

UK Helicopter Search and Rescue (SAR) National Approval Guidance

CAP 999



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Revision history

Revisions in the second edition

August 2014

This edition has been updated to incorporate various minor changes to improve the text and to amend the guidance to align with European aviation regulations.

Revisions in the third edition

March 2021

This edition has been updated to incorporate changes to UK aviation legislation from 1 January 2021 and to improve the guidance generally. It also introduces comprehensive information for the selection and training of technical crew members for SAR operations.

Foreword

Introduction

This CAP has been published to assist operators intending to conduct civil maritime Search and Rescue helicopter operations in the UK in accordance with national requirements and recommended practices. It provides an expected means of compliance together with guidance in determining operational procedures and Operations Manual development.

Abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviations

AED	Automated External Defibrillator
Air Ops	Air Operations Regulation
AMC	Acceptable Means of Compliance
AME	Aero Medical Examiner
ANO	Air Navigation Order
AOC	Air Operator's Certificate
ARCC	Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre
ATPL	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
ATS	Air Traffic Services
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CAP	Civil Aviation Publication
CAT	Commercial Air Transport
CPL	Commercial Pilot's Licence
CRM	Crew Resource Management
DfT	Department for Transport
EU	European Union
FATO	Final approach and take-off area
FC	Flight Crew
FTL	Flight Time Limitations
HEMS	Helicopter Emergency Medical Services
HESLO	Helicopter External Sling Load Operations
HHO	Helicopter Hoist Operations
HOFO	Helicopter Offshore Operations
IAMSAR	International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue
IDE	Instruments, data, equipment
JRCC	Joint Rescue Coordination Centre
LIMSAR	Limited Search and Rescue
LVO	Low Visibility Operations
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Medevac	Medical Evacuation
MEL	Minimum Equipment List
MLR	Manual, Logs and Records
MRCC	Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
MRT	Mountain Rescue Team
NAA	National Aviation Authority
NVIS	Night Vision Imaging Systems
Part-CAT	Air Operations Regulation Annex IV - Commercial Air Transport Operations
Part-FCL	Aircrew Regulation Annex I - Flight Crew Licensing
Part-MED	Aircrew Regulation Annex IV – Medical requirements
Part-ORO	Air Operations Regulation Annex III - Organisation Requirements for Air Operations
Part-SPA	Air Operations Regulation Annex V - Specific Approvals
Part-SPO	Air Operations Regulation Annex VIII - Specialised Operations
PT	Public Transport
RIB	Rigid Inflatable Boat
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
SAR	Search and Rescue
SOLAS	Safety of Life at Sea
TCA	UK SAR technical crew member attestation
TCM	Technical crew member
UKSRR	UK SAR Region
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VFR	Visual Flight Rules
VMC	Visual Meteorological Conditions

Definitions for use in CAP 999

For the purpose of this CAP the following definitions apply:

Ground/Maritime Emergency Service Personnel - Any ground emergency service personnel (such as HM Coastguard, Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), police, fire, ambulance, Mountain Rescue Team (MRT), Armed Forces personnel, etc.) involved with SAR and whose tasks are to any extent pertinent to helicopter SAR operations.

Limited Search and Rescue (LIMSAR) - A temporary degradation of an all-weather SAR asset due to unserviceable SAR related equipment that reduces the capability of the asset which is controlled through an approved minimum equipment list (MEL); or a temporary reduction of crew qualification or currency (as described in the operations manual).

Medical evacuation (Medevac) - Evacuation of a person for medical reasons.

Place of Safety - A place where a survivor or SAR passenger may be delivered after rescue or recovery at which there are additional services or where the prevailing circumstances are not perceived to be life-threatening.

Psychoactive Substances – Substances which are either alcohol, opioids, cannabinoids, sedatives and hypnotics, cocaine, other psychostimulants, hallucinogens, or volatile solvents, with the exception of caffeine and tobacco.

Search and Rescue - The all-weather activity of responding to tasking related to locating and recovering persons in distress, potential distress or missing, delivering them to a place of safety and recovering to an operational base.

