

RESCUE SAFETY:

- Do not attempt a rescue that exceeds the limits of your capabilities, your training, or your vessel.
- Do not place your vessel, crew, or passengers in serious danger.
- Have a plan prior to action. Communicate the plan and your expectations to your crew, and if possible to the distressed vessel. Keep Coast Guard informed of your actions.
- Have a plan for recovery of survivors onto high sided vessels.
- Ensure all your crew is wearing PFDs and safety gear when working at rails or on small boats.

For more information, call the nearest Rescue Coordination Center or your local search and rescue authorities.



Rescue at Sea

GUIDANCE FOR “GOOD SAMARITAN” VESSELS ASSISTING IN MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE



DEVELOPED BY:
U.S. COAST GUARD
RESCUE COORDINATION
CENTER
JUNEAU, ALASKA

Good Samaritan Vessel Response Guidance:

What is a Good Samaritan Vessel?

It is a private vessel that renders voluntary aid without compensation to a person or vessel who is injured or in danger. Good Samaritans are expected to exercise reasonable care to avoid negligent conduct that worsens the position of the victims and to avoid reckless and wanton conduct in performing the rescue.



Is there a duty to assist?

- For centuries, sailors have voluntarily assisted others in distress. This maritime rescue doctrine encourages seafarers to go to the aid of life and property in distress.
- Good Samaritan vessels are usually the first to arrive on scene, and are often critical in saving lives, especially in remote regions or areas with limited SAR facilities.
- In USA, federal statute, 46 USC 2304 requires a master to render assistance if the master **can do so without serious danger to master's vessel or individuals on board**. Similar requirements may exist in other countries.

If you hear a MAY DAY or Distress Call:

- Remain silent, listen, and write down information about the boat in distress, **especially the specific location:** latitude and longitude coordinates and geographic reference point preferred.
- SAR authority should respond immediately. Listen for directions.
- If the rescue authority **does not respond**:
 - ◆ Attempt to reach the rescue authorities while traveling toward the distressed boat. Once contact is made, relay MAY DAY information and follow directions as able.
 - ◆ Notify distressed vessel that MAY Day was heard and is being relayed.
- If you cannot reach SAR authorities, continue to communicate with the distressed vessel and assist as able while not placing yourself or your passengers in danger. Continue efforts to contact authorities.
- As long as the Mayday situation is ongoing, other vessels are required to stay off Channel 16 VHF.

Responding to UMIB:

- SAR authorities may issue **U**rgent **M**arine **I**nformation **B**roadcasts to alert potential “Good Samaritan” vessels of an emergency in their area.
- If you are in a position to assist, respond to SAR authorities and follow their directions.

Search and Rescue (SAR) Organization:

Key terms to understand are:

- **Rescue Coordination Center (RCC):** The RCC is the physical location of the command center that manages search and rescue operations in their area of responsibility.
- **SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC):** The SMC, located at the RCC, is the person in charge of planning and executing a specific SAR operation.
- **On Scene Coordinator (OSC):**



The OSC is the person appointed by the SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) to coordinate search and rescue operations on scene.

The person in charge of the first rescue vessel to arrive on scene will normally assume the functions of OSC until relieved by a more capable vessel or government resource. Good Samaritan vessels may be placed in the role of OSC. Refer to the section on “OSC Duties”.

If You Are The First Vessel To Arrive On Scene:

- √ Rescue People from the Water. Victims not wearing life jackets are high priority.
- √ Establish contact with distressed vessel master. Assist as requested within your vessel and crew capability.
- √ Establish & maintain contact with SAR authorities.
- √ Assume On Scene Coordinator (OSC) role. Take control of other arriving vessels and SAR actions until relieved by SAR



Good Samaritan OSC Duties:

- At the direction of the SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC), coordinate on scene SAR operations until relieved by SAR authorities.
- Coordinate on-scene communications with master and maintain communications with the SMC. See “Communications Best Practices” section.
- Track on scene arrival and departure of rescue assets. Assign tasks as required.
- Maintain detailed record of operations: areas searched, sighting, actions and results obtained.
- Request additional rescue resource and SMC assistance as necessary.
- Recommend to the SMC the release of resources not required.
- Track number and location of survivors. Report to SMC. See Accountability Section.

On Scene Communications Best Practices:

- Use VHF CH 16 only as hailing / emergency frequency. Switch to alternate channel for on scene operations and reports to authorities.
- On Scene Coordinator (OSC) should serve as sole communicator to distressed vessel master. Remember, master is dealing with the emergency. Do not overload with un-necessary communications.
- Rescue vessels must check-in with the OSC on arrival and check-out upon departure.
- The OSC must maintain communications with the SMC. This is critical. Provide regular updates on:
 - ◆ Weather/sea state.
 - ◆ Visual description of distressed vessel: draft, visual damage, list, fire/smoke, location of passengers, number recovered, etc.
 - ◆ On scene search actions, resources, recommendations and potential problems.
 - ◆ Significant events and changes in distressed vessel condition.
 - ◆ Name and contact information of rescue vessels with survivors on board.
 - ◆ Number of survivors on each rescue vessel, and destination of each vessel upon release from scene.



Evacuee/Survivor Accountability:

It is critical to track the location of all evacuees from the distressed vessel. SAR Efforts will continue until everyone is accounted for.



1. During a small event with one or two rescue boats:

- Report the number and names of evacuees to the On Scene Coordinator (OSC). If no OSC, report directly to the SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC). Include your contact information, condition of evacuees, and your destination for offloading.
- Upon arrival at offloading site, contact the SMC and confirm the number & names of evacuees. Provide information as requested.

2. During a large mass rescue event with many rescue boats:

- Each rescue boat reports to the OSC the total number and condition of survivors on board, and then stands by for instructions on the location for evacuee offload.
- OSC relays the information from the rescue boats to the SMC. In a mass rescue event, the SMC will identify specific landing sites for evacuees to be offloaded and processed.
- OSC directs rescue boats to the designated landing site, and reports their release and estimated arrival time to SMC.
- Rescue boats report their arrival at the landing site to the SMC, and confirm the total number of persons offloaded. SMC may provide additional tasking.