
4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

MSC.1/Circ.892/Rev.1
28 November 2022

GUIDANCE ON ALERTING OF SEARCH AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES

- 1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 106th session (2 to 11 November 2022), approved the revised *Guidance on alerting of search and rescue authorities*, as set out in the annex, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), at its ninth session (21 to 30 June 2022).
- 2 This circular provides guidance to ensure early notification of SAR authorities when involved in emergency situations.
- 3 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed Guidance to the attention of shipmasters, officers, key shore-based personnel and any other parties concerned.
- 4 This circular becomes effective on 1 January 2024, superseding MSC/Circ.892 as from that date.

ANNEX

GUIDANCE ON ALERTING THE SEARCH AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES

1 The need for the earliest possible alerting of the search and rescue (SAR) coordination authority to maritime emergencies cannot be overemphasized.

2 It is essential to enable shore-based facilities to respond without delay to any situation which constitutes, or has the potential to constitute, a danger to life. Time lost in the initial stages of an incident may be crucial to its eventual outcome. It cannot be regained.

3 Factors to be considered include position (in relation to hazards and to shore-based or other SAR units); time of day; weather conditions (actual and forecast); the number of persons at risk or potentially at risk; specific assistance required.

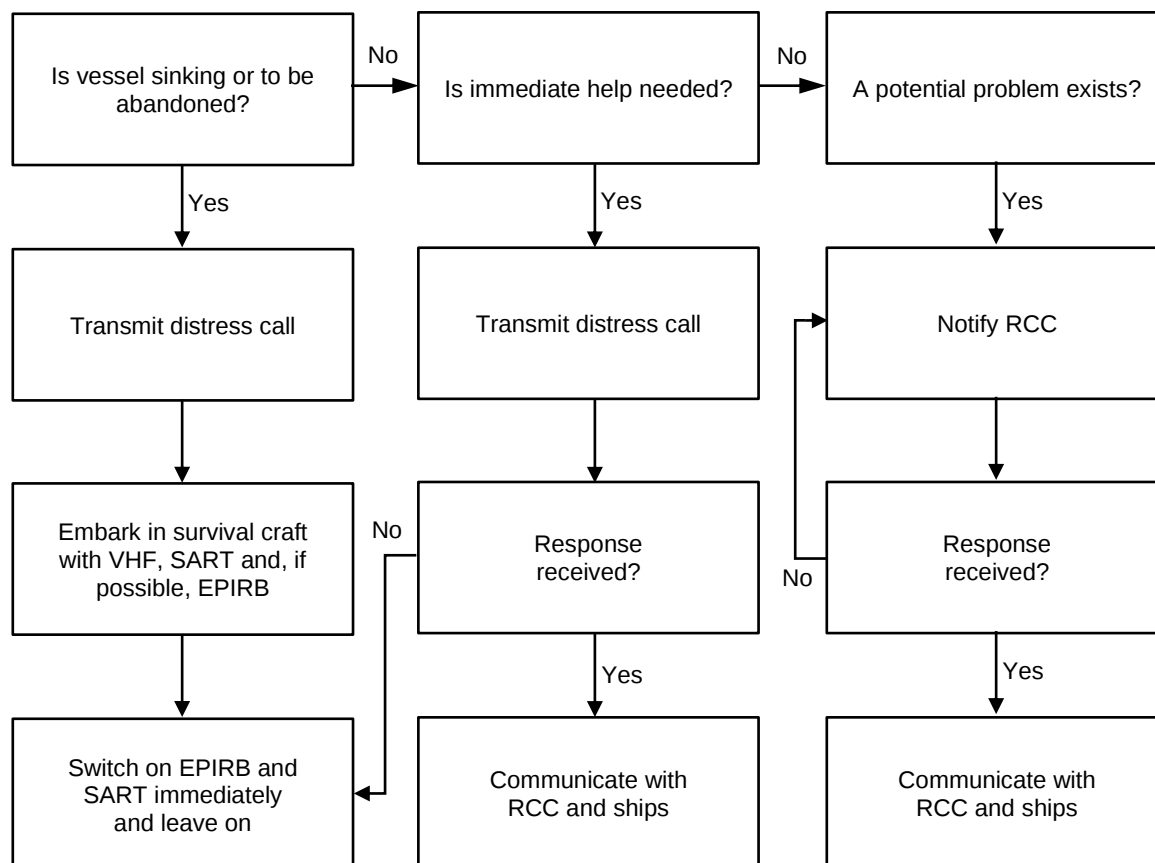
4 It is always best to consider the "worst-case scenario" and to alert the SAR organization accordingly. Depending on the circumstances, the coordinating authority may choose to alert or dispatch SAR facilities as a precautionary measure and/or to reduce transit times. If assistance is not subsequently required, any such positive response can be easily curtailed. But time lost through delays in notification can never be regained.

5 It is therefore essential that the SAR coordinating authority be informed immediately of:

- .1 all maritime SAR incidents;
- .2 any situation which may develop into a SAR incident; and
- .3 any incident which may involve or lead to danger to life, the environment or to property which may require action from the SAR services and/or other authorities.

Operating guidance for ships in distress or urgency situations*

6 The following diagram shows standard procedures for distress/urgency message routing. It is for guidance only, and does not preclude the use of any and all available means of distress alerting.



* To be considered in conjunction with *GMDSS Operating guidance for ships in distress situations* (MSC.1/Circ.1656).

Operating guidance for ships observing another vessel apparently in danger

7 The following diagram shows suggested procedures for reporting concerns about the safety of another vessel (fire, smoke, adrift, navigating towards a danger, etc.).

