



# **CAR SAR**

# **SEARCH AND RESCUE REGULATIONS**

**FOREWORD**

**CONTENTS**

**REVISION RECORD**

**LIST of EFFECTIVE PAGES**



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## FOREWORD

1. The Civil Aviation Authority of San Marino is known in these regulations as the “Authority” and has implemented CAR SAR, (Civil Aviation Regulations – Search and Rescue).
2. Other regulations involving Air Navigation Services are;
  - (a) CAR ATS – Air Traffic Services
  - (b) CAR AIS – Aeronautical Information Services
  - (c) CAR MET – Aviation Meteorology Services
3. Unless otherwise stated, applicable CAR DEF definitions, abbreviations and units of measurement are used throughout this document.
4. The editing practices used in this document are as follows;
  - (a) ‘Shall’ or ‘Will’ or ‘Must’ is used to indicate a mandatory requirement.
  - (b) ‘Should’ is used to indicate a recommendation.
  - (c) ‘May’ is used to indicate discretion by the Authority, the industry or the applicant, as appropriate.

*Note; The use of the male gender implies all genders.*

5. Paragraphs and sub-paragraphs with new, amended and corrected text will be enclosed within square brackets until a subsequent “amendment” is issued.



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## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL

#### 1.1 APPLICABILITY

This Chapter prescribes regulations;

- (a) governing the provision of Search and Rescue Services and the coordination of these services; and
- (b) that apply to any designated provider of search and rescue services and of any subcontractor that provides, or intends to provide, such services to assist in the search and rescue activities of aircraft in the territory of San Marino.
- (c) for the establishment, maintenance and operation of Search and Rescue services in San Marino' Search and Rescue Region (SRR), which is limited to the territory of San Marino.

#### 1.2 DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

##### 1.2.1 Definitions

When the following terms are used in these regulations for search and rescue, they have the following meanings:

**Alerting post.** Any facility intended to serve as an intermediary between a person reporting an emergency and a rescue coordination centre or rescue sub-centre.

**Alert phase.** A situation wherein apprehension exists as to the safety of an aircraft and its occupants.

**Distress phase.** A situation wherein there is a reasonable certainty that an aircraft and its occupants are threatened by grave and imminent danger and require immediate assistance.

**Ditching.** The forced landing of an aircraft on water.

**Emergency phase.** A generic term meaning, as the case may be, uncertainty phase, alert phase or distress phase.

**Joint rescue coordination centre (JRCC).** A rescue coordination centre responsible for both aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations.

**Operator.** A person, organisation or enterprise engaged in or offering to engage in an aircraft operation.

**Pilot-in-command.** The pilot designated by the operator, or in the case of general aviation, the owner, as being in command and charged with the safe conduct of a flight.

**Rescue.** An operation to retrieve persons in distress, provide for their initial medical or other needs, and deliver them to a place of safety.

**Rescue coordination centre (RCC).** A unit responsible for promoting efficient organisation of search and rescue services and for coordinating the conduct of search and rescue operations within a search and rescue region.



**Rescue sub-centre (RSC).** A unit subordinate to a rescue coordination centre, established to complement the latter according to particular provisions of the responsible authorities.

**Search.** An operation normally coordinated by a rescue coordination centre or rescue sub-centre using available personnel and facilities to locate persons in distress.

**Search and rescue aircraft.** An aircraft provided with specialized equipment suitable for the efficient conduct of search and rescue missions.

**Search and rescue facility.** Any mobile resource, including designated search and rescue units, used to conduct search and rescue operations.

**Search and rescue service.** The performance of distress monitoring, communication, coordination and search and rescue functions, initial medical assistance or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources, including cooperating aircraft, vessels and other craft and installations.

**Search and rescue region (SRR).** An area of defined dimensions, associated with a rescue coordination centre, within which search and rescue services are provided.

**Search and rescue unit.** A mobile resource composed of trained personnel and provided with equipment suitable for the expeditious conduct of search and rescue operations.

