

The background image shows a maritime search and rescue operation. In the upper left, a large white and dark blue ship is visible, emitting thick black smoke from its funnel. In the lower right, a red inflatable rescue boat (Zodiac) is moving across the water, carrying several people. In the lower center, a smaller, dark inflatable boat is also visible. The sky is overcast and grey, and the water is a dark, choppy blue-grey.

# Search and Rescue and International Law

Rick Button  
Chief, Coordination Division  
Office of Search and Rescue  
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters  
Washington, D.C.



# Global SAR Organization



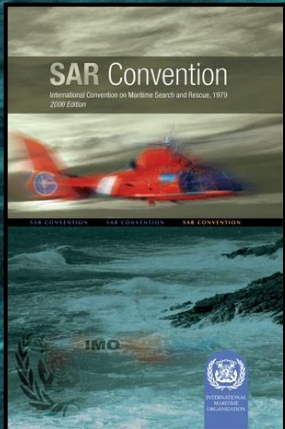
**International  
Maritime  
Organization  
(IMO)**

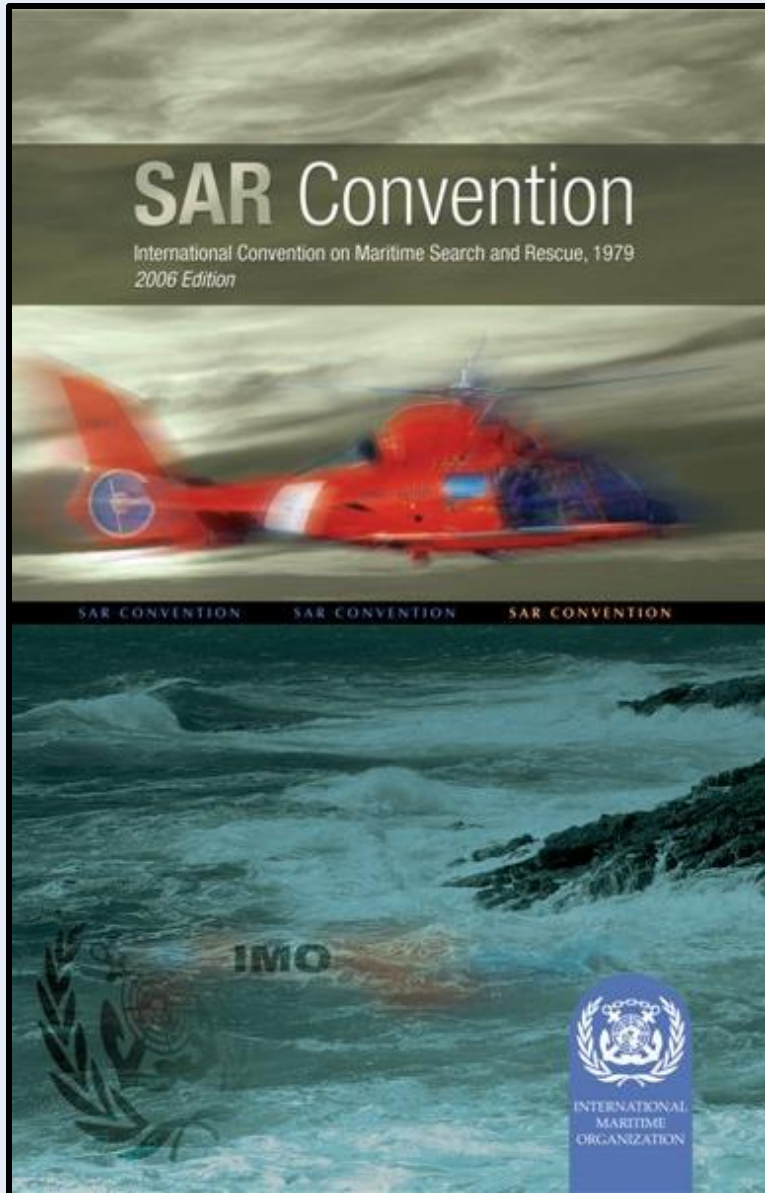
**International  
Civil Aviation  
Organization  
(ICAO)**



