Please forward your suggestions to any changes or corrections to this GUIDE TO COORDINATION OF MAJOR SAR INCIDENTS AT SEA to:

NAVAL WARFARE CENTRE
Naval Base Frederikshavn
9900 Frederikshavn

Att.: Commander Anders Møller
Tlf.: 7264 7356
E-mail: amoeller@mil.dk
FOREWORD

In the event of a mass rescue operation (MRO), no single organization is fully equipped to mount an effective response. The success of an MRO is contingent upon the seamless efforts of search and rescue agencies, the company, mutual assistance assets, and Good Samaritans. Success is also contingent upon effective plans and the exercising of those plans.

The purpose of this planning guidance is to assist those in developing plans for mass rescue operations in the maritime environment. Mass rescues could be the result of a ship or aircraft incident. In any case, the sequence of priority in major multi-mission incidents must be lifesaving, environmental protection, and then property protection.

The intent of this planning guidance is also to generate consistency, raise awareness, identify stakeholders, and provide continuity between existing emergency plans. This guide includes extract of different publications dealing with mass rescue operations (MRO).

ANDERS MØLLER
commander
Naval Warfare Centre
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INTRODUCTION

1. A mass rescue operation (MRO) is one that involves the need for immediate assistance to large numbers of persons in distress such that capabilities normally available to search and rescue (SAR) authorities are inadequate.

2. Fortunately, MROs are relatively rare compared to normal SAR operations, but major incidents leading to the need for MROs have not been infrequent on a worldwide basis, and can occur anywhere at any time. Since the nature of such operations may be poorly understood due to limited chances to gain experience with major incidents involving MROs, this Guidance begins with a general discussion of MROs and related matters.

3. Flooding, earthquakes, terrorism, casualties in the offshore oil industry, accidents involving releases of hazardous materials and major aircraft or ship incidents are examples which, because of their magnitude, may need to use the same resources as would be needed to carry out mass maritime or aeronautical rescue operations.

4. The sequence of priority in major multi-mission incidents must be lifesaving first, generally followed by environmental protection, and then protection of property.

5. Moral and legal obligations, as well as public and political expectations, drive the need to be prepared to carry out MROs safely and effectively should they become necessary. Since the need for MROs is relatively rare, it is difficult to gain practical experience to help deal with them. While the types of potential MRO scenarios, as well as the organizations, emergency response structures and circumstances vary from place to place, there are certain general principles, common actions and examples that can be followed based on lessons of history, which this Guidance is intended to convey.

6. MROs are relatively low-probability high-consequence events. Effective response to such major incidents typically require immediate, well-planned and closely coordinated large-scale actions and use of resources from multiple organizations. Intense and sustained high priority lifesaving efforts may need to be carried out at the same time and place as major efforts to save the environment and property. Huge amounts of selected information will need to be readily available at the right times and the right places not only to support the response efforts, but to meet the needs of the media, public and families of the persons in distress, which may number in the hundreds or thousands. Many means of communications will need to be available and interlinked amongst organizations at various levels to handle huge amounts of information reliably for the duration of the response. A surge in the numbers of competent staffing in all key organizations must be available immediately and be sustainable for up to weeks at a time. Equipment and logistics demands will jump to unprecedented levels. Successful MROs depend on the
advance provision of flexible and all level contingency plans. Intense integrated planning and operational efforts must also be carried out in real time throughout actual rescue efforts.

7. All who will be involved in the overall multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction, multi-mission and possibly international response to a major incident will need clearly understand who is in charge, how to work with who is in charge, the respective roles of all involved, and how to interact with each other. SAR authorities may be responsible for all, or part, of the MRO responsibilities of the major incident response, and will be able to co-ordinate their efforts seamlessly with other incident responders under overall direction of another authority within or outside their agency. The broader response environment may involve hazards mitigation, damage control and salvage operations, pollution control, complex traffic management, large-scale logistics efforts, medical and coroner functions, accident-incident investigation, intense public and political attention, etc. MRO plans need to be part of and compatible with overall response plans for major incidents. Plans must typically allow for command, control and communications structures that can accommodate simultaneous air, sea and land operations.

8. Potential disastrous consequences of poor preparations for MROs in terms of loss of life and other adverse results are enormous. Major incidents may involve hundreds or thousands of persons in distress in remote and hostile environments. A large passenger ship collision, a downed aircraft, or a terrorist incident could, for example, call for the immediate rescue of large numbers of passengers and crew in poor environmental conditions, with many of the survivors having little ability to help themselves, and the dire results of failure are evident.