**State of Registry.** The State on whose register the aircraft is entered.

**Uncertainty phase.** A situation wherein uncertainty exists as to the safety of an aircraft and its occupants.

### 1.2.2 Acronyms

JRCC Joint rescue coordination centre

RCC Rescue coordination centre

RSC Rescue sub-centre

SAR Search and Rescue

SRR Search and rescue region

### 1.3 STATE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- (a) Oversight of civil SAR units shall be conducted on a regular and systematic basis by the Authority.
- (b) Oversight functions shall be based upon these regulations and directives issued by the Authority to aid in safe operating practices.
- (c) SAR units shall have documented, developed and implemented:
  - (1) Job descriptions for all technical staff;
  - (2) Training programmes which includes initial, recurrent and specialized training;
  - (3) Operations manuals and reference material; and





- (4) Equipment operations manuals and reference material.
- (d) SAR units shall also have policies and procedures for the;
  - (1) recruitment and retention of technical staff;
  - (2) maintenance and storage of training records; and
  - (3) recording and archiving of data.

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVE**

- (a) The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that any designated SAR unit meets the search and rescue needs and obligations under the Convention on International Civil Aviation.
- (b) Any organisation that provides SAR on behalf of San Marino shall ensure that its services are continuously developed and improved, co-operate with neighbouring states and to consider the services to be part of a global system.
- (c) This Manual shall be read in conjunction with the following;
  - (1) International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR);
    - (i) Manual Vol 1 – Organisation and Management;
    - (ii) Manual Vol II – Mission Co-ordination;
    - (iii) Manual Vol III – Mobile Facilities; and
  - (2) ICAO Doc 9756 – Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation.



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## CHAPTER 2

### ORGANISATION

#### 2.1 SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES

2.1.1 The Authority 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.

- (a) Those portions of areas of undetermined sovereignty for which search and rescue services will be established shall be determined on the basis of regional air navigation agreements. Where San Marino, 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 these regulations.
- (b) Basic elements of search and rescue services shall include a legal framework, a responsible authority, organised available resources, communication facilities and a workforce skilled in coordination and operational functions.
- (c) Designated search and rescue service units shall establish processes to improve service provision, including the aspects of planning, domestic and international cooperative arrangements and training.

2.1.2 In providing assistance to aircraft in distress and to survivors of aircraft accidents, the designated SAR unit shall do so regardless of the nationality or status of such persons or the circumstances in which such persons are found.

2.1.3 Search and rescue services shall use search and rescue units and other available facilities to assist any aircraft or its occupants that are or appear to be in a state of emergency.

2.1.4 Where separate aeronautical and maritime rescue coordination centres serve the same area, the Authority shall ensure the closest practicable coordination between the centres.

2.1.5 The Authority should facilitate consistency and cooperation between their aeronautical and maritime search and rescue services.

2.1.6 The Authority should establish a joint rescue coordination centre to coordinate aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations, where practical.

#### 2.2 SEARCH AND RESCUE REGION

2.2.1 The Authority shall delineate the search and rescue region, within which it will provide search and rescue services. Such region and neighbouring regions shall be contiguous.

2.2.2 Search and rescue regions should, in so far as practicable, be coincident with corresponding flight information regions and, with respect to those areas over the high seas, maritime search and rescue regions.



## 2.3 RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRES AND RESCUE SUB-CENTRES

2.3.1 The Authority shall establish a rescue coordination centre in a search and rescue region.

*Note: The Civil Protection, under the authority of the Secretary of State for Internal Affairs, is responsible for establishing a rescue coordination centre, or rescue sub-centre, where appropriate, for the search and rescue region within the territory of San Marino.*

2.3.2 Where all of the airspace of San Marino is included within a search and rescue region associated with a rescue coordination centre in another Contracting State, the rescue coordination centre should establish a rescue sub-centre subordinate to the rescue coordination centre wherever this would improve the efficiency of search and rescue services within its territory.

2.3.3 The rescue coordination centre and any rescue sub-centre, shall be staffed 24 hours a day by trained personnel proficient in the use of the English language used for radio-telephony communications.

2.3.4 In areas where public telecommunications facilities would not permit persons observing an aircraft in emergency to notify the rescue coordination centre concerned directly and promptly, the Authority should designate suitable units of public or private services as alerting posts.

2.3.5 [Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue sub-centre shall maintain up-to-date contact details in the OPS Control Directory.]

2.3.6 Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue sub-centre shall subscribe and maintain access to the location of an aircraft in distress repository (LADR).]

## 2.4 Search and rescue communications

2.4.1 The rescue coordination centre shall have means of rapid and reliable two-way communication with;

- (a) associated air traffic services units;
- (b) any adjacent rescue coordination centres;
- (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.