**International  
Convention on Maritime  
Search and Rescue  
(1979)  
“SAR Convention”**

**Convention on  
International Civil  
Aviation (1944):  
Annex 12 – Search  
and Rescue  
“Chicago Convention”**



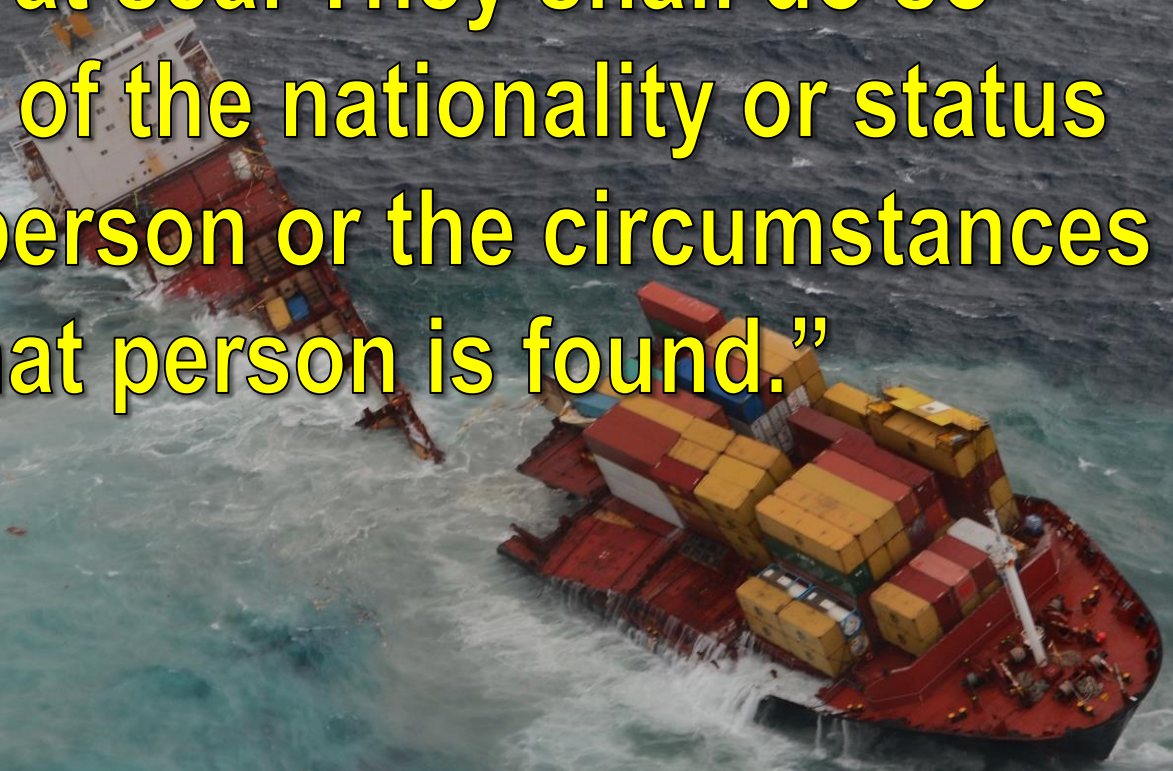


# Maritime SAR Convention (1979)

**Provides a framework  
for carrying out SAR  
operations in the  
maritime environment**



**“2.1.10 Parties shall ensure that assistance be provided to any person in distress at sea. They shall do so regardless of the nationality or status of such a person or the circumstances in which that person is found.”**





# Chicago Convention (1944)

**Provides the basis for  
international  
cooperation between  
contracting States for  
international civil  
aviation SAR services**

Doc 7300/8



**Convention on  
International Civil Aviation**

**Convention relative à  
l'aviation civile internationale**

**Convenio sobre  
Aviación Civil Internacional**

**Конвенция о международной  
гражданской авиации**

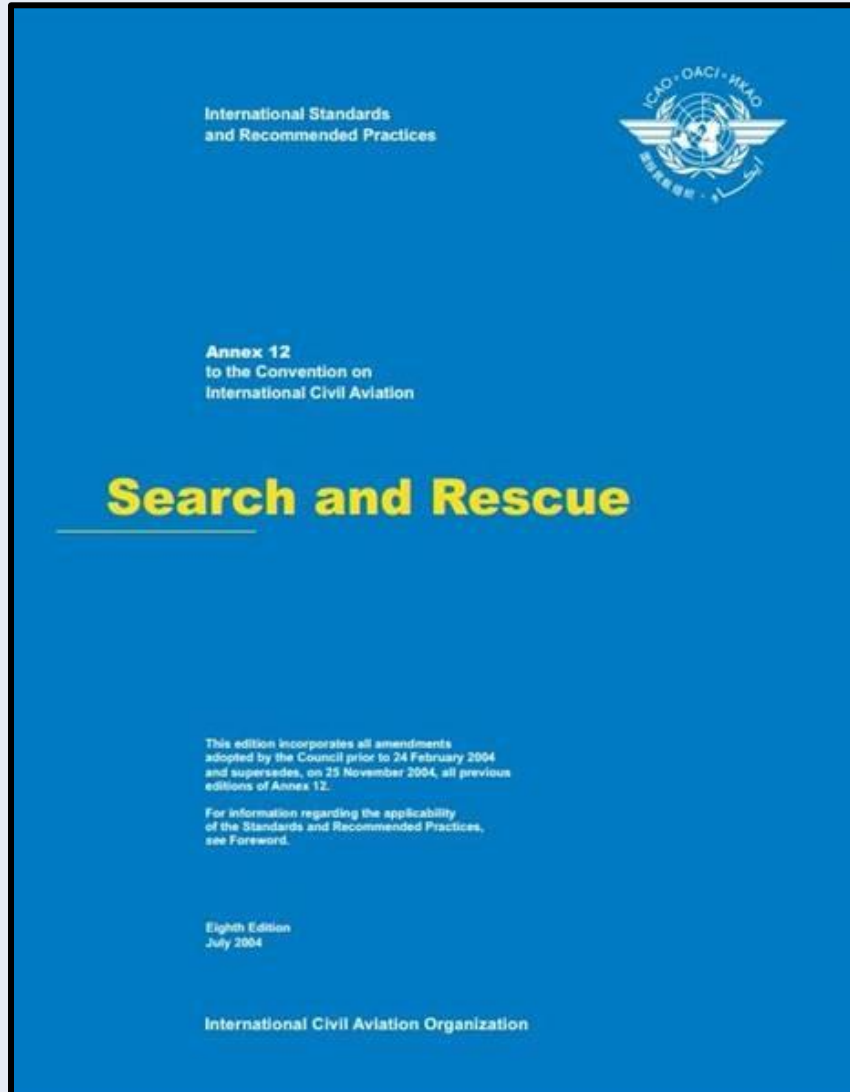
This document supersedes Doc 7300/7.  
Le présent document annule et remplace le Doc 7300/7.  
Este documento reemplaza el Doc 7300/7.  
Настоящий документ заменяет Doc 7300/7.

