

# Search and Rescue operations

This chapter contains the following topics:

[Summary](#)

[Abbreviations and definitions](#)

[Operational framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region](#)

[Operational roles and responsibilities](#)

[General procedures for land and marine operations](#)

[Support services](#)

[Volunteers](#)

[Communications](#)

[Communications procedures](#)

[Land/marine transport](#)

[Air transport](#)

[Emergency Ambulance Services \(EAS\)](#)

[Equipment](#)

[Rations](#)

[Administration](#)

[Training](#)

[Expenses](#)

[Debriefing](#)

[Reports and forms](#)

[Annex one - Search and Rescue loss of wages claim form \(NFB1\)](#)

[Annex two - Search and Rescue expenses claim form \(NFB2\)](#)

[Annex three - Sample Exercise Directive](#)

[Annex four - Transfer of SAR co-ordination responsibility RCCNZ \(Category II\) to NZ Police \(Category I\)](#)

[Annex five - Transfer of SAR co-ordination responsibility NZ Police \(Category I\) to RCCNZ \(Category II\)](#)

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Summary**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides the information, policy and procedures necessary for Police to efficiently carry out their duties during a Search and Rescue operation (SAROP).

It should be read together with all relevant [Police Instructions](#).

It also contains guidelines for interaction with Government departments and volunteer organisations involved in the operation.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### Abbreviations and definitions

#### Table

This table shows abbreviations and definitions relevant to SAR.

<b>Term/abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation/definition</b>
<b>AREC</b>	<a href="#">Amateur Radio Emergency Communications.</a>
<b>CAA</b>	<a href="#">Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand.</a>
<b>Cave rescue controller</b>	An expert in cave SAR skills appointed to take charge of the rescue at the scene.
<b>CIMS</b>	Coordinated Incident Management System. The model of command and control used in SAROPs. CIMS provides a structured approach for managing emergency and SAR incidents. See the Search and Rescue Incident Management Guidelines: <a href="#">LandSAR CIMS for SAR.</a>
<b>Coordinating Authority</b>	The Coordinating Authority is the agency or body responsible for the overall conduct of the Search and Rescue Operation. The Coordinating Authority will lead and manage the operation. Police and the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand are the recognised Coordinating Authorities in New Zealand.
<b>Operations Manager (OPSM)</b>	The Operations Manager activates and supervises operational organisational elements as needed or in accordance with the IAP and then directs its execution. See <a href="#">LandSAR CIMS for SAR.</a> While the Incident Management Team (IMT) includes an operations manager, the higher level coordinating unit does not - this acts in support of rather than directs IMT.
<b>Incident Control Point (ICP)</b>	The location where the IC and, where established, the Incident Management Team provide overall direction of response activities in an emergency situation. See <a href="#">LandSAR CIMS for SAR.</a>
<b>Incident Controller (IC)</b>	The IC is responsible for the overall management of the incident. See <a href="#">LandSAR CIMS for SAR.</a>
<b>Incident Management Team (IMT)</b>	The IMT is established under the CIMS model. See <a href="#">LandSAR CIMS for SAR.</a>
<b>IAMSAR</b>	International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue. A SAR manual jointly produced by the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the International Maritime Organisation.
<b>IMTEX</b>	Incident Management Team Exercise - usually tabletop.
<b>Land SAR NZ</b>	<a href="#">New Zealand Land Search and Rescue Inc.</a>
<b>Logistics manager (LOGM)</b>	Responsible for providing facilities, services and materials in support of management of an incident. Member of the IMT. See <a href="#">LandSAR CIMS for SAR.</a>
<b>Mass Rescue Operation ((MRO)</b>	A SAROP that involves the need for immediate assistance to large numbers of persons in distress.
<b>National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC)</b>	Based in the basement of the 'Beehive' at Parliament.
<b>On Scene Coordinator (OSC)</b>	A person, appointed by the IC during a SAROP to take charge at the scene. For marine operations usually the skipper of one of the rescue vessels. In a Category II search the OSC is a resource to the RCCNZ and will be SAR trained.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

