

SAR Co-operation Plan

Parts 3–6



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Contents

Introduction	1
Description of a SAR Co-operation Plan	1
Corrections and Updating.....	1
Part 3 Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre and Sub-centre.....	2
3.1 Search and Rescue Regions and Sub-regions	2
3.2 Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinator (SMC)	3
3.3 On-scene Co-ordinator (OSC).....	3
3.4 Aircraft Co-ordinator (ACO).....	3
3.5 Finnish Maritime Assistance Services (MAS).....	4
Part 4 SAR Facilities	5
4.1 Finnish Search and Rescue Region (SRR)	5
4.1.1 Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) and Maritime Rescue Sub- centre (MRSC).....	5
4.1.2 Communications	6
4.1.3 General Description of SAR Units and Other Resources.....	7
4.1.4 Communications Plan	8
MAJOR ACCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS CHART	9
4.1.5 Search and Rescue planning.....	9
4.1.6 Telemedical Maritime Assistance Service (TMAS) and Maritime First-aid Services.....	10
4.1.7 Fire Protection and Fire Fighting, Chemical Hazards, Other Hazards	10
4.1.8 General Arrangements at Evacuation Centres	11
4.1.9 Informing Next-of-kin	11
4.1.10 Suspension or Termination of SAR actions	11
Part 5 Media Communications in a SAR Situation.....	13
Part 6 Periodic Exercises.....	14



Introduction

The preparation of a SAR co-operation plan is required under Chapter V, Section 7.3 of the SOLAS Convention:

Passenger ships, to which chapter I applies, shall have on board a plan for co-operation with appropriate search and rescue services in event of an emergency. The plan shall be developed in co-operation between the ship, the company (ship-owner) as defined in regulation IX/1, and the search and rescue services. The plan shall include provisions for periodic exercises to be undertaken to test its effectiveness. The plan shall be developed based on the guidelines developed by the Organisation (IMO).

A SAR co-operation plan must be developed by the ship, ship-owner and the SAR (search and rescue) services in accordance with the guidelines of the International Maritime Organization IMO (MSC / Circ. 1079 / Rev. 1 with appendices). The aim of SAR co-operation planning is to enhance mutual understanding between a ship, the ship-owner and SAR services so that in the event of an emergency, all three parties will be able to work together efficiently. The information included in the plan must be readily available and up to date.

Description of a SAR Co-operation Plan

A SAR co-operation plan shall consist of six parts that contain information on the ship-owner (Part 1), ships (Part 2), SAR services (Parts 3 and 4), media relations (Part 5) and periodic exercises (Part 6). Further instructions on the development of a SAR co-operation plan is provided in the Maritime Rescue Instructions and on the web site of the Finnish Border Guard at www.raja.fi/sar . On the same web site is more SAR related information available.

