International guidance on MROs

Harnessing today without compromising tomorrow…
International guidance on MROs

- **COMSAR/Circ.31**: Guidance for Mass Rescue Operations
- **MSC.1/Circ.1186**: Guidelines on the training of SAR service personnel working in major incidents
- **MSC.1/Circ.1183**: Guidelines on the provision of external support as an aid to incident containment
- **MSC.1/Circ.1184**: Enhanced contingency planning guidance for passenger ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities
- **MSC.1/Circ.1182/Rev.1**: Guide to recovery techniques
- **MSC.1/Circ.1447**: Guidelines for the development of plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water
- **MSC.1/Circ.1079**: Guidelines for preparing plans for cooperation between SAR services and passenger ships
COMSAR/Circ.31
Guidance for Mass Rescue Operations

- Prepared by the Joint ICAO/IMO Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue at its ninth session (Hong Kong, China, 30 September to 4 October 2002)

- Guidance were agreed by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR), at its seventh session (13 to 17 January 2003)
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.

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 world-wide basis.

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.

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.

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.
To the extent practicable, MROs should be co-ordinated by an SMC in an RCC.

However, depending on the magnitude, nature, complexity of a mass rescue incident, the rescue efforts may be better co-ordinated by an appropriate operations center 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
- serious problems in addition to potential loss of lives, such as environmental threats, terrorist actions, or national security issues.
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...

Means of reliably accounting for everyone involved, including responders, survivors, crew...

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

Ready availability to all potential users of plans, checklists and flowcharts
- **Major incidents** are, fortunately, rare
- However, they must **be planned and prepared for**
- The preparation includes an **additional element of training**
- **SAR service** personnel are generally used to handling **relatively small-scale incidents**
- The rarity of major incidents means that they **cannot gain the same levels of direct experience in dealing with emergencies on this scale**.
- The need for specific **training therefore increases commensurately**
The Guidelines on the training of SAR service personnel working in major incidents were approved by the Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-first session (10 to 19 May 2006)

Successful interaction and mutual understanding between those who will have to work closely together during a major emergency are of fundamental importance to its being handled successfully.

The human element and relevant training for all who may be involved are key factors in this context.
These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the guidance on mass rescue operations in the IAMSAR Manual, Volume I, Section 6.5, and especially Volume II, Section 6.15.

In these guidelines the term major incident means an incident which requires special arrangements to be put in place in order to deal with it.

The incident is above and beyond what may be regarded as routine SAR work.
Particular attention is drawn to the following aspects of major incident preparedness:

1. the structure and synergy of the wider SAR team which, in a major incident, will include members who are not used to working together as part of the everyday response;
2. the crucial importance of effective communications at all levels;
3. the additional pressures placed on SAR service personnel during major incidents, and particularly in mass rescue operations;
4. the usefulness of major emergency exercises and simulations; and
5. the usefulness of familiarization visits and exchanges, and joint training initiatives.
Prepared by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue at its first session (30 June to 4 July 2014)

The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-fourth session (17 to 21 November 2014), with a view to providing specific guidance to seafarers on recovery techniques, approved the Guide on recovery techniques
The recovery process is often difficult

It may be complicated by:

- **The size of your ship:**
  survivors may have to climb or be lifted considerable distances to get aboard

- **Differences in relative movement between your ship and the craft or people alongside:**
  it may be difficult to stay alongside or for survivors to get onto ladders, etc. or in through shell openings; and

- **The physical capability of those to be recovered:**
  they may be able to do little or nothing to help themselves
This guide focuses on recovery and the work you may have to do to achieve it.

It is intended to be used as a reference document.

You should read it now and you should refer to it again while proceeding to the scene of the emergency.

Should be a part of your preparation for the recovery operation.
The guidance is set out as follows:

- Possible recovery problems
- Planning considerations
- Providing assistance before recovery
- The recovery process – general considerations
- The approach
- Rescue craft and lines
- Getting people aboard – factors to consider
- Climbing and lifting
- Providing assistance when standing by
  The immediate care of people recovered
- Recovery Checklist
Approved by the Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-first session (26 to 30 November 2012)

Aiming at providing additional guidance on the application of the requirements in SOLAS regulation III/17-1

Should be read in conjunction with the Guide to recovery techniques (MSC.1/Circ.1182) and the Guide for cold water survival (MSC.1/Circ.1185/Rev.1)
A risk assessment should be conducted and documented when developing plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water.

The recovery plans and procedures should facilitate the transfer of persons from the water to the ship while minimizing the risk of injury from impact with the ship's side or other structures.

To the extent practicable, recovery procedures should provide for recovery of persons in a horizontal or near-horizontal ("deck-chair") position. (refer to the Guide for cold water survival (MSC.1/Circ.1185/Rev.1)

If carried, dedicated recovery equipment should be clearly marked with the maximum number of persons it can accommodate, based on a weight of 82.5 kg per person.
Recovery operations should be conducted at a position clear of the ship’s propellers and, as far as practicable, within the ship's parallel mid-body section.

A source of illumination and, where required, a source of power should be available for the area where the recovery operation is conducted.

Ship-specific procedures for the recovery of persons from the water should specify the anticipated conditions under which a recovery operation may be conducted without causing undue hazard to the ship and the ship's crew.
Having considered the recommendations made by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue at its fourth session (8 to 10 March 2017)

The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-eighth session (7 to 16 June 2017), approved the revised guidelines (in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3)
To provide a uniform basis for the establishment of plans for cooperation between passenger ships and SAR services in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3

Plans developed in accordance with the Guidelines will meet the requirements of the regulation
The aim of SAR cooperation planning is to enhance the mutual understanding between a ship, a company and SAR services.

In the event of an emergency, all three parties will be able to work together efficiently and effectively.

This is best achieved by the prior exchange of information and by conducting joint emergency response exercises.
The objectives of SAR cooperation planning

- To link the SAR response plans of the company, the passenger ship, and relevant SAR services so that these plans complement each other.

- To enable the early and efficient establishment of contact in the event of emergency between
  - the passenger ship
  - the company's shore-based emergency response system
  - the SAR services

- To provide the SAR services with easily accessible and up-to-date information about the ship.

- To provide the ship and the company with easily accessible information about SAR and other emergency services available in the ship's area of operation, to assist in decision-making and in contingency planning.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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