



St Helena Government

Maritime & Aeronautical Search & Rescue Plan

Summary	Risk Specific Search and Rescue plan
Purpose	Plan for use in the response to Maritime and Aeronautical Emergencies
Status	Issued
Version Control	V5
Date Issued	03/09/2025
Date of next Review	03/09/2026

Prepared by	Emergency Planning
Reviewed by	Emergency Planning, Sea Rescue Service & JESCC
Issued by	Emergency Planning
Approved by	Chief of Police

St Helena has a Major Incident Response plan (MIRP), it may be necessary to activate functions within the MIRP to support this SAR Plan.

Version Control

[illegible]

Exercising, Validation and Activation

Date	Type	Update
01/12/2023	TMAS	Cruise Ship Azamara Pursuit
05/01/2024	TMAS	Cruise Ship Celestyal Journey
17/01/2024	Exercise	Exercise Orange Stingray
28/01/2024	TMAS	FV Maral Segundo
16/04/2024	TMAS	SY Neorion
18/04/2024	TMAS	MV Hondius
01/06/2024	TMAS	MV Aquitania
06/06/2024	TMAS	DHT Amazon
30/07/2024	TMAS	MV Berge Elbrus
03/11/2024	TMAS	MV Theresa Hebei
06/11/2024	TMAS	NSU Welfare
04/12/2024	Exercise	SAR Exercise, Prosperous Bay Beach
12/12/2024	TMAS	MV Karoline
17/02/2025	TMAS	MV Rose
18/02/2025	TMAS	MV Rose
10/03/2025	TMAS	MV Artax
12/03/2025	Exercise	SAR Exercise, Banks Beach
28/03/2025	TMAS	Cruise Ship Carnival
01/04/2025	TMAS	MV Maersk Pittsburgh
24/04/2025	TMAS	FV Madera Josefa Uno
28/04/2025	TMAS	SV Vaster
05/05/2025	TMAS	MV Katagalan Brave
23/06/2025	TMAS	FV Pasca Landa
22/07/2025	TMAS	MV Yasa Southern Cross
02/09/2025	TMAS	Bulk Carrier KM Osaka

List of Plan Holders

Plan Number	Responsible Person
1	Emergency Planning
2	Chief Secretary
3	Royal St Helena Police Service
4	St Helena Fire & Rescue Service
5	Portfolio Director of Environmental, Natural Resources and Planning
6	Portfolio Director of Safety, Security and Home Affairs
7	Portfolio Director Health & Social Care
8	Portfolio Director of Education, Skills & Employment
9	Portfolio Director of Economic Development
10	Deputy Financial Secretary - Treasury
11	Deputy Chief Secretary
12	Governor's Office
13	Harbour Master
15	Communications Hub
16	Joint Emergency Services Control Room
16	St Helena Airport Ltd - Rescue Fire Fighting Service Manager
17	Deputy Sea Rescue Managers
18	Emergency Operations Manager
19	Senior Air Traffic Control Officer
20	Chief Medical Officer
21	Senior Medical Officer

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1. THE BASIS OF SEARCH & RESCUE SERVICES

1.1 International agreements

St Helena is obligated to adhere to two international conventions:

- Safety of Life at Sea; and
- International Civil Aviation Organisation Convention on International Civil Aviation.

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (1974) and amendments there-to, hereafter the SOLAS Convention, also contains the general obligation to provide maritime SAR services. The States party to the SOLAS Convention undertake to take all necessary arrangements for coastal surveillance and for the rescue of persons in distress at sea. These arrangements must include the establishment, operation and maintenance of search and rescue facilities as are deemed practicable and necessary, having regard to the density of the seagoing traffic and the navigational dangers. According to the SOLAS Convention, these arrangements must, so far as possible, provide adequate means of locating and rescuing persons in distress.

Furthermore The International Civil Aviation Organisation convention, warrants the provision of a Search and Rescue Service. Annex 12 para 2.1.1 states, *“Contracting States shall, individually or in cooperation with other States, arrange for the establishment and prompt provision of search and rescue services within their territories to ensure that assistance is rendered to persons in distress. Such services shall be provided on a 24-hour basis.”*

1.2 Regulations and Guidelines

The International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR Manual), published by the IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). The IAMSAR Manual contains practical guidelines for the organisation of maritime and aeronautical search and rescue, mission coordination, operations of search and rescue units (SRUs) and provision of SAR related training. The manual is not binding but provides a good foundation for the appropriate provision of maritime and aeronautical SAR services.

1.3 Local Legislation

SAR provision is covered under the following local legislation:

- **Air Navigation (Overseas Territories) Order 2013, Articles 7 (2) (c), Search and Rescue Organisation and Facilities:** Under this Order, the Governor, in 2020, designated the Director of Police as having responsibility within the Territory and Territorial Waters to provide, or secure the provision of, a Search and Rescue (SAR) service for the benefit of civil aviation
- **The Merchant Shipping Ordinance 2021:** This also includes the requirement for St. Helena to abide by the SOLAS Convention. This Ordinance makes the Maritime Authority responsible for the provision of search and rescue capabilities with St. Helena’s territorial waters.

1.4 Terms and definitions

- Central Alerting Post (CAP)

“St Helena Radio” is a VHF/HF Coast Radio Station that is responsible for monitoring the maritime distress frequencies and coordination during a maritime incident. This

function is provided by the Joint Emergency Services Control Centre (JESCC), which is staffed 24/7.