9. Preparedness to mount an extraordinarily large and rapid response is critical to preventing large-scale loss of lives. Such preparedness often depends on strong and visionary leadership and unusual levels of co-operation to achieve. There will often be strong resistance to paying the inherently high price in terms of time, effort and funding that preparedness for major incidents entails, particularly as they are rare events. The required levels of co-operation, co-ordination, planning, resources and exercises, required for preparedness are challenging and do not happen without the requisite commitment of SAR authorities, regulatory authorities, transportation companies, sources of military and commercial assistance and others.

10. SAR authorities should co-ordinate MRO plans with companies that operate ships and aircraft designed to carry large numbers of persons. Such companies should share in preparations to minimize the chances that MROs will be needed, and to ensure success if they are.

11. MRO planning, preparations and exercises are essential since opportunities to handle actual incidents involving mass rescues are rare. Therefore the exercising of MRO plans is particularly important.

12. The provisions of this document are intended to provide general guidance to authorities and organizations responsible for ensuring that MROs, should they be necessary, are successful.
GENERAL GUIDANCE

1. For a situation involving large numbers of persons in distress, on scene responsibilities for the safety of passengers and crew will be shared by the OSC and the aircraft pilot in command or ship master, with the pilot or master assuming as much of this responsibility as possible before or after the aircraft or ship is abandoned.

2. Pilots and masters are responsible for maneuvering the aircraft or ship as feasible and appropriate. They also have overall responsibility for safety, medical care, communications, fire and damage control, maintaining order and providing general direction.

3. Unless a ship appears to be in imminent danger of sinking, it is usually advisable for passengers and crew to remain on board as long as it is safe to do so.

4. In the case of a downed aircraft, whether passengers would be safer on board should be assessed for each situation. Usually they should promptly evacuate the aircraft at sea. On land this decision must account for the conditions of the aircraft and the environment, expected time to rescue or aircraft repair, and whether required passenger care can be best provided inside the aircraft.

5. The OSC will normally be designated by an SMC. An OSC may be able to handle certain communications on scene and with appropriate remote authorities to help free the pilot or master to retain the integrity of his or her craft. However, these persons are themselves in need of assistance, and anything the OSC can do to help them should be considered, bearing in mind that the OSC’s main duty is coordinating SAR facilities and rescue efforts under the SMC’s general direction.

6. It is important to minimize unnecessary communications with the master of a ship or pilot in command of an aircraft in distress, and this should be taken into account in advance planning. Exchanges of information during joint planning by use of SAR Plans of Co-operation and other means will reduce the need to ask the pilot or master for this information one or more times during a crisis. Persons or organizations that want this information should be directed to a source ashore or on the ground that is prepared to handle what could be many requests.

7. High priority should be given to tracking and accounting for all persons on board and all lifeboats and rafts, and efforts to keep them together will help in this regard. Availability of accurate manifests and accounting is critical. The need to relocate survival craft and check for persons in them can waste valuable resources. One option is to sink survival craft once the persons in them have been rescued; however, the potential that other survivors may find and need the craft should be considered.

8. Navy ships are often better equipped than commercial vessels for retrieving people who have abandoned a ship or aircraft, and use of any such ships should be considered.

9. Helicopter capabilities should be employed if available, especially for retrieval of weak or immobile survivors. Lifeboat crews should be trained in helicopter hoist
operations. Lowering a rescue person from the helicopter to assist survivors may be viable.

10. Ship companies should be encouraged to equip large passenger ships and possibly other types of vessels with helicopter landing areas, clearly marked hoist-winch areas, and onboard helicopters to facilitate more direct transfers of numerous persons.

11. If a ship with a large freeboard cannot safely retrieve survivors from the water or survival craft, it may be possible to first retrieve them onto small vessels, and then transfer them to progressively larger ones.

12. Depending on the circumstances, it may be safer to tow survival craft to shore without removing the occupants at sea. Lifeboats could be designed to support passengers for longer periods of time, and to be able to reach shore on their own from longer distances offshore.

13. To the extent practicable, MROs should be co-ordinated by an SMC in an RCC. However, depending on the magnitude, nature and complexity of a mass rescue incident, the rescue efforts may be better co-ordinated by an appropriate operations centre higher within the SAR agency or a government. Considerations in this decision might include, among others:

- extensive rescue support by organizations other than those commonly used for SAR;
- need for heavy international diplomatic support;
- and serious problems in addition to potential loss of lives, such as environmental threats, terrorist actions, or national security issues.