Eighth Edition – Huitième édition – Octava edición – Издание восьмое — 2000

International Civil Aviation Organization  
Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale  
Organización de Aviación Civil Internacional  
Международная организация гражданской авиации



# Global SAR Organization

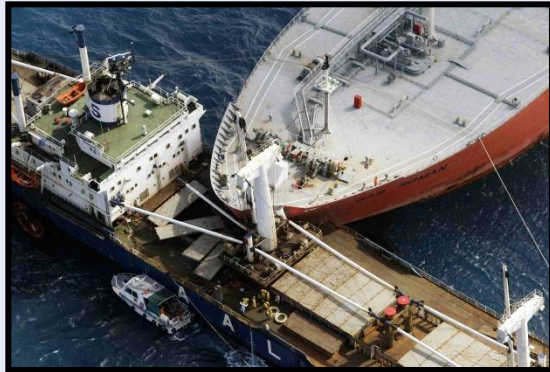
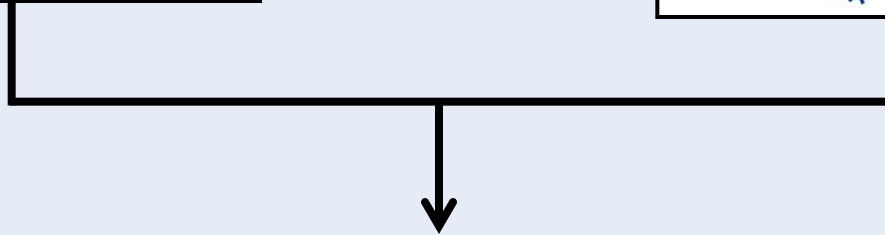


## Annex 12: Chicago Convention's primary Annex for SAR

**Aligned with the Maritime SAR Convention**



# Global SAR Organization



**International  
Aeronautical &  
Maritime Search  
and Rescue  
(IAMSAR) Manual**





# Global SAR Organization

## IAMSAR Manual

**Harmonizes aeronautical & maritime SAR organization, procedures, equipment, & terminology internationally**



A photograph of a submarine's conning tower (指挥台) emerging from the water. The tower is white with a blue and black striped pattern. A large, white, turbulent wake is visible behind the tower, extending towards the bottom left of the frame. The water is a dark, choppy blue-grey. In the background, a dark, tree-lined shore is visible under a clear sky.

**Nations implement the  
aeronautical and maritime  
SAR systems developed by  
IMO and ICAO**

**SAR services are provided “individually or in  
cooperation with other States”**



# SAR Regions

- World is divided into aeronautical & maritime SAR Regions
- An area of defined dimensions associated with a rescue co-ordination centre
- Formalized by agreement between States with adjacent SAR regions
- Aeronautical & maritime SAR Regions may not be the same



# SAR Regions

SAR Region “lines of delimitation” are not national borders (beyond the territorial sea)



Define a geographical area where a nation is responsible for coordinating SAR



# Rescue Coordination Center (RCC)

**Every SAR  
Region  
has a RCC**



# Global SAR Organization

**RCCs coordinate SAR w/in their SAR Region and w/other RCCs**

**RCCs are:**

- **Maritime (MRCC)**
- **Aeronautical (ARCC)**
- **Joint aeronautical & maritime (JRCC)**

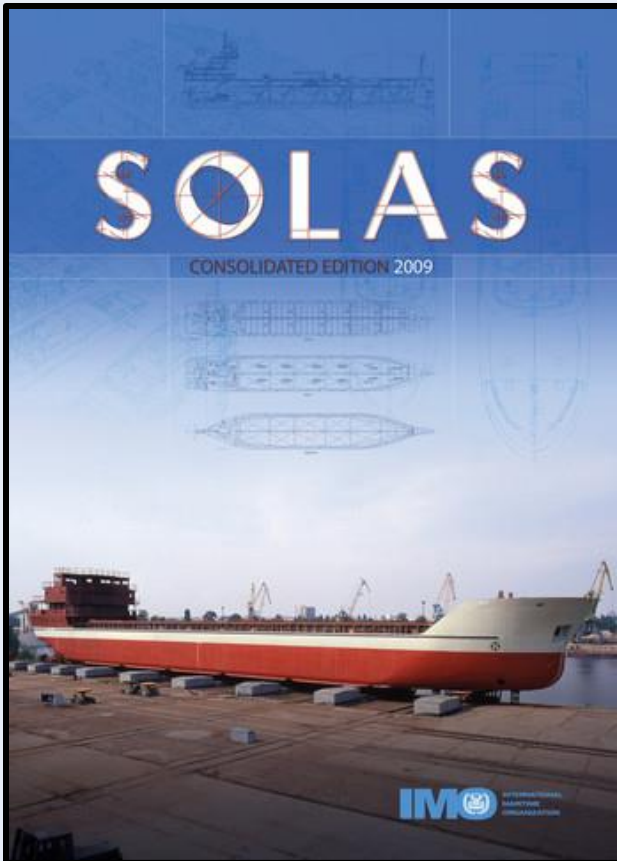






# Other Conventions that discuss SAR

# Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention (1974)





# **SOLAS Convention**

- **Most important international convention concerning merchant ship safety**
- **Minimum standards for construction, equipment and operation of ships, compatible with their safety**
- **Flag States responsible for ensuring ships under their flag comply with its requirements**



# SOLAS Convention

## Chapter V: Safety of navigation

### Regulation 33 – Distress situations: obligations and procedures



Obligates ship's master to assist persons in distress at sea regardless of nationality, status, or circumstance of the persons in distress



