



Ref: T2/6.01

MSC.1/Circ.1184
31 May 2006

**ENHANCED CONTINGENCY PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR PASSENGER SHIPS
OPERATING IN AREAS REMOTE FROM SAR FACILITIES**

- 1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-first session (10 to 19 May 2006), with a view to providing enhanced guidance for passenger ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities, approved the Enhanced contingency planning guidance for passenger ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue, at its tenth session (6 to 10 March 2006), as set out in the annex.
- 2 Member Governments and international organizations are invited to bring the annexed guidance to the attention of all concerned.

ANNEX**ENHANCED CONTINGENCY PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR PASSENGER SHIPS
OPERATING IN AREAS REMOTE FROM SAR FACILITIES**

1 In accordance with the relevant provisions of the SOLAS and SAR Conventions and the ISM Code, contingency plans for passenger ships should be prepared for operating in areas considered to be remote from SAR facilities. Factors which may make an area remote from SAR services are set out in the Appendix and may include:

- .1 the number of people potentially at risk as the result of an accident in the area;
- .2 the total recovery capacity of SAR facilities available to reach the scene of the accident and recover those at risk within survival times (including all additional SAR facilities likely to be available, as well as designated SAR units); and
- .3 whether there is any shortfall between the number to be recovered and the capacity of those SAR facilities available.

2 SAR co-operation planning arrangements should be enhanced for ships operating in areas remote from SAR facilities (see Appendix), as follows:

- .1 the Company should give reasonable notice of the arrival of its ship in the remote area to the relevant RCC;
- .2 if not already doing so, the Company should arrange direct exchange of the ship's SAR co-operation plan with the relevant SAR services;
- .3 the relevant SAR services may request a copy of the relevant part of the Company's emergency plan, in addition to the basic SAR co-operation plan, in order to assist their own contingency planning; and
- .4 the Company should keep the RCC informed as to the ship's position and intentions while the ship is operating in the remote area.

3 The risks of remote area operation should be assessed and planned for. The following enhancements should be among those considered:

- .1 voyage 'pairing', i.e., mutual exchange of information that may be available to the SAR Authority or the vessel operator with reference to other passenger ships operating in the same area, so that, if two or more passenger ships are operating in the same general area at the same time, each can be used as a SAR facility in case of accident to another;
- .2 the carriage of enhanced life-saving appliances;
- .3 the provision of additional life-saving resources; and
- .4 other sources of assistance that may be available in the area.

APPENDIX

**CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING WHAT CONSTITUTES
AN AREA REMOTE FROM SAR FACILITIES**

1 The following criteria are considered relevant in determining what constitutes an area remote from SAR facilities:

- .1 the number of people at risk;
- .2 the nature of the risk and whether containment strategies can mitigate its effects, in particular whether the effects of the incident can be so contained as to enable those at risk to remain on board until rescued, or for a period prior to eventual evacuation, thus extending the time to recover;
- .3 the availability of SAR facilities and other resources which may be deployed in order to contain the incident and keep those at risk on board until rescued, or for a period prior to eventual evacuation, thus extending the time to recover;
- .4 the total recovery capacity of SAR facilities available to reach the scene and recover those who have taken to survival craft within the five day “time to recover” parameter and/or within survival times;
- .5 any shortfall between the number to be recovered and the capacity of those SAR facilities available;
- .6 the distance (in time) between individual SAR facilities’ start points and the scene of the emergency;
- .7 the prevailing sea conditions, both on scene and encountered by SAR facilities proceeding;
- .8 the prevailing weather conditions, both on scene and encountered by SAR facilities proceeding;
- .9 any restrictions on SAR facility deployment which limit or remove their ability to respond even if theoretically within reach of the scene of the emergency;
- .10 the ability of those at risk to survive in the prevailing weather and sea conditions until they can be recovered (that is, for a maximum of five days according to the “time to recover” parameter);
- .11 the ability of available SAR facilities to recover those at risk in the prevailing weather and sea conditions;*

* The continuing work on developing functional requirements for SOLAS ships on systems used to recover persons from survival craft and from the water should be noted in this regard. It is intended that SOLAS ships will, in future, be better able to recover people in such circumstances.

- .12 any shortfall between the time taken to recover those at risk and the five day “time to recover” parameter and/or survival times in the prevailing conditions;
 - .13 availability and quality of communications; and
 - .14 effective co-ordination of search and rescue response.
-