



Search and Rescue Coordination Course: RCC Mission Planning and the IAMSAR Manual



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Introduction:

Search and rescue coordination for maritime and aeronautical incidents, run from a rescue coordination centre RCC under the IAMSAR Manual, is the subject of this 5-day course for coast guard, RCC and civil aviation units, who produce a SAR Mission Coordination Plan for a case RCC. Survivors are lost when beacon alerts sit unclassified, drift is estimated by guesswork and aircraft and vessels arrive on scene without a shared search action plan. Nominees already staff an RCC watch or handle distress alerts and practise through timed simulation. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this search and rescue coordination course.

Course Objectives:

- Organise RCC and rescue sub-centre roles, SAR region boundaries and coordinator duties using IAMSAR Manual Volume I principles
- Classify incoming GMDSS and COSPAS-SARSAT distress alerts into uncertainty, alert and distress phases and start the matching actions
- Calculate datum, leeway and total drift and define search areas using the IAMSAR Manual Volume II planning sequence
- Allocate search effort and select search patterns that raise the probability of success for the units available
- Coordinate aircraft and vessels on scene through On-Scene Coordinator and Aircraft Coordinator tasking, including mass-rescue operations
- Apply cross-border SAR agreements and case conclusion criteria when handing over, suspending or closing a SAR case

Target Audience:

- Coast guard operations units responsible for maritime distress response within a SAR region
 - Rescue coordination centre and rescue sub-centre watch teams responsible for alert handling and mission coordination
 - Civil aviation alerting and air traffic services units responsible for overdue and missing aircraft notification
 - SAR aviation and maritime unit planners responsible for tasking helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft and rescue craft
 - Port and maritime authority liaison units responsible for supporting RCCs with vessel and traffic information
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Course Outline:

Day 1: SAR System Organisation and Rescue Coordination Centre Roles

- IAMSAR Manual Volume I SAR System Components and Responsibilities
- SAR Region Boundaries and Rescue Sub-Centre Delegation Arrangements
- SAR Mission Coordinator, On-Scene Coordinator and Aircraft Coordinator Duties
- Joint, Maritime and Aeronautical RCC Staffing and Watch Structures
- RCC Readiness Baseline Using Case Records and Resource Inventories

Day 2: Distress Alerting Systems and Emergency Phases

- COSPAS-SARSAT EPIRB, ELT and PLB Alert Data Interpretation
- LEOSAR, GEOSAR and MEOSAR Detection With LUT and MCC Routing
- GMDSS Sea Areas, DSC Alerts and NAVTEX Broadcast Handling
- Uncertainty, Alert and Distress Phase Classification and Escalation
- Overdue Aircraft and Vessel Communication Searches and False Alert Screening

Day 3: Search Planning, Datum and Drift Calculation

- IAMSAR Manual Volume II Search Planning Sequence and Worksheets
- Datum Point, Line and Area Determination From Last Known Position
- Leeway, Sea Current and Wind Current Drift Vector Calculation
- Probability of Containment, Detection and Success Effort Allocation
- Expanding Square, Sector, Track Line and Parallel Sweep Pattern Selection

Day 4: Coordinating Aircraft, Vessels and Mass-Rescue Operations

- On-Scene Coordinator Tasking and Search Action Plan Messages
- Aircraft Coordinator Airspace Separation and Helicopter Hoist Sequencing
- Mass-Rescue Operations Planning for Passenger Ships and Ditched Airliners
- Cross-Border SAR Agreements, Letters of Agreement and Handover Protocols
- SAR Case Suspension, Conclusion Criteria and Post-Case Debrief Records

Day 5: Simulation Exercise and SAR Mission Coordination Plan

- Case RCC Scenario Pack With Overdue Aircraft Over Sea
 - Simulated Alert Escalation From Beacon Detection to Distress Phase
 - Drift Recalculation and Search Area Update Under Changing Weather
 - Neighbouring RCC Handover Injects Using the Agreed Coordination Protocol
 - SAR Mission Coordination Plan Completion and Peer Review
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Skills You Will Gain:

- SAR Alert Classification
- Distress Beacon Data Analysis
- Datum and Drift Estimation
- Search Effort Allocation
- Search Pattern Selection
- Multi-Unit On-Scene Tasking
- Mass-Rescue Planning
- Cross-Border SAR Liaison

Why Attend This Course:

- Deliver a SAR Mission Coordination Plan for a case RCC to the RCC chief, the SAR mission coordinator roster and partner aviation units
- Decide when an alert moves from uncertainty to distress and which aircraft and vessels to task first
- Avoid lost search hours caused by unchecked false alerts, outdated datum positions and overlapping search areas
- Brief watch officers and SAR unit planners on the drift worksheets, search patterns and handover protocol used in the plan

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant presents the SAR Mission Coordination Plan to the RCC chief and the watch supervisors, who use it to standardise alert classification, search planning worksheets and the tasking of aircraft and vessels. Partner aviation and maritime units use its handover protocol when a case crosses a SAR region boundary. After its first live case or exercise, the unit should compare planned and actual search times, check datum accuracy against the final position found and revise the plan.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before the search and rescue coordination course?

Participants should already work on an RCC watch, in coast guard operations or in aviation alerting and understand basic chartwork, bearings and vectors. Prior SAR mission coordinator experience is not required. Bringing local SAR plans or recent case logs helps them apply the simulation to their own centre.

How does search and rescue coordination differ from shipboard emergency or urban rescue courses?

Search and rescue coordination is run from a shore centre that classifies alerts, plans search areas and tasks aircraft and vessels across a SAR region. Shipboard emergency courses train the crew of one vessel, while urban rescue courses cover collapse, rope and confined space work on land.

Why does drift calculation matter so much in maritime search and rescue coordination?

Drift calculation decides where survivors are most likely to be now, not where they were last seen. Leeway, sea current and wind current move a datum quickly, so an outdated datum sends units to empty water and lowers the probability of success with every hour.

What does a participant take back from the search and rescue coordination course?

Each participant takes back a SAR Mission Coordination Plan for a case RCC, with alert classification steps, drift and search planning worksheets, search pattern choices, on-scene tasking messages and a cross-border handover protocol that the centre can adapt to its own SAR region.