



Ref. T1/1.02

MSC/Circ.1041
28 May 2002

**GUIDELINES FOR SHIP OPERATORS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR)
SERVICES ON MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SAR DATA PROVIDERS
HOLDING SAR CO-OPERATION PLANS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
SOLAS REGULATION V/7.3 AND MSC/CIRC.1000 AND THE
PROVISION OF UP-TO-DATE PLANS AT ALL TIMES**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), 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 MSC/Circ.1000 on Guidelines for preparing plans for co-operation between SAR services and passenger ships (in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3).

3 The Maritime Safety Committee, recalling the entry into force on 1 July 2002, 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 that date.

4 MSC 74, in approving MSC/Circ.1000, instructed COMSAR 6 to develop, as a matter of urgency, minimum requirements for SAR Data Providers (SDPs) holding information on behalf of ships and their operators and the search and rescue (SAR) services in accordance with the above guidelines, so as to ensure a prompt, reliable and error-free 24-hour service providing up-to-date data when required.

5 The Committee, at its seventy-fifth session (15 to 24 May 2002), having considered the recommendations made by the COMSAR Sub-Committee, at its sixth session (18 to 22 February 2002), approved Guidelines for ship operators and the search and rescue (SAR) services on minimum requirements for SAR Data Providers holding SAR co-operation plans in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3 and MSC/Circ.1000 and the provision of up-to-date plans at all times.

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

ANNEX

**GUIDELINES FOR SHIP OPERATORS AND THE SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR)
SERVICES ON MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SAR DATA PROVIDERS
HOLDING SAR CO-OPERATION PLANS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOLAS
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Minimum requirements

- 1 If the objectives of SAR co-operation planning set out in MSC/Circ.1000 on Guidelines for preparing plans for co-operation between SAR services and passenger ships (in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3), are to be met, and if the SAR Data Provider (SDP) system is to be used as detailed in that Circular, there are certain minimum requirements for an SDP to enable it to be effective.
- 2 Each SDP should:
 - .1 arrange for easy, continuous and immediate access to its SAR co-operation plans for relevant shipping companies and operators, and for all RCCs with responsibilities within the operating areas of the ships concerned;
 - .2 ensure that essential technical capabilities, such as computers and communications links, are reliable and are redundant or have arrangements in place for rapid repair, and are provided with sources of emergency power. This requirement may be satisfied by establishing a back-up SDP;
 - .3 ensure that updates to plans are made promptly accessible, and that back-up data in paper or electronic form is kept in a suitable safe location and is readily available;
 - .4 ensure that, if staff are necessary to provide data access to authorised users, such personnel are always available to handle urgent requests, trained to properly retrieve and transmit the needed information, and proficient in the use of the English language; and
 - .5 ensure that pertinent information in the International SAR Co-operation Plans Index, including information on the primary and any back-up SDPs, is kept up to date. Details of the Index and the procedure for updating it are included in MSC/Circ.1000.
- 3 A shipping company, an RCC, or other suitable entity may act as an SDP. However, the ship cannot be her own SDP as this would negate the fundamental concept of easing the load on ship's staff during an emergency.

Information up date

4 The information contained in each SAR co-operation plan must be kept up to date. When the SDP system is being used, those with responsibility for ensuring that this is so are the ship, her operator, and the SDP itself. Each party to the plan is responsible for ensuring that information in the plan pertaining to itself is correct. This requires positive checking of the plan at regular intervals, and a clear process for making any amendments required.

5 As regards the ship and her operator, the requirements of the ISM Code should be considered to extend to the SAR co-operation planning process. The SAR co-operation plan should be an integral part of the Safety Management Manual. The Code requires that “the Company should establish and maintain procedures to control all documents and data which are relevant to the Safety management system” (Chapter 11). Such procedures should now be in place for all passenger ships. Regular review of SAR co-operation plans should be a part of the overall documentation review process.

6 SAR service and SDP information contained in each SAR co-operation plan should be audited in a similar way.

7 The International SAR Co-operation Plans Index must also be kept up to date. It is the SDP’s responsibility to ensure that this is done. SDPs should therefore check whether any amendments made to the plan affect the Index entry. If so, the SDP must notify the Index administrators in accordance with the procedure set out in MSC/Circ.1000.
