Planning Guidance & References

Development of a Mass Rescue Plan required a format that will be easy to use and will immediately assist your company or organization in an emergency. Create prioritized check lists of action items and important information for ship and office specific actions.

Some good information sources to reference when developing your MRO Plan include:

- International Maritime Organization (IMO) Circ. 31
- National Search and Rescue (SAR) Supplement
- Coast Guard SAR Addendum
- Incident Management Handbook, Commandant Publication P3120.17
- Navigation Rules, International—Inland, Commandant Instruction M16672.2 Series

Information On the Internet

U.S. Coast Guard
www.uscg.mil/hq/g-o/g-opr/sar.htm

International Maritime Organization
www.imo.org/home.asp

Passenger Vessel Association: www.passengervessel.com

For additional assistance, including a FREE ASSESSMENT of existing MRO plans, or information on preparing for mass rescue operations, please contact the U.S. Coast Guard Passenger Vessel Specialist in your region.

U.S. Coast Guard Passenger Vessel Safety Program

First District 617-223-8442
Fifth District 757-398-6558
Seventh District 305-415-6876
Ninth District 504-589-6159
Eleventh District 510-437-5960
Thirteenth District 206-220-7224
Fourteenth District 808-541-2118
Seventeenth District 907-463-2808
Puerto Rico 787-729-2385
What Is a Mass Rescue Operation?

A **mass rescue operation** (MRO) is a search and rescue activity that requires immediate assistance to a large number of persons in distress such that the capabilities normally available to search and rescue authorities are inadequate.

Why Plan for a MRO?

While mass rescue scenarios are low probability, high consequence events planning, training and exercising are required to develop and maintain your mass rescue skills in order to minimize the loss of life, injury, and property should a catastrophic situation arise. The success of an MRO is contingent upon the seamless efforts of search and rescue agencies, the company, mutual assistance assets, and Good Samaritans. *Having an effective MRO plan and exercising that plan is a must.*

Your Mass Rescue Plan Should:

- **Recognize** and define your unique MRO risks.
- **Identify** shortfalls & ways to avoid/correct problems before they occur.
- **Identify** who is in charge and how to work with who is in charge.
- **Define** your response priorities.
- **Provide** quick start checklists for immediate action items.
- **Identify** your response team and their individual duties.
- **Identify** all available response assets and how to quickly acquire.
- **Engage** your response partners, their respective roles, and their contact information.
- **Identify** communications paths. How will you talk to your response partners?
- **Define** your training and exercise requirements.

Response Coordination in MROs.

Successful response to MRO incidents requires immediate, well planned and closely coordinated actions and use of rescue resources from multiple organizations. A well developed MRO Plan will assist with:

**VESSEL OWNERS & OPERATORS:**
- Notify SAR services at earliest time of potential distress situations.
- Provide critical information to response partners to avoid multiple requests to master.
- Using Incident Command System (ICS), support SAR response partners to maximum extent.

**U.S. COAST GUARD:**
- Designate On Scene Commander (OSC) and direct operations.
- Establish Unified Command.
- Coordinate all activity with operators. Avoid duplication of effort.

**PORT COMMUNITY:**
- Assist with supporting large number of evacuees into community: medical, food, temporary lodging & mental health needs.