



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization
North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

WORKING PAPER

NACCWGSARTF5 — WP/06
12/09/24

Fifth North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group (NACC/WG) Search and Rescue (SAR) Implementation Task Force Meeting (NACC/WG/SAR/TF/5)
Mexico City, Mexico, 23 to 27 September 2024

Agenda Item 2: Search and Rescue (SAR) Global and Regional Affairs

ADOPTION OF AMENDMENT 19 TO ANNEX 12

(Presented by United States)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper advises of the recent adoption of Amendment 19 to Annex 12 and highlights certain parts relevant to current SAR operations and procedures.

Action:	Is shown in Section 3
Strategic Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICAO State letter AN 15/1.4-24/23 dated 18 April 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 ICAO State letter Ref. *AN 15/1.4-24/23* dated 18 April 2024 informed States that Amendment 19 to the International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of Annex 12 - *Search and Rescue*, was adopted by the Council on 18 March 2024. Amendment 19 has an effective date of 28 November 2024 and an applicability date of 26 November 2026.

1.2 Annex 12 – *Search and Rescue*, Ninth Edition, July 2024 incorporates amendment 19 and has been published.

2. Background

2.1 The last time Annex 12 was amended, Amendment 18, was in 2007. If national SAR services have not been provided a copy of Amendment 19 or the Ninth edition of Annex 12, it is recommended that the national civil aviation authority be contacted for this information. The specific Amendment 19 text for inclusion in Annex 12 is shown in the State letter on pages 24-31 (**Appendix**).

2.2 SAR services will need to consider steps to take to implement Amendment 19 to Annex 12. Significant changes include:

- 2.3.6 Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue subcentre shall maintain up-to-date contact details in the OPS Control Directory.
- 2.3.7 Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue subcentre shall subscribe and maintain access to the location of an aircraft in distress repository (LADR).
- 2.6.9 Recommendation. – As of 26 November 2026, each search and rescue aircraft, when used for search and rescue over maritime areas, should carry a droppable device for measuring actual surface drift.
- 3.2.5 regarding 24-hour SAR point of contact for receipt and acknowledgement of Cospas-Sarsat alert data.
- 4.2.4 The search and rescue plans of operation shall contain details regarding actions to be taken by those engaged in search and rescue, including:
 - o i) as of 26 November 2026, the methods for obtaining approval to allow search and rescue units from an assisting State to enter into the territory of the State of the RCC.

3. Suggested Actions

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) consider views on Amendment 19 to Annex 12 and, in particular, text highlighted in paragraph 2.2.



International
Civil Aviation
Organization

Organisation
de l'aviation civile
internationale

Organización
de Aviación Civil
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Международная
организация
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航空组织

Tel.: +1 514-315-2008

Ref.: AN 15/1.4-24/23

18 April 2024

Subject: Adoption of Amendment 19 to Annex 12

Action required: a) Notify any disapproval before 22 July 2024; b) Notify any differences and compliance before 28 October 2024¹; c) Consider the use of the Electronic Filing of Differences (EFOD) System for notification of differences and compliance

Sir/Madam,

1. I have the honour to inform you that Amendment 19 to the *International Standards and Recommended Practices, Search and Rescue* (Annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation) was adopted by the Council at the fifth meeting of its 231st Session on 18 March 2024. Copies of the Amendment and the Resolution of Adoption are available as attachments to the electronic version of this State letter on the ICAO-NET (<http://portal.icao.int>) where you can access all other relevant documentation.

2. When adopting the amendment, the Council prescribed 22 July 2024 as the date on which it will become effective, except for any part concerning which a majority of Contracting States have registered their disapproval before that date. In addition, the Council resolved that Amendment 19, to the extent it becomes effective, will become applicable on 28 November 2024².

3. Amendment 19 arises from:

- a) recommendations of the sixth meeting of the Air Traffic Management Operations Panel (ATMOPSP/6) regarding the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS); and
- b) recommendations of the twenty-seventh meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization/International Maritime Organization (ICAO/IMO) Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (JWG-SAR/27) concerning drift measurement, responsiveness of search and rescue (SAR) points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR

¹ 26 October 2026 for provisions related to drift measurement, responsiveness of SAR points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

² 26 November 2026 for provisions related to drift measurement, responsiveness of SAR points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

4. The amendment concerning GADSS aims to facilitate contact between air traffic services units, air operators and rescue coordination centres (RCCs), and will ensure that RCCs receive notification on the location of an aircraft in distress in a timely manner.