# **SOLAS Convention**

## **Chapter V: Safety of navigation**

### **Regulation 33 – Distress situations: obligations and procedures**

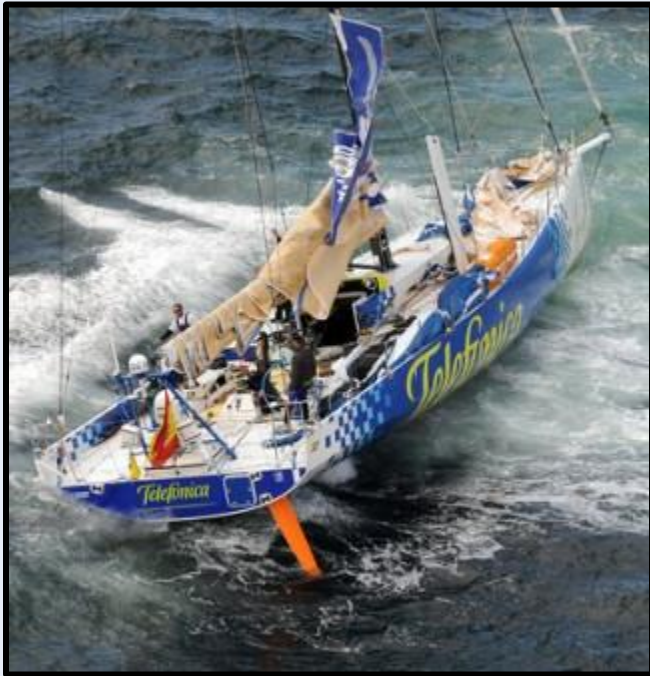
#### **Paragraph 1-1 – Contracting Governments**

- **Obligated to assist ships providing assistance to persons in distress in order to minimize the impact to the ships' intended voyage**



# SOLAS Convention

## Paragraph 1-1 – Contracting Governments



- Primarily responsible for coordinating with the ship providing the assistance if the rescue occurred within its SAR region
- Responsible for arranging disembarkation of persons rescued to a **place of safety** soon as reasonably practicable



## **Place of safety**

- 1. A location where rescue operations are considered to terminate**
- 2. Where a survivor's safety of life is no longer threatened and where their basic human needs (e.g., food, shelter & medical needs) can be met**
- 3. A place from which transportation arrangements can be made for the survivor's next or final destination**

**IAMSAR Manual - Volume I**

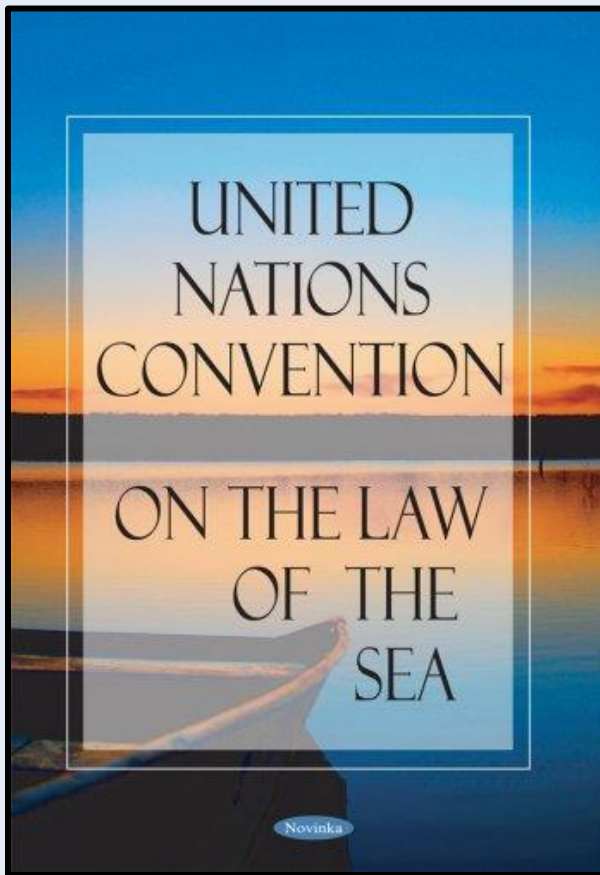
## Place of safety

- *Guidelines on the Treatment of Persons Rescued at Sea, Resolution MSC.167(78), 20 May 2004*
- A life raft, even with ample rations, is not considered a place of safety
- Life raft is a life-saving appliance; does not meet SOLAS requirements for a place of safety





# UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982)



# UNCLOS

## Article 98: Duty to render assistance

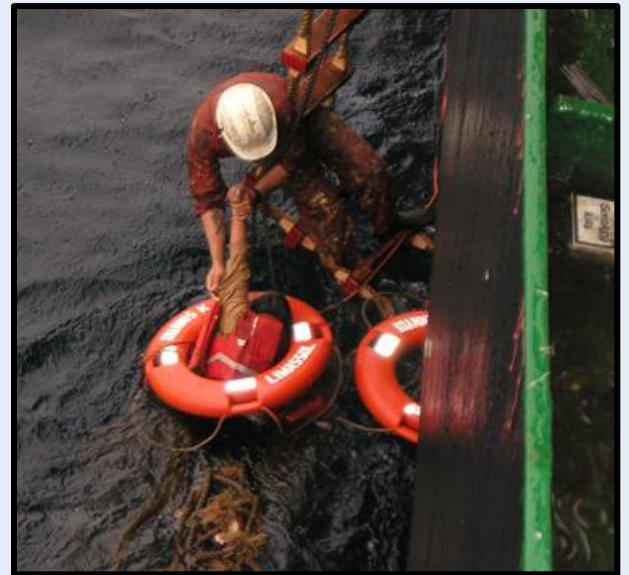
- States require masters flying their flag to render assistance to persons in distress **at sea** (if able to do so)
- Requires ships after a collision to render assistance to the other ship, its crew and its passengers