14. The following factors should be considered in MRO planning:

- use the Incident Command System (ICS) or other effective means of handling multiagency, multi-jurisdiction, multi-mission scenarios;
- identify situations within the SRR that could potentially lead to the need for MROs, including scenarios that might involve cascading casualties or outages;
- mobilisation and co-ordination of necessary SAR facilities, including those not normally available for SAR services;
- ability to activate plans immediately;
- call up procedures for needed personnel;
- need for supplemental communications capabilities, possibly including the need for interpreters;
- dispatching of liaison officers;
- activation of additional staff to augment, replace or sustain needed staffing levels;
- recovery and transport of large numbers of survivors (and bodies, if necessary), accounting for survivors potentially having injuries and lack of training, age limitation, hypothermia, etc.;
- a means of reliably accounting for everyone involved, including responders, survivors, crew, etc.;
• care, assistance and further transfer of survivors once delivered to a place of safety, and further transfer of bodies beyond their initial delivery point;
• activation of plans for notifying, managing and assisting the media and families in large numbers;
• control of access to the RCC and other sensitive facilities and locations;
• RCC backup and relocation plans, as appropriate; and
• ready availability to all potential users of plans, checklists and flowcharts.

15. At some point the ability of an RCC to continue to effectively co-ordinate the MRO and still handle its other SAR responsibilities might be overwhelmed, and another RCC or a higher authority may need to assume responsibility for the MRO.

16. With these possibilities in mind, MRO plans may provide for various degrees of response, along with criteria for determining which amount of response will be implemented. For example, as local SAR resources are exhausted, or from the outset, SAR resources may need to be obtained from distant national or international sources.

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18. Experiences in responding to major incidents have resulted in other practical advice such as the following:

• plan and exercise how any agency receiving notification of an actual or potential mass rescue event can immediately alert and conference call other authorities that will potentially be involved, brief them, and enable immediate actions to be taken by all concerned (this will require identification of contacts in each agency that can be contacted on a 24-hour basis, and that have authority to immediately initiate actions and commit resources);
• co-ordinate all rescue operations effectively from the very beginning;
• begin quickly with a high level of effort stand down as appropriate rather than begin too late with too little effort;
• use more capable resources like cruise ships for taking large numbers of survivors on board;
• ensure that MRO emergency plans address communications interoperability or interlinking;
• retrieve and protect debris as evidence for follow on investigation;
• put security plans in place to limit access to the RCC;
• arrange in advance to involve the Red Cross, chaplains, critical incident stress experts and other such support for human needs;
• identify senior agency spokespersons to protect the time of workers directly involved in the response and designated a senior official to provide information to families;

• clearly identify the point at which the SAR response (lifesaving) has ended, and the focus shifts to investigation and recovery;

• be prepared to use an ICS when appropriate;

• ensure that air traffic and air space can be and is controlled on scene;

• the SMC can often benefit from assigning additional liaison personnel on scene;

• anticipate development and needs and act early;

• ensure that the scopes of SAR plans and other emergency or disaster response plans are co-ordinated to reduce gaps, overlaps and confusion about who is in charge and what procedures will be followed at various times and places;

• control access to the scene, including access by the media;

• work out in advance how private resources can be appropriately used to supplement other SAR resources;

• ensure that SAR plans provide for logistics support for large numbers of rescuers and survivors, including pre-arranged accommodations, if possible, and availability of food, medical care and transportation;

• consider requesting assistance from airlines and shipping companies other than the one whose aircraft or ship is involved in the incident, and know the types of assistance that such organizations might provide;

• bar coded bracelets can be an effective means of identifying children before, during and after the emergency;

• attempt to reduce the burden on a pilot or master and crews;

• if safe and appropriate to do so, place a marine casualty officer on board to assist the master and SAR personnel;

• share capabilities, expertise and assets among government and industry to take maximum advantage of the strengths of each.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication plans must provide for a heavy volume of communication use, as a major incident will normally involve many responding organizations that need to communicate effectively with each other from the beginning. As necessary, advance arrangements
should be made to link means of interagency communications that are not inherently interoperable. Interagency communications must be based on terminology that all involved understand.

MAJOR INCIDENT COORDINATION

1. Regardless of the magnitude and priority of the lifesaving efforts involved in responding to a major incident, if any other functions are being carried out concurrently on scene by other than SAR personnel, the overall response involving SAR and the other functions, e.g., firefighting, should be well co-ordinated.

2. If certain basic concepts and terms are recognized and understood by all emergency responders, they will be much better prepared to co-ordinate joint efforts.

3. Standard SAR procedures should typically be followed for the SAR part of the response, but these procedures will be largely independent of other efforts. Companies or authorities handling other aspects of the response will follow command, control and communication procedures developed for their respective organizations and duties.

4. The SAR system can function in its normal manner or use modified SAR procedures established to account for special demands of mass rescues, but it should be appropriately linked and subjected to a scheme for management of the overall incident response.

5. For major incidents, crisis management for the overall response may also be needed. The ICS is one simple and effective means of meeting this need. The ICS works best with some advance familiarization and exercising. The ICS is an example of an effective system used for emergency management, and is a tool that can be used where no equivalent means of overall incident management is in place.