2.4.2 The rescue coordination sub-centre shall have means of rapid and reliable two-way communication with;

- (1) adjacent rescue sub-centres;
- (2) a meteorological office or meteorological watch office;
- (3) search and rescue units; and
- (4) alerting posts.

## **2.5 Search and rescue units**

2.5.1 The Authority shall designate as search and rescue units elements of public or private services suitably located and equipped for search and rescue operations.

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

## **2.6 Search and rescue equipment**

2.6.1 Search and rescue units shall be provided with equipment for locating promptly, and for providing adequate assistance at, the scene of an accident.

2.6.2 Each search and rescue unit should have means of rapid and reliable two-way communication with other search and rescue facilities engaged in the same operation.

2.6.3 Each search and rescue aircraft shall be equipped to be able to communicate on the aeronautical distress and on-scene frequencies and on such other frequencies as may be prescribed.

2.6.4 Each search and rescue aircraft shall be equipped with a device for homing on distress frequencies.

2.6.5 Each search and rescue aircraft, when used for search and rescue over maritime areas, shall be equipped to be able to communicate with vessels.

2.6.6 Each search and rescue aircraft, when used for search and rescue over maritime areas shall carry a copy of the International Code of Signals to enable it to overcome language difficulties that may be experienced in communicating with vessels.

2.6.7 Unless it is known that there is no need to provide supplies to survivors by air, at least one of the aircraft participating in a search and rescue operation should carry droppable survival equipment.

2.6.8 A designated SAR unit should locate, at appropriate aerodromes, survival equipment suitably packed for dropping by aircraft.

2.6.9 [As of 26 November 2026, each search and rescue aircraft, when used for search and rescue over maritime areas, should carry a droppable device for measuring actual surface drift.]



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## CHAPTER 3

### COOPERATION

#### 3.1 Cooperation between States

- 3.1.1 The designated SAR unit shall coordinate their search and rescue units with those of neighbouring States.
- 3.1.2 The designated SAR unit should, whenever necessary, coordinate their search and rescue operations with those of neighbouring States especially when these operations are proximate to adjacent search and rescue regions.
- 3.1.3 The designated SAR unit should, in so far as practicable, develop common search and rescue plans and procedures to facilitate coordination of search and rescue operations with those of neighbouring States.
- 3.1.4 Subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by its own authorities, San Marino shall permit immediate entry into its territory of search and rescue units of other States for the purpose of searching for the site of aircraft accidents and rescuing survivors of such accidents.
- 3.1.5 The designated SAR unit that wishes their search and rescue units to enter the territory of San Marino for search and rescue purposes shall transmit a request to the Authority, giving full details of the projected mission and the need for it.
- 3.1.6 The Authority shall, in cooperation with the appropriate authorities;
- immediately acknowledge the receipt of such a request made in 3.1.5, and
  - as soon as possible, indicate the conditions, if any, under which the projected mission may be undertaken.
- 3.1.7 The Authority should enter into agreements with neighbouring States to strengthen search and rescue cooperation and coordination, setting forth the conditions for entry of each other's search and rescue units into their respective territories. These agreements should also provide for expediting entry of such units with the least possible formalities.
- 3.1.8 When required, the rescue coordination centre should;
- (a) request from other rescue coordination centres such assistance, including aircraft, persons or equipment, as may be needed;
  - (b) grant any necessary permission for the entry of such aircraft, persons or equipment into its territory; and
  - (c) make the necessary arrangements with the appropriate customs, immigration or other authorities with a view to expediting such entry.
- 3.1.9 When requested, the rescue coordination centre should provide assistance to other rescue coordination centres, including assistance in the form of aircraft, persons or equipment.



- 3.1.10 [Until 25 November 2026, the RCC should make arrangements for joint training exercises involving their search and rescue units, those of other States and operators, in order to promote search and rescue efficiency.]
- 3.1.11 [As of 26 November 2026, the RCC should make arrangements for joint training exercises involving their RCCs RSCs and search and rescue units, those of other States and operators, in order to promote search and rescue efficiency.]
- 3.1.12 The RCC should make arrangements for periodic liaison visits by personnel of their rescue coordination centre to the centres of neighbouring States.

