



Cayman Islands

National Maritime Search & Rescue Plan

Revision Record

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03			
04			

A strategic overview of maritime search and rescue in the Cayman Islands.

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1. Foreword

1.1 The Cayman Islands Coast Guard (CICG) provides a comprehensive search and rescue service for persons and vessels reported to be in distress or missing at sea.

2. Abbreviations

AOU	Air Operation Unit
CBC	Customs and Border Control
CICG	Cayman Islands Coast Guard
HMCI	Hazard Management Cayman Islands
HMCG	His Majesty's Coast Guard (United Kingdom)
MORCC	Maritime Operations and Rescue Coordination Centre
MSAR	Maritime Search and Rescue
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
RCC	Rescue Coordination Centre
RCIPS	Royal Cayman Islands Police Service
SAR	Search and Rescue
SRR	Search and Rescue Region
SSB	Single Side Band
USCG	United States Coast Guard
VHF	Very High Frequency

3. Introduction

3.1 The organisation for search and rescue in the Cayman Islands is an amalgam of separate Government Departments, the Emergency Services.

3.2 The purpose of this Strategic Overview is to provide a framework for the strategic and operational oversight of SAR and to describe the scope and responsibilities of those entities that play a part in SAR activities in the Cayman Islands.

3.3 The organisation for civil SAR in the Cayman Islands is derived from the following international conventions:

The Convention on the High Seas, 1958:

http://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/8_1_1958_high_seas.pdf

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982:

https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974:

[https://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Safety-of-Life-at-Sea-\(SOLAS\),-1974.aspx](https://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Safety-of-Life-at-Sea-(SOLAS),-1974.aspx)

The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979:

<https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002800d43b3>

The Convention on International Civil Aviation, 1944:

https://www.icao.int/publications/Documents/7300_9ed.pdf

3.4 In addition, the organisation for civil SAR in the Cayman Islands is also derived from the following national legislation:

The Maritime Authority Act (2013 Revision):

<https://www.cishipping.com/sites/default/files/Maritime%20Authority%20law%202013%20revision.PDF>

The Cayman Islands Coast Guard Act, 2021:

https://legislation.gov.ky/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2021/2021-0002/CaymanIslandsCoastGuardAct2021_Act%20%20of%202021.pdf

4. Scope

4.1 The Cayman Islands Coast Guard (CICG) is responsible for the delivery of maritime SAR within the territory, including territorial waters which cover approximately 16,553.17 square nautical miles (**Annex A – Map of territorial waters**).

4.2 The Cayman Islands Maritime Search and Rescue Region (SRR) borders the SRRs of Cuba, Honduras, and Jamaica, and covers approximately 43,200 nautical square miles.

4.3 The Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) for Grand Cayman is administered from MORCC Grand Cayman, located at CICG Maritime Operations and Rescue Coordination Centre (MORCC). The MORCC is responsible for all Maritime Operations & SAR coordination activity within the Cayman SRR.

(Annex B – Map of Cayman Islands SRR).

Cayman Islands Coast Guard Operational SRR

GPS Format Degrees Decimal Minuets (DDM)			
Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
20° 40.08' N	81° 15.00' W	17° 35.05' N	80° 49.98' W
20° 40.08' N	80° 27.06' W	17° 35.05' N	82° 21.00' W
20° 21.06' N	79° 43.02' W	19° 27.95' N	83° 35.83' W
20° 00.00' N	79° 00.00' W	20° 41.04' N	83° 12.00' W
19° 00.00' N	79° 00.00' W	20° 40.08' N	81° 15.00' W

4.4 A key function of CICG is to:

- Deliver a timely maritime SAR response to calls for assistance from persons or vessels in distress within its assigned SRR; and
- When not within its operational capabilities, ensure that a coordinated maritime SAR response is provided to ensure that a timely SAR service is delivered to those persons or vessels in distress within its assigned SRR.

4.4 This function is undertaken through CICG, the MORCC and various other government agencies/authorities working together to:

- Receive details of persons or vessels in distress or requiring assistance;
- Investigate and evaluate information;
- Assess whether incident is within local operational capabilities, and determine whether State cooperation is to be sought under CICG SAR International Agreements;
- Timely deployment of SAR response units to persons/vessels in distress or requiring assistance;
- Coordinate response between all SAR response units for the duration of the SAR operation;
- Ensure communication between SAR response units, the MORCC, any other supporting MRCC is maintained; and
- Maintain SAR units/assets capable of search, rescue and recovery and the delivery of those rescued to a place of safety.

