

Amendments to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual Volume III

Ref: TAN 001-26

Issued: 11/02/26

1. Introduction

IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.168 has introduced amendments to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual effective from 1 January 2026.

SOLAS Regulation V/21 requires all ships subject to SOLAS to carry an up-to-date edition of IAMSAR Volume III. MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.2 requires the IAMSAR Manual Volume III to always be carried onboard in hard copy format, as it is required for use during emergencies.

This notice serves as guidance for operators on the updated requirements introduced by the amendments.

2. Application

All Isle of Man Registered Vessels required under SOLAS Regulation V/21 to carry life-saving appliances must also carry the IAMSAR Manual Volume III. This includes:

- Merchant ships of 150 GT and above; and
- Other smaller vessels and pleasure craft where applicable—see [MSN 063](#) for full details.

3. Amendments to the IAMSAR Manual

The amendments introduced by IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1686 include, but are not limited to, the following:

3.1 Updates to Volume III

Incorporates 2024 revisions to SOLAS Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) regulations.

3.2 New Appendices Introduced

- Appendix P (Volume I): Sample memorandum of understanding between SAR service and accident investigation authority;
- Appendix Q (Volume I): Sample process for expeditious approval allowing SAR units from an assisting State to enter the territory of the RCC State;
- Appendix W (Volume II): Guidance on night search by aircraft using Electro-Optic/Infrared (EO/IR) equipment and/or Night Vision Devices (NVDs);
- Enhanced Guidance on Night Search Operations: Operational guidance for EO/IR systems and NVDs, with detailed RCC staff instructions in Appendix W;



- New Section on Offshore Wind Farms: Section 6.15 (Volume II) covering SAR considerations for offshore wind and renewable energy installations, including coordination procedures, hazards, and communication protocols;
- Expanded Guidance on Flight Tracking Systems: Improved access and use of flight tracking applications to support situational awareness and search planning.

4. Required Action for Operators

The updated IAMSAR Manual Volume III must be carried onboard in hard copy format no later than 1 January 2026. Please find the IMO-recommended publication available for purchase here [IAMSAR Manual Volume III](#).

Vessel procedures and crew training should be updated to reflect the new guidance, particularly regarding:

- i. Night search operations using EO/IR and NVD systems;
- ii. Offshore wind farm SAR considerations; and
- iii. Use of flight tracking systems for situational awareness and search planning.

5. Further Reading

- IAMSAR Manual Volume III
- SOLAS Regulation V/21
- MSC.1/Circ.1686

Please note - The Isle of Man Ship Registry cannot give legal advice. Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel. You should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