5. The amendment concerning drift measurement aims at improving the chances of rescue for survivors of aircraft accidents by providing SAR services with an accurate and up-to-date drift model. Such a model allows rescue coordination centres to determine an initial search datum and patterns with more accuracy. The amendment was supported by further amendments developed by the ICAO/IMO JWG-SAR which aim to improve SAR response times, facilitate assistance from other States during SAR operations, reduce the risk to SAR personnel at accident sites, ensure that the conduct of exercises took account of both the search and the rescue phases of SAR, and provide better information to rescue coordination centres with a commensurate reduction in the need for further enquiries.

6. The subjects are given in the amendment to the Foreword of Annex 12, a copy of which is in Attachment A.

7. In conformity with the Resolution of Adoption, may I request:

- a) that before 22 July 2024 you inform me if there is any part of the adopted Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) amendments in Amendment 19 concerning which your Government wishes to register disapproval, using the form in Attachment B for this purpose. Please note that only statements of disapproval need be registered and if you do not reply it will be assumed that you do not disapprove of the amendment;
- a) that before 28 October 2024¹ you inform me of the following, using the Electronic Filing of Differences (EFOD) System or the form in Attachment C for this purpose:
 - 1) any differences that will exist on 28 November 2024² between the national regulations or practices of your Government and the provisions of the whole of Annex 12, as amended by all amendments up to and including Amendment 19, and thereafter of any further differences that may arise; and
 - 2) the date or dates by which your Government will have complied with the provisions of the whole of Annex 12 as amended by all amendments up to and including Amendment 19.

8. With reference to the request in paragraph 7 a) above, it should be noted that a registration of disapproval of Amendment 19 or any part of it in accordance with Article 90 of the Convention does not constitute a notification of differences under Article 38 of the Convention. To comply with the latter provision, a separate statement is necessary if any differences do exist, as requested in paragraph 7 b) 1). It is recalled in this respect that international Standards in Annexes have a conditional binding force, to the

¹ 26 October 2026 for provisions related to drift measurement, responsiveness of SAR points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

² 26 November 2026 for provisions related to drift measurement, responsiveness of SAR points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

extent that the State or States concerned have not notified any difference thereto under Article 38 of the Convention.

9. With reference to the request in paragraph 7 b) above, it should be also noted that the ICAO Assembly, at its 39th Session (27 September to 6 October 2016), resolved that Member States should be encouraged to use the EFOD System when notifying differences (Resolution A39-22 refers). The EFOD System is currently available on the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) restricted website (<http://www.icao.int/usoap>) which is accessible by all Member States. You are invited to consider using this for notification of compliance and differences.

10. Guidance on the determination and reporting of differences is given in the Note on the Notification of Differences in Attachment D. Please note that a detailed repetition of previously notified differences, if they continue to apply, may be avoided by stating the current validity of such differences.

11. I would appreciate it if you would also send a copy of your notifications, referred to in paragraph 7 b) above, to the ICAO Regional Office accredited to your Government.

12. At the fifth meeting of its 204th Session, the Council requested that States, when being advised of the adoption of an Annex amendment, be provided with information on implementation and available guidance material, as well as an impact assessment. This is presented for your information in Attachments E and F, respectively. An overview of the approval process for Amendment 19 to Annex 12 is also included for your information in Attachment G.

13. As soon as practicable after the amendment becomes effective, on 22 July 2024, replacement pages incorporating Amendment 19 will be forwarded to you.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

for Juan Carlos Salazar
Secretary General

Enclosures:

- A — Amendment to the Foreword of Annex 12
- B — Form on notification of disapproval of all or part of Amendment 19 to Annex 12
- C — Form on notification of compliance with or differences from Annex 12
- D — Note on the Notification of Differences
- E — Implementation task list and outline of guidance material in relation to Amendment 19 to Annex 12
- F — Impact assessment in relation to Amendment 19 to Annex 12
- G — Overview of approval process for Amendment 19 to Annex 12

ATTACHMENT A to State letter AN 15/1.4-24/23

AMENDMENT TO THE FOREWORD OF ANNEX 12

Add the following element at the end of Table A:

<i>Amendment</i>	<i>Source(s)</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Adopted/Approved Effective Applicable</i>
19	Sixth meeting of the Air Traffic Management Operations Panel (ATMOPSP/6); and the twenty-seventh meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization/International Maritime Organization (ICAO/IMO) Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (JWG-SAR/27).	a) Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS); and b) Responsiveness of SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission as of 26 November 2026.	18 March 2024 22 July 2024 28 November 2024 26 November 2026

ATTACHMENT B to State letter AN 15/1.4-24/23

NOTIFICATION OF DISAPPROVAL OF ALL OR PART OF
AMENDMENT 19 TO ANNEX 12

To: The Secretary General
International Civil Aviation Organization
999 Robert-Bourassa Boulevard
Montréal, Quebec
Canada H3C 5H7

(State) _____ hereby wishes to disapprove the following parts of
Amendment 19 to Annex 12:

Signature _____

Date _____

NOTES

- 1) If you wish to disapprove all or part of Amendment 19 to Annex 12, please dispatch this notification of disapproval to reach ICAO Headquarters by 22 July 2024. If it has not been received by that date it will be assumed that you do not disapprove of the amendment. **If you approve of all parts of Amendment 19, it is not necessary to return this notification of disapproval.**
- 2) This notification should not be considered a notification of compliance with or differences from Annex 12. Separate notifications on this are necessary. (See Attachment C.)
- 3) Please use extra sheets as required.