(Annex C – List of assets used to effect SAR).

Cayman Islands SAR responsibility:

4.5 The responsibility for overall provision of national maritime SAR lies with Cayman Islands Government which has delegated this responsibility to the CICG by virtue of the Cayman Islands Coast Guard Act 2021.

Authorities with responsibility for the response and co-ordination of MSAR

Cayman Islands Coast Guard

4.6 CICG maintains adequate resources to manage and coordinate maritime SAR within the territorial waters of Cayman Islands. This work is done by utilising a command-and-control structure to co-ordinate such operations, and through the operation of a Rescue Coordination Centre that sits within this structure. CICG works closely with other government agencies and international partners in the delivery of SAR services. Domestic agencies may have a part to play depending upon the nature of the SAR incident. The Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS), for example, remain responsible for the investigation of deaths or the investigation of any cases where there is believed to be potential criminal activity.

4.7 Local SAR Agreements: CICG works in partnership with other organisations within the Cayman Islands including the RCIPS Air Operations Unit, Port Authority, the Fire Service, and the National Weather Service.

4.8 International SAR Agreements: CICG has in place SAR agreements with the Jamaica Defence Force, The Honduras Merchant Marine and Navy, The Mexican Navy and the United States Coast Guard. These agreements provide for cooperation between States when the incident so requires.

4.9 Cruise Ship Contingency: In response to distress calls from cruise ships operating within its SRR, CICG has established a series of procedures which entail:

- Immediate contact with the emergency point of contact at the relevant cruise line operation centre;
- Immediate notification of incident to United States Coast Guard (USCG) District Seven (RCC Miami) and request electronic copy of any SAR plans for the particular cruise ship in distress;
- Immediate notification of incident to United Kingdom Maritime & Coast Guard Agency (RCC UK) and request electronic copy of any SAR plans for the particular cruise ship in distress;
- Immediate notification of incident to the Operations Centre in the State responsible for the SRR nearest to the location of the cruise ship; and
- Emergency broadcast on VHF and SSB radio seeking assistance from any vessels in the immediate vicinity of the cruise ship.

(See Annex D – CICG Process to be followed in event of Distress Call from Cruise Ship).

(See Annex E – CIGC Processes to be followed in event of (i) General Distress Calls; (ii) Distress Calls relating to Aircraft in Water; and (iii) Distress Calls relating to Oil spills and (iv) Medical Evacuations).

4.10 SAR Planning & Exercises: Cruise ship operators or other entities wishing to engage with the Cayman Islands Coast Guard (CICG) in the testing or development of SAR response plans for cruise ships operating within the Cayman Islands SRR can do so by contacting the CICG Operations & Rescue Coordination Centre by calling: +1 (345) 649-6722 or email: orcc@cicg.gov.ky

Further guidance and information is available from the Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands per Guidance Note 07/2023 (Rev 01) which is available here:

<https://cishipping.com/system/files/notices/documents/CIGN%2007%202023%20Rev%2001%20SAR%20Plans%20Final.pdf>

Other authorities who may be tasked to SAR incidents

Cayman Islands Ambulance, Service

4.11 The Cayman Islands Ambulance Service has a statutory responsibility to respond to traumatic and medical emergencies. Ambulance services may be able to provide advanced pre-hospital care at the scene of an incident. Further information may be found at: <https://www.hsa.ky/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Cayman-Islands-EMS-Policy-Procedure-Manual-1.pdf>

Cayman Islands Fire Service

4.12 The Cayman Islands Fire service is responsible for dealing with domestic and aerodrome-related fires. The fire service has also been delegated the responsibility to respond to inshore related rescues, not in excess of 2 miles from land.

Cayman Islands National Weather Service

4.13 The Cayman Islands National Weather Service provides the most current meteorology information to the CICG in order to assist with the creation of search/drift patterns and plans prior to and during MSAR operations.

SAR Communications

4.14 The SAR response asset shall communicate with RCC on the established frequency and give confirmation of a vessel in distress.

4.15 In the event there is a disruption in communication, the Department of Public Safety Communications will facilitate communication as the central alerting post.

4.16 The SAR units shall maintain constant communication with the RCC, informing of progress.

4.17 SAR surface asset at the location of the vessel in distress will communicate on the frequency established by the RCC.

4.18 On confirmation of a vessel being overdue, lost or in distress, the RCC shall activate the Overdue Vessel Response Plan.