# UNCLOS

- Article 98, paragraph 1(a), sets the general obligation to render assistance to persons in distress “**at sea**” (i.e., anywhere in the oceans)
- Article 58, paragraph 2:  
Article 98 applicable in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ)



# UNCLOS

**Duty to render assistance also addressed in Article 18  
(Meaning of passage):**



- **Paragraph 2: Ship exercising innocent passage through the territorial sea may stop and anchor “for the purpose of rendering assistance to persons, ships or aircraft in danger or distress”**



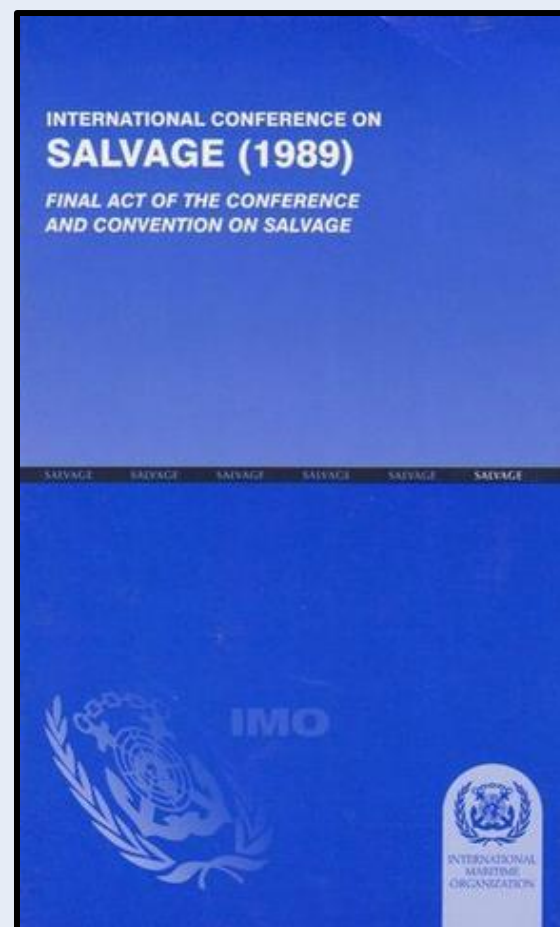
# UNCLOS



- **Summary**: The duty to render assistance exists throughout the ocean, whether the territorial sea, straits used for international navigation, archipelagic waters, EEZ, or on the high seas (Also in SOLAS/Salvage Conventions)
- Assistance is to be given to any person, ship or aircraft in distress

# International Convention on Salvage (1989)

**Article 10: Masters have a  
duty to render assistance  
to persons in distress**





# RESCUE

## AT SEA

A GUIDE TO PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE AS  
APPLIED TO REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS



Photo © Maris Henry

[http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/seamigration/Documents/UNHCR-Rescue\\_at\\_Sea-Guide-ENG-screen.pdf](http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/seamigration/Documents/UNHCR-Rescue_at_Sea-Guide-ENG-screen.pdf)



**Questions?**



# **Backup Slides**

## **What international instrument(s) discuss the coordination and conduct of SAR operations in a coastal State's TTS?**

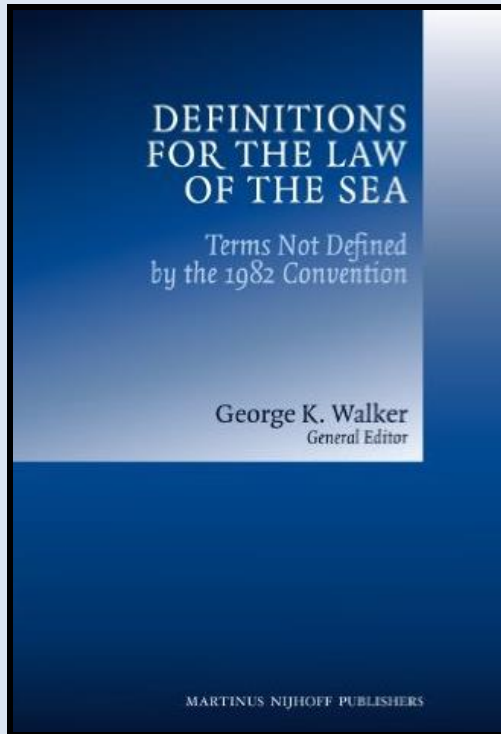
**SOLAS Convention, V/33:** *“1 The master of a ship at sea which is in a position to be able to provide assistance, on receiving information from any source that persons are in distress at sea, is bound to proceed with all speed to their assistance...”*

**Salvage Convention, Article 10(1):** *“Every master is bound, so far as he can do so without serious danger to his vessel and persons thereon, to render assistance to any person in danger of being lost at sea.”*

**UNCLOS, Article 98(1):** *“Every State shall require the master of a ship flying its flag, in so far as he can do so without serious danger to the ship, the crew or the passengers: (a) to render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost;*



# What is a distress?



**“ “Distress,” as used in UNCLOS Articles 18, 39, 98 and 109, and as incorporated by reference in UNCLOS Articles 45 and 54, means an event of grave necessity, such as severe weather or mechanical failure in a ship or aircraft; or a human-caused event, such as a collision with another ship or aircraft.”**

