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Circular Letter No.5045

1 July 2025

To: All IMO Member States
United Nations and its specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject **Thirty-second meeting of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on
Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue
(Sydney, Australia, 3 to 7 November 2025)**

1 The Secretary-General has the honour to invite representation at the thirty-second meeting of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (ICAO/IMO JWG 32), which will take place in Sydney, Australia, from Monday, 3 to Friday, 7 November 2025. The meeting will be conducted in English and in person only.

2 The ICAO/IMO JWG was established in 1993 with the objective of assisting ICAO and IMO in developing provisions regarding new search and rescue techniques and procedures where both aeronautical and maritime interests are involved. The Group is composed of a limited number of both aeronautical and maritime search and rescue experts from Member States of IMO and ICAO. Maritime search and rescue members are represented by experts from Chile, China, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

3 The terms of reference and the provisional agenda for ICAO/IMO JWG 32 (ICAO/IMO JWG-SAR/32-IP.1), as approved by the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue, at its twelfth session, are attached hereto together with relevant information on the meeting registration and visa application.

Submission of documents

4 In accordance with the *Organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.6), the deadlines and the method for the submission of documents to the meeting are specified in the notes to the provisional agenda for ICAO/IMO JWG 32 (ICAO/IMO JWG-SAR/32-IP.1).

Distribution of documents

5 Documents submitted to ICAO/IMO JWG 32 will be made available on IMODOCS, "Meeting Documents", "NCSR Sub-Committee" and finally "ICAO/IMO JWG" (<http://docs.imo.org/Category.aspx?cid=359>).

ANNEX 1**REGISTRATION, ACCREDITATION AND CODE OF CONDUCT****Registration**

Member States, UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs registered through IMO are required to provide, prior to the meeting date, the names of all the members of their delegations attending the meeting via the Online Meeting Registration System (OMRS), as advised in Circular Letter No.4336 of 5 November 2020.

Due to the room capacity, participation is limited to **up to two persons** per delegation participating as observers. This includes those registered through ICAO.

Delegates attending the meeting who have completed the registration procedure will be issued with a badge at the registration desk on arrival. Issue of the badge will require photographic proof of identity, e.g. passport, identity card or driving licence.

Any matters relating to the use of the OMRS and participation in the forthcoming meeting of ICAO/IMO JWG should be communicated to:

Registration Unit
Meeting Services, Meeting Support Section
Email: onlineregistration@imo.org

Members of delegations will not be registered to attend the meeting without authorization from their respective OMRS Delegation Coordinator(s). Delegates whose names do not appear on the OMRS list will be asked to contact their OMRS Delegation Coordinator in order to process their authorization to attend the meeting.

Code of Conduct

Delegates, participants, attendees and guests are subject to the Code of Conduct for Delegates, Observers and Other Participants at IMO Meetings, Events and Activities to Prevent Harassment including Sexual Harassment (Circular Letter No.4908).

ANNEX 2**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ICAO/IMO JOINT WORKING GROUP ON
HARMONIZATION OF AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE**

1 This Joint Working Group (JWG) is established to develop recommendations and information to support the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue and/or ICAO, as appropriate, on any matters pertinent to harmonization of international maritime and aeronautical search and rescue (SAR).

2 The JWG will meet as necessary, subject to approval of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee and ICAO, with meetings supported by the IMO and ICAO Secretariats.

3 Invitations to participate in the JWG will be submitted to respective Member and Contracting States by both IMO and ICAO, respectively.

4 Language services will not be provided during JWG meetings.

5 JWG meetings will generally take place annually about midway between meetings of the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue.

6 JWG will provide an active interface between IMO and ICAO for harmonization of maritime and aeronautical SAR plans and procedures in accordance with the 1985 memorandum of understanding between IMO and ICAO, and with resolution 1 of the 1979 International Conference on Maritime Search and Rescue.