ATTACHMENT C to State letter AN 15/1.4-24/23

**NOTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH OR DIFFERENCES
FROM ANNEX 12
(Including all amendments up to and including Amendment 19)**

To: The Secretary General
International Civil Aviation Organization
999 Robert-Bourassa Boulevard
Montréal, Quebec
Canada H3C 5H7

1. No differences will exist on _____ between the national regulations and/or practices of **(State)** _____ and the provisions of Annex 12, including all amendments up to and including Amendment 19.

2. The following differences will exist on _____ between the regulations and/or practices of **(State)** _____ and the provisions of Annex 12, including Amendment 19 (Please see Note 2) below.)

a) Annex Provision (Please give exact paragraph reference)	b) Details of Difference (Please describe the difference clearly and concisely)	c) Remarks (Please indicate reasons for the difference)
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(Please use extra sheets as required.)

3. By the dates indicated below, **(State)** _____ will have complied with the provisions of Annex 12, including all amendments up to and including Amendment 19 for which differences have been notified in 2 above.

a) Annex Provision (Please give exact paragraph reference)	b) Date	c) Comments
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(Please use extra sheets as required.)

Signature _____

Date _____

NOTES

- 1) If paragraph 1 above is applicable to your State, please complete paragraph 1 and return this form to ICAO Headquarters. If paragraph 2 is applicable to you, please complete paragraphs 2 and 3 and return the form to ICAO Headquarters.
- 2) A detailed repetition of previously notified differences, if they continue to apply, may be avoided by stating the current validity of such differences.
- 3) Guidance on the notification of differences is provided in the Note on the Notification of Differences and in the *Manual on Notification and Publication of Differences* (Doc 10055).
- 4) Please send a copy of this notification to the ICAO Regional Office accredited to your Government.

NOTE ON THE NOTIFICATION OF DIFFERENCES
(Prepared and issued in accordance with instructions of the Council)

1. *Introduction*

1.1 Article 38 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (“Convention”) requires that a Contracting State notify ICAO any time it does not comply with a Standard in all respects, it does not bring its regulations or practices into full accord with any Standard, or it adopts regulations or practices differing in any particular respect from the Standard.

1.2 The Assembly and the Council, when reviewing the notification of differences by Contracting States in compliance with Article 38 of the Convention, have repeatedly noted that the timeliness and currency of such notifications is not entirely satisfactory. Therefore, this note is issued to reiterate the primary purpose of Article 38 of the Convention and to facilitate the determination and notification of differences.

1.3 The primary purpose of the notification of differences is to promote safety, regularity and efficiency in air navigation by ensuring that governmental and other agencies, including operators and service providers, concerned with international civil aviation are made aware of all national regulations and practices in so far as they differ from those prescribed in the Standards contained in Annexes to the Convention.

1.4 Contracting States are, therefore, requested to give particular attention to the notification of differences with respect to Standards in all Annexes, as described in paragraph 4 b) 1) of the Resolution of Adoption.

1.5 Although differences from Recommended Practices are not notifiable under Article 38 of the Convention, the Assembly has urged Contracting States to extend the above considerations to Recommended Practices contained in Annexes to the Convention, as well.

2. *Notification of differences from Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs)*

2.1 Guidance to Contracting States in the notification of differences to Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) can only be given in very general terms. Contracting States are further reminded that compliance with SARPs generally extends beyond the issuance of national regulations and requires establishment of practical arrangements for implementation, such as the provision of facilities, personnel and equipment and effective enforcement mechanisms. Contracting States should take those elements into account when determining their compliance and differences. The following categories of differences are provided as a guide in determining whether a notifiable difference exists:

- a) *A Contracting State’s requirement is more exacting or exceeds a SARP (Category A)*. This category applies when the national regulation and practices are more demanding than the corresponding SARP, or impose an obligation within the scope of the Annex which is not covered by the SARP. This is of particular importance where a Contracting State requires a higher standard which affects the operation of aircraft of other Contracting States in and above its territory;

- b) *A Contracting State's requirement is different in character or the Contracting State has established other means of compliance (Category B)**. This category applies, in particular, when the national regulation and practices are different in character from the corresponding SARP, or when the national regulation and practices differ in principle, type or system from the corresponding SARP, without necessarily imposing an additional obligation; and
- c) *A Contracting State's requirement is less protective, partially implemented or not implemented (Category C)*. This category applies when the national regulation and practices are less protective than the corresponding SARP; when no national regulation has been promulgated to address the corresponding SARP, in whole or in part; or when the Contracting State has not brought its practices into full accord with the corresponding SARP.