# National SAR System





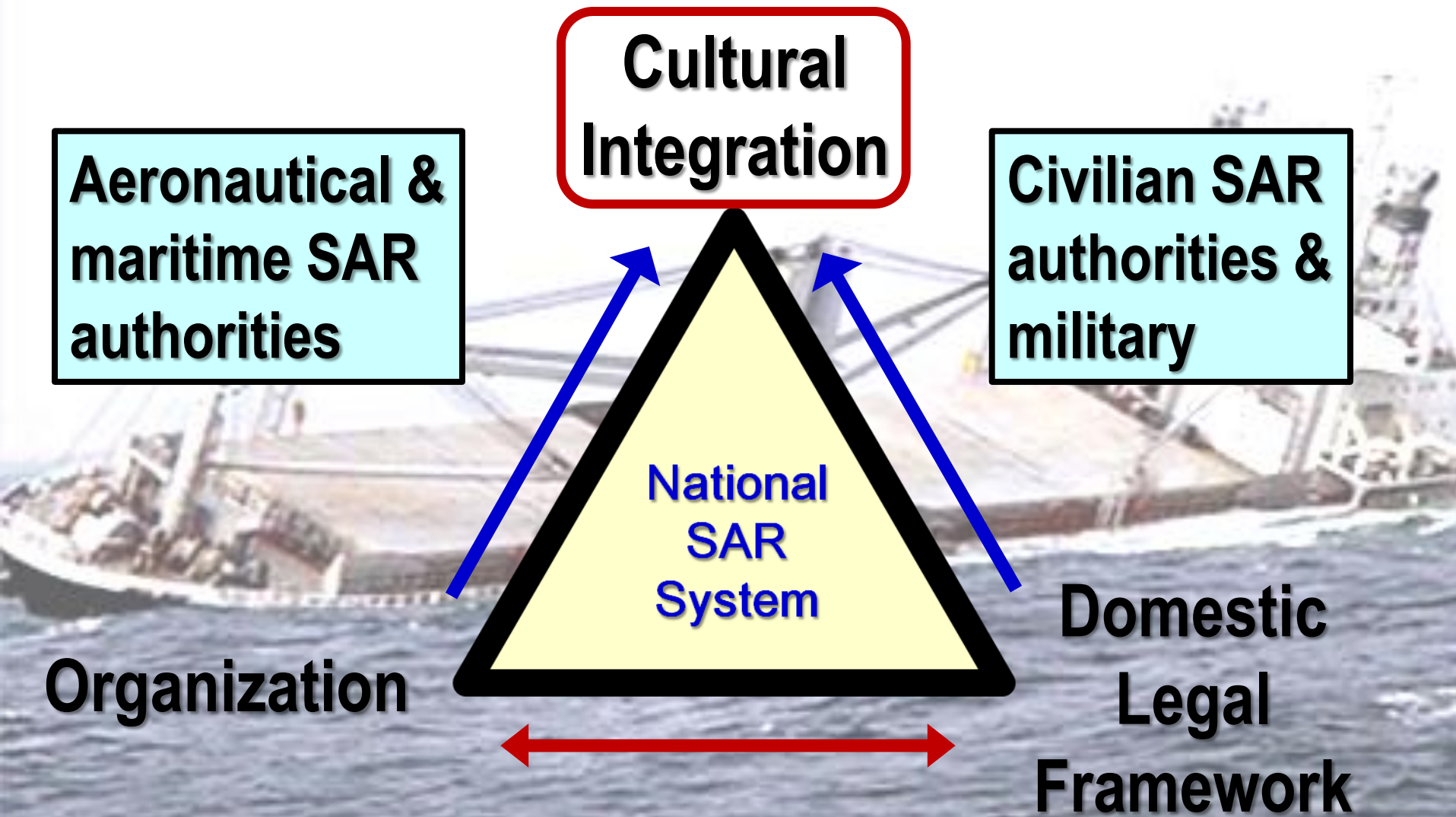
# Why do SAR?