- **Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR)**

Means a set of duties that include the search and rescue of persons in distress at sea, provision of emergency medical services for them and conduct of radio communications related to an emergency phase. Other duties regarded as part of maritime SAR include the provision of tele medical assistance services for vessels.

- **Search and Rescue Region (SRR)**

Means the international maritime area that comprises St Helena's territorial waters.

- **Search and Rescue Sub-Region (SRS)**

Is a sub-region within the Search and Rescue Region (SRR). This area is the territorial waters of St Helena (12Nm from the coastline) and its airspace (which extends to 20Nm from the runway at St. Helena Airport).

- **Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)**

Means a designated coordination centre that acts as the Search and Rescue Region's (SRR) co-ordination centre and is the international point of contact for St Helena's SAR services, which takes care of the continuous coordination, communication and preparedness, and coordinates SAR operations within its Search and Rescue Sub-Region (SRS).

- **Search and Rescue Coordinator (SC)**

Is the commander responsible for SAR arrangements within the SRS.

- **Search Mission Coordinator (SMC)**

Is the commander responsible for an active search and rescue operation.

- **On-Scene Coordinator (OSC)**

Is a person whose duty is to coordinate and harmonise on-scene search and rescue operations under the Search and Rescue Coordinator (SC).

- **Aviation Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC)**

Means a designated coordination centre that acts as the Search and Rescue Region's (SRR) co-ordination centre and is the international point of contact for St Helena's SAR services, which takes care of the continuous coordination, communication and preparedness, and coordinates SAR operations within its Search and Rescue Sub-Region (SRS).

- **Aircraft Coordinator (ACO)**

Is a person whose duty is to coordinate and harmonise on-scene aeronautical SAR operations.

- **Emergency Phase**

a generic term meaning, as the case may be, uncertainty phase, alert phase, or distress phase.

- **Uncertainty phase**, a situation wherein doubt exists as to the safety of an aircraft or a marine vessel, and of the persons on board.

- **Alert phase**, a situation wherein apprehension exists as to the safety of an aircraft or marine vessel, and of the persons on board.
 - **Distress phase**, a situation wherein there is reasonable certainty that a vessel or other craft, including an aircraft or a person, is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance.
-
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**
Means the branch of medical services responsible for providing acute medical care to patients primarily outside health care institutions and, where necessary, the transport of patients to the most appropriate health care unit.
 - **Tele Medical Assistance Service (TMAS)**
Is the provision of urgent medical services for vessels at sea via a satellite phone network, VHF Radio or E-mail.
 - **Cospas-Sarsat System**
An international satellite system for SAR used for the transmission of distress alerts sent by emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs), emergency locator transmitters (ELTs) or personal locator beacons (PLBs) via a satellite link.
 - **Search and Rescue St Helena (SARSH)**
The SAR Committee that is responsible for the ongoing management and governance process which develops, implements and maintains SAR on and in the SRS around St Helena. The SARSH committee is responsible to the St Helena Resilience Forum (SHRF).

A full list of abbreviations used in this document can be found in Appendix 4 – Abbreviations.

2. SEARCH & RESCUE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

2.1 SAR Responsibilities

The overall responsibility of SAR rests with H.E. the Governor. The Director of the Royal St Helena Police Service, under H.E.'s direction, ensures the provision of SAR in the overseas territory of St Helena. The Director has the responsibility for ensuring the SARSH Policy is adhered to and regular reporting of the SARSH Programme to the Governor is carried out. This policy is to be reviewed by the SARSH Committee annually, post incident, or when there has been a significant change to management officers or management processes.

2.1.1 Search and Rescue St Helena (SARSH)

SARSH is a committee that is responsible for the ongoing management and governance process which develops, implements, and maintains SAR on and around the territory of St Helena. The aim of the SARSH Programme is to ensure a coordinated and effective Aeronautical, Maritime, and Land-Based Search and Rescue capability within the territory of St Helena, and agreed Rescue Sub-Region, to assist other agencies as far as practical in the area adjacent.

2.2 St Helena Sea Rescue Service

St Helena has a Sea Rescue Service that is responsible for searching for and rescuing persons in distress in or near the territorial waters of St Helena. However, in the interest of saving lives and due to the remoteness of the island the Sea Rescue Service has the capability and will go beyond the SRS to rescue persons in distress, or that requires assistance. The St Helena Sea Rescue Service has an establishment of 13 (7 full-time and 8 part-time).

2.2.1 St Helena Sea Rescue Service resources

The service has four vessels with the following capabilities:

- **1 x 4.2 metre Gemini surf rescue vessel:**

Primarily used for extracting casualties from the rocky shoreline. It has a range of 10Nm and operates within 1Nm of the shoreline.

- **2 x Gemini 8.5 metre RIBs:**

Each Vessel can carry 2x50 person life rafts for mass casualty operations, these are used to provide a rescue capability for ditching aircraft. Each RIB can operate for approximately 4 hours without refuelling and can operate up to 25-30Nm from the coast of St Helena.

- **1 x Storm force, 11-meter offshore vessel:**

This vessel has a 14 person capacity, can operate for 12 hours without refuelling, and can operate at up to 60Nm from the coast of St Helena.

