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**GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING PLANS FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN  
SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES AND PASSENGER SHIPS  
(IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOLAS REGULATION V/7.3)**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-fourth session (30 May to 8 June 2001), recalled that MSC 73, in adopting amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention, *inter alia*, revising chapter V, had also adopted regulation V/7.3, which requires all passenger ships to which SOLAS chapter I applies to have on board a plan for co-operation with appropriate search and rescue services in event of an emergency. Subsequently, MSC 73 had instructed the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) to revise MSC/Circ.864 on Guidelines for preparing plans for co-operation between search and rescue services and passenger ships on fixed routes (in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/15(c)), as appropriate.

2 The Committee, having considered the recommendations made by the COMSAR Sub-Committee, at its fifth session (11 to 15 December 2000), approved Guidelines for preparing plans for co-operation between SAR services and passenger ships (in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3), as set out at the annex.

3 The Maritime Safety Committee, recalling the entry into force date of the 2000 SOLAS amendments, agreed that all ships to which SOLAS regulation V/7.3 applies should have co-operation plans in place by 1 July 2002.

4 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed guidelines to the attention of SAR service providers, shipowners, ship operators, ship masters and others concerned and to use the provisions contained therein as appropriate.

5 MSC/Circ.864 is herewith revoked.

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## ANNEX

### **GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING PLANS FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES AND PASSENGER SHIPS (in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3)<sup>1</sup>**

#### **1 Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide a uniform basis for the establishment of plans for co-operation between passenger ships and SAR services in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3. Co-operation plans developed in accordance with these Guidelines will meet the requirements of the revised regulation.

1.2 These Guidelines are applicable to all passenger ships to which SOLAS chapter I applies. They are relevant to the safety management system (SMS) maintained by passenger ships in accordance with the International Safety Management (ISM) Code and in particular to the section of the SMS dealing with emergency preparedness. They should also be taken into consideration when drawing up SAR co-operation plans for passenger ships in domestic trade.

1.3 These Guidelines serve the overall aim of efficiently establishing the tripartite emergency response network of the ship, the company (as defined in the ISM Code) and the SAR services.

#### **2 Aims & objectives of SAR Co-operation Planning**

2.1 The intent of SAR co-operation plans is to help to ensure that assistance can be provided to persons in distress at sea. SAR co-operation plans are to enhance mutual understanding between a ship, company and SAR services; this is best achieved by the prior exchange of information and by joint exercises.

2.2 The objectives of SAR co-operation planning are to:

- .1 enable the early and efficient establishment of contact in the event of emergency between the passenger ship, her operators' shorebased emergency response system and the SAR services. The SAR co-operation plan should ensure that all relevant contact details are known to each of the three parties beforehand and that these details are kept up-to-date;
- .2 provide the SAR services with easily accessible and up-to-date information about the ship - in particular her intended voyage, communications and emergency response systems; and
- .3 provide the ship and her operators with easily accessible information about SAR and other emergency services available in the ship's area of operation and to assist in decision-making and contingency planning.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly regulation V/15(c). The revised regulation is in force from 1 July 2002.

2.3 The plan is not only of use when a passenger ship is herself the subject of an emergency. It will also be useful when passenger ships are acting as SAR facilities and, particularly, when taking on the role of On Scene Co-ordinator.

### **3 Regulatory requirements**

The text of regulation SOLAS V/7.3 is, as follows:

“Passenger ships, to which chapter I applies, shall have on board a plan for co-operation with appropriate search and rescue services in event of an emergency. The plan shall be developed in co-operation between the ship, the company, as defined in regulation IX/1, and the search and rescue services. The plan shall include provisions for periodic exercises to be undertaken to test its effectiveness. The plan shall be developed based on the guidelines developed by the Organization.”

### **4 General requirements**

4.1 Passenger ship operators' emergency response plans should be linked to those of the SAR services responsible for the areas in which their ships operate, so that the tripartite response – i.e. the response on-board, the response from the company's emergency response organization ashore and the response from the SAR services - is co-ordinated effectively and efficiently. It is the purpose of the SAR co-operation plan to act as that link.

4.2 The plan should contain the basic information which will enable the response to any emergency to commence without delay. This information will include direct contact details for the three parties - ship, company and SAR services - so that the tripartite response system may be established and linked from the outset.