4.19 A “FALSE ALARM” will be declared by RCC when vessels are accounted for, or when the location of a presumed aircraft impact as specified in the COSPAS-SARSAT message is investigated and shows no evidence of such incident.

4.20 Supporting agencies involved in SAR operations employ the following means of communications: HF, VHF, SSB, Iridium SAT Telephone, and email. 4.21 To notify a maritime incident in the national territory, the following means of communication can be used:

- Direct Call to Cayman Islands DPSC / 911
- Direct Call to the MRCC (+1 345-936-6722 or +1 345-936-6722)
- Call by Marine VHF Radio (VHF Channel 16 / 156.8 MHz)
- Call by Marine MF/HF SSB Radio on distress hailing channel (2182.00 & 8291.00 KHz)
- Email orcc@cicg.gov.ky or orcc.cayman@gmail.com

Details also available in the “Contact Points” and “Global SAR Plan” modules on IMO GISIS - (https://webaccounts.imo.org/Common/weblogin.aspx?App=GISISMembers&ReturnUrl=https%3a%2f%2fgis.imo.org%2fMembers%2f&error_message=interaction_required)

Major Incidents / Joint Operations

4.22 Hazard Management of the Cayman Islands (HMCI) is the lead agency for incidents involving mass casualties and will be the coordinating entity for all relevant departments.

Cayman Islands SAR Committee Structure

4.23 SAR Committee Members

- Commandant of the Coast Guard or designated officer
- Representative from the Maritime Authority
- Representative from the Aviation Authority
- Representative of the RCIPS Air Operations Unit
- Representative of Hazard Management Cayman Islands
- Representative of Cayman Islands Fire Service
- Representative of Cayman Islands Ambulance Service / Health Service Authority
- Representative of the National Maritime Affairs Secretariat

