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The IAMSAR Manual is a product of the International Maritime Search and Rescue (IMSR) system. It is a result of the IMO's efforts to coordinate and harmonize SAR systems, and the obligations they accepted under the Convention on International Maritime Search and Rescue, the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979 and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS). These conventions provide guidelines for a common, systematic and effective approach to conducting and providing SAR services. States are encouraged to develop and improve their SAR services, cooperate with neighbouring States and to provide their SAR services to be part of a global SAR system.

Each volume of the IAMSAR Manual is written with specific SAR system objectives in mind, and can be used as a stand-alone document, or in conjunction with the other two volumes, as a means to obtain a full view of the SAR system. Depending on the duties assigned, it may be necessary to refer to only one, two, or all three volumes.

The Organization of IAMSAR Manual Volume II follows the concept of SAR system development, establishment and improvement of national and regional SAR systems, and encourages all participating States to provide effective and economical SAR services.

The Mission Coordination Volume II will assist personnel who are conducting SAR operations and exercises, and

The Mobile Facilities Volume II will be intended to help shore-based facilities, aircraft and vessels to help with performance of a search mission, including coordination, facilities and other aspects of SAR that pertain to their own operations.

Mission Coordination

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the SAR system concept, including a review of providing SAR services, and why such services are required and beneficial. The SAR system is described from a global, regional and national perspective. Key components of the SAR system, such as search and rescue regions (SRRs), operations and support facilities, and the on-scene commander (OSCAR) are discussed.

Chapter 2 focuses primarily on SAR communications topics, including distress communications, emergency beacons, communications for SAR operations and coordination, and operations and safety systems related to or used by the SAR system.

Chapter 3 introduces the three stages through which responses to SAR incidents typically proceed, describes the three emergency phases (uncertainty, alert and distress) and the first 24 hours of the search and initial action in detail, and provides additional valuable guidance to the on-scene commander of a SAR incident.

Chapter 4 contains a detailed discussion of theory and practice of search planning. It presents a complete yet practical application of search theory to the SAR search problem. It provides guidance for balancing the conflicting goals of covering the search area with limited resources and for the ability to achieve high probabilities of detection over all areas. The procedures outlined allow the search planner to determine the optimal area to search so that the chances of success are maximized.

Chapter 5 discusses search techniques and overlays, including search patterns, assignment of search conditions, search pattern software for visual, electronic, night vision and other search software assignments, standard methods for designing and describing search software, management of electronic coordination, and finally compiling all the information into a search report.