

Press release from AECO - Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (for immediate release):

Cruise industry cooperation highlighted in Arctic search and rescue event

This week, the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) published the report their most recent search and rescue (SAR) tabletop exercise. The report concludes that cruise ships can make valuable contribution to search and rescue in the Arctic. To achieve this, dialogue between the cruise industry and SAR responders is essential.

What happens when a cruise ship experiences an engine room fire and loses propulsion some hundred nautical miles west of the Arctic island of Jan Mayen? This is the scenario that participants of the 2018 Joint Arctic Search and Rescue Tabletop Exercise and Workshop where presented with when they gathered in Reykjavik in on April 10-11. The event gathered representatives from the cruise industry, the Arctic SAR community and academia for the third year in a row. The exercise is organized by AECO, the Icelandic Coast Guard and the Joint Rescue Coordination Center North-Norway to increase dialogue between cruise operators and the Arctic preparedness and response sector.

The scenario, which was developed by the US Coast Guard, was designed to train participants for a situation where another cruise ship is the first to arrive on the scene. The participants had to consider whether this vessel of opportunity was ready and able to take on the role of on-scene coordinator. As responders deployed ships and aircrafts to scene, the cruise ship mobilized its crew and resources to assist the vessel in distress.

Frigg Jørgensen, executive director of AECO, says that the exercise was a valuable opportunity to get a better understanding of the operations and reasoning of the different players involved in such a rescue.

"The participants got a chance to observe the discussions of the other groups and understand how they think and what their concerns are. For example, by listening to each other, all the groups realized that everyone wants to speak directly with the captain. As a result, the captain could end up spending a lot of time on communication during an emergency. One of the things we discussed is how communication can be streamlined to relieve some of the strain on the captain," says Jørgensen.

The next [Joint Arctic SAR workshop and TTX](#) will take place April 9 – 10, 2019 in Reykjavik.

Suggested illustration photos



Photo credit:

Photo by U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Grant DeVuyst, via Wikimedia Commons.

High resolution illustration image can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3cb1gv6py2eaoc/AAChm6mohx5bwU4ymTRgnnkia?dl=0>



Photo credit:

Photo by Arild Lyssand.

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AECO - Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators

Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators is an international organization for expedition cruise operators and associates in the Arctic, dedicated to managing environmentally friendly, safe and considerate cruise tourism. With close to 70 international members – including 40 vessel operators, owners and management, and 50 expedition cruise vessels that are organized by the association – AECO represent the great majority of these operations in the Arctic.

Website: www.aeco.no.

The Icelandic Coast Guard

The Icelandic Coast Guard (ICG) is a civilian law enforcement agency that is responsible for search and rescue, maritime safety and security surveillance, and law enforcement in the seas surrounding Iceland.

Website: <http://www.lhg.is/english/>

Joint Rescue Coordination Centre North-Norway

Norwegian rescue services are carried out through cooperation between government agencies, voluntary organizations and private companies who have resources appropriate for rescue services. The Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) North-Norway has the overall operational responsibility during search and rescue operations in its area of responsibility, which stretches from 65°N to the North Pole. JRCC North-Norway is located in Bodø.

Website: <https://www.hovedredningssentralen.no/english/>