INDUSTRY PLANNING AND RESPONSE

1. SAR authorities should co-ordinate MRO plans with companies that operate aircraft and ships designed to carry large numbers of persons. Such companies should share in preparations to minimize the chances that MROs will be needed and to ensure success if they are. For passenger ships, SAR Plans of Co-operation are part of MRO plans.

PUBLIC AND MEDIA RELATIONS

1. What the media reports may matter more than what SAR services do for shaping of public opinion about MROs. Importantly, the role of the media may be critical in shaping the actions of the public and those directly involved in the distress situation in a way that contributes to safety, success and panic control. There should be no unwarranted delays in providing information to the media. Information should be readily available, clear, accurate, consistent and freely exchanged among emergency responders and others concerned, such as the public and families of persons on board.

2. Identify spokespersons and outline what they will say, staying factual. If SAR services do not provide a public spokesperson for a major incident, the media will.
Spokespersons should be cautious about speculating on causes of accidents and should inform the media that current operations are focused on saving lives.

3. Ensure that the media knows who is in charge of co-ordinating rescue operations.

4. A single spokesperson not directly involved in the incident can be valuable in relieving the Incident Coordinator (IC) and SMC of this duty.

5. Many entities are involved in a major incident, including ships, aircraft, companies and SAR services. Co-ordination is required to ensure that there is one message with many messengers. Interviews should be live if possible.

6. Prompt establishment of a joint information centre away from the SMC will help to achieve this goal. The centre can establish proper procedures for establishing what messages will be released to the public and how those messages will be released. Since the messages may be sensitive, it is critical that everyone communicates the same information. The centre can be responsible for co-ordinating information made available via the internet and perhaps establishing and maintaining a public web site.

7. The media is a 24-hour global market, with news broadcast worldwide around the clock. The media will find a way to get to the scene for first hand information, pictures and video. By providing transportation to the scene and controlling media access, safety and what is reported can be improved and better controlled.

8. Media outlets may have more resources to mobilize on scene than do SAR authorities, and RCC operating plans should account for how to deal with such situations.

9. Information should be provided to the public on what SAR facilities are being used and, if possible, a web address or list of contact phone numbers should be provided for families, media and others to contact for more information.

10. Preparations should be made so that large numbers of callers can be accommodated without saturating the phone system or crashing the computer server.

11. Advance preparation of standby web pages by transportation companies and SAR authorities can help in responding to floods of requests for information. These pages can be quickly posted to provide general information the media can use. Web information should be timely and accurate. Once posted, these pages can be easily updated with the status of the incident and could also include:
   • contact information;
   • basic government or industry facts;
   • industry and SAR definitions;
   • photographs and statistics of aircraft, ships and SAR facilities;
   • answers to frequently asked questions;
   • links to other key sites;
   • information on passenger capacity, crew size, vessel plans and firefighting capabilities; and
   • library footage of a vessel inspection or of the crew performing lifesaving drills.
12. Besides the media, families and other organizations will also want this information.

**FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

1. It is very important to develop and share lessons learned from actual MRO operations and exercises. However, concerns (often excessive) about legal liability may discourage highlighting matters that could have been done better.

2. Since lessons learned can help prevent recurring serious mistakes, agreement should be reached among principal participants on how lessons learned can be depersonalized and made widely available. Lessons learned from MROs should be shared not just locally, but internationally.

3. Careful accounting for survivors after they have been delivered to a place of safety remains important. They need to be kept informed about plans for them and about the ongoing response operations. With large numbers of persons often staying in different places, keeping track of and working with them can be difficult.

4. Transportation companies are often best suited to handle and assist survivors during this time. Crewmembers may be placed at various locations to record passenger names and locations. Another possibility is for airlines or passenger ships to attach plastic cards to life vests to give passengers phone numbers for contacting the company. Some companies use bar coded bracelets to track children who are passengers.

5. Communicating with passengers is more difficult in remote areas, where phone service may be inadequate or lacking. If phones do exist, calling the airline or shipping company may be the best way to check in and find out information. In more populated areas, local agencies may have an emergency evacuation or other useful plan that can be implemented.

6. To protect passengers from harassment by interviewers and cameras, survivors might be placed in hotels or other places of refuge. However, triage and landing locations must be established and publicized to all rescue personnel and good Samaritans.

**EXERCISES FOR MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS**

Since opportunities to handle actual incidents involving mass rescues are rare and challenging, exercising MRO plans are particularly important. Mass evacuation and rescue operations are difficult and costly, leading to a tendency to use simulation excessively during exercises rather than physically exercising on scene efforts.