<b>Planning/Intelligence Manager (PIM)</b>	The Planning/Intelligence Manager collects, evaluates, processes, and disseminates information for use at the incident. See <a href="#">LandSAR CIMS for SAR</a> .
<b>Police Liaison Officer (PLO)</b>	The appointed Police employee to liaise between an ICP (such as the RCCNZ) and Police staff.
<b>Police National Coordination Centre (PNCC)</b>	The PNCC is located in Operations Group at PNHQ. When activated it supports operations nationally.
<b>Police SAR Squad</b>	A group of Police employees in each district trained and competent to command, control and support a SAROP including being deployed into remote and difficult terrain and in marine and water based environments, and includes Police Maritime Units. Police SAR Squad members are trained in <a href="#">Disaster Victim Identification</a> .
<b>SAR Mission Coordinator/SAR Officer</b>	An officer of the RCCNZ trained to coordinate SAR incidents. Reporting an incident to them fulfils the obligation under the Maritime Transport Act 1994 to report maritime incidents/accidents to Maritime New Zealand.
<b>Subject Matter Expert (SME)</b>	Experts in SAR and other areas. Police may call on advice from SME. SME must be consulted early in a SAROP (if relevant).
<b>RCCNZ</b>	The Rescue Co-ordination Centre New Zealand, RCCNZ is part of Maritime New Zealand and is responsible for co-ordinating Category II operations.
<b>Relay station</b>	A base established to relay communications.
<b>Rescue Coordinator</b>	The person appointed by the OPSM to take charge of a rescue at the scene.
<b>RNZPC</b>	Royal New Zealand Police College. The Police training establishment centrally sited in Porirua City has teaching sites throughout New Zealand.
<b>Staging area</b>	Locations where resources are gathered before being dispatched to either a 'Safe Forward Point' or an incident area.
<b>SAR</b>	Search and Rescue.
<b>SAREX</b>	A SAR training exercise. A planned training event often involving several response agencies.
<b>SAROP</b>	A search and rescue operation (SAROP) is an operation undertaken by a Coordinating Authority to locate and retrieve persons missing or in distress. The intention of the operation is to save lives, prevent or minimise injuries and remove persons from situations of peril by locating the persons, providing for initial medical care or other needs and then delivering them to a place of safety. For Police, a SAROP may extend to the recovery of deceased persons including from difficult terrain and/or conditions.
<b>Search team</b>	A portion of a search party (usually four persons) allocated a specific task within the overall search plan. There may be any number of search teams in the search party.

### **Operational Framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region**

See ['Operational framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region'](#).

Please refer to the NZSAR [website](#). This site includes considerable information about SAR in New Zealand, including policy agreed between SAR partners, operational documents and templates and a resource database of SAR assets.

#### **New Zealand Police Search and Rescue Organisation**

The organisation of SAR within Police comprises Police at national, district and area levels. Within each Police district, the District Commander appoints a District SAR Manager (senior sergeant, inspector or above) to administer and supervise SAR.

In the event of a SAROP, a currently qualified Police employee is the IC. As a SAROP progresses a trained SAR squad member should be appointed IC. The IC leads an Incident Management Team to manage the SAROP and must have completed the [defined course of training](#) for this role.

See also Comms Centre ['Master Standard Operating Procedures'](#).

#### **National Coordinator: SAR**

The National Coordinator: SAR is part of Operations Group at PNHQ, and performs a liaison function for District Commanders at a national level with government and non government agencies involved in search and rescue.

The National Coordinator: SAR provides a resource and advisory service for Police districts and, on request, must provide an input into training for search and rescue and [disaster victim identification](#) procedures.

#### **The Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ)**

Maritime New Zealand maintains and operates the RCCNZ which is the co-ordinating authority for Category II SAROPs, and for managing beacon registrations and the response to distress beacon activations.

The IC must consider advising the RCCNZ of any coastal marine SAR operation. RCCNZ are available for advice in Category I operations. It must be specified what advice is sought (e.g. Search Area Determination).

When a Category II SAROP is initiated and is of such scale that the PNCC or National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC) is activated, a Police Liaison Officer may be assigned to RCCNZ. Alternatively RCCNZ may request a Police Liaison Officer for a Category II incident. The request is made direct to PNHQ (Operations Group).

The Police Liaison Officer when responding to a request to assist at the RCCNZ provides the link between RCCNZ and the PNCC or NCMC, and:

- obtains information on the vessel, aircraft and its passengers or missing party as requested by the RCCNZ SAR Mission Coordinator
- working with the Media Team obtains information from the public through media appeals
- liaises with the Police Communications Centre and District Commanders
- liaises with the Police Coordinator and the On Scene Coordinator at the RCCNZ about the organisation of ground parties
- keeps next of kin advised
- keeps Police and the RCCNZ informed of each other's actions

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

- provides regular SITREPS to the National Manager: Operations PNHQ and to District Commanders involved, and
- attends and provides Police input to meeting reviews that are considering suspension or termination of the search.

When an operation reaches the stage where only Police-controlled tasks remain and the RCCNZ is no longer required, the Police representative continues to liaise with the district involved and the RCCNZ SAR Mission Coordinator.