4.3 Each of the parties to the plan should have access to a controlled copy of it, so that each party knows what information is available to the others.

### **5 Operational requirements**

5.1 The plan should be concise and user-friendly so as to enable its easy use in emergency conditions. It should, where appropriate, be drawn up according to the framework set out in the Appendices to these Guidelines. The use of a common framework enables SAR service personnel to find the information they require rapidly, whatever ship or company they are dealing with. Likewise, it enables crew members or members of the company emergency response team ashore, to find the information they require, whatever SAR region in which the emergency has occurred.

5.2 The framework is designed to enable modules of information (about different ships, or about each of the SAR regions along the ship's route) to be easily added to the plan, or removed from it if no longer relevant, without a need for a whole plan to be revised.

5.3 The SAR co-operation plan does not replace more detailed emergency response plans already in place, whether as part of the company's SMS or the SAR services' arrangements.

## 6 Use by ships trading through many SAR regions

6.1 It will significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of any SAR response if passenger ship's crews and operators have a good understanding of the SAR services available to them in the areas where they operate and have established liaison links with those services. This is as true for passenger ships which routinely transit many SAR regions as for any other passenger ship.

6.2 However, there may be administrative difficulties in maintaining direct links between a ship transiting many SAR regions, such as a cruise ship, and each SAR service along her route. For such ships it is neither necessary and practical to hold a complete copy of a ship's SAR co-operation plan at every Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC), nor is it to maintain on board extensive details of every SAR service with which the ship may possibly come into contact.

6.3 This can be overcome by use of the SAR data provider<sup>2</sup> system which permits the use of contact points between the SAR services and the cruise ship operator.

6.4 In cases where the ship cannot establish direct communications with the RCC in whose area the ship is operating, then the SAR data provider must be able to provide essential information rapidly to the parties concerned on a 24-hour basis.

6.5 A passenger ship such as a ferry, which trades on fixed routes, should not use the SAR data provider system, but submit a plan to all SAR services along her route. Other passenger ships, such as cruise ships, are not required to draw up co-operation plans with more than one SAR service. When trading in one or more of the cruising areas, defined in paragraph 6.6 below, such ships are recommended to draw up a co-operation plan with one SAR service in each area. Ships using the SAR data provider system are not required to include in the plan information beyond that set out in Appendix 2 to these Guidelines. Regardless of which system ships use, they should be encouraged to make contact with the relevant SAR services.

6.6 For this purpose, 'cruising areas' are defined as:

- .1 'Eastern North Atlantic'
  - including the SAR regions of Europe (except that part of the France SAR Region co-ordinated from Martinique), Greenland, Iceland, Morocco and the Mediterranean and Black Seas;
- .2 'Africa'
  - including the SAR Regions of Réunion, Mauritius, Seychelles and continental Africa except those of Morocco and the Mediterranean Sea;

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<sup>2</sup> The 'search and rescue data provider' is defined in the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual as "a source for a rescue co-ordination center to contact to obtain data to support search and rescue operations..." (Vol I, page xi).

- .3 'North and Central America'
  - including the SAR regions of Canada, the United States, Central America, the Caribbean, and Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and that part of the France SAR Region co-ordinated from Martinique;
- .4 'South America'
  - except the SAR regions of Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana;
- .5 'Australasia'
  - including the SAR regions of Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and the islands of the Southwest Pacific; and
- .6 'Asia'
  - including the SAR Regions of the Russian Federation, the Northwest Pacific, the Philippines, the Northern Indian Ocean and the China Sea, except that of Indonesia.

## **7 Administrative requirements**

7.1 In order to compile a SAR co-operation plan, the ship (or the company) should contact one of the SAR services responsible for the area in which the ship operates. If the SAR data provider system is being used, the SAR service contacted will be the appropriate global or regional contact. It is in any case recommended that neighbouring SAR services co-operate for administrative purposes, each holding copies of the others' modules of information, so that the ship or company need only contact one SAR service in order to complete the whole plan.