MRO exercise objectives need not be addressed in a single large exercise, but may be satisfied in part by routine incorporation into multiple drills, some intended mainly to test other systems. However, realistic drills are necessary and costly, and over 1,000 volunteer ship passengers or hundreds of volunteer aircraft passengers will likely be needed to conduct a realistic exercise.
Separate rooms can be used to simulate command posts that would normally be in separate locations.

MRO exercises should ideally achieve the following objectives:

- **Account for:**
  - Crew and passenger lists
  - Rescued passengers and crew until they can return to their homes
  - All persons associated with the rescue and aftermath operations
  - Lifeboats, including empty boats or rafts
  - High freeboard issues for likely rescue facilities

- **Identify and task available resources:**
  - Use of Amver
  - Potential resources ashore and afloat
  - Resources from local agencies (medical personnel, hospital facilities, fire department, general community, transportation resources)
  - National and regional military and other resources

- **Evaluate notification processes, resource availability, timeliness of initial response, real-time elements, conference capabilities and overall co-ordination**

- **Ensure all agency roles are sorted out, understood and properly followed**

- **Test capabilities of potential OSCs and ability to transfer OSC duties**

- **Evaluate span of control**

- **Evacuate a ship or aircraft**

- **Co-ordinate activities and achieve information exchanges**
  - Communications (RCC-RCC, government-industry, RCC-OSC, on scene, shore-ship, ground-air, ship-air, SAR facility-survival craft, etc.)
  - Information for all concerned (identify, merge, purge, retrieve and transfer to the right place in the right form at the right time)
  - New communication and information management technologies
  - Media and next-of-kin

- **Safely transfer and care for passengers (evacuation, in survival craft, rescue, medical, protection from environment, post-rescue transfers, etc.)**

- **Test all communication links that may be needed for notification, co-ordination and support**

- **Conduct medical triage and provide first aid**

- **Assess ship’s safety management system effectiveness**

- **Exercise co-ordination with local response agencies**
• Provide food, water, lifejackets and other protective clothing to survivors

• Test mass rescue plans:
  • SAR services
  • Company (including aircraft and ship plans)
  • Any relevant emergency response organizations, e.g., disaster response, military, firefighting and medical
  • Transportation and accommodations

• Assess how effectively earlier lessons learned have been accounted for in updated plans and how well these lessons were disseminated

• Exercise salvage and pollution abatement capabilities

• Carry out emergency relocation of the disabled craft

• Exercise external affairs, such as international and public relations:
  • Necessary participants involved
  • Joint information centers established quickly and properly staffed
  • Press briefings handled effectively, e.g., consistent information from different sources
  • Notification of the next of kin and family briefings
  • Staff and equipment capacity to handle incoming requests for information
  • Rescued persons tracked, kept informed and needs monitored, and reunited with belongings

The following steps are normally carried out during exercise planning:

• Agree on the exercise scenario, goals and extent Assembly a multi-disciplinary planning team and agree on objectives for each aspect of the exercise

• Develop the main events and associated timetables

• Confirm availability of agencies to be involved, including any media representatives or volunteers

• Confirm availability of transportation, buildings, equipment, aircraft, ships or other needed resources

• Test all communications that will be used, including tests of radio and mobile phones at or near the locations where they will be used

• Identify and brief all participants and people who will facilitate the exercise, and ensure that facilitators have good independent communications with person who will be controlling the exercise
• Ensure that everyone involved knows what to do if an actual emergency should arise during the exercise. If observers are invited, arrange for their safety, and to keep them informed about the exercise progress.

• For longer exercises, arrange for food and toilet facilities.

• Use “exercise in progress” signs, advance notifications and other means to help ensure that person not involved in the exercise do not become alarmed.

• Schedule times and places for debriefs.

• Agree and prepare conclusions and recommendations with the entity responsible for handling each recommendation along with the due date for any actions.

• Prepare a clear and concise report and distribute it as appropriate to the participating organizations.

• Consider the outcome of this exercise in planning future exercises.

**DEFINITION**

A Mass Rescue Operation (MRO) is a civil search and rescue activity characterized by the need for immediate assistance to a large number of persons in distress, such that the capabilities normally available to search and rescue authorities are inadequate.

**PRIORITY**

1. Lifesaving
2. Environmental Protection
3. Property Protection

**MUTUAL ASSISTANCE**

Search and Rescue authorities may not be well equipped on their own to handle the evacuation of large numbers of passengers immediately. Serious consideration should be given by companies and search and rescue authorities to develop a mutual aid system. In this type of system, search and rescue authorities can call upon the use of other company vessels to evacuate passengers to or to serve as triage sites, etc.