7 The JWG will review and develop proposals relating to harmonization in various matters including:

- .1 provisions of conventions, plans, manuals and other documents affecting SAR;
- .2 SAR operational principles, procedures and techniques;
- .3 SAR system administration, organization and implementation methods;
- .4 RCC/RSC equipment and facility designations and standards;
- .5 SAR communications; and
- .6 SAR personnel staffing and training.

8 The need for JWG continuation will be reviewed by IMO and ICAO on an ongoing basis; the JWG will be discontinued when either organization concludes that the work is no longer cost-effective, and formally informs the other of its decision to discontinue.

9 The guidelines for the conduct of JWG meetings are:

- .1 members are expected to serve as individual SAR experts rather than State representatives;
- .2 the JWG has no power to make recommendations to States, nor to any organization other than IMO and ICAO;

- .3 recommendations from JWG meetings are made directly to both organizations; and
- .4 representatives of other organizations or States may attend JWG meetings and participate as observers; however, meeting announcements and documentation relating to JWG meetings will only be distributed to the members, observers invited to attend by the Group and others who request advance notification.

ANNEX 3**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON LOGISTIC ARRANGEMENTS,
INCLUDING VISA APPLICATION**

The thirty-second meeting of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue will be conducted in Sydney, Australia, from 3 to 7 November 2025.

Venue:

Terrace Room
Australian National Maritime Museum
2 Murray St, Sydney NSW 2000
Australia
www.sea.museum/en/home

The venue has good accessibility <https://www.sea.museum/en/visit/plan-your-visit/accessibility>.

The Registration Desk will be open from 8.30 a.m. on Monday, 3 November 2025.

Morning and afternoon teas will be provided during the meeting. There are several options within easy walking distance of the venue where delegates can purchase their own lunch each day.

Passport, visa and entry requirements

All travellers are advised to check their respective country's travel visa requirements with their nearest Australian Embassy or Consulate or online.

Passport, visa and entry requirements and information for visitors to Australia, including Australia's strict biosecurity requirements, can be found on the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs website:
<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/entering-and-leaving-australia/entering-australia>.

It is recommended that visa applications are submitted well in advance of travel to allow as much time as possible for processing. Information on visa application times is available on the above website.

Australian Government embassies and consulates:

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-locations/missions/our-embassies-and-consulates-overseas>

Specific enquiries for visa and hosting arrangements may be referred to Jessica.Knight@amsa.gov.au.

General travel information for visitors to Australia

Practical tips and helpful things to know before visiting Australia, including climate, electrical plugs, money and currency, and so on is available on the Australian Tourism website <https://www.australia.com/en/facts-and-planning/about-australia/key-facts-about-australia.html>.

Please consider the important health and safety advice, including water safety and recommendations to take out travel and health insurance available at <https://www.australia.com/en/facts-and-planning/health-and-safety/faq.html>.

Airport Transfer Transport advice

The venue is located on Darling Harbour in the central city area of Sydney about 10 km from Sydney International (Kingsford Smith) Airport.

Information on transport options to/from the airport: <https://www.sydneyairport.com.au/info-sheet/transport-options>.

Accommodation

Sydney has a wide range of hotels and accommodation options at various levels and price ranges. It is a major tourist city.

There are several hotels within about a 10-minute walk of the meeting venue, including:

- Novotel Sydney
- W Sydney
- Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour
- Ibis Sydney Darling Harbour
- Hyatt Regency Sydney

Additional accommodation options can be found at <https://www.sydney.com/accommodation>.

Getting around

The area around the venue is well served by different transport options including light rail, bus, taxi, ride-share and Sydney Harbour ferries (there is a ferry jetty outside the venue).