7.2 The ship or company and the SAR services compile the details required of them according to the framework (see Appendices). The ship or company is responsible for providing the information in chapter 1 'The company' and chapter 2 'The ship(s)'. The SAR services are responsible for providing the introductory paragraphs; chapter 3 'The RCCs' and chapter 4 'SAR facilities'. Chapter 5 'Media relations' and chapter 6 'Periodic exercises' should be considered jointly. Copies of the completed plan should be distributed to all relevant parties, using a controlled distribution system.

7.3 The plan should be written in:

- .1 the on-board working language(s) of the passenger ship; and
- .2 English and, if agreed, a language or languages commonly used by the ship, the company and the SAR services.

The aim should be that all those likely to need to refer to the plan should have a copy readily available in a language in which they are fluent. The plan may be provided and distributed electronically if agreed between the ship, the company and the SAR services.

7.4 SAR co-operation plans, once they have been agreed, should be reciprocally recognised

7.5 The originator of each module of the plan (the ship, company, or SAR service, as appropriate) is responsible for keeping it up-to-date and ensuring that all those holding controlled copies of the module are advised of changes. Each holder of a controlled copy of the plan is responsible for recording notified changes.

7.6 Distribution of controlled copies of the plan should be consistent with the main aim of SAR co-operation planning; copies should therefore be available to each of the three parties to emergency response - the ship, the company and the relevant SAR services. If the SAR data provider system is being utilised, the SAR data provider should hold copies of the plan for onward distribution to the co-ordinating RCC in the event of an emergency, or on request for contingency planning purposes. It is not essential that every RCC through whose SAR region the ship trades should hold a copy of the plan, only that each RCC should be able to obtain a copy from the relevant SAR data provider without delay.

7.7 Likewise, it is not essential for the ship to carry details of each and every SAR region's resources, if the SAR data provider system is being utilised. However, the ship should always be able to obtain such details via her nominated SAR data provider(s) without delay. It is recommended that SAR service modules be carried for at least those SAR regions in which the ship spends the majority of her time. As a minimum, the ship should carry contact details for her SAR data provider(s).

7.8 It is, of course, essential that all parties know *where* the SAR data are held. For SAR co-operation plans to be useful, their location has to be easily traced. Each plan should therefore contain a controlled distribution list. If using the SAR data provider system, RCCs *not* on the list may refer to a simple index, available to all SAR services as indicated in paragraphs 7.9 and 7.10 below, which enables the user to search for a ship by any of three means of identification (name, call sign or MMSI) and to identify the RCC(s) which hold copies of that ship's SAR co-operation plan. Information in the index is deliberately limited; the plans themselves are the prime documents. Index entries should be submitted and kept up-to-date by SAR data provider.

7.9 Index entries, and any subsequent amendments, should be submitted to:

International SARCP Index  
HM Coastguard  
Pendennis Point  
Castle Drive  
FALMOUTH TR11 4WZ  
United Kingdom  
  
tel: +44 1326 211569  
fax: +44 1326 319264.

The telephone is staffed 0845 - 1700 local time, Monday to Friday.

Entries should be made for all passenger ships using the SAR data provider system in accordance with the Guidelines; i.e, ships which trade through many SAR regions. Entries for other passenger ships trading internationally will also be accepted. Entries should include:

- ship's name;
- call sign;
- MMSI;
- company identity;
- SAR data provider identity; and
- SAR data provider's 24-hour contact telephone number.

7.10 The entries will be added to the index of SAR co-operation plans for ships trading across many SAR regions (the 'International SARCP Index'). The index has been placed on the website of the United Kingdom's Maritime and Coastguard Agency at [www.mcga.gov.uk/sarcp](http://www.mcga.gov.uk/sarcp). Users with access to the Internet are recommended to visit this website to obtain details of a particular ship's SAR data provider. Instructions on use of the index are included on the site. Users who do not have access to the Internet are invited to contact MRCC Falmouth (24-hour telephone +44 1326 317575) if a SAR co-operation plan is required in an emergency. MRCC Falmouth will then provide the caller with details of the relevant SAR data provider and will be able to assist further if required.

## **8 Periodic exercises**

8.1 The regulation requires that the plan includes provisions for periodic exercises to be undertaken to test its effectiveness.

8.2 Both frequency and type of exercise will depend on the circumstances in which the ship operates, availability of SAR service resources, etc. The ship should not be required to exercise her SAR co-operation arrangements more than once in any twelve-month period. Whenever possible, such exercises should be held in conjunction with other exercises involving the ship.

