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<b>Safety Recommendation Status:</b>	Implemented, closed

### **Safety Recommendation:**

The Minister for Transport should ensure that the training syllabus for personnel involved in the decisions to launch SAR helicopter missions includes the following: information regarding the protocols used by other agencies with whom they work, so that it is clear where responsibilities lie, and how to make best use of each agency's expertise; recognition of and strategies to address cognitive bias which could affect decision-making/risk assessment regarding the initiation and continuation of SAR missions; the potential for in-flight communications with helicopter crews to adversely affect crew effectiveness; and practical scenario-based exercises.

### **Response:**

On 01 February 2022, and in subsequent engagement with the AAIU, the Department of Transport provided the following response to this Safety Recommendation:

*"On behalf of the Minister I would like to convey the following:*

*The recommendation is accepted.*

*Coast Guard carried out a review of all relevant SOPs and training for IRCG personnel involved in the decisions to launch SAR helicopter missions. The review of SOPs is a continuous process that requires engagement with all relevant stakeholders.*

*A procedure is in place as part of the safety management system to manage and review SOPs, training syllabi and in support of continuous system improvement.*

*Coast Guard reviewed its SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) course and in October 2019 introduced a SAR Aviation Tasking and Coordination (SATaC) Course for all staff engaged in decisions to launch SAR aircraft. All personnel within the Rescue Coordination Centres who task SAR aircraft will have completed this course by Q1 2022.*

*IRCG personnel undergo a formal SMC course and refresher training every three years. Additional opportunities for scenario-based training continue to be identified and include the utilisation of specific facilities for scenario-based training. Course syllabi which include input from key stakeholders are being reviewed to ensure specific inclusion of those protocols used by other agencies, and in particular MEDICO Cork, the National Ambulance Service and the Air Corps.*

*The revised course syllabi and associated scenario-based exercises include:*

- *information regarding the protocols used by other agencies with whom they work (i.e., Medico Cork, the Operator, National Ambulance Service, the Air Corps etc), so that it is clear where responsibilities lie, and how to make best use of each agency's expertise;*
- *recognition of and strategies to address cognitive bias which could affect decision-making/risk assessment regarding the initiation and continuation of SAR missions;*
- *the potential for in-flight communications with helicopter crews to adversely affect crew effectiveness; and*
- *practical scenario-based exercises.*

*A SATaC refresher training course, an integral element of this training programme is to be introduced in 2022. This will afford further opportunity to reflect on the recommendation.*

*The SATaC initial courses and refresher courses are delivered by an IAA Approved Training Organisation.*

*The IAMSAR manuals require the SMC to carry out risk assessments, the standard SMC training course will include specific training on risk assessment for tasking of aviation assets and review of the incident by continuing to re-evaluate earlier decisions in light of new or changed conditions and set out in SOPs by Q 4 2022."*

On 19 September 2023, the Department of Transport provided the following update this Safety Recommendation:

*"SATaC (SAR Aviation Tasking and Coordination) was introduced in 2019 and is delivered by an IAA Authorised Training Organisation (ATO). The first refresher course was conducted in January 2023. Both the basic SATaC and the refresher course are core elements of IRCG Watch Officer and On Call Panel training. CG personnel are required to complete SATaC refresher training every four years. Topics such as understanding of agency protocols, cognitive bias, and inflight communications are addressed in the SATaC and SAR Mission Coordinator course.*

*SMC syllabus was updated in 2022. The training is now delivered by the National Maritime College of Ireland as a formal academic course as opposed to a bespoke Coast Guard course. New entrant Watch Officer training includes formal engagement with stakeholders and student reports on the interactions are independently evaluated by NMCI as an element of New Entrant training. The first academic programme for new entrant Watch Officer training was successfully introduced in 2022. It incorporates an SMC course and a self-learning / RCC understudy programme."*

**AAIU Comment:**

The AAIU notes the Minister's response of 01 February 2022.

The AAIU also notes that certain activities are scheduled for completion by Q1 and Q4 of 2022, and that 'Course syllabi which include input from key stakeholders are being reviewed to ensure specific inclusion of those protocols used by other agencies.'

The AAIU considers the status of this Safety Recommendation to be 'In process of implementation'.

The AAIU notes the Minister's response of 19 September 2023.

The AAIU considers the status of this Safety Recommendation to be 'Implemented, closed'.