These categories do not apply to Not Applicable SARP. Please see the paragraph below.

2.2 **Not Applicable SARP.** When a Contracting State deems a SARP concerning aircraft, operations, equipment, personnel, or air navigation facilities or services to be not applicable to the existing aviation activities of the State, notification of a difference is not required. For example, a Contracting State that is not a State of Design or Manufacture and that does not have any national regulations on the subject, would not be required to notify differences from Annex 8 provisions related to the design and construction of an aircraft.

2.3 **Differences from appendices, tables and figures.** The material comprising a SARP includes not only the SARP itself, but also the appendices, tables and figures associated with the SARP. Therefore, differences from appendices, tables and figures are notifiable under Article 38. In order to file a difference against an appendix, table or figure, States should file a difference against the SARP that makes reference to the appendix, table or figure.

2.4 **Differences from definitions.** Contracting States should notify differences from definitions. The definition of a term used in a SARP does not have independent status but is an essential part of each SARP in which the term is used. Therefore, a difference from the definition of the term may result in there being a difference from any SARP in which the term is used. To this end, Contracting States should take into consideration differences from definitions when determining compliance or differences to SARPs in which the terms are used.

2.5 The notification of differences should be not only to the latest amendment but to the whole Annex, including the amendment. In other words, Contracting States that have already notified differences are requested to provide regular updates of the differences previously notified until the difference no longer exists.

2.6 Further guidance on the identification and notification of differences, examples of well-defined differences and examples of model processes and procedures for management of the notification of differences can be found in the *Manual on Notification and Publication of Differences* (Doc 10055).

* The expression "different in character or other means of compliance" in b) would be applied to a national regulation and practice which achieve, by other means, the same objective as that of the corresponding SARPs or for other substantive reasons so cannot be classified under a) or c).

3. *Form of notification of differences*

3.1 Differences can be notified:

- a) by sending to ICAO Headquarters a form on notification of compliance or differences;
or
- b) through the Electronic Filing of Differences (EFOD) System at www.icao.int/usoap.

3.2 When notifying differences, the following information should be provided:

- a) the number of the paragraph or subparagraph which contains the SARP to which the difference relates*;
- b) the reasons why the State does not comply with the SARP, or considers it necessary to adopt different regulations or practices;
- c) a clear and concise description of the difference; and
- d) intentions for future compliance and any date by which your Government plans to confirm compliance with and remove its difference from the SARP for which the difference has been notified.

3.3 The differences notified will be made available to other Contracting States, normally in the terms used by the Contracting State when making the notification. In the interest of making the information as useful as possible, Contracting States are requested to ensure that:

- a) statements be as clear and concise as possible and be confined to essential points;
- b) the provision of extracts from national regulations not be considered as sufficient to satisfy the obligation to notify differences; and
- c) general comments, unclear acronyms and references be avoided.

* This applies only when the notification is made under 3.1 a).

**IMPLEMENTATION TASK LIST AND OUTLINE OF GUIDANCE MATERIAL
IN RELATION TO AMENDMENT 19 TO ANNEX 12**

1. IMPLEMENTATION TASK LIST

1.1 Essential steps to be followed by a State to implement Amendment 19 to Annex 12 will include:

- a) identification of the rule-making process necessary to transpose the modified ICAO provisions into the national regulations;
- b) establishment of a national implementation plan that takes into account the modified ICAO provisions;
- c) drafting of the modification(s) to the national regulations and means of compliance;
- d) official adoption of the national regulations and means of compliance;
- e) filing of State differences with ICAO, if necessary;
- f) publication of significant differences in the Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP), if necessary; and
- g) training of operational staff in the use of the new provisions.

2. STANDARDIZATION PROCESS

2.1 Effective date: 22 July 2024

2.2 Applicability date: 28 November 2024 (for elements concerning the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS)) and 26 November 2026 (for elements concerning drift measurement, responsiveness of search and rescue (SAR) points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.)