## **3.2 Cooperation with other services**

- 3.2.1 Any aircraft, vessel and local service and facility, which does not form part of the search and rescue unit, shall, when requested, cooperate fully in search and rescue and to extend any possible assistance to the survivors of aircraft accidents.
- 3.2.2 The RCC should ensure the closest practicable coordination between the relevant aeronautical and maritime authorities to provide for the most effective and efficient search and rescue services.
- 3.2.3 The RCC shall ensure that their search and rescue services cooperate with those responsible for investigating accidents and with those responsible for the care of those who suffered from the accident.
- 3.2.4 To facilitate accident investigation, rescue units should, when practicable, be accompanied by persons qualified in the conduct of aircraft accident investigations.
- 3.2.5 [Until 25 November 2026, the Authority shall designate a search and rescue point of contact for the receipt of Cospas-Sarsat distress data.]
- 3.2.6 As of 26 November 2026, the Authority shall designate a 24-hour search and rescue point of contact available for the receipt and acknowledgement of Cospas-Sarsat distress alert data that ensures timely notification to the responsible RCC for the initiation of appropriate search and rescue response action.]

## **3.3 Dissemination of information**

- 3.3.1 The Authority shall publish and disseminate all information necessary for the entry of search and rescue units of other States into its territory or, alternatively, include this information in search and rescue service arrangements.
- 3.3.2 When such information could benefit the provision of search and rescue services, the Authority should make available the Aeronautical Information Publication regarding their search and rescue plans of operation.
- 3.3.3 The Authority should, to the extent desirable and practicable, disseminate information to the general public and emergency response authorities regarding actions to be taken when;
- (a) there is reason to believe that an aircraft's emergency situation may become cause for public concern; or
  - (b) require a general emergency response.





## CHAPTER 4

### PREPARATORY MEASURES

#### 4.1 Preparatory information

4.1.1 The rescue coordination centre shall have readily available at all times up-to-date information concerning the following in respect of its search and rescue region:

- (a) search and rescue units, rescue sub-centres and alerting posts;
- (b) air traffic services units;
- (c) means of communication that may be used in search and rescue operations;
- (d) addresses and telephone numbers of all operators, or their designated representatives, engaged in operations in the region; and
- (e) any other public and private resources including medical and transportation facilities that are likely to be useful in search and rescue.

4.1.2 The rescue coordination centre should have readily available all other information of interest to search and rescue, including information regarding:

- (a) the locations, call signs, hours of watch, and frequencies of all radio stations likely to be employed in support of search and rescue operations;
- (b) the locations and hours of watch of services keeping radio watch, and the frequencies guarded;
- (c) locations where supplies of droppable emergency and survival equipment are stored;
- (d) objects which it is known might be mistaken for unlocated or unreported wreckage, particularly if viewed from the air;
- (e) [as of 26 November 2026, the position, course and speed of aircraft that may be able to provide assistance to aircraft in distress; and
- (f) as of 26 November 2026, where the search and rescue region includes maritime areas, the position, course and speed of ships that may be able to provide assistance to aircraft in distress.

4.1.3 Until 25 November 2026, each rescue coordination centre whose search and rescue region includes maritime areas should have ready access to information regarding the position, course and speed of ships within such areas that may be able to provide assistance to aircraft in distress and information on how to contact them.]

*Note: This information may either be kept in the rescue coordination centres or be readily accessible*

4.1.4 Those organisation designated to be involved in the provision of search and rescue services, should individually, or in cooperation with other States, either establish ship reporting systems in cooperation with maritime authorities or arrange communication links with the Automated



Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System (Amver) or regional ship reporting systems to facilitate search and rescue operations at sea.

