Chapter 9

DISTRESS AND URGENCY PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE PROCEDURES

9.1 INTRODUCTION

9.1.1 Distress and urgency communication procedures are detailed in Annex 10, Volume II.

9.1.2 Distress and urgency conditions are defined as:

a) Distress: a condition of being threatened by serious and/or imminent danger and of requiring immediate assistance.

b) Urgency: a condition concerning the safety of an aircraft or other vehicle, or of some person on board or within sight, but which does not require immediate assistance.

9.1.3 The word “MAYDAY” spoken at the start identifies a distress message, and the words “PAN PAN” spoken at the start identifies an urgency message. The words “MAYDAY” or “PAN PAN”, as appropriate, should preferably be spoken three times at the start of the initial distress or urgency call.

9.1.4 Distress messages have priority over all other transmissions, and urgency messages have priority over all transmissions except distress messages.

9.1.5 Pilots making distress or urgency calls should attempt to speak slowly and distinctly so as to avoid any unnecessary repetition.

9.1.6 Pilots should adapt the phraseology procedures in this chapter to their specific needs and to the time available.

9.1.7 Pilots should seek assistance whenever there is any doubt as to the safety of a flight. In this way, the risk of a more serious situation developing can often be avoided.

9.1.8 A distress or urgency call should normally be made on the frequency in use at the time. Distress communications should be continued on this frequency until it is considered that better assistance can be provided by changing to another frequency. The frequency 121.5 MHz has been designated the international aeronautical emergency frequency although not all aeronautical stations maintain a continuous watch on that frequency. These provisions are not intended to prevent the use of any other communications frequency if considered necessary or desirable, including the maritime mobile service RTF calling frequencies.

9.1.9 If the ground station called by the aircraft in distress or urgency does not reply, then any other ground station or aircraft shall reply and give whatever assistance possible.

9.1.10 A station replying (or originating a reply) to an aircraft in distress or urgency should provide such advice, information and instructions as is necessary to assist the pilot. Superfluous transmissions may be distracting at a time when the pilot's hands are already full.

9.1.11 Aeronautical stations shall refrain from further use of a frequency on which distress or urgency traffic is heard, unless directly involved in rendering assistance or until after the emergency traffic has been terminated.

9.1.12 When a distress message has been intercepted which apparently receives no acknowledgement, the aircraft intercepting the distress message should, if time and circumstances seem appropriate, acknowledge the message and then broadcast it.

9.2 DISTRESS MESSAGES

9.2.1 Aircraft in distress

9.2.1.1 A distress message should contain as many as possible of the following elements, and, if possible, in the order shown:

a) name of the station addressed;

b) identification of the aircraft;

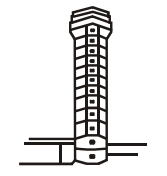
c) nature of the distress condition;

d) intention of the person in command;

e) position, level and heading of the aircraft; and

f) any other useful information.

MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY WALDEN TOWER G-ABCD ENGINE ON FIRE MAKING FORCED LANDING 20 MILES SOUTH OF WALDEN. PASSING 3 000 FEET HEADING 360



G-ABCD WALDEN TOWER ROGER
MAYDAY WIND AT WALDEN
350 DEGREES 10 KNOTS, QNH 1008

MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY WALDEN TOWER G-ABCD ENGINE FAILED. WILL ATTEMPT TO LAND YOUR FIELD, 5 MILES SOUTH, 4 000 FEET HEADING 360

G-ABCD WALDEN TOWER ROGER MAYDAY CLEARED STRAIGHT-IN APPROACH RUNWAY 35 WIND 360 DEGREES 10 KNOTS QNH 1008, YOU ARE NUMBER ONE

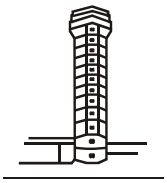
CLEARED STRAIGHT-IN APPROACH RUNWAY 35 QNH 1008 G-ABCD

9.2.1.2 These provisions are not intended to prevent the aircraft from using any means at its disposal to attract attention and make known its condition (including the activation of the appropriate SSR code, 7700), nor any station from using any means at its disposal to assist an aircraft in distress. Variation on the elements listed under 9.2.1.1 is permissible when the transmitting station is not itself in distress, provided that such a circumstance is clearly stated.

9.2.1.3 The station addressed will normally be the station communicating with the aircraft or the station in whose area of responsibility the aircraft is operating.

9.2.2 Imposition of silence

An aircraft in distress or a station in control of distress traffic may impose silence, either on all aircraft on the frequency or on a particular aircraft which interferes with the distress traffic. Aircraft so requested will maintain radio silence until advised that the distress traffic has ended.



ALL STATIONS WALDEN TOWER STOP TRANSMITTING. MAYDAY

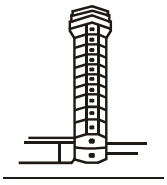
or

FASTAIR 345 STOP TRANSMITTING, MAYDAY

9.2.3 Termination of distress and silence

9.2.3.1 When an aircraft is no longer in distress, it shall transmit a message cancelling the distress condition.

9.2.3.2 When the ground station controlling the distress traffic is aware that the aircraft is no longer in distress it shall terminate the distress communication and silence condition.