2.3 Embedded applicability date(s): N/A

3. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

3.1 ICAO documentation

Title	Type (PANS/TI/ Manual/Circ)	Planned publication date
<i>Doc 9756, Manual of Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation, Part I — Organization and Planning</i>	Manual	Available
<i>Doc 10165, Manual on Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System</i>	Manual	Q3 2024
<i>Doc 9731, International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual</i>	Manual	Q2 2025

3.2 **External documentation**

Title	External Organization	Publication date
None		

4. **IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE TASKS**

Type	Global	Regional
Increased awareness	State letter	SAR Workshops

5. **UNIVERSAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT AUDIT PROGRAMME (USOAP)**

5.1 No changes are envisaged in the Protocol Questions (existing PQs are considered sufficient to address existing and new provisions).

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN RELATION TO
AMENDMENT 19 TO ANNEX 12**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Amendment 19 to Annex 12 introduces elements concerning the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS); and elements concerning drift measurement, responsiveness of search and rescue (SAR) points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 Amendment concerning the Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS)

2.1.1 *Safety impact:* Positive. Facilitation of communication required for the reporting of an aircraft in a distress condition will result in a faster response to a forced landing contributing to better management of safety risks.

2.1.2 *Financial impact:* Negligible cost impact to both States and industry. The OPS Control Directory has been available to air navigation service providers (ANSPs) and air operators since 2018, has no cost to Member States, air operators, ANSPs or RCCs, and has web-based access.

2.1.3 *Security impact:* No security impact with the implementation of this amendment.

2.1.4 *Environmental impact:* No environmental impact with the implementation of this amendment.

2.1.5 *Efficiency impact:* No efficiency impact with the implementation of this amendment.

2.1.6 *Expected implementation time:* Between one to two years for States to adapt the amendment into the national regulatory framework, and to allow industry to change the applicable procedures and implement training of relevant personnel.

2.2 Amendment concerning drift measurement, responsiveness of search and rescue (SAR) points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission

2.2.1 *Safety impact:* Positive. Requiring more urgency when deploying technology that can improve search planning can reduce search durations. Similarly, ensuring that RCCs have the means to enable assets of assisting States to commence work, and RCCs being provided with all information necessary to plot an accurate initial search, can be expected to reduce search times. Time taken to find survivors has a direct relationship to decreasing likelihood of survival. Requiring acknowledgement of Cospas-Sarsat distress alert data will improve search and rescue point of contact (SPOC) response rates, increasing confidence that distress messages will be properly acted upon.

2.2.2 *Financial impact:* Negligible cost impact to both States and industry. The financial impact to States consists of oversight both in terms of change management and ongoing operational review. For industry, SAR organizations will need to adapt existing training and procedures to cover enhanced topics. While States will potentially need to purchase, and train crews in the use of, drift measurement devices, these costs can be expected to be offset by the reduced search times they bring.

2.2.3 *Security impact:* No security impact with the implementation of this amendment.

2.2.4 *Environmental impact:* Positive. Reduced search times equate to less time spent flying or sailing search and rescue units (SRUs), with commensurate reductions in environmentally harmful emissions.

2.2.5 *Efficiency impact:* No efficiency impact with the implementation of this amendment.

2.2.6 *Expected implementation time:* Between two to five years for States and industry. The expected implementation time refers to the relevant processes which mainly include the required legislative amendments, procurement of new equipment, and training of operational personnel whose work is related to the new provisions.

ATTACHMENT G to State letter AN 15/1.4-24/23

**OVERVIEW OF APPROVAL PROCESS FOR
AMENDMENT 19 TO ANNEX 12**

Amendment concerning	Source(s)	Preliminary review by the ANC	State letter and date	Final review by the ANC	No. of replies at final review	Adopted Effective Applicable
Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS)	Sixth meeting of the Air Traffic Management Operations Panel (ATMOPSP/6)	15 March 2022 (ANC 219-8)	AN 13/13.1, AN 15/1.3, AN 15/1.3-22/47 27 April 2022	16 March 2023 (ANC 222-5)	51 Contracting States 7 int. orgs. Total: 58 replies	18 March 2024 22 July 2024 28 November 2024
Drift measurement, responsiveness of search and rescue (SAR) points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.	Twenty-seventh meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization/ International Maritime Organization (ICAO/IMO) Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (JWG-SAR/27).	15 March 2022 (ANC 219-7, 8 and 10)	AN 15/1.3-22/24 21 April 2022	16 March 2023 (ANC 222-5)	54 Contracting States 3 int. orgs Total: 57 replies	18 March 2024 22 July 2024 26 November 2026

— END —

AMENDMENT 19

TO THE

**INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS
AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES**

SEARCH AND RESCUE

ANNEX 12

TO THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION

The amendment to Annex 12, contained in this document was adopted by the Council of ICAO on **18 March 2024**. Such parts of this amendment as have not been disapproved by more than half of the total number of Contracting States on or before **22 July 2024** will become effective on that date and will become applicable on **28 November 2024** and **26 November 2026** as specified in the Resolution of Adoption. (State letter AN 15/1.4-24/23 refers.)