2.2.2 Training and Preparedness

St Helena Sea Rescue Service:

The Sea Rescue Service has an annual training programme. Training is conducted each week to ensure that staff maintain their skills. The Service also receives training from a National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI), South Africa, trainer who delivers 15Nm and 40Nm coxswains' courses. Some members of the team have also been trained and have the capability to conduct search mission planning. The service also conducts exercises with the CAP and the St Helena Fire & Rescue Service, to support both maritime and terrestrial search and rescue.

For the purpose of Maritime SAR preparedness, the Sea Rescue Service obtains necessary information including the following from other authorities in order to be able to perform its duties:

- Details of vessels and
- vessel owners contact details.
- Details of EPIRBs registered, all flag vessels, daily weather forecasts.

2.3 Central Alerting Post (CAP)

The Royal St Helena Police Service (RSHP) manages the JESCC which is responsible for operating a CAP on the island of St Helena. The CAP maintains a listening watch on the distress frequencies on VHF and HF. The CAP is staffed 24 /7 and can communicate with vessels on VHF up to 30Nm from the coast and 200Nm on HF.

The coordination of an aviation or maritime incident will be done through the CAP. The CAP will activate St Helena's SAR functions based on the information received. Activation speed sheets are found in Appendix 1 – Speed Sheet. The CAP is also responsible for responding to information requests and sharing information with MRCC's. Contact detail of the MRCC's that St Helena works closely with can be found in Appendix 2 – Rescue Co-ordination Centres.

2.3.1 Training and Preparedness

All staff at the CAP have been trained to monitor distress frequencies, acknowledge and relay distress alerts, alert and dispatch SAR resources, and coordinate the SAR response. The CAP staff have been trained by HM Coast Guard in maritime distress call management and have been given a basic insight into search mission planning. Regular maritime distress drills are carried out by Sea Rescue Service and CAP staff.

2.4 Search and Rescue operations (operational coordination)

The RSHP has responsibility for the command and coordination of any Search and Rescue operation in the territory of St Helena. If a request for medical or other assistance does not require an immediate emergency response due to the nature of the incident, the location of the vessel making the call, or beyond the resourcing limits of the Sea Rescue Service then a Tactical Command meeting should take place as soon as possible with the appropriate agencies.

A command structure will be established as soon as notification of an incident has been received. This will comprise of but not limited to the following:

Silver (SMC) Duty Senior Police Commander and the CAP

Bronze Media – SHG Press Office

Maritime Search

Tactical Adviser Sea Rescue Manager, Deputy or Deputy Emergency Planning Manager

Bronze Search Planning – Sea Rescue Manager or Deputy

Bronze OSC – Rescue Boat Coxswain

Aviation Search

Tactical Adviser Aircraft Coordinator (ACO)
 Bronze Search Planning – Air Traffic Control
 Bronze OSC – Rescue Boat Coxswain

Terrestrial Search

Tactical Adviser Police Search Advisor (PoISA)
 Bronze Search Team Leader

2.4.1 Silver responsibilities

- In liaison with the Tactical Advisor determine an appropriate response and deploy resources accordingly (this may need to be undertaken prior to a Tactical Coordination Group meeting) (TCG).
- Where there is a likelihood of casualties and once confirmed, designate a RV point.
- Consider activating Major Incident Plan, or elements thereof, if circumstances are appropriate
- Consider whether the criteria for declaring a major incident are met and, if so, declare this as a 'Major Incident'.
- Determine the requirement for Survivor Reception Centres etc.
- Inform the Chief of Police (if necessary)
- Inform HE The Governor / Head of Governor's Office where appropriate
- Contact the Chief Secretary to agree who will take the role of Gold Commander (if required).
- Arrange for the call out additional resources as appropriate including SHG Public Relations (Bronze Media).
- Determine an appropriate location for a land-based Incident Control Point (Silver) and convene a TCG to include:
 - Police (Chair)
 - Senior Investigating Officer (SIO)
 - Representatives (as appropriate) from:
 - Sea Rescue
 - Fire & Rescue Service
 - Airport Fire Service
 - Harbour Master
 - Survivor Reception Centre(s)
 - Rest Centre(s)
 - Health Directorate
 - HM Coroner
 - Any other relevant services and/or special advisors

2.4.2 Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) – Silver Commander

The SMC is responsible for SAR personnel, equipment, and deployed resources. Where necessary, the SMC appoints an On Scene Coordinator (OSC) or an Aircraft Coordinator (ACO) to assist the SMC. Decisions regarding the suspension and termination of SAR actions are made by the SMC.

2.4.3 MRCC & ARCC MOU

The RSHP has an memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the MRCC and ARCC of South Africa, the MOU how the parties will support each other in SAR operations and training.

2.4.4 On-Scene Coordinator

The Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) may appoint an On Scene Coordinator (OSC) whose duty is to coordinate on-scene search and rescue actions not taking place on board the vessel in distress under the SMC. The master of the vessel is responsible for rescue and evacuation measures on-board the vessel in distress. A person appointed as an OSC must be a Coxswain with in-depth competence in the tasks. In urgent cases where this is necessary to save human lives, a capable person other than a Coxswain may be appointed as an OSC. Before appointing an OSC, the SMC should make sure the person is capable and willing to perform the role. A member of the crew of a vessel sailing in international waters may not be appointed as an OSC against their will. To appoint an OSC is the appropriate solution particularly in cases where there are a lot of SRUs deployed or a lot of vessels arrive at the scene in response to a distress call. A person who is on the scene usually has the best capacity to coordinate all of the vessels arriving at the scene as efficiently as possible. Efforts should be made to appoint as the OSC the head of the SRU with the best capacities for coordination.