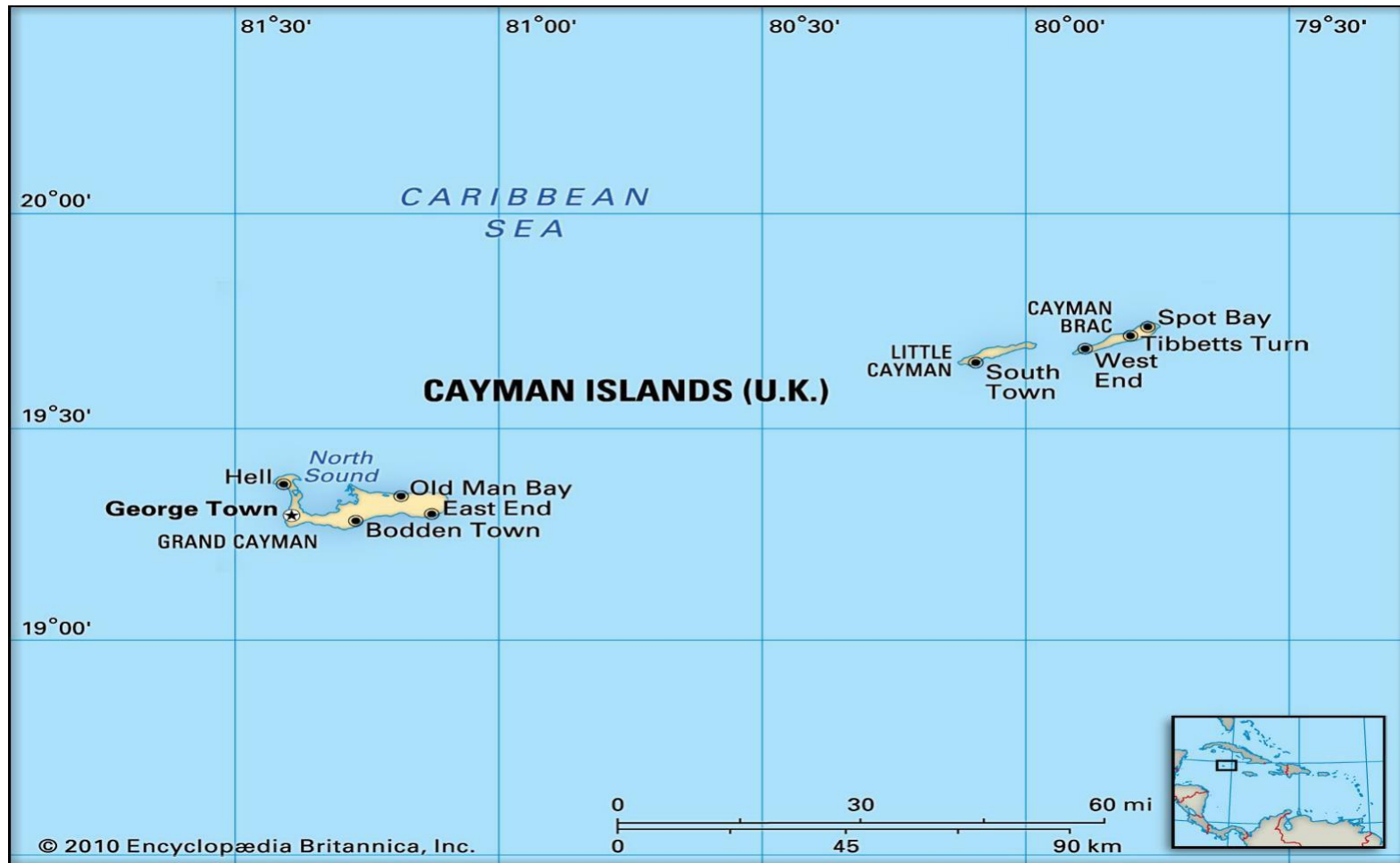
Objectives

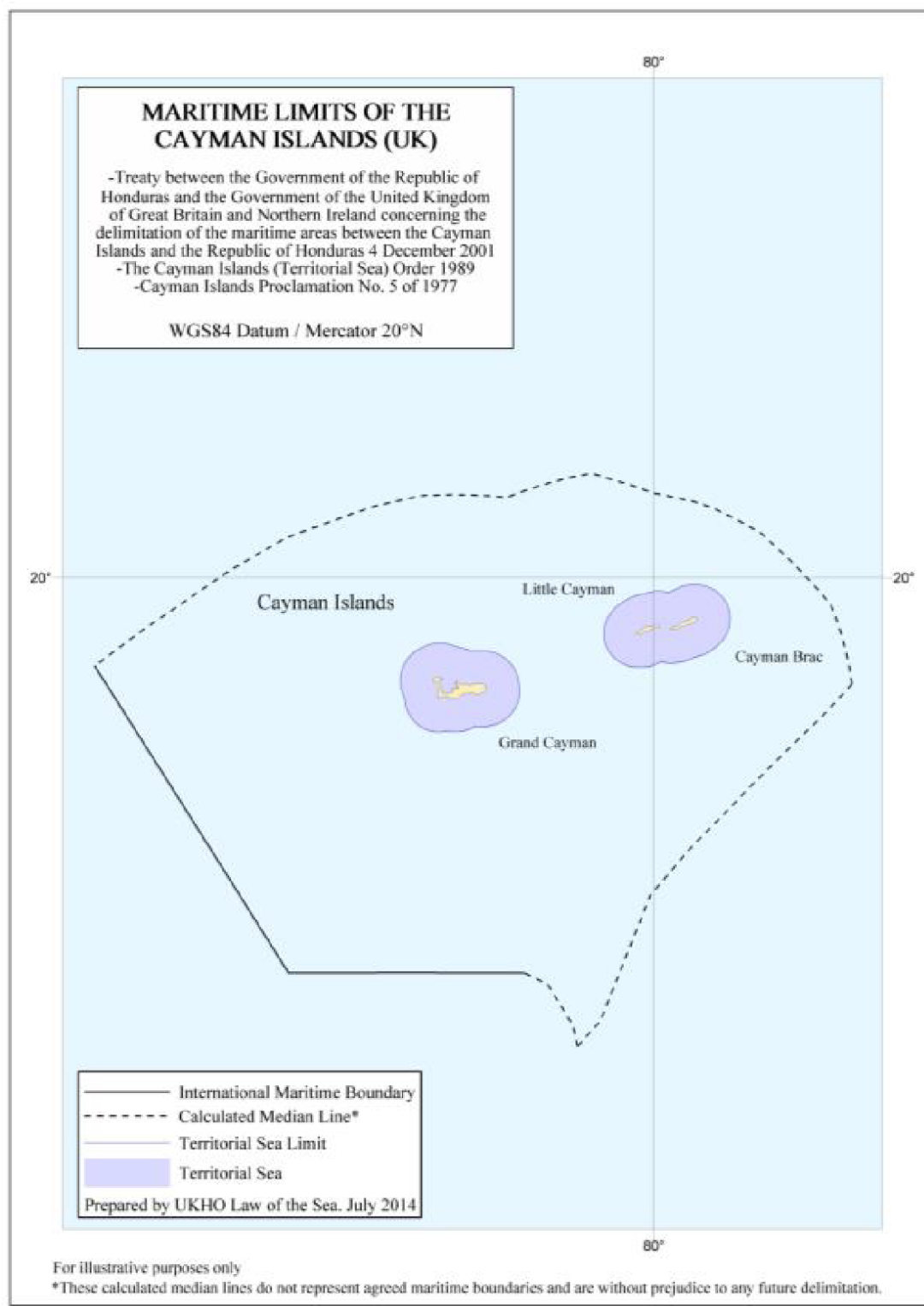
4.24 The establishment of the SAR Committee is intended to accomplish the following:

- Provide the forum for promulgating a harmonized national SAR plan.
- Provide an interface with other national, regional, and international organizations involved with the provision of SAR services.
- Promote close co-operation and coordination between civilian and Government authorities and organizations for the provision of effective SAR services.
- Ensure SAR standards are maintained and harmonized between Aeronautical & Maritime SAR Systems.
- Determine other ways to enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of SAR services.
- Standardize SAR procedures, training, and equipment where practicable.

Annex A

Territorial Waters





Annex B

GPS Format Degrees Decimal Minuets (DDM)	
Latitude	Longitude
20° 40.08' N	81° 15.00' W
20° 40.08' N	80° 27.06' W
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Annex C

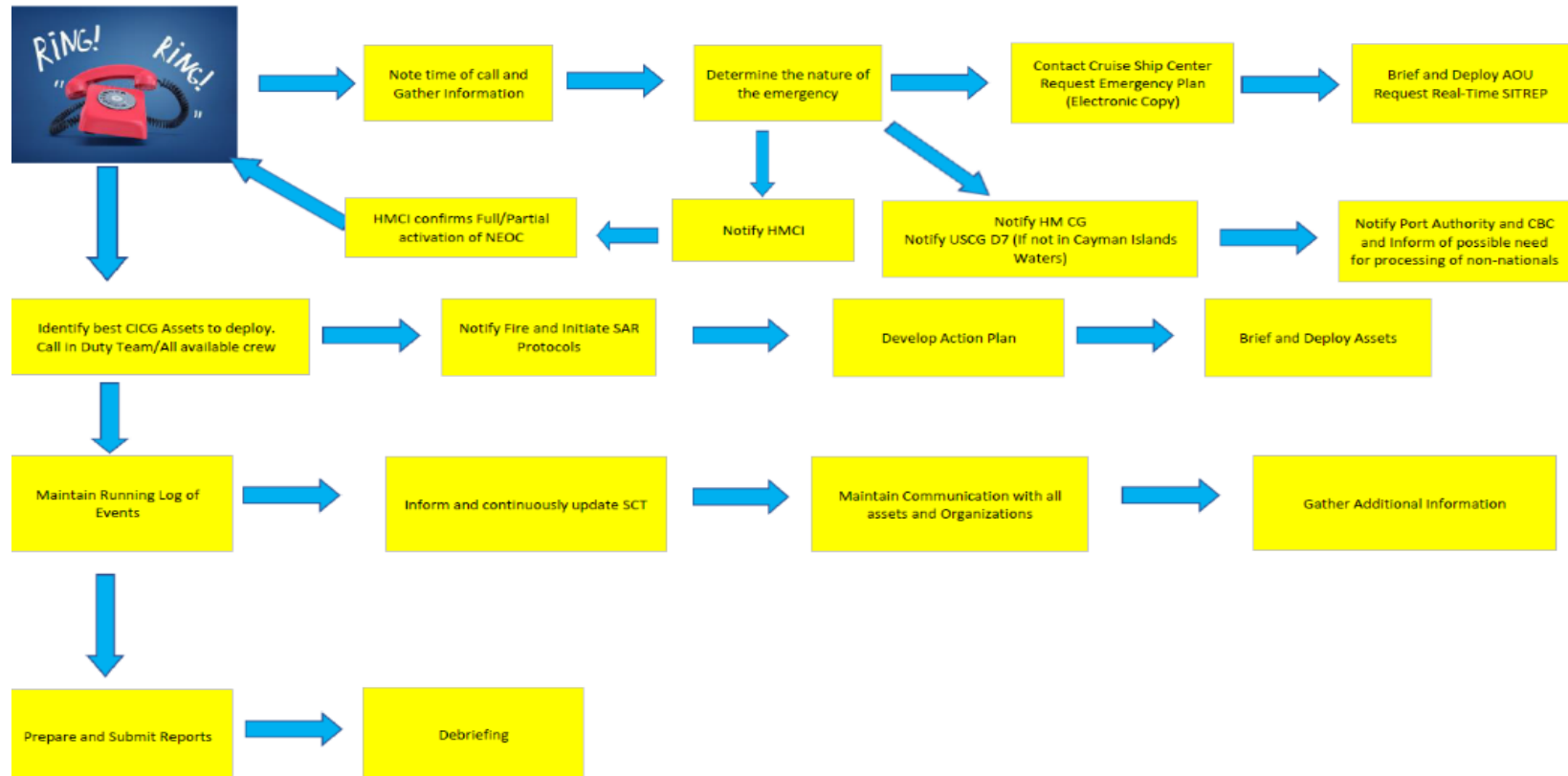
Asset Description	Range of Response	SAR Capabilities
CICG 44 Foot SAFE Boat (Special Purpose Vessel)	0 – 100 NM	Speed: 40 knots SAR Range: 100 NM Sea Height: 15ft
CICG 38 Foot SAFE Boat Interceptor Class	0 – 100 NM	Speed: 60knots SAR Range: 100 NM Sea Height: 8ft
CICG 24 Foot Zodiac RHIB	0-20 NM	Speed: 40knots SAR Range: 15-20NM Sea Height: 5ft
CIFS ATLANTIC 75 Lifeboat 24ft RHIB	0 – 5 NM	Speed: 32knots SAR Range: 2 NM Sea Height: 6ft
RCIPS EC 145 Helicopter	0 – 200 NM	Speed: 167 SAR Range: 100 NM & 30min on scene.