MARCH 2024

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

**AMENDMENT 19 TO THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS
AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES**

ANNEX 12 — *SEARCH AND RESCUE*

RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

The Council

Acting in accordance with the Convention on International Civil Aviation, and particularly with the provisions of Articles 37, 54 and 90 thereof,

1. *Hereby adopts* on 18 March 2024 Amendment 19 to the International Standards and Recommended Practices contained in the document entitled *International Standards and Recommended Practices, Search and Rescue* which for convenience is designated Annex 12 to the Convention;
2. *Prescribes* 22 July 2024 as the date upon which the said amendment shall become effective, except for any part thereof in respect of which a majority of the Contracting States have registered their disapproval with the Council before that date;
3. *Resolves* that the said amendment or such parts thereof as have become effective shall become applicable on 28 November 2024¹;
4. *Requests the Secretary General:*
 - a) to notify each Contracting State immediately of the above action and immediately after 22 July 2024 of those parts of the amendment which have become effective;
 - b) to request each Contracting State:
 - 1) to notify the Organization (in accordance with the obligation imposed by Article 38 of the Convention) of the differences that will exist on 28 November 2024¹ between its national regulations or practices and the provisions of the Standards in the Annex as hereby amended, such notification to be made before 28 October 2024², and thereafter to notify the Organization of any further differences that arise; and
 - 2) to notify the Organization before 28 October 2024² of the date or dates by which it will have complied with the provisions of the Standards in the Annex as hereby amended.
 - c) to invite each Contracting State to notify additionally any differences between its own practices and those established by the Recommended Practices, following the procedure specified in subparagraph b) above with respect to differences from Standards.

¹ **26 November 2026** for provisions related to drift measurement, responsiveness of SAR points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

² **26 October 2026** for provisions related to drift measurement, responsiveness of SAR points of contact, methods for allowing other States to assist in SAR operations, safety of SAR personnel at accident sites, conduct of exercises, and procedures to be followed when intercepting a distress transmission.

**NOTES ON THE PRESENTATION OF
AMENDMENT 19 TO ANNEX 12**

The text of the amendment is arranged to show deleted text with a line through it and new text highlighted with grey shading, as shown below:

~~Text to be deleted is shown with a line through it.~~

text to be deleted

New text to be inserted is highlighted with grey shading.

new text to be inserted

~~Text to be deleted is shown with a line through it~~ followed by
the replacement text which is highlighted with grey shading.

new text to replace existing text

TEXT OF AMENDMENT 19

TO THE

**INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS
AND RECOMMENDED PRACTICES**

SEARCH AND RESCUE

ANNEX 12

TO THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION

CHAPTER 2. ORGANIZATION

2.1 Search and rescue services

...

2.3 Rescue coordination centres and rescue subcentres

...

2.3.6 Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue subcentre shall maintain up-to-date contact details in the OPS Control Directory.

2.3.7 Each rescue coordination centre and, as appropriate, rescue subcentre shall subscribe and maintain access to the location of an aircraft in distress repository (LADR).

Note.— *Guidance on the use of the OPS Control Directory and the LADR is contained in the Manual on Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System (GADSS) (Doc 10165).*

...

2.6 Search and rescue equipment

...

2.6.5 Each search and rescue aircraft, when used for search and rescue over maritime areas, shall be equipped to be able to communicate with vessels.

Note.— *Until 25 November 2026, ~~Many many~~ vessels can communicate with aircraft on 2182 kHz, 4125 kHz and 121.5 MHz. However, these frequencies, and in particular 121.5 MHz, may not be routinely monitored by vessels.*

Note.— *As of 26 November 2026, ~~Many many~~ vessels can communicate with aircraft on 2182 kHz, 4125 kHz, ~~and~~ 121.5 MHz and 123.1 MHz. However, these frequencies, and in particular 121.5 MHz and 123.1 MHz, may not be routinely monitored by vessels. Rather, vessels monitor Channel 16 (156.8 MHz), the international maritime distress, safety and calling frequency.*

2.6.6 Each search and rescue aircraft, when used for search and rescue over maritime areas shall carry a copy of the *International Code of Signals* to enable it to overcome language difficulties that may be experienced in communicating with ships.

Note.— *The International Code of Signals is published in English, French and Spanish by the International Maritime Organization as documents I994E, I995F and I996S.*

...

2.6.9 **Recommendation.**— *As of 26 November 2026, each search and rescue aircraft, when used for search and rescue over maritime areas, should carry a droppable device for measuring actual surface drift.*

...

CHAPTER 3. COOPERATION

3.1 Cooperation between States

...