2.4.5 Aircraft Coordinator

The appointment of an Aircraft Coordinator (ACO) is justified in cases where there are aircraft participating in a SAR operation. The appointment of an ACO takes place in the same manner as that of an OSC and an ACO operates under the SMC. An ACO is tasked with coordinating and harmonising aeronautical SAR activity on the scene as outlined by the SMC. The ACO performs their duties from Air Traffic Control Tower.

2.4.6 Master of the vessel and other contributors

Rescue measures on-board a vessel in distress are coordinated by the master of the vessel. It is the responsibility of the vessel in distress to ensure that all people are evacuated (however this is not always possible), in most cases there will be confusion during the evacuation stage. The SMC or the OSC must confirm with the master of the vessel in distress that they have accounted for all persons on-board or tasked out search teams for any missing persons on the vessel.

2.4.7 National Non-Specialist SAR vessels

Due to the limited resources of the St Helena Sea Rescue Service, it may be necessary at time to request assistance from local vessels and crews to support a SAR incident.

Where a decision is made to request deployment of local non specialist vessels for SAR the Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) will satisfy themselves of the following:

- The vessel is suitable for the proposed task
- That there are adequate means of communication aboard the vessel
- That the names of the crew are recorded
- That the Skipper and crew are briefed and fully understand the task
- A list of vessels and owners can be found in Appendix 5 – Local non-specialist SAR Vessels

2.4.8 International Non-Specialist SAR Vessels

It is possible to request International vessels to assist in SAR incidents as stated in the SOLAS Convention, Chapter 5 regulation 33.

The master of a ship in distress or the search and rescue service concerned, after consultation, so far as may be possible, with the masters of ships which answer the distress alert, has the right to requisition one or more of those ships as the master of the ship in distress or the search and rescue service considers best able to render assistance, and it shall be the duty of the master or masters of the ship or ships requisitioned to comply with the requisition by continuing to proceed with all speed to the assistance of persons in distress. The tasking of international vessels would normally be made through the MRCC.

2.4.9 Exercising and Preparedness

The SARSH committee, with the support of the SHRF, ensures that there is SAR preparedness in St Helena. Each agency i.e. CAP, Sea Rescue, carries out training and exercising on a regular basis. Additional training also takes place following any change in SOPs or operational issues identified as a result of incident/training debrief

In addition, it is a requirement that all air traffic controllers must have received Search Mission Co-ordination training before being deployed to the island. This is supplemented by monthly simulation exercises which sometimes involve aircraft ditching at sea.

2.5 Communications System

2.5.1 Central Alerting Post (CAP)

The CAP is responsible for operating radio communications during maritime SAR emergency phases and the maintenance of related preparedness. CAP staff coordinate and broadcast:

- maritime safety information;
- emergency phase radio communications include a listening watch on distress frequencies;
- response to distress alerts and calls;
- mobilisation of SRUs; and
- coordination of radio communications during SAR operations.

The CAP maintains constant preparedness for emergency phase radio communications at St Helena Island by keeping a continuous communication watch on international maritime radio on VHF, MF, distress frequencies:

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

2.5.2 Emergency Radio Message

Distress Message

Initiation of distress message by a vessel in distress indicates that a vessel and its crew or other person is being threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance. Distress messages can also be conducted in situations where there are one or more persons overboard. A vessel may only initiate distress messages on the authority of the master or other person responsible for the vessel. The CAP may declare a distress where a vessel in distress has for some other reason not initiated distress message although the person responsible for CAP regards the message necessary. Any notification of DSC, EPIRB, PLB, and ELT must be treated as a distress message and acted upon immediately.

Urgency message

An urgency message indicates that the station has a very urgent message to transmit concerning the safety of a vessel or person but the situation is not a distress phase. Examples of issues communicated through an urgency message include: report on a missing vessel; · a vessel reporting its manoeuvring difficulties; · a vessel reports its problems when it is not yet in actual distress; · a person has suffered a serious health incident or accident and there is a need for urgent medical care or access to the tele medical assistance service.

Safety message

A safety message is employed to transmit a message concerning an important navigational warning. Safety messages can be transmitted by the CAP and vessels.

Safety messages are classified as navigational and weather warnings. Navigational warnings provide information about issues such as a beacon light being off, a displaced navigation aid, or an obstacle in a fairway. Weather warnings include storm, wind, and icing warnings. The CAP must also advise the Nav-Area coordinator of any safety to Navigation information that is reported.

An example of Safety to Navigation information are:

- Damaged or broken lights, fog signals, buoys, and navigational aids that affect main shipping lanes.
- Wrecks, reefs, rocks, and shoals that might be a danger to main shipping lanes.
- Drifting hazards, e.g. derelict ships, mines, ice.
- Unexpected changes or closures of established routes.
- Cable or pipe laying, naval exercises, or underwater operations that might be a danger for shipping lanes.
- Problems with radio navigation, radio or satellite maritime safety information services.
- Areas to avoid where search and rescue and anti-pollution activities are happening.

