

United States Air Force  
Air Force Communications Command / Aerospace Rescue Service  
OPLAN 9506 -- Search and Rescue

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## COMMUNICATIONS

During the coordination phase of requesting AFCC mobile communication assistance, a joint AFCC/ARS determination will be made regarding frequencies needed to support the deployed unit. AFCC may elect to use MARS or other AFCC available frequencies for point-to-point communications, or may request MAC clearance of a different frequency.

### Emergency Communications Frequencies

The unit in distress, or a station that has been assigned controlling responsibility by the unit in distress, controls distress traffic. However, for cases involving international civil aviation, the station addressed by the distress message controls distress traffic. Once communications are established with a distressed unit, they should be maintained on the same frequency. The following frequencies have been assigned as distress or emergency frequencies:

500kHz -- International CW/MCW distress & calling (Not guarded by USN ships).    \*\*Phasing out\*\*  
2182kHz -- International voice distress/safety/calling.  
4125kHz -- International voice distress/safety/calling backup (not guarded).  
6215.5kHz- International voice distress/safety/calling backup (not guarded).  
8364kHz -- International CW/MCW lifeboat/survival craft & SAR forces.  
27.065mHz -- Citizens' Band Radio emergency freq. CB Ch# 9.  
121.5mHz -- International VHF voice aeronautical emergency & ELT/EPIRBs.  
156.8mHz -- VHF-FM International voice distress/safety & calling. EPIRB alert tones. Marine channel 16.  
156.75mHz-- Class C (marine) EPIRB 15 second homing signal.  
243.0mHz -- Joint/Combined military UHF voice aeronautical emergency, international survival craft & ELTs.

### Search and Rescue Dedicated Frequencies

The following frequencies have been dedicated for SAR & SAR coordination usage:

2670kHz -- USCG emergency coordination.  
3023.5kHz -International voice SAR on-scene PRIMARY.  
5680kHz -- International voice SAR on-scene.  
8364kHz -- International survival craft & SAR on-scene.  
Guarded by USN during aircraft Maritime Patrol Operations in support of fleet units.  
40.5mHz --(FM) United States DoD Joint Operations common.  
121.6mHz --U.S./Canada voice SAR on-scene.  
123.1mHz --International voice SAR on-scene PRIMARY.  
138.45mHz -(FM) ARS on-scene.  
138.78mHz -(FM) ARS on-scene (discrete).  
156.3mHz -- Merchant ship/USCG on-scene. Marine radio ch# 6.  
259.0mHz -- UHF/AM CONUS Air Rescue Operations.

282.8mHz -- Joint/Combined SAR DF & on-scene PRIMARY.

381.0mHz -- CONUS Air Rescue Operations.

381.8mHz -- USCG aircraft working frequency.

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USCG Aircraft HF working freqs: (USB)

5692 8984

5696 11197

8980 11201

Civil Air Patrol (CAP)

4582kHz USB -- National Emergency & Calling frequency.

26.62mHz AM

143.90mHz AM/FM

148.15mHz AM/FM & FM repeaters.

#### SAR Mission Communications

The SAR Coordinator (SC) should establish the radio frequencies available for assignment as control, on-scene, monitor, homing, and press channels in the SAR Plan. The SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) selects the SAR-dedicated frequencies, informs the On-Scene Commander (OSC) and/or SAR Units (SRUs) of the assigned frequencies, and establishes communications between adjacent Rescue Coordination Centers (RCCs) and with parent agencies of the units involved in the SAR. The OSC will maintain communications with all SRUs and with the SMC. A primary & secondary frequency in the HF, VHF and/or UHF band should be assigned as an "on-scene" channel.

The On-Scene Commander (OSC) controls the communications on-scene and ensures that reliable communications are maintained. The SRUs will report to the OSC on the assigned "on-scene" frequency.

All units involved in the SAR operation should identify themselves using vessel name, aircraft type or tail #, or shore location or name. Classified tactical callsigns should not be used unless the SAR mission is classified or behind enemy lines. Armed Forces, CAP, or USCG aircraft should use the word "rescue" in their callsign when priority handling is critical. SAR Units (SRUs) should initially check in with the On-Scene Commander (OSC) using their full, plain-language callsign. Thereafter, search area assignments, such as "Alpha 6" or "Delta 2" should be used as callsigns.

A Control Channel is to be used by the On-Scene Commander & SAR Mission Coordinator only.

On Scene Channels are used between the OSC and SRUs.

Monitor Channels are guarded by the SRUs for possible transmissions from the distressed craft/survivors.

En Route Channels are used by the SRUs and their parent agencies until the SRU reaches the SAR scene, & switches their operational control to the OSC.

A Homing Channel can be any On-Scene or Distress frequency used for direction finding.

Press Channels are used by news media personnel for filing stories. When possible, the Press Channels will be regular HF/VHF/INMARSAT marine and/or aircraft frequencies

available to the public for phone patches, etc.

Primary CONUS RCC -- Scott AFB, IL.