**GEOGRAPHIC AREAS**

Planning considerations should be given to response abilities due to geographic restraints. Resources would decrease and response times increase the farther off shore or the more remote an area an incident occurs. The following general geographic locations should be considered:

• Coastal – within state or territorial jurisdiction
• Offshore/High Seas
• Areas not able to immediately respond (e.g. international waters or remote areas as Greenland)
SAR MISSION COORDINATOR (SMC) ROLE

For Mass Rescue Operations the SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) will initiate action and coordinate the overall SAR response.

ON SCENE COORDINATOR (OSC)

OSC’s main duty is coordinating SAR assets and rescue efforts under the SMC’s general direction. OSC may be able to handle communications on scene with remote authorities to free the pilot or master to retain the integrity of his or her craft. OSC will normally be designated by an SMC. On Scene responsibilities for safety of passengers and crew will be shared by the OSC and the shipmaster or aircraft pilot in command, with the pilot or master assuming as much of this responsibility as possible before or after the ship or aircraft is abandoned.

AIRCRAFT COORDINATOR (ACO)

The purpose of the Aircraft Coordinator (ACO) function is to coordinate the involvement of multiple aircraft in a SAR operation, in order to increase mission effectiveness, while maintaining flight safety for all aircraft involved. The ACO should be seen as a cooperating, supporting and advisory agency. Normally the ACO will be appointed by the SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC).

The SMC should take the following factors into account when deciding whether or not to appoint an ACO to coordinate aircraft activity:

- Number of aircraft in the same SAR mission.
- Aircraft from different countries.
- Weather conditions.
- Communication problems.
- Logistic problems.

The ACO function will normally be performed from the facility with the most suitable mix of communication means, radar, Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) and navigation systems, long endurance on-scene combined with trained personnel. Duties of the ACO can be carried out from a fixed wing aircraft, helicopter, ship, a fixed structure such as an oil rig, or an appropriate land unit – like a Rescue Coordination Centre.

LOCAL INCIDENT COORDINATOR (LICO)

LICO’s main duty is coordinating SAR assets and rescue efforts under the OSC’s general direction. The LICO is a person appointed by the OSC. The LICO may be a person from the crew of the OSC vessel or another person appointed from one of the other SRU’s participating in the Search and Rescue Operation. The LICO is the local coordinator on board the distressed vessel and is coordinating the assistance with firefighting, medical treatment of injured persons, damage control in case of leakage, search for missing persons in the vessel, total evacuation of the vessel diving assistance and towing assistance. This coordination is done as a close teamwork with the captain (or his representative) of the distressed vessel and the On Scene Coordinator (OSC).

The initial task for the LICO is to get an overview of the situation on board the distressed vessel together with the captain. Based on the actual situation the LICO will inform the
OSC about the general situation and request for the assistance needed, i.e. firefighting, medical assistance and coordinate the total incident for arriving incident teams.

General SAR organization
COMMAND, CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS

Establish Missions and Objectives:

1. Address safety of passengers and crew.
2. Respond to potential and actual security threats.
3. Mitigate threat of pollution.
4. Manage information.

Minimize unnecessary communication with the shipmaster or aircraft pilot. Persons or organizations in need of information should be directed to a source ashore that is prepared to handle potentially large requests (e.g. from assisting agencies, the media, relatives, etc.).

MISSION OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure Safety of Response Personnel
2. Manage a Coordinated Response
3. Establish Mission Priorities
   (1) Safety of Responders
(2) Secondary incident
(3) Hazardous Materials

4. Address Safety of Passengers and Crew

• Stabilize the vessel
  (1) Assess vessel integrity
  (2) Extinguish fire
  (3) Initiate damage control

• Passenger and Crew Management
  (1) Obtain Crew and Passenger list
  (2) Account for passengers and crew until they can return home.
  (3) Evaluate and treat injuries
  (4) Determine need for evacuation
  (5) Plan and conduct evacuation, if needed

• Implement passenger and crew shore side response
  (1) Quarantine Options for passenger and crew that are landed ashore.
  (2) Transport passenger and crew that are landed ashore
  (3) Process and account for passengers and crew landed ashore
  (4) Provide shore side facilities to care for and house passengers and crew

5. Respond to Potential and Actual Security Threats

• Evaluate possible cause of casualty or threat
• Make timely notifications
• Mobilize outside security agencies and support
• Initiate an investigation
• Limit access and establish a security zone and or restricted air space
  (1) Secure landing sites and reception centers

6. Mitigate Threat of Pollution

• Ensure actions are underway to control the source and minimize the total volume of oil or pollutant released
• Ensure all necessary actions have been taken to protect environmentally sensitive areas, to include minimizing wildlife impacts
• Ensure effective containment, cleanup, recovery, and disposal of spilled product

7. Manage Information

• Manage Internal Communications
• Maintain effective information flow to and from the scene and to the responders
• Establish effective communications flow between:
• Command Posts
• Initial Responders
• Fire/Rescue/Law Enforcement
• Military/Civil Assets
• Involved party (i.e. satellite, cellular, virtual…)

• External communications

• Provide first and best source of information for:
  • Families (including next of kin), passengers, and crew
  • The media
  • Stakeholders

• Establish and implement media strategy
  • Press Release
  • Pre-established Web site
  • Public
  • Stakeholders

• Establish methodology for unified command to release common message to avoid confusion.