## 4.2 Plans of operation

- 4.2.1 The rescue coordination centre shall prepare detailed plans of operation for the conduct of search and rescue operations within its search and rescue region.
- 4.2.2 Search and rescue plans of operations should be developed jointly with representatives of the operators and other public or private services that may assist in providing search and rescue services or benefit from them, taking into account that the number of survivors could be large.
- 4.2.3 The plans of operation shall specify arrangements for the servicing and refuelling, to the extent possible, of aircraft, vessels and vehicles employed in search and rescue operations, including those made available by other States.
- 4.2.4 The search and rescue plans of operation shall contain details regarding actions to be taken by those persons engaged in search and rescue, including:
- (a) the manner in which search and rescue operations are to be conducted in the search and rescue region;
  - (b) the use of available communication systems and facilities;
  - (c) the actions to be taken jointly with other rescue coordination centres;
  - (d) the methods of alerting en-route aircraft and ships at sea;
  - (e) the duties and prerogatives of persons assigned to search and rescue;
  - (f) the possible redeployment of equipment that may be necessitated by meteorological or other conditions;
  - (g) the methods for obtaining essential information relevant to search and rescue operations, such as weather reports and forecasts, appropriate NOTAM, etc.;
  - (h) the methods for obtaining, from other rescue coordination centres, such assistance, including aircraft, vessels, persons or equipment, as may be needed;
  - (i) [as of 26 November 2026, the methods for obtaining approval to allow search and rescue units from an assisting State to enter into the territory of the State of the RCC;
  - (j) as of 26 November 2026, the methods for assisting distressed aircraft being compelled to ditch to rendezvous with surface craft;
  - (k) the methods for assisting search and rescue or other aircraft to proceed to aircraft in distress; and
  - (l) as of 26 November 2026, cooperative actions to be taken in conjunction with air traffic services units and other authorities concerned to assist aircraft known or believed to be subject to unlawful interference.]



4.2.5 Search and rescue plans of operation should be integrated with airport emergency plans to provide for rescue services in the vicinity of aerodromes including, for coastal aerodromes, areas of water.

### 4.3 Search and rescue units

4.3.1 Each search and rescue unit shall:

- (a) be cognizant of all parts of the plans of operation prescribed in 4.2 that are necessary for the effective conduct of its duties; and
- (b) keep the rescue coordination centre informed of its preparedness.

4.3.2 Units providing search and rescue services shall:

- (a) maintain in readiness the required number of search and rescue facilities; and
- (b) maintain adequate supplies of rations, medical stores, signalling devices and other survival and rescue equipment.

### 4.4 Training and exercises

4.4.1 [Until 25 November 2026, to achieve and maintain maximum efficiency in search and rescue, units providing search and rescue services shall provide for regular training of their search and rescue personnel and arrange appropriate search and rescue exercises.

4.4.2 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.

*Note: The need for regular training and exercises may be moderated commensurate with the frequency of real search and rescue responses which demonstrate satisfactory and effective search and rescue performance.]*

### 4.5 [Accident sites and Wreckage

4.5.1 As of 26 November 2025, the Authority shall ensure that search and rescue personnel that may be required to respond to an aircraft accident site are trained in the management of related occupational health risks.]

4.5.2 The Authority, in cooperation with concerned authorities, should ensure that wreckage resulting from aircraft accidents within its territory or, in the case of accidents on the high seas or in areas of undetermined sovereignty, within the search and rescue regions for which it is responsible, is removed, obliterated or charted following completion of the accident investigation, if its presence might constitute a hazard or confuse subsequent search and rescue operations.



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## CHAPTER 5

### OPERATING PROCEDURES

#### 5.1 Information concerning emergencies

- 5.1.1 Any authority or any element of the search and rescue organisation having reason to believe that an aircraft is in an emergency shall give immediately all available information to the rescue coordination centre.
- 5.1.2 The rescue coordination centre shall, immediately upon receipt of information concerning aircraft in emergency, evaluate such information and assess the extent of the operation required.
- 5.1.3 When information concerning aircraft in emergency is received from other sources than air traffic services units, the rescue coordination centre shall determine to which emergency phase the situation corresponds and shall apply the procedures applicable to that phase.

#### 5.2 Procedures for rescue coordination centres during emergency phases

##### 5.2.1 Uncertainty phase

Upon the occurrence of an uncertainty phase, the rescue coordination centre shall cooperate to the utmost with air traffic services units and other appropriate agencies and services in order that incoming reports may be speedily evaluated.

##### 5.2.2 Alert phase

Upon the occurrence of an alert phase the rescue coordination centre shall immediately alert search and rescue units and initiate any necessary action.