WALDEN TOWER G-CD CANCEL DISTRESS. ENGINE SERVICEABLE, RUNWAY IN SIGHT. REQUEST LANDING

G-CD WIND 350 DEGREES 8 KNOTS, RUNWAY 35 CLEARED TO LAND

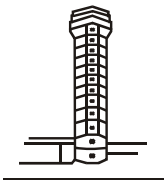
RUNWAY 35 CLEARED TO LAND G-CD

ALL STATIONS WALDEN TOWER DISTRESS TRAFFIC ENDED

9.3 URGENCY MESSAGES

9.3.1 An urgency message should contain as many of the elements detailed in 9.2.1.1 as are required by the circumstances. The call should be made on the frequency in use at the time, and the station addressed will normally be that station communicating with the aircraft, or the station in whose area of responsibility the aircraft is operating. All other stations should take care not to interfere with the transmission of urgency traffic.

PAN PAN, PAN PAN, PAN PAN WALDEN TOWER G-ABCD C172 2 000 FEET HEADING 190 ABOVE CLOUD UNSURE OF MY POSITION REQUEST HEADING TO WALDEN



G-ABCD WALDEN TOWER FLY HEADING 160

HEADING 160
G-ABCD

– – – – – – – – –

PAN PAN, PAN PAN, PAN PAN WALDEN TOWER G-ABCD 10 MILES NORTH AT 2 000 FEET. PASSENGER WITH SUSPECTED HEART ATTACK REQUEST PRIORITY LANDING

G-CD WALDEN TOWER NUMBER 1 CLEARED STRAIGHT-IN APPROACH RUNWAY 17 WIND 180 DEGREES 10 KNOTS QNH 1008 AMBULANCE ALERTED

CLEARED STRAIGHT-IN APPROACH RUNWAY 17 QNH 1008
G-CD

– – – – – – – – –

PAN PAN, PAN PAN, PAN PAN
WALDEN TOWER G-BBCC
INTERCEPTED URGENCY CALL
FROM G-ABCD PASSENGER WITH
SUSPECTED HEART ATTACK
REQUESTING PRIORITY LANDING
WALDEN. HIS POSITION 10 MILES
NORTH AT 2 000 FEET

G-BBCC ROGER

G-ABCD WALDEN TOWER RUNWAY 35 WIND
340 DEGREES 10 KNOTS QNH 1008 NO TRAFFIC

(if G-ABCD does not acknowledge this message
G-BBCC will relay)

9.3.2 In the first example above, further questions might be asked of the pilot in order to assist in ascertaining the position of the aircraft.

9.4 EMERGENCY DESCENT

9.4.1 When an aircraft announces that it is making an emergency descent, the controller will take all possible action to safeguard other aircraft.

9.4.2 The general broadcast to warn aircraft of an emergency descent should be followed, as necessary, by specific instructions.

FASTAIR 345 POSITION NORTH CROSS
NDB
EMERGENCY DESCENT TO FL 100
DUE TO DECOMPRESSION

ATTENTION ALL AIRCRAFT IN THE VICINITY OF NORTH
CROSS NDB, EMERGENCY DESCENT IN PROGRESS
FROM FL 350 TO FL 100, LEAVE A1 TO
THE NORTH IMMEDIATELY

9.5 AIRCRAFT COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE

Note.— General rules that are applicable in the event of communications failure are contained in Annex 10, Volume II.

9.5.1 When an aircraft station fails to establish contact with the aeronautical station on the designated frequency, it shall attempt to establish contact on another frequency appropriate to the route. If this attempt fails, the aircraft shall attempt to establish communication with other aircraft or other aeronautical stations on frequencies appropriate to the route.

9.5.2 If the attempts specified under 9.5.1 fail, the aircraft shall transmit its message twice on the designated frequency(ies), preceded by the phrase “TRANSMITTING BLIND” and, if necessary, include the addressee(s) for which the message is intended.

9.5.3 When an aircraft is unable to establish communication due to receiver failure, it shall transmit reports at the scheduled times, or positions, on the frequency in use, preceded by the phrase “TRANSMITTING BLIND DUE TO RECEIVER FAILURE”. The aircraft shall transmit the intended message, following this by a complete repetition. During this procedure, the aircraft shall also advise the time of its next intended transmission.

9.5.4 An aircraft which is provided with air traffic control or advisory service shall, in addition to complying with 9.5.3, transmit information regarding the intention of the pilot-in-command with respect to the continuation of the flight of the aircraft.

9.5.5 When an aircraft is unable to establish communication due to airborne equipment failure, it shall, if so equipped, select the appropriate SSR code to indicate radio failure (7600).

9.5.6 When an aeronautical station has been unable to establish contact with an aircraft after calls on the frequencies on which the aircraft is believed to be listening, it shall:

a) request other aeronautical stations to render assistance by calling the aircraft and relaying traffic, if necessary; and/or

b) request aircraft on the route to attempt to establish communication with the aircraft and relay messages, if necessary.

9.5.7 If the attempts specified in 9.5.6 fail, the aeronautical station should transmit messages addressed to the aircraft, other than messages containing air traffic control clearances, by blind transmission on the frequency(ies) on which the aircraft is believed to be listening.

9.5.8 Blind transmission of air traffic control clearances shall not be made to aircraft, except at the specific request of the originator.

Note.— Examples of radio failure (transmitter) where radar is used are contained in Chapter 6.

———————