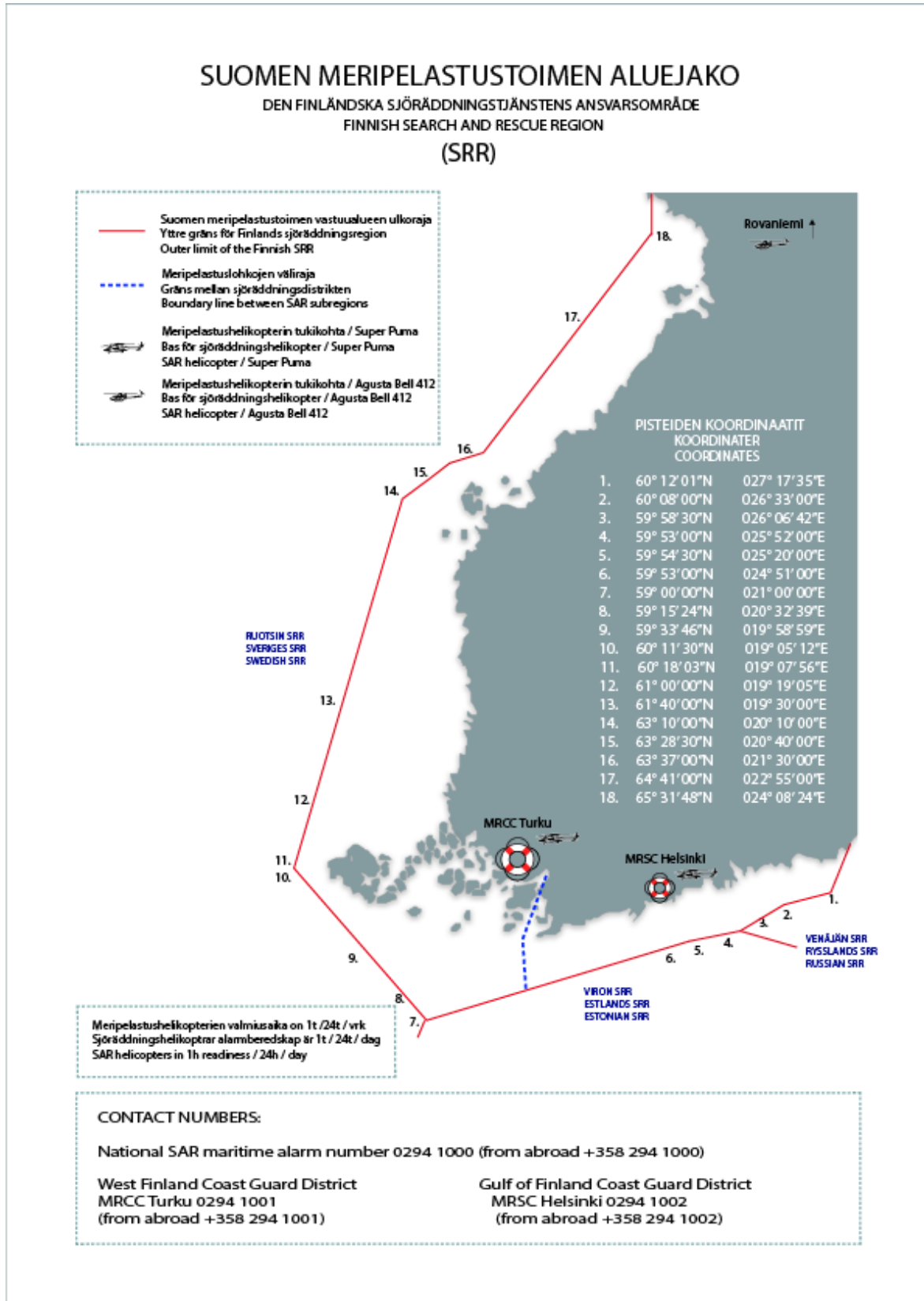
Corrections and Updating

Minor corrections to the SAR co-operation plan may be notified by e-mail directly to the relevant Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre or sub-centre. Examples of such corrections are changes in telephone numbers or contact persons. More extensive changes to the ship and ship-owner details must be corrected by means of an updated SAR co-operation plan or part thereof. The SAR co-operation plan is checked for up-to-datedness annually in connection with other inspections conducted on the ship.



Part 3 Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre and Sub-centre

3.1 Search and Rescue Regions and Sub-regions





3.2 Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinator (SMC)

The Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator (SMC) is a border guard specifically trained to co-ordinate the SAR activities at a Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre or sub-centre.

The SMC determines the phase of emergency and is responsible for alerting the units needed for the task. He/she leads and co-ordinates the operation of the rescue units in the search and rescue sub-region by determining their duties, providing them with the necessary orders, instructions and information, maintaining the preconditions for their activities, and requesting additional resources as required by the mission. The SMC decides on the suspension and termination of the search and rescue activities and on the release from duty of the units ordered to participate in the SAR mission.

3.3 On-scene Co-ordinator (OSC)

The On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) is a person who, under the command of the SMC, is responsible for leading and co-ordinating SAR operations at the scene of the accident.

If necessary, the SMC may also assign another OSC who, under the command of the SMC, is responsible for leading SAR activities outside the distress vessel at the scene of the accident.