##### 5.2.3 Distress phase

Upon the occurrence of a distress phase, the rescue coordination centre shall:

- (a) immediately initiate action by search and rescue units in accordance with the appropriate plan of operation;
- (b) ascertain the position of the aircraft, estimate the degree of uncertainty of this position, and, on the basis of this information and the circumstances, determine the extent of the area to be searched;
- (c) notify the operator, where possible, and keep the operator informed of developments;
- (d) notify other rescue coordination centres, the help of which seems likely to be required, or which may be concerned in the operation;
- (e) notify the associated air traffic services unit, when the information on the emergency has been received from another source;
- (f) request at an early stage such aircraft, vessels, coastal stations and other services not specifically included in the appropriate plan of operation and able to assist to:



- (1) maintain a listening watch for transmissions from the aircraft in distress, survival radio equipment or an ELT;

*Note 1: [Until 25 November 2026, the frequencies contained in the specifications for ELTs are 121.5 MHz and 406 MHz.]*

*Note 2: As of 26 November 2026, the frequencies contained in the specifications for ELTs are 121.5 MHz and 406.0 to 406.1 MHz.]*

- (2) assist the aircraft in distress as far as practicable; and
  - (3) inform the appropriate rescue coordination centre of any developments;
- (g) from the information available, draw up a detailed plan of action for the conduct of the search and/or rescue operation required and communicate such plan for the guidance of the authorities immediately directing the conduct of such an operation;
  - (h) amend as necessary, in the light of evolving circumstances, the detailed plan of action;
  - (i) notify San Marino Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority, which is responsible for notifying the State of Registry of the aircraft.
  - (j) The order in which these actions are described shall be followed unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

#### 5.2.4 Initiation of search and rescue action in respect of an aircraft whose position is unknown

In the event that an emergency phase is declared in respect of an aircraft whose position is unknown and may be in one of two or more search and rescue regions, the following shall apply:

- (a) When a rescue coordination centre is notified of the existence of an emergency phase and is unaware of other centres taking appropriate action, it shall assume responsibility for initiating suitable action and confer with neighbouring rescue coordination centres with the objective of designating one rescue coordination centre to assume responsibility forthwith.
- (b) Unless otherwise decided by common agreement of the rescue coordination centres concerned, the rescue coordination centre to coordinate search and rescue action shall be the centre responsible for:
  - (1) the region in which the aircraft last reported its position; or
  - (2) the region to which the aircraft was proceeding when its last reported position was on the line separating two search and rescue regions; or
  - (3) the region to which the aircraft was destined when it was not equipped with suitable two-way radio communication or not under obligation to maintain radio communication; or
  - (4) the region in which the distress site is located as identified by the Cospas-Sarsat system.



- (c) After declaration of the distress phase, the rescue coordination centre with overall coordination responsibility shall inform all rescue coordination centres that may become involved in the operation of all the circumstances of the emergency and subsequent developments. Likewise, all rescue coordination centres becoming aware of any information pertaining to the emergency shall inform the rescue coordination centre that has overall responsibility.

#### 5.2.5 Passing of information to aircraft in respect of which an emergency phase has been declared

Whenever applicable, the rescue coordination centre responsible for search and rescue action shall forward to the air traffic services unit serving the flight information region in which the aircraft is operating, information of the search and rescue action initiated, in order that such information can be passed to the aircraft.

### 5.3 Procedures where responsibility for operations extends to two or more Contracting States

Where the conduct of operations over the entire search and rescue region is the responsibility of more than one Contracting State, each involved State shall take action in accordance with the relevant plan of operations when so requested by the rescue coordination centre of the region.

### 5.4 Procedures for authorities in the field

The search and rescue unit immediately directing the conduct of operations or any part thereof shall;

- (a) give instructions to the units under their direction and inform the rescue coordination centre of such instructions; and
- (b) keep the rescue coordination centre informed of developments.

### 5.5 Procedures for rescue coordination centres — termination and suspension of operations

5.5.1 Search and rescue operations shall continue, when practicable, until all survivors are delivered to a place of safety or until all reasonable hope of rescuing survivors has passed.

5.5.2 The responsible rescue coordination centre shall normally be responsible for determining when to discontinue search and rescue operations.

*Note: The Authority may require input from other appropriate authorities in the decision-making process leading to termination of SAR operations.*

5.5.3 When a search and rescue operation has been successful or when a rescue coordination centre considers, or is informed, that an emergency no longer exists, the emergency phase shall be cancelled, the search and rescue operation shall be terminated and any authority, facility or service that has been activated or notified shall be promptly informed.

5.5.4 If a search and rescue operation becomes impracticable and the rescue coordination centre concludes that there might still be survivors, the centre shall temporarily suspend on-scene activities pending further developments and shall promptly inform any authority, facility or service which has been activated or notified. Relevant information subsequently received shall be evaluated and search and rescue operations resumed when justified and practicable.