Public transport information <https://transportnsw.info/>

Country and city information

[Travel to Australia – Australian Tourism Information – Tourism Australia](#)

[Visitor's guide to Sydney – City of Sydney](#)

[Sydney, Australia | Official Sydney Tourism Website](#)



International Civil Aviation Organization

INFORMATION PAPER

ICAO/IMO JWG-SAR/32-IP.1
1 July 2025
ENGLISH ONLY



Agenda item 1

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE ICAO/IMO JOINT WORKING GROUP ON HARMONIZATION OF AERONAUTICAL AND MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE

- 1 Adoption of the agenda**
- 2 Decisions of ICAO and IMO bodies related to the Joint Working Group work, for instance:**
 - Briefing on the outcome of ICAO activities; and
 - Briefing on the outcome of IMO activities.
- 3 Conventions, plans, manuals and other documents affecting SAR, for instance:**
 - amendments to the IAMSAR Manual, including changes to facilitate use by training institutions;
 - Status of the Maritime SAR Convention and Annex 12 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation;
 - Alignment of the IMO Area SAR Plans, GMDSS Master Plan and ICAO Regional Air Navigation Plans; and
 - Progress report on work by the ANC and provisions pertaining to airborne carriage of crash alert and signalling equipment.
- 4 SAR operational principles, procedures and techniques, for instance:**
 - Development of operational guidelines for safe and effective search and rescue operations, taking account of experience gained from past SAR events;
 - Mass rescue operations, taking account of experiences gained;
 - Medical assistance in the context of SAR services;
 - Effects of measures to enhance maritime and aeronautical security on SAR services, including the implementation of the long-range identification and tracking (LRIT) system;

- Development of new and revised procedural strategies for the practical provision of SAR services; and
- Development of a structured process to review SAR alerting procedures between ATC services and SAR authorities.

5 SAR system administration, organization and implementation methods, for instance:

- Regional SAR development, including SAR committees and task forces;
- Development of guidance on regulatory provisions and other guidelines for State and subregional SAR organizations;
- Quality assurance, systems improvement, needs assessment, risk management, safety management and resource allocation;
- Evaluating the effect of various technical cooperation projects in conjunction with relevant governments, organizations and agencies with a view to assessing their impact on implementing and maintenance of effective SAR services; and
- General overview of SAR issues, including State and industry SAR system initiatives, identification of new and emerging issues, global SAR system implementation status and SAR system data and trends.

6 RCC/RSC and SAR equipment and facility designations and standards, for instance:

- Establishment of RCCs and in particular JRCCs;
- Status of AIS, ADS-B and shore/land-based facilities and systems in aeronautical and maritime SAR; and
- Search and Rescue equipment, including information technology.

7 SAR communications, for instance:

- Status, elements and procedures of maritime communication systems for distress and SAR, including the GMDSS;
- Status, elements and procedures of aeronautical communications systems for distress and SAR, including GADSS;
- Status of the Cospas-Sarsat system, including MEOSAR and development of second generation beacons; and
- Monitor trends in SAR communications and provide advice on emerging technologies.

8 SAR personnel staffing and training, for instance:

- Development of RCC staff qualifications and standards; and
- Development of joint SAR training courses based on the IAMSAR Manual.

9 Any other business

10 Provisional agenda for JWG 33

11 Reports to ICAO and the NCSR Sub-Committee

Notes:

- 1 documents should be received by the Secretariat by **Friday, 19 September 2025** (six-week deadline);
- 2 documents commenting on those referred to in sub-paragraph .1 above, should be received by **Friday, 17 October 2025** (two-week deadline);
- 3 for reasons of economy, documents should be submitted in single spacing, and be as concise as possible, and:
 - .1 all documents should include a brief summary;
 - .2 working papers should conclude with a summary of the action which the Joint Working Group is invited to take;
 - .3 information papers should conclude with a summary of the information contained therein; and
 - .4 the following word-processing format should be observed in order to standardize the presentation of documents:
 - font: Arial;
 - font size: 11 pt;
 - justification: full;
 - margins: 2 cm top, 2.5 cm bottom, left and right.

A template can be requested from the Secretariat (NCSR@imo.org or jwelton@icao.int) for use in the preparation of documents.

Participants registered through IMO should submit documents via the Meeting Document Submission Portal on [IMODOCS](#) (Submission Portal) in DOCX format. All submissions through the Portal will be confirmed via notification to the submitter and their status can be checked on the Portal.

Participants registered through ICAO should submit documents via email to jwelton@icao.int.