For all nations, having an effective SAR system is crucial

- National responsibility
- Protecting citizens
- Protecting visitors
- Commerce



# Key Issue: Effective SAR cooperation & coordination between:





**National SAR  
Coordinating  
Committee**

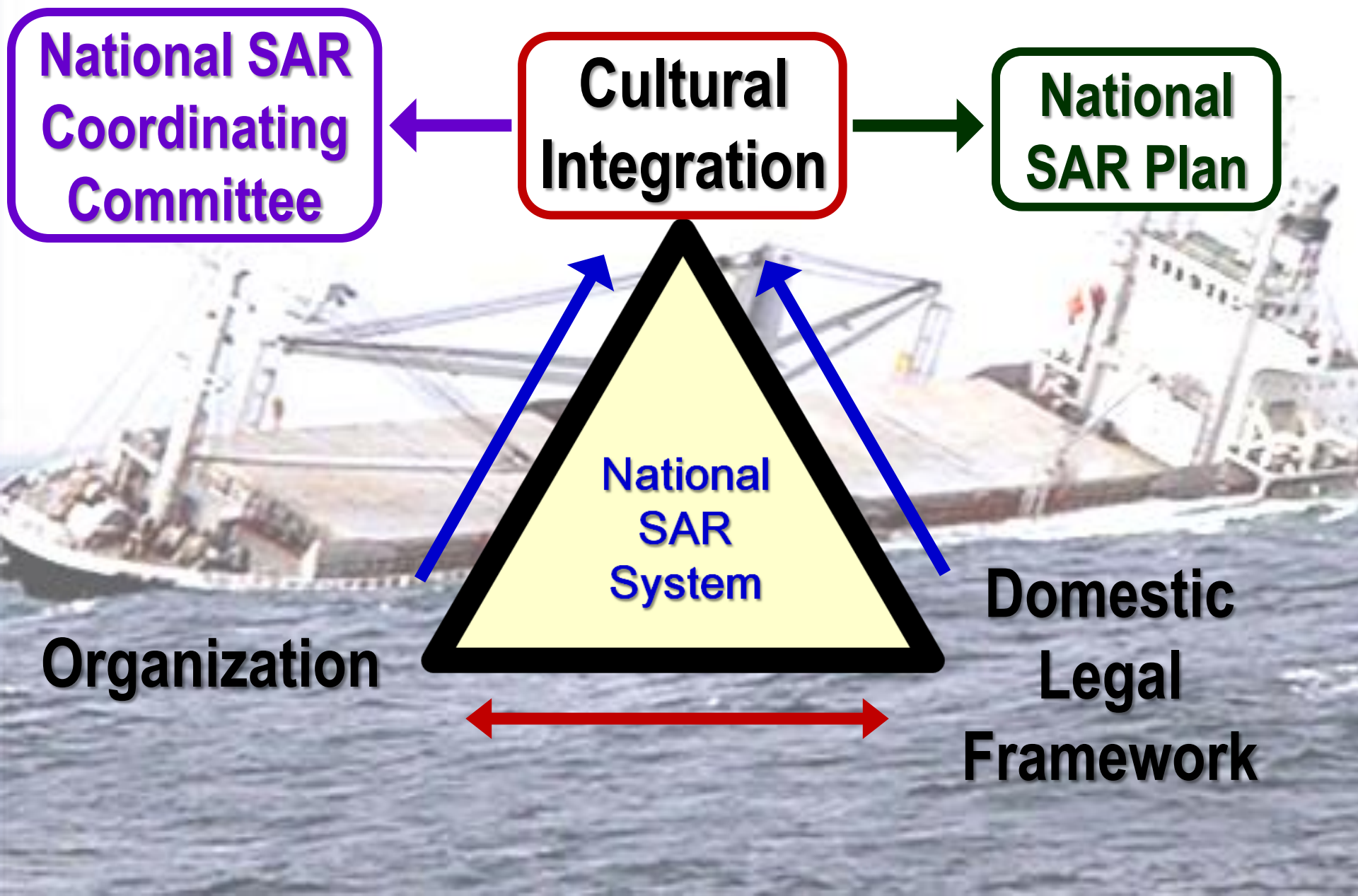
**Cultural  
Integration**

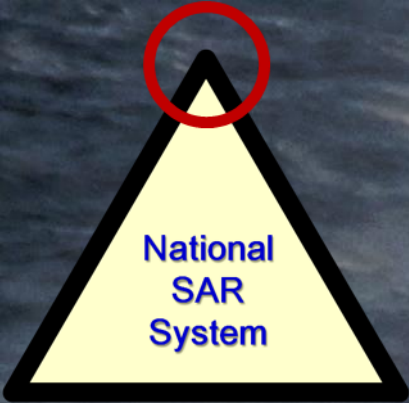
**National  
SAR Plan**

**National  
SAR  
System**

**Organization**

**Domestic  
Legal  
Framework**





# Cultural Integration

- Most difficult challenge
- A nation can have a SAR legal framework, developed the SAR policy and domestic SAR organization
- However, nations, people and agencies must be willing to work together to save lives



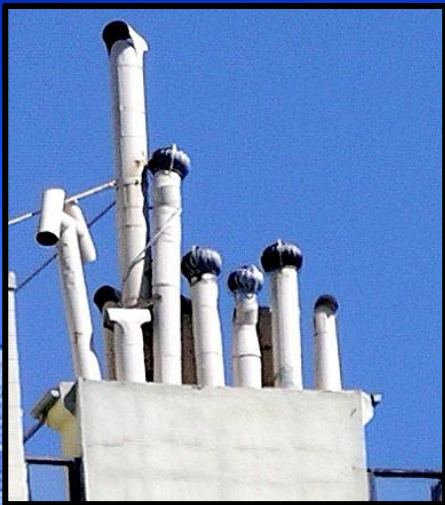




# Barrier to Cultural Integration

**“Stovepipes”**

**“...management and employees  
have narrowly and rigidly defined  
responsibilities”**





# Barrier to Cultural Integration

**People, agencies and nations unwilling to share information and resources to save lives**



**Unwilling or reluctant to go through the process of improving SAR coordination & cooperation**



# Use all available resources to save lives



**Other Government Agencies**

**Military**

**Local Government facilities**

**Volunteers (boats and planes)**

**Private Companies**

**Neighboring States**

**Ships at Sea**

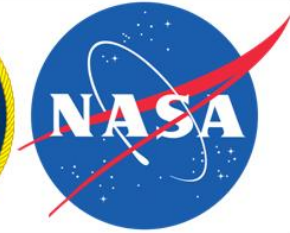
# U.S. SAR System







# National SAR Committee



**Homeland  
Security**

**Defense**

**State**

**Commerce**

**Interior Transportation**

**FCC**

**NASA**

**NSARC Chair:**

**Ms. Dana Tulis  
Director, Incident  
Management &  
Preparedness Policy  
U.S. Coast Guard**

**NSARC Secretariat:**

**Coast Guard Office of  
Search and Rescue**

**All SAR:**

**Land Sea Air**



# National SAR Committee

FEDERAL REGISTER, VOL. 39, NO. 114—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 1974

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

### INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR)

#### Notice of Establishment

This notice announces the establishment of the Interagency Committee on Search and Rescue (SAR) under the sponsorship of the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Department of Transportation.