3.1.8 **Recommendation.**— *Until 25 November 2026, Contracting States should make arrangements for joint training exercises involving their search and rescue units, those of other States and operators, in order to promote search and rescue efficiency.*

3.1.8 **Recommendation.**— *As of 26 November 2026, Contracting States should make arrangements for joint training exercises involving their **RCCs, RSCs** and search and rescue units, those of other States and operators, in order to promote search and rescue efficiency.*

...

3.2 Cooperation with other services

...

3.2.5 **Until 25 November 2026,** States shall designate a search and rescue point of contact for the receipt of Cospas-Sarsat distress data.

3.2.5 **As of 26 November 2026,** States shall designate a **24-hour** search and rescue point of contact available for the receipt and acknowledgement of Cospas-Sarsat distress alert data that ensures timely notification to the responsible RCC for the initiation of appropriate search and rescue response action.

...

CHAPTER 4. PREPARATORY MEASURES

...

4.1.2 **Recommendation.**— *Each rescue coordination centre should have readily available all other information of interest to search and rescue, including information regarding:*

...

- c) *locations where supplies of droppable emergency and survival equipment are stored; ~~and~~*
- d) *objects which it is known might be mistaken for unlocated or unreported wreckage, particularly if viewed from the air;*
- e) *as of 26 November 2026, the position, course and speed of aircraft that may be able to provide assistance to aircraft in distress; and*
- f) *as of 26 November 2026, where the search and rescue region includes maritime areas, the position, course and speed of ships that may be able to provide assistance to aircraft in distress.*

4.1.3 **Recommendation.**— *Until 25 November 2026¹, ~~Each~~ each rescue coordination centre whose search and rescue region includes maritime areas should have ready access to information regarding the position, course and speed of ships within such areas that may be able to provide assistance to aircraft in distress and information on how to contact them.*

Note.— *This information may either be kept in the rescue coordination centres or be readily accessible.*

Editorial Note.— *Renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly.*

...

4.2.4 The search and rescue plans of operation shall contain details regarding actions to be taken by those persons engaged in search and rescue, including:

...

- i) *as of 26 November 2026, the methods for obtaining approval to allow search and rescue units from an assisting State to enter into the territory of the State of the RCC;*

Editorial Note.— *Renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly.*

...

4.4 Training and exercises

Until 25 November 2026, ~~To~~ to achieve and maintain maximum efficiency in search and rescue, Contracting States shall provide for regular training of their search and rescue personnel and arrange appropriate search and rescue exercises.

¹ Paragraph 4.1.3 and the accompanying Note will be deleted as of 26 November 2026.

As of 26 November 2026, To to achieve and maintain maximum efficiency in search and rescue, Contracting States shall provide for regular training and exercises for of their search and rescue personnel and arrange appropriate search and rescue exercises, which include both land and maritime environments as appropriate, containing both search and rescue elements, remote from an aerodrome.

Note.— The need for regular training and exercises may be moderated commensurate with the frequency of real search and rescue responses which demonstrate satisfactory and effective search and rescue performance.

...

4.5 Wreckage

(Applicable until 25 November 2026)

Recommendation.— *Each Contracting State should ensure that wreckage resulting from aircraft accidents within its territory or, in the case of accidents on the high seas or in areas of undetermined sovereignty, within the search and rescue regions for which it is responsible, is removed, obliterated or charted following completion of the accident investigation, if its presence might constitute a hazard or confuse subsequent search and rescue operations.*

4.5 Accident sites and ~~Wreckage-wreckage~~

(Applicable as of 26 November 2026)

4.5.1 Contracting States shall ensure that search and rescue personnel that may be required to respond to an aircraft accident site are trained in the management of related occupational health risks.

Note.— Guidance related to effective occupational health practices at aircraft accident sites is contained in the Manual of Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation, Part I – Organization and Planning (Doc 9756) and Circular 315 – Hazards at Aircraft Accident Sites.

4.5.2 **Recommendation.**— *Each Contracting State should ensure that wreckage resulting from aircraft accidents within its territory or, in the case of accidents on the high seas or in areas of undetermined sovereignty, within the search and rescue regions for which it is responsible, is removed, obliterated or charted following completion of the accident investigation, if its presence might constitute a hazard or confuse subsequent search and rescue operations.*

...

CHAPTER 5. OPERATING PROCEDURES

...

5.2 Procedures for rescue coordination centres during emergency phases

...

5.2.3 Distress phase

Upon the occurrence of a distress phase, the rescue coordination centre shall:

...

- f) request at an early stage such aircraft, vessels, coastal stations and other services not specifically included in the appropriate plan of operation and able to assist to:

- 1) maintain a listening watch for transmissions from the aircraft in distress, survival radio equipment or an ELT;

Note.— Until 25 November 2026, ~~the~~ the frequencies contained in the specifications for ELTs given in Annex 10, Volume III, are 121.5 MHz and 406 MHz.