- **Search** – An operation normally managed by the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC), Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) or Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) using available personnel, facilities and equipment to locate persons in distress.
- **Rescue** – An operation to retrieve persons in distress, provide for their initial medical or other needs and deliver them to a place of safety.

SAR Crew - The members of crew required to operate a helicopter on a SAR flight, i.e. flight crew (commander / co-pilot), SAR technical crew members (winch operator / winchman), or that combination stated in the company operations manual.

SAR Flight - Generic term for a flight conducted under a SAR approval i.e. SAR operational flight or SAR training flight.

SAR Operating Base - An aerodrome at which the SAR crew and the SAR helicopter are normally based and on stand-by for SAR operations.

SAR Operating Site (on scene) - The position of the survivor(s) or a site selected by the commander for the purpose of conducting a rescue.

SAR Operational Flight - A flight by a helicopter operating under a SAR Approval when tasked by the SAR Tasking Agency.

SAR Passenger - A person other than SAR crew carried during a SAR flight whose function is relevant to the task/flight, who is one of the following:

- specialist rescue or life-saving personnel;
- medical personnel;
- ill or injured persons and other persons directly involved;
- survivors;
- ground/maritime emergency service personnel; or
- other persons as approved by the CAA.

SAR Service - The performance of distress monitoring, communication, coordination and search and rescue functions, including provision of medical advice, initial medical assistance, or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources, including cooperating aircraft, vessels and other craft and installations.

SAR Tasking Agency - A place where the launch and co-ordination or control of the SAR service takes place, e.g. Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre.

SAR Technical Crew Member - A member of the SAR crew (e.g. winch operator, winchman) other than flight crew who is assigned to a helicopter SAR flight for the purpose of operating specific aircraft and role equipment, assisting the flight crew during the mission and attending to any person in need of medical assistance.

SAR Training Flight - A flight conducted for the purpose of training a SAR crew. This includes initial, recurrent and advanced SAR training as defined by the operator and approved by the CAA.

Suitable Accommodation - A dedicated area at the SAR operating base to enable the on-shift SAR crew to take rest while holding a state of readiness. Sleeping accommodation must be individual and quiet with the ability for each crew member to control heat and light to enable undisturbed sleep.

Survivor - Person in potential or actual distress, to whom the SAR operational flight is intended to render assistance.

Chapter 1

General information

Introduction

- 1.1 The organisation for civil maritime and civil aviation Search and Rescue (SAR) in the UK is derived from the UK Government's adherence to the United Nations Convention on the High Seas (1958); the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)(1982); the Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS)(1974); the Maritime Search and Rescue Convention (1979) and the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago 1944), Annex 12.
- 1.2 The UK SAR responsibility for ships, aircraft and persons, whether civilian or military, covers the UK SAR Region (UKSRR). Responsibility for civil aeronautical and maritime SAR policy rests with the Department for Transport (DfT). As such, the DfT is responsible, through the UK SAR Strategic Committee, for assessing the adequacy of UK civil aeronautical and maritime SAR resources, response and co-ordination.
- 1.3 The UK SAR organisation is a combination of separate government departments, the emergency services and other organisations. Voluntary and commercial ventures that are not nationally declared assets but may be called upon by national authorities also play a significant role.
- 1.4 The functions of declared SAR units are:
 1. to provide assistance to persons, vessels and aircraft in distress; and
 2. to deliver survivors to a place of safety or where further assistance can be rendered.
- 1.5 References to EU regulations in this document are to those regulations as retained and amended in UK domestic law under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and will be referenced for example UK (EU) Reg. No. 965/2012.
- 1.6 The terminology in this document follows that established in UK (EU) Reg. No. 965/2012, the Air Operations Regulation (Air Ops), and the Air Navigation Order (ANO) as amended.
- 1.7 SAR operators should refer to the requirements established in Air Ops and the ANO for all aspects of helicopter operations not covered by this CAP.