Contact details for St Helena's Nav-Area coordinator can be found in Appendix 3

2.5.3 Prioritisation of distress and safety messages

The table below sets out how the CAP will prioritise radio messages:

Distress and safety Messages	DSC Priority Category	Phrase in Radio telephony	Prioritisation in telephony
Distress Message	Distress Alert	Mayday	Priority over all other messages
Urgency Message	Urgency Announcement	Pan Pan	Priority over all other messages except Distress
Safety Message	Safety Announcement	Securité	Priority over all other messages except Distress and Urgency
Routine Message	Routine Call		No priority over other messages

2.5.4 General information about the GMDSS

The Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) is based on equipment used at sea, on land, and in the air to transmit distress messages as fast as possible to those responsible for SAR. Vessels participating in the GMDSS are required to carry such radio equipment that

always enables the transmission of distress alerts from the sea area in which the vessel operates to SAR authorities on land. The system enables the speedy alert of land-based authorities coordinating SAR actions and of vessels near the vessel or person in distress to render assistance so that they can assist in coordinated SAR measures with minimum delay. Radio equipment in accordance with the GMDSS is compulsory on board commercial vessels. A recreational vessel becomes a GMDSS participant once equipped with a device compatible with the system (such as VHF radio with DSC).

2.5.5 GMDSS subsystems

The GMDSS consists of several independent radio and communication systems that have been brought together to create one more extensive system.

- Digital Selective Calling (DSC) device and radiotelephone on VHF,
- MF or HF frequencies
- Cospas-Sarsat Emergency Position-Indicating Beacon (EPIRB) Inmarsat.
- Search and Rescue Radar Transponder (SART) Portable VHF radiotelephone.

In addition, the GMDSS can be used to transmit Maritime Safety Information (MSI).

3. FUNCTIONING OF THE SEARCH & RESCUE SYSTEM

3.1 Situational Awareness

The CAP maintains continuous situational awareness regarding the situation in their respective search and rescue area. This situational awareness consists of basic information, position, and preparedness data on SRUs. Basic situational awareness also includes the up-to-date contact details of other maritime SAR authorities, volunteers associations, and other organisations.

In emergency phases, the basic situational awareness creates the starting point for the real-time awareness created to support mission coordination. Emergency phase situational awareness provides information about at least the following issues:-

- Current operational assessments.
- The type of emergency phase and the development of the situation.
- Information about the vessel/aircraft in distress and the owner/operator.
- The coordination structure and the grouping of subsidiary levels of coordination and units and any changes to them.
- Measures are taken by the MRCC/ARCC.
- Progress made in SAR operations.
- The number and identities of located and rescued persons, their health status, location site as well as their transfer further to an evacuation or care location.
- The number and identities, if available, of persons involved in the incident or being searched for.
- Details of objects related to the incident found, their descriptions, location sites, and times.

3.2 Coordination

3.2.1 Command structure

The Island of St Helena operates a three tier command system, during an SAR operation the command structure will be as follows

Gold:Chief Secretary or person nominated by them.

Silver:.....Duty Senior police commander who will take the role as Search Mission Coordinator (SMC)

Bronze:The on scene commander would be a Bronze commander, the SMC may activate more Bronze commanders for different areas or functions if the incident dictates it.

3.2.2 Co-ordination responsibility

The CAP coordinates SAR actions independently within the territory of St Helena. The CAP must, however, keep the MRCC aware of the situation in their SAR area. Where necessary, decisions about resources, the allocation of international resources are made by MRCC in situations where national SRUs need additional assistance or not able to operate. The person in charge of the operational coordination of maritime SAR operations are the Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) on duty at the time.

The SMC determines which emergency phase is at hand and is responsible for ensuring that responsible actions are taken required by the situation. The SMC is assisted by the other personnel of the CAP. The SMC is responsible for searches and the rescue of persons in danger at sea. The SMC should also ensure that a media bronze is stood up to warn and inform as necessary within the scope of their powers, the SMC may order persons to provide assistance, requisition equipment, and supplies for use in SAR operations. Where necessary, the SC appoints an On-Scene Coordinator (OSC), an Aircraft Coordinator (ACO). Decisions regarding the suspension and termination of SAR measures are also made by the SC. The CAP is always manned with a minimum staff of one person and therefore additional staff should be recalled to assist with communications for the SMC.

During a SAR emergency phase, the role of the SMC can be passed on from one person to another in contexts such as prolonged search or rescue operations. This should not, however, take place during a response to an acute distress phase unless necessary to secure sufficient functional capacity. On the other hand, the duty must be passed on to another person before the person acting as the SMC becomes exhausted. When passing the duties on, the outgoing SMC must brief the incoming SMC and both must agree that the incoming SMC is in a position (i.e. has the relevant understanding of the situation and access to required information and communication systems) in order to assume command. The SAR mission situation, strategy, plan, available resources, their duties, restrictions, and the measures taken must be covered unambiguously and the switchover of the SMC's role must be documented.

3.2.3 Initiation of SAR action

Maritime

In the event of an emergency at sea, a vessel will make a distress call (Mayday / Pan Pan / Sécurité). Depending on the capability of the vessel this will be broadcast either on VHF channel 16 or MF 2182 KHz.

The CAP (Call sign St Helena Radio ZHHM) has responsibility for monitoring these channels.

When a message is received, the CAP duty operator will:

- Relay the message
- Whether inside or outside of territorial waters immediately notify the relevant person as per speed sheets.
- Start to create an OTRCIS incident.
- Maintain contact with the vessel and seek to gather further information in relation to the emergency, updating the OTRCIS incident as necessary.
- Relay updates to the Sea Rescue / Police commanders as the situation develops.
- Follow the speed sheets for activating the SAR function and their SOPs.