The person assigned as an OSC shall be an official with in-depth knowledge of the duties involved. A competent person other than an official can also be temporarily assigned as an OSC in urgent cases where it is deemed necessary in order to save human lives.

3.4 Aircraft Co-ordinator (ACO)

The Aircraft Coordinator (ACO) duties require special knowledge of aircraft operations. Aiming at the effective co-ordination of aircraft, the ACO activities seek to contribute to aeronautical rescue and SAR services with a clearly improving effect. The methods employed are based on highly developed routines.

In the Finnish ACO model, the SMC, who is based in a maritime rescue co-ordination centre or sub-centre, is assisted by a Border Guard official who is ACO trained and is familiar with effective SAR co-ordination models and possesses the required co-ordination capabilities. ACO-trained air traffic control personnel are alerted from ANS Finland to assist him/her in his/her duties. If there are two ACOs, efforts must be made to have them work as partners. In certain special cases, the ACO may operate at the scene of the accident.



3.5 Finnish Maritime Assistance Services (MAS)

MRCC Turku is responsible for providing Maritime Assistance Services (MAS) within the Finnish Search and Rescue Region. The purpose of MAS is to support the contingency planning and preventive measures within the search and rescue services in preparation for maritime hazards and emergencies. Ships also serve as an unambiguous national contact points for assistance requests and notifications.



Part 4 SAR Facilities

4.1 Finnish Search and Rescue Region (SRR)

4.1.1 Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) and Maritime Rescue Sub-centre (MRSC)

The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) and sub-centre (MRSC) are responsible for maintaining immediate leadership and communication preparedness in their respective search and rescue sub-regions, and for the radio communication in situations of distress in maritime rescue. The Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinator (SMC) operating in an MRCC or MRSC is responsible for leading the search and rescue activities and for sending assistance for those in distress at sea. In his/her duties, he/she is assisted by the personnel of the MRCC or MRSC.

The MRCC or MRSC receives emergency alarms from people who are in distress at sea through channels such as:

- telephone
- VHF and MF-DSC emergency safety call frequencies
- VHF voice emergency frequencies
- COSPAS-SARSAT distress alarm reception system

SAR AREA OF WESTERN FINLAND

MRCC Turku

PL 16 (Juhana Herttuan puistokatu 21)
FI-20101 Turku

SAR AREA OF THE GULF OF FINLAND

MRSC Helsinki

PL 150 (Vilhonvuorenkatu 6)
FI-00161 Helsinki



4.1.2 Communications

The national alarm number of maritime rescue is

0294 1000

(+358 294 1000 when calling from outside of Finland)

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

VHF-DSC 70

VHF channel 16

MF-DSC 2187.5 kHz

SAR Area of Western Finland

Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre

MRCC Turku

On-call 24 h / day	
Alarm number (+TMAS)	+358 (0)294 1001
MAS	+358 (0)294 1006
Telephone (non-urgent)	+358 (0)294 1010
Fax	+358 (0)294 1019
Inmarsat-C	423002211 (EMEA)
E-mail	mrcc@raja.fi
Radio call	MRCC Turku
MMSI	002301000

SAR Area of the Gulf of Finland

Maritime Rescue Sub-centre

MRSC Helsinki

On-call 24 h / day	
Alarm number (+TMAS)	+358 (0)294 1002
Telephone (non-urgent)	+358 (0)294 1100
Fax	+358 (0)294 1099
Inmarsat-C	423000283 (EMEA)
E-mail	mrsc.helsinki@raja.fi
Radio call	MRSC Helsinki
MMSI	002302000



4.1.3 General Description of SAR Units and Other Resources

The emergency preparedness and availability of the SAR units vary according to the season and weather conditions. The number of available units is significantly smaller during winter because the majority of boats are not ice-capable. Patrol vessels, hovercrafts and different types of ice vehicles are used in ice-covered sea areas during the winter season.

The coast guard stations, part of the Finnish Border Guard, maintain a 24-hour emergency preparedness based on a risk analysis and action plan drawn up for the purpose. In practice, the different emergency preparedness arrangements make it possible for a patrol to take off within 10 to 60 minutes depending on the place and time. When on duty, patrol vessels are on immediate 24-hour readiness.