Note.— As of 26 November 2026, ~~the~~ the frequencies contained in the specifications for ELTs given in Annex 10, Volume III, are 121.5 MHz and 406.0 to 406.1 MHz. The Cospas-Sarsat 406 MHz channel assignment plan is contained in Cospas-Sarsat Document C/S T.012.

...

5.6 Procedures at the scene of an accident²

...

5.6.2 When a pilot-in-command observes that either another aircraft or a surface craft is in distress, the pilot shall, if possible and unless considered unreasonable or unnecessary:

...

- c) as appropriate, report to the rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit as much of the following information as possible:

...

- whether persons have been seen to abandon the craft in distress;
- ~~as of 26 November 2026, whether any distress signals, including distress beacon transmissions, have been received or observed;~~
- on-scene weather conditions;
- apparent physical condition of survivors;
- ~~until 25 November 2026, apparent best ground access route to the distress site; and~~
- ~~as of 26 November 2026, apparent best ground access route to the distress site scene; and~~
- ~~as of 26 November 2026, position and description of any other craft in the area that may assist; and~~

...

5.6.2.1 ~~Until 25 November 2026, if~~ the first aircraft to reach the scene of an accident is not a search and rescue aircraft, it shall take charge of on-scene activities of all other aircraft subsequently arriving until the first search and rescue aircraft reaches the scene of the accident. If, in the meantime, such aircraft is unable to establish communication with the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit, it shall, by mutual agreement, hand over to an aircraft capable of establishing and maintaining such communications until the arrival of the first search and rescue aircraft.

5.6.2.1 ~~As of 26 November 2026, if~~ the first aircraft to reach the ~~scene of an accident~~ distress scene is not a search and rescue aircraft, it shall take charge of on-scene activities of all other aircraft subsequently arriving until the first search and rescue aircraft reaches the ~~distress scene of the accident~~ distress scene. If, in the

² As of 26 November 2026, section 5.6 will be titled:

5.6 Procedures at the distress scene

meantime, such aircraft is unable to establish communication with the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit, it shall, by mutual agreement, hand over to an aircraft capable of establishing and maintaining such communications until the arrival of the first search and rescue aircraft.

5.6.3 When it is necessary for an aircraft to convey information to survivors or surface rescue units, and two-way communication ~~is~~ is not available, it shall, if practicable, drop communication equipment that would enable direct contact to be established, or convey the information by dropping a hard copy message.

...

5.6.5 When it is necessary for an aircraft to direct a surface craft to the place where an aircraft or surface craft is in distress, the aircraft shall do so by transmitting precise instructions by any means at its disposal. If no radio communication can be established, the aircraft shall make the appropriate visual signal.

Note.— *Until 25 November 2026, Air-air-to-surface and surface-to-air visual signals are published in Volume III of Doc 9731.*

Note.— *As of 26 November 2026, Air-air-to-surface and surface-to-air visual signals are published in Volume III of Doc 9731 the Appendix and in the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual, Volume III — Mobile Facilities (Doc 9731).*

...

5.6.6 **Recommendation.**— *As of 26 November 2026, when carrying a device for measuring actual surface drift in accordance with 2.6.9, a search and rescue aircraft should drop the device as soon as it reaches the scene of an accident.*

Note.— *The deployment of such devices will assist with search area planning accuracy and, therefore, minimize search times.*

5.7 Procedures for a pilot-in-command intercepting a distress transmission

(Applicable until 25 November 2026)

...

5.7 Procedures for a pilot-in-command intercepting a distress transmission

(Applicable as of 26 November 2026)

5.7.1 Whenever a distress transmission is intercepted by a pilot-in-command of an aircraft, the pilot shall, if feasible:

...

- d) inform the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit of the distress transmission, giving all available information; ~~and~~
- e) at the pilot's discretion, while awaiting instructions, proceed to the **distress** position ~~given in the transmission;~~ **and**
- f) attempt to establish communications with the person(s) in distress.

5.7.2 Whenever a pilot monitors 121.5 MHz, and intercepts a transmission from a distress beacon, the pilot shall also:

- a) record, and report as soon as possible, the position where the transmission was first received;

- b) not alter any settings for squelch on the aircraft's radio; and
- c) if feasible, continue to monitor the frequency until such time as the signal ceases, and inform the appropriate rescue coordination centre or air traffic services unit of such.

Note.— Retaining the existing settings for squelch from the time the transmission is first received until the signal ceases provides rescue coordination centres with the most accurate potential location of the distress beacon.

...

— END —