## 5.6 Procedures at the scene of an accident

- 5.6.1 When multiple facilities are engaged in search and rescue operations on-scene, the rescue coordination centre or, when appropriate, the rescue sub-centre shall designate one or more units on-scene to coordinate all actions to help ensure the safety and effectiveness of air and surface operations, taking into account facility capabilities and operational requirements.
- 5.6.2 When a pilot-in-command observes that either another aircraft or a surface craft is in distress, the pilot shall, if possible and unless considered unreasonable or unnecessary:
- (a) keep the craft in distress in sight until compelled to leave the scene or advised by the rescue coordination centre that it is no longer necessary;
  - (b) determine the position of the craft in distress;
  - (c) as appropriate, report to the rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit as much of the following information as possible:
    - (1) type of craft in distress, its identification and condition;
    - (2) its position, expressed in geographical or grid coordinates or in distance and true bearing from a distinctive landmark or from a radio navigation aid;
    - (3) time of observation expressed in hours and minutes Coordinated Universal Time (UTC);
    - (4) number of persons observed;
    - (5) whether persons have been seen to abandon the craft in distress;
    - (6) [as of 26 November 2026, whether any distress signals, including distress beacon transmissions, have been received or observed;]
    - (7) on-scene weather conditions;
    - (8) apparent physical condition of survivors;
    - (9) [until 25 November 2026, apparent best ground access route to the distress site;
    - (10) as of 26 November 2026, apparent best ground access route to the distress scene; and
    - (11) as of 26 November 2026, position and description of any other craft in the area that may assist; and]
  - (d) act as instructed by the rescue coordination centre or the air traffic services unit.
- 5.6.3 [Until 25 November 2026, if the first aircraft to reach the scene of an accident is not a search and rescue aircraft, it shall take charge of on-scene activities of all other aircraft subsequently arriving until the first search and rescue aircraft reaches the scene of the accident. If, in the meantime, such aircraft is unable to establish communication with the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit, it shall, by mutual agreement, hand over to an aircraft capable of establishing and maintaining such communications until the arrival of the first search and rescue aircraft.





- 5.6.4 As of 26 November 2026, if the first aircraft to reach the distress scene is not a search and rescue aircraft, it shall take charge of on-scene activities of all other aircraft subsequently arriving until the first search and rescue aircraft reaches the distress scene. If, in the meantime, such aircraft is unable to establish communication with the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit, it shall, by mutual agreement, hand over to an aircraft capable of establishing and maintaining such communications until the arrival of the first search and rescue aircraft.]
- 5.6.5 When it is necessary for an aircraft to convey information to survivors or surface rescue units, and two-way communication is not available, it shall, if practicable, drop communication equipment that would enable direct contact to be established, or convey the information by dropping a hard copy message.
- 5.6.6 [When a ground signal has been displayed, the aircraft shall indicate whether the signal has been understood or not by the means described in 5.6.5 or, if this is not practicable, by making the appropriate visual signal.]
- 5.6.7 When it is necessary for an aircraft to direct a surface craft to the place where an aircraft or surface craft is in distress, the aircraft shall do so by transmitting precise instructions by any means at its disposal. If no radio communication can be established, the aircraft shall make the appropriate visual signal.
- 5.6.8 [As of 26 November 2026, when carrying a device for measuring actual surface drift in accordance with 2.6.9, a search and rescue aircraft should drop the device as soon as it reaches the scene of an accident.

*Note: The deployment of such devices will assist with search area planning accuracy and, therefore, minimize search times.]*

## **5.7 Procedures for a pilot-in-command intercepting a distress transmission**

- 5.7.1 Whenever a distress transmission is intercepted by a pilot-in-command of an aircraft, the pilot shall, if feasible:
- (a) acknowledge the distress transmission;
  - (b) record the position of the craft in distress if given;
  - (c) take a bearing on the transmission;
  - (d) inform the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit of the distress transmission, giving all available information;
  - (e) [until 25 November 2026, at the pilot's discretion, while awaiting instructions, proceed to the position given in the transmission.
  - (f) as of 26 November 2026, at the pilot's discretion, while awaiting instructions, proceed to the distress position; and
  - (g) attempt to establish communications with the person(s) in distress.
- 5.7.2 Whenever a pilot monitors 121.5 MHz, and intercepts a transmission from a distress beacon, the pilot shall also;



- (a) record, and report as soon as possible, the position where the transmission was first received;
- (b) not alter any settings for squelch on the aircraft's radio; and
- (c) if feasible, continue to monitor the frequency until such time as the signal ceases, and inform the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit of such.