8.3 While it is very important that emergency response arrangements be tested jointly from time to time - by, for example, requesting local SAR service involvement in exercises already being run in accordance with the ISM Code and each ship's SMS requirements - it is also important that the benefits of such exercises are not diluted by *over-exercising*, or by always exercising in particular ways or with particular authorities. The aim should be to test all parts of the emergency response network realistically, over time. A wide variety of scenarios should be employed; different SAR services should be involved, if appropriate; and exercises should be so arranged as to allow all relevant staff (including relief staff) to participate over time.

8.4 Various types of exercise are acceptable: 'full-scale' or 'live', 'co-ordination', and/or 'communications' exercises may all be appropriate<sup>3</sup>. 'Tabletop' exercises, SAR seminars and liaison exchanges involving ship's personnel, shorebased company emergency response personnel and SAR service personnel can be beneficial.

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<sup>3</sup> IAMSAR Manual, Vol I, Chapter 3.3 refers.



8.5 Exercises should be co-ordinated between the parties involved to ensure efficient use of available resources. The principle of reciprocity applies. If a ship has conducted a SAR co-operation exercise within the last twelve months, she should be deemed by all parties to have fulfilled the requirements of the regulation: the 'SAR service' should be considered a global entity in this context. Likewise, the SAR services of individual States should co-operate to ensure that passenger ships' exercise requirements are distributed between them in a way appropriate to available resources.

8.6 Exercises conducted under this regulation should occasionally include the passenger ship taking on the role of a SAR facility - and in particular the role of On Scene Co-ordinator, if appropriate.

8.7 Ships which have participated in actual SAR incidents may be deemed to have fulfilled the exercise requirements of this regulation.

8.8 Exercises conducted under this regulation should be formally recorded by all the main participants (ship, company and SAR service). The record should include at least the date, location and type of exercise and a list of the main participants. A copy of the record should be available aboard the ship for inspection.

APPENDIX 1

**PLAN FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES AND  
PASSENGER SHIPS NOT USING THE SAR DATA PROVIDER SYSTEM**

**(IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOLAS REGULATION V/7.3)**

List of Contents

Introduction<sup>4</sup>

Description of a Plan for Co-operation<sup>5</sup>

1 The Company<sup>6</sup>

.1 name and address

.2 contact list

.2.1 24-hour emergency initial and alternative contact arrangements

.2.2 further communications arrangements (including direct telephone/fax links to relevant personnel)

.3 chartlet(s) showing details of route(s) and service(s) together with boundaries of relevant search and rescue regions (SRRs)<sup>7</sup>

.4 liaison arrangements between the Company and relevant RCCs<sup>8</sup>

4.1 provision of relevant incident information

- how specific information will be exchanged at the time of an incident, including details of persons, cargo and bunkers on board, SAR facilities and specialist support available at the time, etc

4.2 provision of liaison officer(s)

- arrangements for sending Company liaison officer(s) to the RCC, with access to supporting documentation concerning the Company and the ship(s); e.g. copies of fire control & safety plans as required by the flag State

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<sup>4</sup> To be prepared by the SAR Service.

<sup>5</sup> To be prepared by the SAR Service.

<sup>6</sup> As defined in the ISM Code.

<sup>7</sup> The chartlet may be replaced by a simple description, if appropriate.

<sup>8</sup> ie, how Company and SAR Service are to work together in the event of an emergency, including the provision of that information which will only be available at the time.

2 The ship(s)<sup>9</sup>

.1 [ship 1]<sup>10</sup>

.1.1 basic details of the ship

- MMSI
- call sign
- country of registry
- type of ship
- gross tonnage
- length overall (in metres)
- maximum permitted draught (in metres)
- service speed
- maximum number of persons allowed on board
- number of crew normally carried
- medical facilities

.1.2 communication equipment carried<sup>11</sup>

.1.3 simple plan of decks and profile of the ship, transmittable by electronic means, and including basic information on

- lifesaving equipment
- fire-fighting equipment
- plan of helicopter deck/winching area with approach sector
- helicopter types for which helicopter deck is designed
- means on board intended to be used to rescue people from the sea or from other vessels

and a colour picture of the ship

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<sup>9</sup> To be prepared by the Company