Depending on the emergency phase at hand, the CAP initiates action in accordance with this plan:

- In the **uncertainty** phase, there is uncertainty about a person's safety at sea or another reason to take measures to assess whether there is any need for assistance. Upon the declaration of this phase, the CAP initiates inquiries to determine whether there are persons in distress. The mobilisation readiness of SRUs can also be raised, but the situation does not yet necessarily call for the use of SRUs.
- In the **alert** phase, a person's safety at sea can be assumed to have been compromised or inquiries made due to the uncertainty phase have been unsuccessful. The CAP expands the coverage of inquiries and initiates the necessary search action to determine whether the distress phase should be declared and prepares to initiate any necessary rescue action. In the alert phase coordination readiness is raised and SRUs are alerted for the mission.
- In the **distress** phase, it is apparent that a person is in danger at sea and in need of immediate assistance. The CAP takes all the necessary action to reduce the risk of loss of lives that is possible and appropriate with the resources available. The initiation of distress radio message helps maximise the speed of response by vessels available for SAR action and facilitate coordination capacities. The CAP must also notify the senior Police commander, Sea Rescue, and (in the case of a Major Incident) the Emergency Planning department as per the speed sheets (Appendix 1). The CAP will remain in command of the incident until the SMC takes on the role.

Note:

Maritime assistance tasks are not SAR tasks even if maritime SRUs are used for them. The purpose of assistance tasks is to help people in situations that are not SAR emergency phases but in which external help is necessary and there is no other appropriate source of help available.

Aviation

In accordance with Annex 12 of the ICAO standard, we use the following phases:

- **Uncertainty Phase (INCERFA):** a situation wherein uncertainty exists as to the safety of an aircraft and its occupants;
- **Alert Phase (ALERFA):** a situation wherein apprehension exists as to the safety of an aircraft and its occupants; and
- **Distress Phase (DETRESFA):** a situation wherein there is a reasonable certainty that an aircraft and its occupants are threatened by grave and imminent danger and require immediate assistance.

St. Helena Terminal Control Area (TMA) falls under Luanda FIR (Flight Information Region). Oceanic flights inbound from Johannesburg will be handed over by Johannesburg Oceanic

sector to Luanda Oceanic sector before it is handed over to St. Helena Approach sector for descent and landing. The point of transfer of control will be before descending through 20,000ft or FL200 or before crossing 60NM radius from the island. St. Helena's TMA class D airspace and is 60nm radius based on ARP (Aerodrome Reference Point) which is a point on the runway and up to FL195

3.2.4 Principles of Use and Operations of SRUs

SARs actions are based on the nature and urgency of the emergency phase, SRUs' equipment, the level of training of the personnel are suitable to operate in St Helena's SAR area.

The mobilisation of SRUs takes place based on the information received by the CAP. The SMC assigns tasks for SRUs, the tasks will contain the location of the operating area, the coordination structure and the communication method to be used, a description of the target of search or rescue, information about the type of assistance required by those in danger and, if necessary, the search area and method.

All SRUs participating in the mission will be ordered to operate under the On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) if necessary. Once the search is completed, the SMC must be informed so that the SMC can assign the SRUs best suited for the rescue work and other necessary help to the scene.

Units performing rescue work must constantly keep the SMC aware through the CAP of the progress made and immediately inform the SMC if any further assistance is required. An SRU may suspend or terminate a SAR duty assigned to it only if authorised by the SMC or it is unsafe to continue. The SMC/OSC in question must be informed immediately through the CAP if an SRU has to deviate from the task assigned to it.

3.2.5 Isolation of a scene

The Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) may temporarily prohibit access to the sea area on which a SAR mission takes place in and restrict access if necessary to secure the efficient performance of SAR operations and to avoid further emergency phases. Before making a decision regarding public fairways, the SMC must consider the possibility of the potential support any none specialist SAR asset can be to the SAR operation.

3.2.6 Maritime Assistance Services and Tele medical Assistance Services.

At times there are requests for medical advice from the Master of a vessel, this usually comes via e-mail but it can be assumed that such a request could come Via VHF or HF from local and international vessels. The CAP will assist the master of any vessel to gain the information they require.

3.2.7 Suspension and termination of operations

The Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) may temporarily suspend the search or rescue operation if appropriate SAR actions are prevented by the prevailing conditions. The reasons for the suspension must be recorded and actions must be resumed once the obstacle no longer exists.

The SMC makes the decision to terminate SAR activity when it has been established based on inquiries made and search measures performed that there is no need for further measures or once all those in danger have been located and rescued. The SMC may also decide to terminate a search when it has become apparent that there is no longer a reasonable probability of finding any more survivors.

The SMC must ensure that the decision to suspend or terminate SAR operations must be logged and communicated immediately to all units and key stakeholders.

3.3 Investigations

3.3.1 Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB)

The UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) may be consulted with regards to the conduct of an investigation into any shipping accident within St Helena territorial waters or a vessel on the St Helena registry. The purpose of an MAIB investigation is the prevention of future accidents. It is not the purpose to apportion liability, nor except so far as is necessary to achieve the objective, to apportion blame. The MAIB is not an enforcement or prosecuting body. MAIB have jurisdiction to investigate incidents involving vessels on the UK register and will investigate other incidents upon request.