The Finnish Border Guard maintains SAR helicopter operations in three flight bases located in Turku, Helsinki and Rovaniemi. The preparedness arrangements, based on a risk analysis, make it possible for a helicopter to take off within 10 to 60 minutes. The on-call duty service may be temporarily interrupted at no more than one flight base at a time. The Finnish Border Guard also has surveillance aircraft suitable for search operations available.

The emergency preparedness of other SAR units used in maritime rescue operations varies by unit from 24-hour to occasional readiness. The specialised Maritime Incident Response Groups (MIRG) and first-aid services are on 24-hour readiness.

The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre and sub-centre maintain real-time resource monitoring of the emergency preparedness and action plans of the SAR units. The quickest and most suitable unit/units capable of carrying out the mission is/are used for maritime search and rescue.

The table below presents a rough outline of the maritime search and rescue units available in Finland.

	Boats	Vessels	SAR helicopter	Surveillance aircrafts	Special groups
The Border Guard	X*	X*	X*	X**	X
The Police	X ***				
The Rescue Service	X ***				X
The Defence Forces	(X)	X	(X)	(X)	X
Voluntary maritime rescue	X ***				
Other potential actors:					
- Arctia		X****			
- Finnpilot	X				
- Meritaito	X*****	X*****			

* = on-call 24 h / day

** = not in continuous readiness

*** = readiness mainly during the open-water season

**** = e.g. ice-breakers and buoy tender vessels

***** = Fairway Service Vessels



4.1.4 Communications Plan

The Finnish Border Guard is responsible for radio communications in distress situations and for maintaining the related emergency preparedness. Radio communications in distress situations comprise the monitoring of emergency frequencies and traffic, answering distress alarms and calls, alerting the SAR units, and co-ordinating the radio traffic during the SAR operation. The MRCC or MRSC gives order on the use of communications frequencies and channels relating to the accident as precisely as possible and also gives orders pertaining to other communications traffic. When assigned to a mission, a search and rescue unit is always provided with details on the effective lines of command and the communications network used.

The international distress and safety call frequencies monitored at the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre or sub-centre are:

- VHF-DSC channel 70 (156.525 MHz)
- VHF channel 16 (156.800 MHz)
- MF-DSC channel 2187.5 kHz

The aircraft emergency frequency is 121.5 MHz. The frequency used for co-operation with aeronautical search and rescue services in a distress situation is 123.1 MHz.

Radio Traffic in a Maritime Search and Rescue Mission

Communications connections between on-shore operating facilities are mainly implemented as telephone and e-mail connections. The off-shore mission co-ordination is primarily implemented using the international VHF voice channels 16 and 14, through which a mission co-ordination network is established. The mission co-ordination network involves the following parties as applicable:

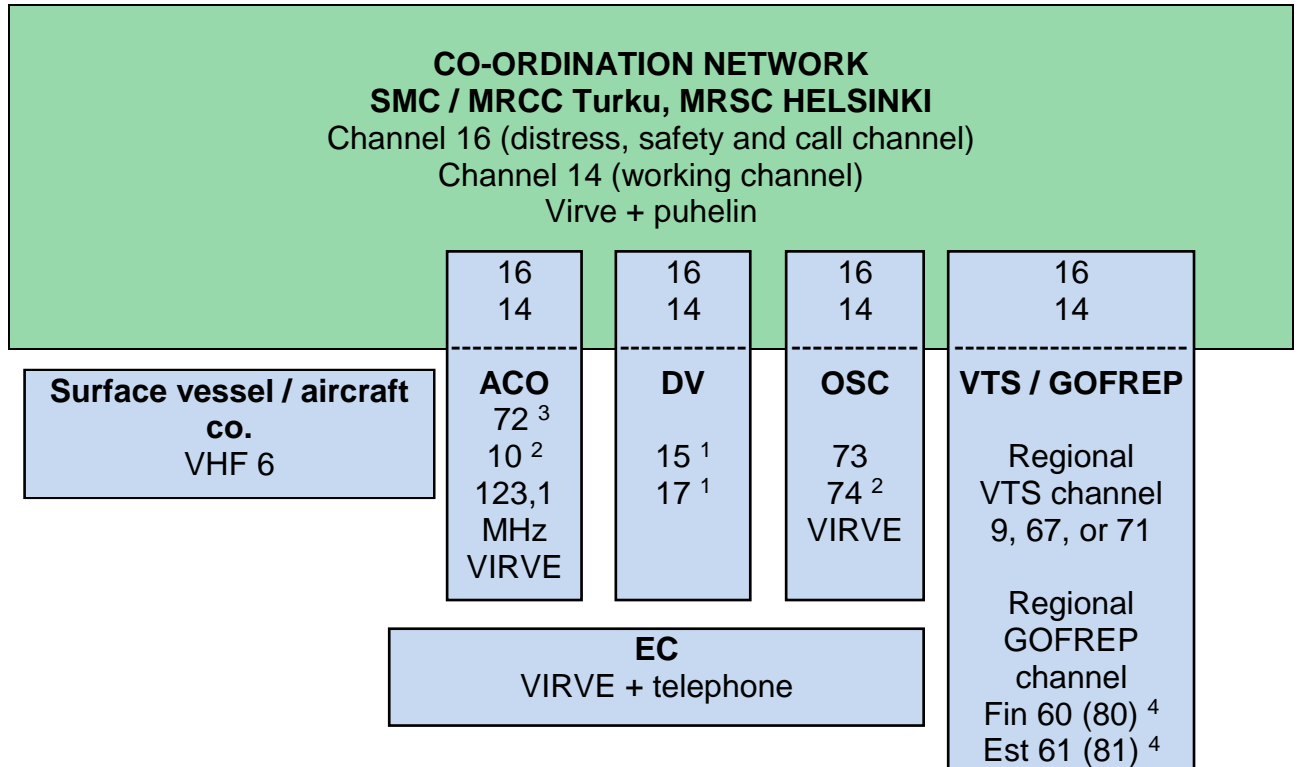
- Distress vessel
- Maritime rescue co-ordination centre
- Maritime rescue sub-centre
- On-scene co-ordinator(s)
- Aircraft co-ordinator
- Evacuation centre co-ordinator

In the event that sub-coordinators are assigned to the mission, the following dedicated networks are established at their disposal:

- Distress vessel: VHF channels 15 or 17
- On-scene co-ordinator: VHF channels 73, 74 or the VIRVE public authority network
- On-scene co-ordinator (surface search): VHF channel 10 or 72
- Aircraft co-ordinator: aircraft radio frequency 123.1 MHz, a maritime VHF channel separately assigned, or VIRVE
- Evacuation centre co-ordinator: VIRVE



MAJOR ACCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS CHART



¹ Or another radio system internal to the ship

² Channels 10 and 74 are only used in the SAR Area of Western Finland

³ Channel 72 is only used in the SAR area of the Gulf of Finland (east of the City of Hanko)

⁴ GOFREP standby channels

Abbreviations used in the table

SMC	= SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION CO-ORDINATOR
DV	= DISTRESS VESSEL
OSC	= ON SCENE CO-ORDINATOR
ACO	= AIRCRAFT CO-ORDINATOR
EC	= EVACUATION CENTRE
CSS	= CO-ORDINATOR OF SURFACE SEARCH
VTS	= VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE
GOFREP	= GULF OF FINLAND REPORTING SYSTEM
VIRVE	= TETRA RADIO NETWORK FOR FINNISH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

4.1.5 Search and Rescue planning

Search and rescue planning in Finland is based on international conventions and national legislation (Maritime Rescue Act and Regulation). The principles outlined in the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manual shall be complied with when planning a search and rescue.



The major maritime and multidisciplinary disaster plan (MoMeVa) has been produced, led by Finnish Border Guard. The plan clarifies the roles of different actors in the major maritime and multidisciplinary disaster and defines the nationwide operating models of cooperative activities.