Annex D

CICG process to be followed in the event of a distress call from a cruise ship



Cayman Islands Coast Guard Process Chart for Cruise Ship Incident

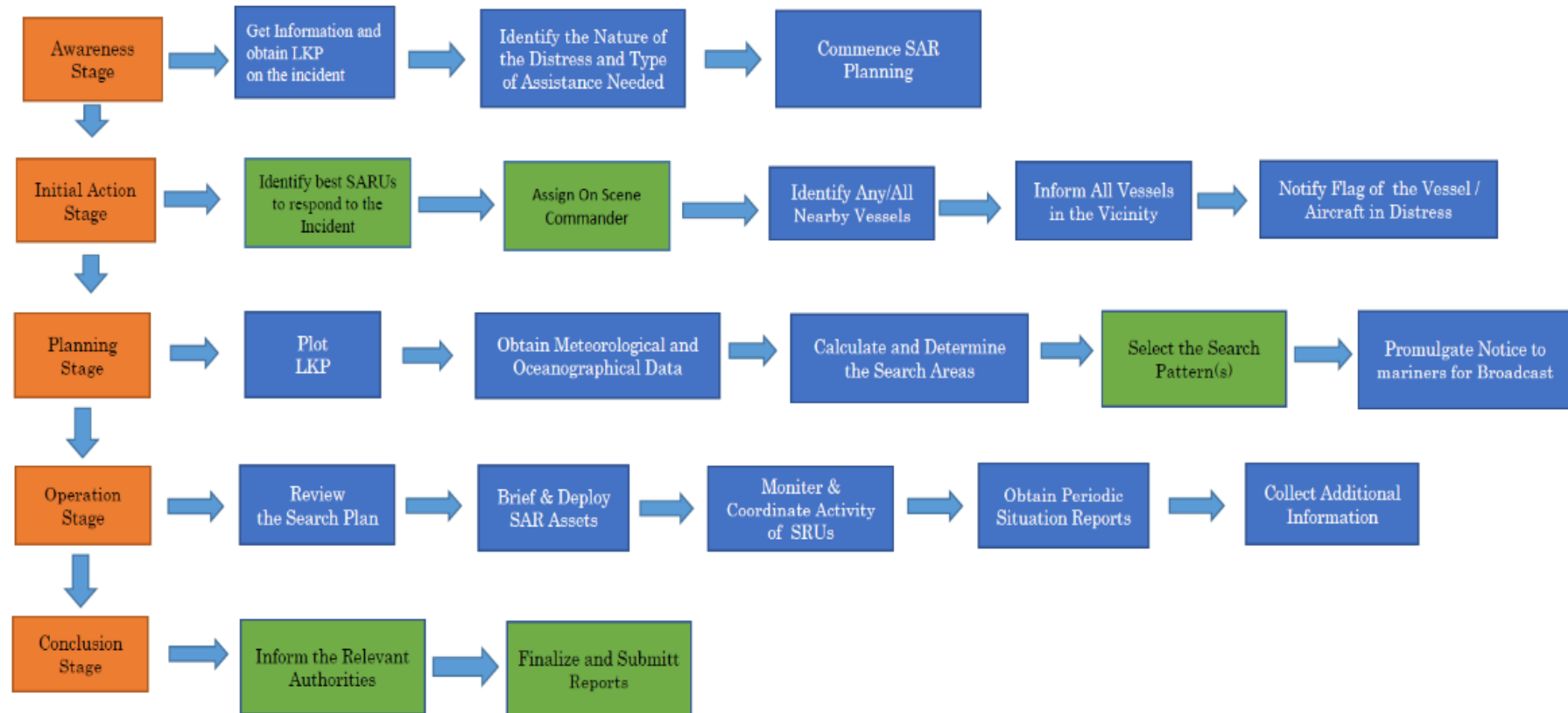


Annex E

CICG process to be followed in the event of a distress call. (General)



Cayman Islands Coast Guard Process Chart for Maritime Search And Rescue Operations

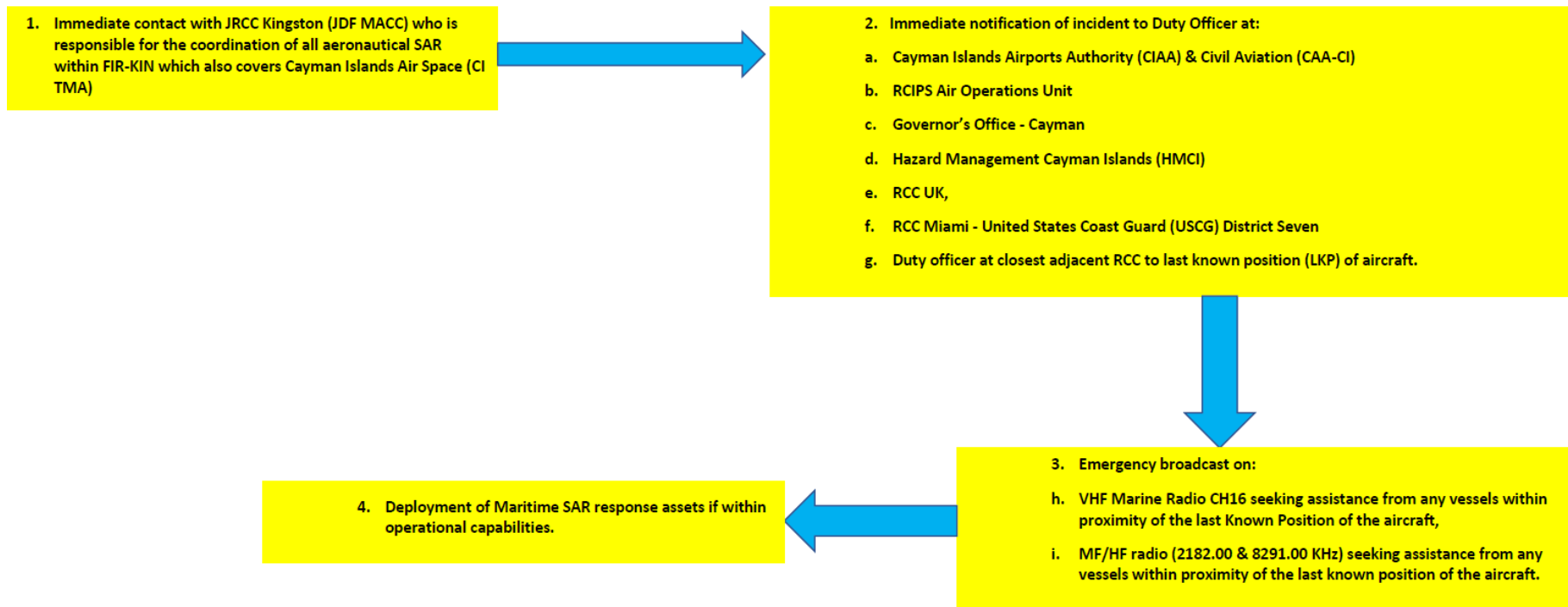


Annex E (Cont.)