St. Helena Flagged Vessels

The Head of Maritime has the responsibility to initiate an investigation under the flag state requirements for conventional size vessels.

Vessels in St. Helena Waters

The investigation of a marine accident involving any conventional size vessel (not registered in St. Helena) in St. Helena's water will be the responsibility of the relevant flag state. However, MAIB may also be contacted by the Maritime Authority, if this is believed to be necessary.

3.3.2 Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB)

In the event of an incident or accident involving an aircraft within St. Helena's airspace, AAIB will be notified by the relevant authority. In the event that the incident/accident occurs at or in the immediate proximity of the airport, this will be done by the Accountable Manager or Airport Operations Manager. If it occurs further away from the island, the Senior Police Officer will notify AAIB.

3.3.3 Coroner

If there is an incident / accident resulting in loss of life within St. Helena's territorial waters, there will be an investigation on behalf of St Helena's Coroner. This investigation will be led by the Royal St Helena Police Service's CID team.

3.3.4 Saving of property

Maritime SAR actions focus on the search for and rescue of persons in danger at sea. Although the saving of property is not normally included in maritime SAR duties, SRUs may case-specifically also employ the saving of property as a means of safeguarding life or livelihoods.

3.3.5 Release of public information

Any information released to the public will be done in line with the SHG Media Plan. Release of information must not violate the protection of privacy, and so the rights of survivors, their relatives and other affected parties must be taken into consideration.

4. RECOVERY

As the incident develops, the Gold Commander must start to consider how the recovery phase will be managed. This may require establishing a 'Recovery Working Group' at an early stage to start developing the plans for this phase of the incident. The St. Helena Major Incident Response Plan contains information to support the planning of the recovery phase.

The recovery phase begins immediately after the threat to human life has subsided. The goal of the recovery phase is to bring the affected area back to some degree of normality.

5. ST HELENA'S SAR RESOURCES

5.1 Sea Rescue Service

The St Helena Sea Rescue Service has four vessels (one offshore and three inshore) and the team is made up of thirteen full-time time and part-time workers. A number of members of the service are trained as Maritime Search Mission Planners.

5.2 St Helena Fire Service

The St Helena Fire and Rescue service has nine full-time personal who are trained in land search technics for missing persons, and rope rescue.

5.3 Airport Fire Service

The Airport Fire Service has eleven full time personal and are trained in rope rescue techniques.

5.4 JESCC

The JESCC is operated by a manager, eight full time staff and operates 24/7. The JESCC is capable of communicating with maritime vessels on both VHF, MF and HF frequencies.

5.5 Emergency Services UAV

The primary function of this UAV is to support SAR. The UAV can operate at all hours and is capable of carrying a twin camera payload, including 30x optical zoom and forward looking infra-red. The UAV has an uninterrupted flight time of approximately 20 minutes depending on the weather i.e. wind.