Finnish Search and Rescue Region (SRR) is divided to two sub regions (West Finland and Gulf of Finland). Coast Guard Districts are responsible for regional planning in their sub region and they have produced detailed regional plans for major maritime and multidisciplinary disaster in their area of responsibility.

4.1.6 Telemedical Maritime Assistance Service (TMAS) and Maritime First-aid Services

The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre and sub-centre are responsible for forwarding the requests for Telemedical Maritime Assistance Service (TMAS) to the on-call doctor as agreed between the relevant national authorities. The Finnish Border Guard provides ships with a forwarding service for medical consultation requests through the MRCC or MRSC.

The social and health authorities are responsible for ensuring the availability of medical rescue services on shore and attending to the psycho-social care of the rescued people when required. In a rescue mission, the activities are co-ordinated to ensure sufficient medical and psycho-social support. The co-operation relating to the afore-mentioned operations are described in more detail in the national maritime multi-type accident preparedness plan (MoMeVa), found at www.raja.fi/SAR.

4.1.7 Fire Protection and Fire Fighting, Chemical Hazards, Other Hazards

The SMC makes the decision concerning assistance given to off-shore vessels (for example, firefighting and hazardous materials diving assistance). In Finland, rescue department personnel with special training, collectively referred to as the MIRG (Maritime Incident Response Group), is primarily used for these duties.

The captain of the ship and his/her crew are responsible for all on-board rescue operations as well as for the evacuation of the people on the vessel. If required, the Finnish SAR services shall support the captain by providing additional resources at the ship's disposal. The SAR services are responsible for any search and rescue operations outside the vessel.

If the situation so requires, for example in the event of a fire, chemical or other accident, an expert in fire and rescue services is requested to join the MRCC or MRSC to assist the captain of the distress vessel and the SMC.

The **Ministry of Interior** is (Starting from 1.1.2019) responsible for arranging the prevention of ship oil and chemical damage in connection with maritime accidents in co-



operation with other authorities as provided under the Rescue Act and Act on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships.

4.1.8 General Arrangements at Evacuation Centres

In major and multi-type accidents, people are transported from the accident scene to an evacuation centre. The evacuation centre is located in the vicinity of the accident site in a location to which the rescued persons can be transported by ship or helicopter and from which there are good onward connections by land. Based on a risk analysis, the setting up of evacuation centres in locations such as harbours and airports is proactively accommodated in the SAR plan. The location of the evacuation centre is determined by the SMC based on the prerequisites created by the Steering Group of the SAR area. The evacuation centres are set up in accordance with the regional preparedness arrangements.

The evacuation centre shall have a sufficient amount of warm areas. If required, the evacuation centre can be set up using portable tents and field medical supplies. The police shall record the personal data of the people who arrive at the evacuation centre. Preconditions for triage and first aid shall be established in the evacuation centre. The necessary crisis help shall be arranged in the evacuation centre. Communications fall under the responsibility of the authority in charge of the operations. The captain of the distress vessel, the OSC and the co-ordinator of the evacuation centre must ensure that the exact number of rescued people is known and notified to the SMC.

4.1.9 Informing Next-of-kin

In the event of an accident, the police are responsible for informing the next-of-kin of those involved in the accident and for publishing their personal details.

In co-operation with volunteers, the police shall arrange a telephone service that can be contacted by the victims' next-of-kin.

4.1.10 Suspension or Termination of SAR actions

The decision to terminate a search, assistance or rescue action rests with the SMC.

- 1) The SMC terminates the SAR or assistance operation when all people have been saved and are no longer in imminent danger.
- 2) If all of the people have not been found or rescued, efforts will continue as long as there remains reasonable hope of finding or rescuing them.

If required, the SMC shall discuss the termination of the mission with the other parties involved. If justified for reasons such as extremely bad weather, the SAR measures may be suspended for a fixed period of time after which they will be continued in accordance with the decision made.