*Note: Retaining the existing settings for squelch from the time the transmission is first received until the signal ceases provides rescue coordination centres with the most accurate potential location of the distress beacon.]*

## **5.8 Search and rescue signals**

- 5.8.1 The air-to-surface and surface-to-air visual signals in the Appendix shall, when used, have the meaning indicated therein. They shall be used only for the purpose indicated and no other signals likely to be confused with them shall be used.
- 5.8.2 Upon observing any of the signals in the Appendix, aircraft shall take such action as may be required by the interpretation of the signal given in that Appendix.

## **5.9 Maintenance of records**

- 5.9.1 The rescue coordination centre should keep a record of the operational efficiency of the search and rescue organisation in its region.
- 5.9.2 The rescue coordination centre should prepare appraisals of actual search and rescue operations in its region. These appraisals should comprise any pertinent remarks on the procedures used and on the emergency and survival equipment, and any suggestions for improvement of those procedures and equipment. Those appraisals which are likely to be of interest to other States shall, when appropriate, be submitted to ICAO for information and dissemination as appropriate.



## APPENDIX

### SEARCH AND RESCUE SIGNALS

#### 1. Signals with surface craft

1.1 The following manoeuvres performed in sequence by an aircraft mean that the aircraft wishes to direct a surface craft towards an aircraft or a surface craft in distress:

- (a) circling the surface craft at least once;
- (b) crossing the projected course of the surface craft close ahead at low altitude and:
  - (1) rocking the wings; or
  - (2) opening and closing the throttle; or
  - (3) changing the propeller pitch.

*Note: Due to high noise level on board surface craft, the sound signals in (2) and (3) may be less effective than the visual signal in (1) and are regarded as alternative means of attracting attention.*

- (c) heading in the direction in which the surface craft is to be directed.

Repetition of such manoeuvres has the same meaning.

1.2 The following manoeuvres by an aircraft means that the assistance of the surface craft to which the signal is directed is no longer required:

- (a) crossing the wake of the surface craft close astern at a low altitude and:
  - (1) rocking the wings; or
  - (2) opening and closing the throttle; or
  - (3) changing the propeller pitch.

*Note: The following replies may be made by surface craft to the signal in 1.1:*

— *for acknowledging receipt of signals:*

- (a) *the hoisting of the “code pennant” (vertical red and white stripes) close up (meaning understood);*
- (b) *the flashing of a succession of “T’s” by signal lamp in the Morse code;*
- (c) *the changing of heading to follow the aircraft.*

— *for indicating inability to comply:*

- (a) *the hoisting of the international flag “N” (a blue and white checkered square);*



(b) the flashing of a succession of “N’s” in the Morse code.

Note: See Note following 1.1 (b)(3).

**2. Ground-air visual signal code**

2.1 Ground-air visual signal code for use by survivors

No.	Message	Code symbol
1	Require assistance	V
2	Require medical assistance	X
3	No or Negative	N
4	Yes or Affirmative	Y
5	Proceeding in this direction	↑

2.2 Ground-air visual signal code for use by rescue units

No.	Message	Code symbol
1	Operation completed	LLL
2	We have found all personnel	<u>LL</u>
3	We have found only some personnel	++
4	We are not able to continue. Returning to base	XX
5	Have divided into two groups. Each proceeding in direction indicated	↔
6	Information received that aircraft is in this direction	→ →
7	Nothing found. Will continue to search	NN

2.3 Symbols shall be at least 2.5 metres (8 feet) long and shall be made as conspicuous as possible.

Note 1: Symbols may be formed by any means such as: strips of fabric, parachute material, pieces of wood, stones or such like material; marking the surface by tramping, or staining with oil.



*Note 2: Attention to the above signals may be attracted by other means such as radio, flares, smoke and reflected light.*

### **3. Air-to-ground signals**

3.1 The following signals by aircraft mean that the ground signals have been understood:

(a) during the hours of daylight:

- by rocking the aircraft's wings;

(b) during the hours of darkness:

- flashing on and off twice the aircraft's landing lights or, if not so equipped, by switching on and off twice its navigation lights.

3.2 Lack of the above signal indicates that the ground signal is not understood.



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