The purpose of the Committee is to oversee the National Search and Rescue Plan and to act as a coordinating forum for national search and rescue matters.







# National SAR Committee Objectives



**“... oversees the National SAR Plan and coordinate interagency SAR matters.”**

**“... preliminary development of interagency positions in SAR matters.”**

**“... an interface with other national agencies involved with emergency services.”**



# National SAR Committee Interagency Agreement

- **NSARC is implemented via interagency agreement signed at the Cabinet level**

## UNITED STATES

## NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE COMMITTEE

## INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

### PURPOSE

1. This Agreement provides for a Federal-level Committee to coordinate search and rescue (SAR) matters of interagency interest for the United States.
2. The *United States National Search and Rescue Committee Interagency Agreement (2007)* is superseded by this Agreement, and the adoption of this Agreement coincides with the adoption of a new *National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP) of the United States*.





# National SAR Plan

## NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN OF THE UNITED STATES

2016

### 19-Page Plan:

**“...coordinating search and rescue (SAR) services to meet domestic needs and international commitments.”**



# National SAR Plan

- Identifies NSARC member agency SAR responsibilities
- Assigns U.S. SAR Coordinators
- Overview of general SAR coordination, & national/international SAR responsibilities
- Serves as the basis for the U.S. SAR system







# National SAR Supplement



**UNITED STATES  
NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE  
SUPPLEMENT  
to the  
International Aeronautical and Maritime  
Search and Rescue Manual  
Version 2.0**



**April 23, 2018**

Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Defense  
Department of State  
Department of Interior  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Transportation  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Federal Communications Commission

- **Guidance to Federal Agencies on implementing the National SAR Plan**
- **Builds upon the IAMSAR Manual**
- **Lists, by coordinate, the U.S. aeronautical and maritime SAR regions**

# Catastrophic Incident SAR (CISAR) Addendum

## Guidance on the conduct of Catastrophic Incident SAR



CATASTROPHIC INCIDENT  
SEARCH AND RESCUE ADDENDUM  
to the  
National Search and Rescue Supplement  
to the  
International Aeronautical and Maritime  
Search and Rescue Manual  
Version 3.0



June, 2012

Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Interior  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
Department of Transportation  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Federal Communications Commission  
([www.uscg.mil/nsarc](http://www.uscg.mil/nsarc))



# U.S. Coast Guard Addendum

**Provides detailed guidance and policy on how the U.S. Coast Guard conducts SAR**

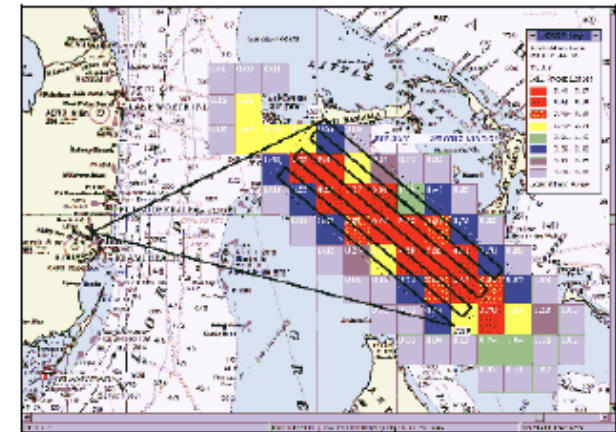


U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security  
United States  
Coast Guard



## U. S. COAST GUARD ADDENDUM

TO THE  
UNITED STATES  
NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE SUPPLEMENT (NSS)  
To The  
International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual  
(IAMSAR)



COMDTINST M16130.2D

(CHANGE-1 INCLUDED)

# Land SAR Addendum

**LAND SEARCH AND RESCUE  
ADDENDUM**  
to the  
**National Search and Rescue Supplement**  
to the  
**International Aeronautical and Maritime  
Search and Rescue Manual**  
**Version 1.0**



**October 2011**

Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Interior  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
Department of Transportation  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Federal Communications Commission  
([www.uscg.mil/nsarc](http://www.uscg.mil/nsarc))

**Land SAR theory  
and practice**

**Provides guidance on  
land SAR operations**



# Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) SAR Addendum

**Provides guidance on  
the use of UAS for SAR**



**UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM (UAS)  
SEARCH AND RESCUE ADDENDUM  
to the  
National Search and Rescue Supplement  
to the  
International Aeronautical and Maritime  
Search and Rescue Manual  
Version 1.0**



**May, 2016**

**Department of Homeland Security  
Department of Defense  
Department of State  
Department of the Interior  
Department of Commerce  
Department of Transportation  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Federal Communications Commission  
([www.uscg.mil/nsarc](http://www.uscg.mil/nsarc))**

**IMO: International Convention on  
Maritime SAR Convention (1979)**

**ICAO: Convention on  
Civil Aviation (1944)**

**Global  
SAR Plan**

**International Aeronautical  
and Maritime Search and  
Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual**

**U.S. SAR  
System**

**National SAR Supplement  
to the IAMSAR Manual**

**National  
SAR Plan**

**USCG SAR  
Addendum**

**UAS SAR  
Addendum**

**Land SAR  
Addendum**

**CISAR  
Addendum**



# U.S. National SAR Committee Guidance

**National SAR Plan**

**National SAR Supplement**

**Catastrophic Incident  
SAR Addendum**

**Land SAR Addendum**

**Coast Guard Addendum**



**<https://cglink.uscg.mil/NSARC>**