will require priority handling and unrestricted access to appropriate airspace. ATC will normally route IFR traffic clear of the area of SAR action in accordance with appropriate ATC separation standards. In the absence of adequate ATC facilities, aircraft control in the area of SAR action will often be advisory rather than directive.

The SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC), whether military or civil, is assigned to coordinate the overall SAR response and has two primary concerns for airspace management:

- gaining access to controlled airspace within the vicinity of the scene of SAR operations; and
- establishing a safe airspace of operation in controlled or uncontrolled airspace with the local ATSU and the airspace authority as appropriate.

The SMC may request the airspace authority to establish a safe area of airspace during SAR operations to minimize the possibility of non-SAR aircraft from interfering with SAR operations, especially for areas with limited air traffic services such as over the high seas. While a SAR operation is in progress, the primary manager of the airspace concerned should be the SMC, not other operational functions such as accident investigation.

The SMC might coordinate with ATC facilities during a mission and should have a basic understanding of airspace access procedures so as to ensure consideration of safety of flight matters. The SMC typically does not have authority to control airspace, nor to provide air traffic services.