The reasons for the termination or suspension of the mission and the general principles of any further actions shall be entered in the SAR information system. In addition to the actions performed, the description and outcome of the incident shall also be entered in the same information system.



Part 5 Media Communications in a SAR Situation

In its capacity as the leader of the SAR mission, the Finnish Coast Guard is also responsible for co-ordinating the communications relating to the mission. Depending on the extent of the accident, the Coast Guard may be assisted by the Headquarters of the Border Guard and the communications personnel of the Ministry of the Interior.

In conventional SAR situations, the SMC who is based in the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre or sub-centre is responsible for communications. Information about SAR situations shall be disseminated on the web site of the Finnish Border Guard at www.raja.fi, and in social media (Twitter) and if needed by e-mail with separate bulletins. Depending on the severity of the situation, the authority in charge shall also inform the management and communications unit of its own organisation, which shall then forward the information to the Government.

Efforts shall be made to ensure that the MRCC or sub-centre issues the first press release within 30 minutes of the incident. The first release shall contain the following information:

- What has happened
- Where the incident took place
- When the incident took place
- What measures have been taken
- When additional information will be available

In the event of a severe accident, a press conference may be arranged. The maritime search and rescue authority shall decide on the parties invited to the press conference and the contents thereof. When it is sure that all parties have been contacted, the media shall be notified of the time and place of the press conference. The objective is to arrange the press conference as soon as possible after the incident while taking the time of the day into account. Supplementary releases on the incident and on the progress of the rescue operations may be given prior to the press conference.

The representatives of the authorities and the ship-owner shall be present at the press conference. The authorities shall explain the actions taken by them, while the ship-owner shall explain matters pertaining to the vessel and its crew. Only reliable information shall be disseminated at the conference; the potential causes shall not be assessed. Due consideration must be given to matters that are to be kept secret, such as the identity of the victims and any aspects relating to criminal investigations. The time and place of the next press conference shall also be notified. Subsequent press conferences shall be arranged when needed. Crisis communications aim at centralised communications that enable equal treatment of the media. This means that the parties involved should not give any additional statements to the media between the press conferences. Efforts shall be made to answer any enquiries from the next-of-kin as accurately as possible, in addition to which the utilisation of social media as a communications channel towards the general public is emphasised.

Any transport of media representatives to the accident scene shall be decided by the authority in charge of the rescue operations. If reporters are also to be taken to the distress vessel, this must be agreed beforehand with the SMC and the captain of the ship.



Part 6 Periodic Exercises

The number, form and training content of the exercises shall be considered jointly by the ship, the ship-owner and the SAR services according to the then-current needs. The exercises shall be arranged once a year. The ship-owner is obliged to actively contribute to the exercise arrangements and contact the MRCC/MRSC, for example, well in advance of the exercise. Large-scale exercises should be agreed upon around six months in advance, while smaller exercises can be carried out at a notice of only a couple of weeks.

The purpose of the exercises is to make the SAR services better known by ships and ship-owners, and to co-ordinate the actions of the ship-owner, the ship and the MRCC or MRSC in the event of accidents.

The exercises are divided into co-ordination, map and communications exercises and contact requests testing the degree of emergency preparedness. The exercises shall primarily take place outside of the summer season (between September and April). The following preparation times should be taken into account when planning the exercises:

- Live SAR exercises: 3 three to six months.
- Exercises between ships: 3 three weeks
- Info updates targeted at companies and ships: one month
- Connection tests and preparedness enquiries can be practised as applicable

The exercises may be connected to the inspection of ISM functions. Co-operation exercises between a passenger ship and patrol vessels must be arranged at least once a year. These co-operation exercises may also be included as part of co-ordination exercises or seminars. Connection tests and preparedness enquiries shall be practised on a monthly basis. If a ship participates in an actual SAR mission, this can, on a case-by-case basis, be regarded as a substitute for a period exercise.

In order to ensure efficient co-operation during possible incidents, ship-owners shall acquaint themselves with the SAR system and be prepared to participate in working in co-operation with the SAR Management Board and comply with the unified communications policy.