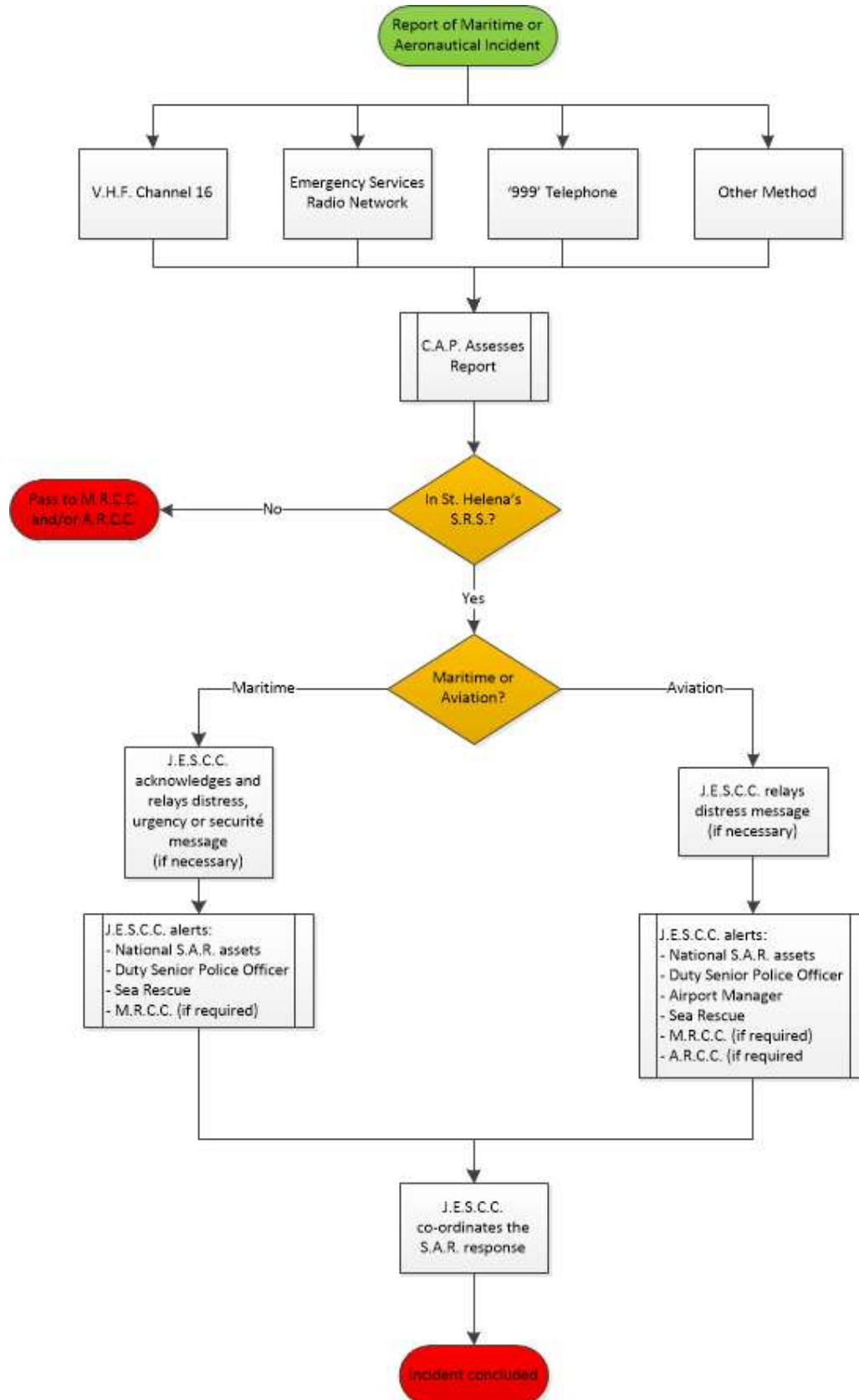
5.6 Royal St Helena Police Service

The Royal St Helena Police Service is responsible for SAR Command and Control. They currently have a number of personnel trained as Silver Commanders who would take on the role of SMC.

5.7 ATC

St Helena Airport has two fulltime ATC operators and all ATC operators have been trained in Search Mission Coordination. An ATC operator will take on the role of Aircraft Coordinator (ACO).

Appendix 1 – Speed Sheet



Appendix 2 – Rescue Co-ordination Centres

Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre

MRCC, Cape Town, South Africa

Tel: +27 21 938 3300

Fax: +27 21 939 3309

Email: mrcc.ct@samsa.org.za

Checked on the 16/09/2024

MRCC, Falmouth, UK

SRR: UKSRR

Tel: +44 1326 317575

Fax: +44 1326 315610

Email: ukmrcc@hmcg.gov.uk

Note: To find contact details for other MRCCs visit the following web site:

<https://sarcontacts.info/>

Checked on the 16/09/2024

Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre

ARCC Johannesburg, South Africa

Contact number: + 27 63 505 5485

Email: ARCC@atns.co.za

Checked on the 16/09/2024

Appendix 3 – Nav-Area Coordinator

Below is the contact information for the Navigational Area Coordinator (South African Navy):

Urgent navigational information (24 Hour Service):

- Fax: +27 21 787 2228 (Preferred)
- E-Mail: navcomcen.cape@sanavy.co.za

Other navigational information (0730 - 1600 Mon - Fri):

- Fax: +27 21 787 2233
- Phone: +27 21 787 2445/2444
- E-mail: hydrosan@iafrica.com

General information (0730 - 1600 Mon - Fri):

- Phone: +27 21 787 2408

Appendix 4 – Abbreviations

AAIB	United Kingdom Air Accident Investigation Branch
ACP	Access Control Point
ALP.....	Ambulance Loading Point
ARCC	Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre
DSC.....	Digital Selective Calling
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
ELT.....	Emergency Locator Transmitter
ENRD	Environment and Natural Resources Directorate
EPIRB.....	Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon
FCP	Forward Control Point
FCO.....	Foreign Commonwealth Office
GMDSS	Global Maritime Distress Safety System
ICAO.....	International Civil Aviation Organization
IEG	Incident Executive Group
ILO.....	Incident Liaison Officer
IMO.....	International Maritime Organisation
JDM.....	Joint Decision Model
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme
MAIB.....	United Kingdom Marine Accident Investigation Branch
MIRP	St. Helena's Major Incident Response Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRCC.....	Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
PLB.....	Personal Locator Beacon
PoISA	Police Search Advisor
RVP	Rendezvous Point
RC	Rest Centres
RC	Rescue Coordination Centre
RSC.....	Rescue Sub Centre
RSR.....	Rescue Sub Region
SAR:	Search and Rescue
SC	Search & Rescue Coordinator
SCG.....	Strategic Coordination Group
SHG.....	St Helena Government
SHRF.....	St Helena Resilience Forum
SMC	Search Mission Coordinator
SRC.....	Survivor Reception Centre
SRR.....	Search and Rescue Region
SRU:.....	Search and Rescue Unit
TCC	Tactical Coordination Centre
TCG.....	Tactical Coordination Group

Appendix 5 – Local non-specialist SAR Vessels

Vessel Name	Capacity	Range	Speed (Knots)	Owner
FV Catfish	10 Persons	30Nm	7	Waylon Thomas
Egalité	14 Persons	80Nm	30	Keith Yon
Enchanted Isle	32 Persons	Unknown	25	Johnathan Herne
FV John Mellis	20 Persons	200Nm	10	Dorian Caswell
Mike Boat / Landing Craft	60 Persons	12Nm	12	Solomon & Co
Sea Horse	20 Persons	30Nm	22	Anthony Thomas
Starlite	12 Persons	20Nm	15	Craig Yon
Swordfish	10 Persons	20Nm	10	Richard Sim