

ON-SCENE COORDINATOR (OSC)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the duties and responsibilities of an On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) during a maritime search and rescue (SAR) incident as defined by the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual, Volume III. The course will train students to utilize a structured approach, applying core leadership principles and management techniques in order to provide effective on-scene management and coordination of a maritime SAR incident.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This course is generally intended for masters and navigational officers at management levels of seagoing vessels (either commercial or governmental) who may be designated as future On Scene Coordinators, but will also be of value to any personnel who may be directly or indirectly involved in the practical delivery of maritime search and rescue activities. This may also include Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC), Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) or a Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC) personnel as part of their responsibilities, as well as those vessel masters or staff onboard primary, secondary or voluntary maritime Search and Rescue Units (SRUs) who may be tasked with OSC duties.

Other potential candidates could also be those from Maritime Shipping agencies, Coast Guard, Navy, Police, Fire & First Responder organizations, Emergency Response contractors, or volunteer SAR organizations.

PREREQUISITES

IAMSAR Solutions Fundamentals of SAR (FSAR) course or SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) course
Be familiar with operational procedures of communications according to GMDSS protocols;
Be familiar with the principles of keeping a navigation watch onboard a seagoing vessel (STCW Code Section A-VIII);
Be a STCW or domestically qualified Ship's Officer / Master or be a qualified Military / Coast Guard Aircraft Commander.

REFERENCES

International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea [SOLAS] (1974)
International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (1979)
Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping of Seafarers (STCW) Convention
IAMSAR manual Volume I - Organization and Management (2022)
IAMSAR manual Volume II - Mission Coordination (2022)
IAMSAR manual Volume III - Mobile Facilities (2022)
International Maritime Organization (IMO) - SAR On-Scene Coordinator Course Curriculum 3.15 (2014)

ICAO Annex XII - Search and Rescue (2024)

Canadian Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual [CAMSAR] (2024)

International Maritime Rescue Federation - SAR Operations

GMDSS Handbook

GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOME

This knowledge-based course will focus on theoretical understanding and practical development of skills necessary to effectively fulfill the role of On Scene Coordinator in marine SAR incidents.

Students will emerge with a solid understanding of the global SAR system, basic principles of maritime drift, distress alerting, search area determination, search pattern assignment & execution, as well as leadership techniques and effective command, control and coordination best practices in managing various types of SAR incidents within a maritime environment.

Throughout the course students will:

1. Develop an understanding of the roles, responsibilities, tasks, and best practices associated with interaction between multiple SAR resources and facilities;
2. Enhance skills in coordinating operations of all SAR facilities on scene, including untrained searchers;
3. Learn to implement and (if necessary) adjust or modify the search action plan / rescue plan received from the Search Mission Coordinator (SMC);
4. Coordinate on-scene communications and provide periodic situation reports (SITREPs) to the SMC;
5. Monitor the performance of assigned Search and Rescue Units (SRUs);
6. Maintain safety and safe separations between all facilities (surface and air);
7. Maintain detailed, accurate records of all SRU actions and search specifics during SAR incidents;
8. Monitoring and reporting on the number, names and distribution of survivors onboard SRUs;
9. Understand the challenges of an OSC in complex SAR incidents;
10. Develop leadership, teamwork and communications skills in order to effectively manage the SAR response efforts on scene.

COURSE TOPICS

International SAR Conventions

Overview of the Global SAR System

National Legal SAR Responsibilities

Introduction to IAMSAR Manual Volumes II (Mission Coordination) & III (Mobile Facilities)

Distress Alerting - Maritime Distress Signals & GMDSS

Stages of a Maritime SAR Incident and Actions

Roles, Responsibilities & Tasks

- On Scene Coordinator (OSC)
- Air Control Officer (ACO)
- Search Mission Coordinator (SMC) at a Rescue Coordination Centre
- Coastal Marine Radio Station
- Search and Rescue Unit (SRU)



Rendering Assistance and Immediate Action in SAR Incidents

Fundamentals of Maritime Drift

Search Area Determination

Search Pattern Selection

- Visual and Electronic Search Patterns

Search and Rescue Units - Characteristics & Assignment

Leadership at Sea

- Command & Control
- Delegation
- Observe, Orient, Decide, Act (OODA) Loop

Teamwork in SAR

- OSC Team Management
- Interoperability with Partners
- Interactions with Shore-Based Facilities

Communications

- OSC Communications Plans
- Onboard Communication Requirements
- Effective On Scene Communications

OSC Documentation & Reporting

Managing Complex SAR Incidents

TableTop Exercises, Case Studies and SAR Simulations

LANGUAGE

Understanding of the English language both written and spoken preferably with a minimum of ICAO Level 3 English proficiency.

DURATION AND LOCATION

Course duration is 5 training days, available in 2026-2027 under mobile on-site training at your location (*we come to you*), and in-house at our facilities in Canada (*you come to us*). For mobile on-site training, the client is to provide a suitable classroom training environment, computers / IT equipment, and the IAMSAR manual (Volume III).

CLASS SIZE

A maximum of 8 students per instructor.

INSTRUCTING PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

Proposed instructors are qualified Canadian maritime SAR Mission Coordinators with a minimum of 5 years combined experience in a Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) and operating a maritime Search and Rescue Unit (SRU). Proposed instructors will also have a minimum of 5-years' experience as a ship's officer or ship's master in the Canadian Coast Guard and/or the Royal Canadian Navy with real-life experience being designated as an OSC on SAR incidents.



CERTIFICATION

Attending students receive a certificate of successful completion for the On-Scene Coordinator course.

COURSE FEE

All-inclusive format. Includes tailored course preparation specific to the client's search and rescue region (SRR), fleet characteristics, SAR resources, personnel, and specific instructional delivery needs. For onsite course deliveries, the course fee includes instructor airfare, hotel, meals, local transportation and incidentals.

AVAILABILITY AND PREPARATION TIME

Course availability is dependent upon IAMSAR Solutions' ongoing training and consulting commitments.

A minimum of 60 days from contract signature is required prior to the start of training. This allows sufficient time to gather appropriate data, develop relevant practical exercises and best prepare course materials that are tailored to the student cadre's area of responsibility.