LOCAL INCIDENT COORDINATION ON BOARD THE DISTRESSED VESSEL

Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) may also include request for the following assistance:
• firefighting,
• triage,
• medical treatment of injured persons,
• MEDIVAC
• damage control in case of leakage,
• environmental protection,
• search for missing persons in the vessel,
• total evacuation of the vessel,
• diving assistance,
• towing assistance

The requested assistance will be provided by the different Search and Rescue Units (SRU) arriving on scene and will depend on the capability of the SRU’s available in the Area Of Operation (AOR) at the present time.

The incident coordinator should be a well trained and educated coordinator (chief mate, chief engineer or another well trained person).

The OSC should call the vessel in distress (the captain or his representative) by radio, asking the captain if it is safe to send a LOCAL INCIDENT COORDINATOR (LICO) on board his vessel for coordination of the total incident.

After entering the distressed vessel the LICO will, as one of the first duties on board, contact the captain (normally on the bridge of the vessel). The LICO should be wearing a
special marking allowing other teams arriving on board to see who is the LICO. When different assistance teams arrive on board the distressed vessel he should make it clear to all arriving teams that he is the LOCAL INCIDENT COORDINATOR and will be the coordinator for all teams arriving on board. The LICO should, first of all, ask the captain about the general situation of the distressed vessel. He should get access to the damage- and fire plan for the vessel to get an overview of the general situation. The LICO should stay close to the captain at all times and monitor and evaluate the situation together with him and his crew. The captain, his crew, the LICO and assisting teams and the OSC with all available Search and Rescue Units should work close together as one team.

The general situation should be based on the following:

- General overall situation onboard
- Dangerous cargo on board
- Safety for incident teams, crew and passengers
- Number of persons on board (POB)
- Possibility to carry out a total evacuation in case an emergency situation (ships crew and incident teams on board at the moment)
- Assistance required assisting the crew in the best way to save lives and property.

When the LICO has completed his work with gathering information on the general situation on board the distressed vessel together with the captain, he should immediately inform the OSC about the situation and the needs for further assistance. (SITREP).

Based on information received from the LICO the OSC should request for the needed assistance from the Search and Rescue Units (SRU) available on scene.

The OSC can use the checklists in Annex 8 to collect information on the capabilities of all SRU’s on scene.

Based on the actual situation on board the distressed vessel the LICO may request further assistance from the SRU’s on scene through the OSC. The OSC will pass on that request to the SRU having that requested capacity available. The SRU will transfer the requested capacity to the distressed vessel. The local team leader will report to the LICO when the team arrive on board and get the actual tasking on board the distressed vessel. Every single team activated by the LICO on board the distressed vessel have to report and refer directly to the LICO and keep him updated on the current situation.

The LICO should keep the OSC updated on the situation by submitting frequently SITREPS. Incident teams that will not be needed anymore on board may be released by the LICO and be returned to their own unit.

Together with the crew of the distressed vessel, the LICO should keep track of the total number of all persons on board at any given time. (Crew, passengers, and number of persons on board as assisting teams).

In case of emergency evacuation of the distressed vessel the LICO should take care of the total evacuation together with the crew of the vessel and make sure that all person will get away from the ship in due time by means of all available means. (Life rafts boats and helicopters).
LOCAL COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR INCIDENT COORDINATION

Incident coordination on board a distressed vessel is very difficult. To coordinate the incident onboard it is very important to have a good and reliable communication plan to stick to basically. The communication plan must be prepared as a standard communication plan. Later on the plan may be changed due to the actual situation on scene. Communication between OSC, LICO, Captain, important crewmembers (chief mate, chief engineer and safety crew) and different incident teams activated different places on board the vessel is essential to the LICO to have a actual and updated picture of the total situation on board. Poor communication will lead to missing important information’s about the situation and in the very end result in loss of lives and property. Poor communication or totally lack of communication between the different persons mentioned above can lead to a catastrophic situation.