CICG process to be followed in the event of a distress call. (Aircraft in water)

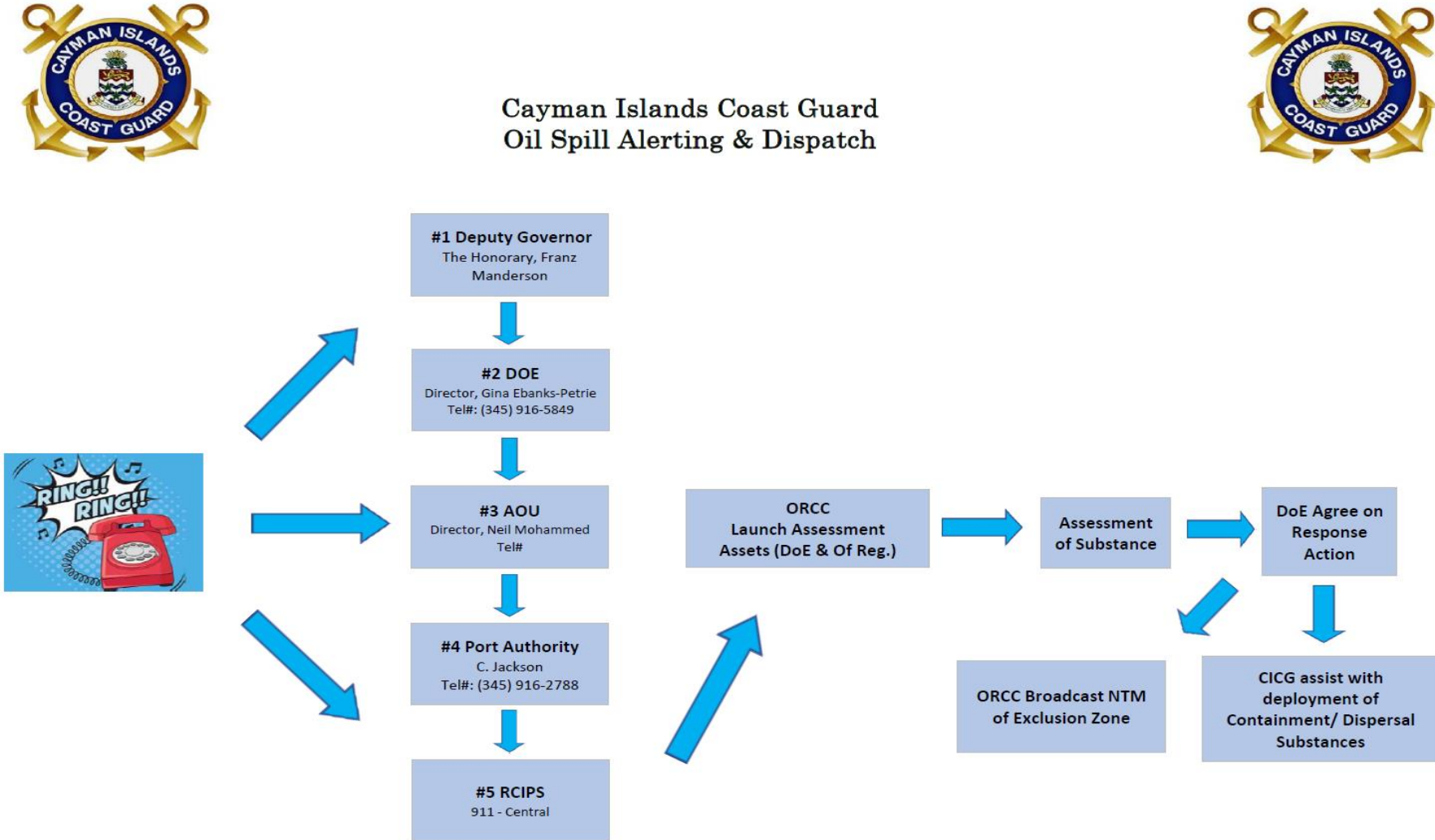


Cayman Islands Coast Guard Aircraft in the Water



Annex E (Cont.)

CICG process to be followed in the event of a distress call. (Oil Spill)



Annex E (Cont.)

CICG process to be followed in the event of a distress call. (MEDIVAC)

