

ARCTIC COAST GUARD FORUM (ACGF)



Arctic Coast Guard Forum (hereinafter ACGF) is non-binding, informal and operationally driven forum for coast guards of the eight Arctic countries. The ACGF was established in year 2015 to foster a safe and secure environment in the Arctic region, promote cooperation between the states and public authorities, and conserve the environment in challenging conditions. The aim of the forum is "Safer and secure and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic". The Finnish Border Guard holds the chairmanship of the forum for years 2017 - 2019.

The Arctic region as an operational environment is characterized as risky and highly complex due to remoteness, long physical distances to civilization, low temperatures, uncertainty with ice and weather, icing, lack of infrastructure and resources, limited communication network and vulnerable nature. The increasing maritime operations in the Arctic call for more competence and capabilities both from the industry and governments regarding safety and preparedness. Considering the growing demand for international dialogue on maritime safety and preparedness, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) aims to exchange best practices and enhance multilateral cooperation on maritime safety in the Arctic region.



The ACGF has determined 10 strategic goals which support operative actions in the Arctic maritime areas. Strategic goals are focusing on strengthening cooperation and coordination in Arctic maritime domain, as well as collaborating with stakeholders such as Arctic shipping companies and other working groups in matters concerning Arctic maritime safety.

The Arctic Coast Guard Forum promotes high standards for operations and sustainable activities

in the Arctic region by creating recommendations for best practices and disseminates them to all relevant stakeholders. The forum also facilitates information of technological solutions to all participants and stakeholders throughout the Arctic maritime domain.

Even though the maritime areas of the Arctic countries are very different from each other and differ according to each country's search and rescue region (SRR), the forum has identified common challenges for maritime and aeronautical search and rescue (SAR) in the Arctic. Long distances, limited resource presence, the capacity to host patients, achieving situational awareness, lack of infrastructure, and unsuitable evacuation and survival equipment have been recognized as issues challenging the emergency preparedness system in the Arctic.



In addition there is a need to develop advanced information sharing between the emergency authorities on resources, technology, infrastructure developments, exercises and incidents, AIS data and other relevant information as well as establishing annual joint training courses and workshops. The information sharing between the industry and coast guards such as sailing plans, emergency plans and vessel information as well as establishing connections to industry groups, AECO/CLIA, voluntary organizations, healthcare authorities, Embassies and other stakeholders has also been found very important.

The ACGF has decided to arrange the first LIVEX in September 2017 in the Denmark Strait area between Iceland and Greenland. During the exercise common operational guidelines for ACGF participants will be tested. In the future a TTX and/or LIVEX every year has been planned to be arranged in order to enhance cooperation between the Arctic coast guards.