Communication on board large vessels is known to be a major problem. Different communication equipment (VHF, UHF, telephones, sound powered telephones and different working frequencies). All these things will make it very difficult to make a communication plan, in advance, that works in all situations.
GENERAL SAR COORDINATION

JRCC/MRCC (SMC)

POLICE
COASTAL RADIOSTATION

On Scene Coordinator (OSC)
Air Coordinator (ACO)

ADJACENT JRCC/MRCC

Search And Rescue Units (Surface)
Search And Rescue Units (Air)

Annex 1
LOCAL INCIDENT COORDINATION BEFORE DEPLOYMENT OF INCIDENT TEAMS

JRCC/MRCC (SMC) -> On Scene Coordinator (OSC) -> Local Incident Coordinator (LICO) -> CAPTAIN

Search And Rescue Unit A
- Firefighting team A
- Medical team A
- Damage control team A

Search And Rescue Unit B
- Medical team B1
- Medical team B2
- Damage control team B

Search And Rescue Unit C
- Firefighting team C1
- Firefighting team C2
- Damage control team C

DISTRESSED VESSEL

Annex 3
LOCAL INCIDENT COORDINATION AFTER DEPLOYMENT OF INCIDENT TEAMS

JRCC/MRCC (SMC) → On Scene Coordinator (OSC) → Local Incident Coordinator (LICO)

CAPTAIN

Search And Rescue Unit A
- Medical team A
- Damage control team A

Search And Rescue Unit B
- Medical team B2
- Damage control team B

Search And Rescue Unit C
- Firefighting team C2

DISTRESSED VESSEL

Annex 4
## ON SCENE COORDINATOR (OSC) CHECKLIST

### INITIAL INFORMATIONS FROM SMC/DISTRESSED UNIT

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<tr>
<th>Informations received at: (Date time group):</th>
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<thead>
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<th>Description of the distress situation:</th>
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<th>Survival equipment on board:</th>
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<th>Communication equipment on board:</th>
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<th>Number of sets:</th>
<th>Channel(s):</th>
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<td>On Scene Coordinator (OSC):</td>
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<td>Air Coordinator (ACO):</td>
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<td>Call sign of ACO:</td>
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Annex 6
### SEARCH AND RESCUE COMMUNICATION PLAN

#### COMMUNICATION PLAN

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Annex 7
### OVERALL COORDINATION OF SEARCH AND RESCUE UNITS

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<th>POSITION/TIME</th>
<th>SPEED</th>
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<th>COMMUNICATION</th>
<th>SAR CAPABILITIES *)</th>
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*) FF=Firefighting teams, MT=Medical teams, SS= Search, SDT=Smoke diving teams, DCT=Damage control teams, DT=Diving teams, TO=Towing capability

**Annex 8**
**HELO RESOURCES (WITHIN RANGE, AS NEEDED, UP TO 500 NAUTICAL MILES)**

To augment high readiness and traditionally used resources

Static Data for planning (update/keep current)

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<th>Number of available helo(s) By type</th>
<th>Response time</th>
<th>Endurance (hours)</th>
<th>Hoisting capability (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Off-shore capability (Range in NM)</th>
<th>Passenger Capacity</th>
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Annex 9.
Helicopter Resources
## FIXED WING RESOURCES (WITHIN RANGE, AS NEEDED, UP TO 500 NAUTICAL MILES)

*To augment high readiness and traditionally used resources*

Static Data for planning (update/keep current)

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**Annex 10**

Fixed wing Resources
### INSHORE RESOURCES

(I.e. HARBOUR PILOT, TUGS, FERRY, STATE, LOCAL, INDUSTRY, COMMERCIAL PROVIDERS)

To augment high readiness and traditionally used resources

Static Data for planning (update/keep current)

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Annex 11
Inshore Resources
OFF SHORE RESOURCES
(i.e. OFF SHORE PLATFORMS, FERRY, NAVY, TUGS, COMMERCIAL PROVIDERS)
To augment high readiness and traditionally used resources

Static Data for planning (update/keep current)

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Annex 12
INSHORE RESOURCES
UNIT/FACILITIES AT POTENTIAL RISK IN YOUR AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
(i.e. CRUSE LINE, FERRY, MERCHANT VESSEL, AIRLINE, OFF SHORE OILINSTALLATIONS)

*To augment high readiness and traditionally used resources*

**FOR THE AREA OF OPERATION OF:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name/address/contact information</th>
<th>Craft name/medical and emergency personnel capability</th>
<th>Emergency management center POC and contact information</th>
<th>Hours of operation</th>
<th>Date last updated</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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Annex 13
Potential risk in your Area of Operation (AOR)
POTENTIAL SURVIVOR TRIAGE/STAGING SITES  
(Consider SRU turnaround time back to scene)  

Static Data for planning (update/keep current)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR THE PORT/AREA OF OPERATION OF:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIEMBARK FROM</td>
<td>LOCATION/POC (for further transfer)</td>
<td>LAT/LONG</td>
<td>Date last updated</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIRCRAFT</td>
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<td>SMALL VESSEL</td>
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<td>LARGE DEEP DRAFT VESSEL</td>
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Annex 14  
Potential Survivor Sites