<sup>10</sup> Enter here the ship's name

<sup>11</sup> Enter here basic information on the ship's communications fit, frequencies available, identifiers, etc

- .2 [ship 2 - as for ship 1, etc]
- 3 The RCCs<sup>12</sup>
- .1 search and rescue regions along the route
    - chartlet showing SRRs in relevant area of ships' operation
  - .2 SAR mission co-ordination (SMC)
    - definition
    - summary of functions
  - .3 on scene co-ordination (OSC)
    - definition
    - selection criteria
    - summary of functions
- 4 SAR facilities<sup>13</sup>
- .1 [SRR]<sup>14</sup>
    - .1.1 RCC/RSCs along the route
      - addresses
    - .1.2 communications
      - equipment
      - frequencies available
      - watch maintained
      - contact list (MMSIs, call signs, telephone, fax and telex numbers)

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<sup>12</sup> To be prepared by the SAR service

<sup>13</sup> To be prepared by the SAR service.

<sup>14</sup> Enter here the name of the relevant state.

- .1.3 general description and availability of designated SAR units (surface and air) and additional facilities along the route, e.g.:
  - fast rescue vessels
  - other vessels
  - heavy/light helicopters
  - long range aircraft
  - fire fighting facilities
- .1.4 communications plan
- .1.5 search planning
- .1.6 medical advice/assistance
- .1.7 fire fighting, chemical hazards, etc
- .1.8 shore reception arrangements
- .1.9 informing next-of-kin
- .1.10 suspension/termination of SAR action
- .2 [SRR 2 - as for SRR 1, etc]
- 5 Media relations<sup>15</sup>
- 6 Periodic exercises<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> To be prepared jointly by the Company and each SAR Service concerned.

<sup>16</sup> Frequency, form and content of training to be considered jointly by the Company and the SAR Service(s) concerned.

APPENDIX 2

**SIMPLIFIED PLAN FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN SEARCH AND RESCUE  
SERVICES AND PASSENGER SHIPS USING THE SAR DATA  
PROVIDER SYSTEM**

**(IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOLAS REGULATION V/7.3)**

Introduction<sup>17</sup>

1 The Company<sup>18</sup>

.1 name and address

.2 contact list

.2.1 24-hour emergency initial and alternative contact arrangements

.2.2 further communications arrangements (including direct telephone/fax links to relevant personnel)

.3 chartlet(s) showing details of route(s) and service(s) together with boundaries of relevant search and rescue regions (SRRs)<sup>19</sup>

2 The ship(s)<sup>20</sup>

.1 [ship 1]<sup>21</sup>

.1.1 basic details of the ship

- MMSI
- call sign
- country of registry
- type of ship
- gross tonnage
- length overall (in metres)
- maximum permitted draught (in metres)
- service speed
- maximum number of persons allowed on board
- number of crew normally carried
- medical facilities

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<sup>17</sup> To be prepared by the SAR Service

<sup>18</sup> As defined in the ISM Code

<sup>19</sup> The chartlet may be replaced by a simple description, if appropriate.

<sup>20</sup> To be prepared by the Company

<sup>21</sup> Enter here the ship's name

- .1.2 communication equipment carried<sup>22</sup>
- .1.3 simple plan of decks and profile of the ship, transmittable by electronic means, and including basic information on
  - lifesaving equipment
  - fire-fighting equipment
  - arrangements for working with helicoptersand a picture of the ship
- .2 [ship 2 - as for ship 1, etc]
- 3 SAR Data Provider<sup>23</sup>
  - .1 [ ]<sup>24</sup>
    - .1.1 address
    - .1.2 communications
      - equipment
      - frequencies available
      - watch maintained
      - contact list (MMSI, call sign, telephone, fax and telex numbers)
- 4 Media relations<sup>25</sup>
- 5 Periodic exercises<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Enter here basic information on the ship's communications fit, frequencies available, identifiers, etc.

<sup>23</sup> To be prepared by the SAR service.

<sup>24</sup> Enter here the name of the SAR Data Provider.

<sup>25</sup> Details of the Company's arrangements for working with the news media should be entered here.

<sup>26</sup> Exercises should be co-ordinated between the parties involved to ensure efficient use of available resources.