### **RCCNZ SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC/Incident controller)**

The RCCNZ SMC:

- in a Category II operation, provides communications and directs how they should be used
- advises the Director CAA/ Maritime NZ when to suspend/terminate a Category II operation (they should consult Police on the decision taking into account Police action yet to be taken)
- retains overall responsibility until the missing party is found, the SAROP is suspended or it has been determined coordination will be transferred to Police (e.g. for a body recovery)
- is available 24/7 to advise Police on request of marine SAR planning methods, and provide specialist marine advice.

### **District Commander's responsibilities**

The District Commander:

- must appoint a suitable Police employee as District SAR Coordinator to be responsible for the administration and coordination of SAR activities within their district
- maintain the capability to command, control and support SAROPs by having Police employees [trained in SAR and CIMS](#)
- maintain a pool of Police employees (Police SAR squad) competent and available to be deployed into remote and difficult terrain and water based and marine environments, including for the purposes of [Disaster Victim Identification](#)
- ensures that SAR responsibilities are included in the performance management process – see [Specialist squad policy](#)
- must initiate and support liaison with SAR resources and partners (eg. LandSAR and Coastguard) (see '[SAR Liaison](#)' in this chapter)
- should ensure the IMT seeks advice from relevant SME early in a SAROP (if required)
- where a volunteer is killed or injured during a SAR operation or training, must, as well as meet organisational and Health and Safety requirements, report the facts to the National Manager: Operations as soon as practicable
- supports training and development of SAR resources and assets
- must support the activities of Alpine Cliff Rescue teams by providing transport for operations and regular training exercises involving no more than 10 days per year
- must ensure that Police SAR squad members undergo regular training exercises totalling 12 days duration in each year per member. At least one training day must be utilised for training in [Disaster Victim Identification](#) procedures. Five of the training days of each squad member must be devoted to joint volunteer training initiatives
- by 30 June each year, must forward a copy of the SAR squad proposed training programme for the forthcoming financial year to the Coordinator: SAR, including:
  - dates of the proposed training
  - dates for any district land and marine SAREX
  - areas where the training is to be held
  - details of radio equipment and frequencies to be used
  - where air support is required from RNZAF, details of the support required (in the form of [Annex 3](#)) must be forwarded with the Exercise Directive form
  - a copy of the application to NZSAR for funding support

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

- by October each year provide the National SAR Coordinator training needs that might be met through NZSAR
- where SAR squads are established, must maintain a store and appoint suitable members to be in charge
- encourages SAR members to attend training exercises held in adjoining districts and SAR related courses arranged by other organisations. Such attendance must be a district expense
- must provide a report to the National Coordinator: SAR, setting out for that financial year just finishing:
  - the names of members of district Police SAR squads
  - any matter or special aspect of SAR which in the opinion of the District Commander should be reported upon, whether for training purposes or for dissemination to other districts
  - training completed by the SAR squad
- ensures that the district has an up-to-date [SAR DMP and SAR response plan](#) which:
  - must have sufficient trained staff available for SAR response covering after hours call outs and operational responses
  - must include contingency planning if local Police SAR is unable to respond
  - may include utilising neighbouring SAR or other Police
- must conduct at least one Police controlled Category I SAR exercise annually (SAREX); both land and marine (districts with a large geographical spread or unique or individual areas of risk should hold more than one SAREX). See [Training](#) in this chapter. NZSAR are able to support SAR training.
- ensures that in June of each year, the District SAR Coordinator arranges meetings with representatives of organisations likely to be called upon to assist in Category I operations, for the purpose of reviewing district procedures
- assign SAR staff, as subject matter experts, to direct or facilitate SAR courses managed by the RNZPC.

See also: '[Police exercises](#)' in the Police Manual.

In actual SAR operations, the District Commander:

- must ensure a suitable on-call response is maintained that enables a trained IC to be appointed to manage SAROPs – see [SAR Training Pathway](#)
- must ensure that members of SAR squads are called upon when calls for SAR assistance are received
- must consider whether due to special circumstances, the subject of a SAR operation should be called upon to meet all or part of the expenses involved. If so, the matter should be reported to the National Manager: Operations.

### **Terminating/suspending a SAROP**

When all avenues of SAR investigation and search have been exhausted and the missing person has not been found, the IC, having consulted with the IMT and specialist advisors (as to factors such as person profile, likely behaviours, survivability, risk to searchers) may recommend terminating or suspending a search.

All aspects of the SAR investigation and operation must be documented and collated by the IC. This must be peer-reviewed by a Police SAR Coordinator not involved in the SAROP (who may establish an IMT to assist in this review, and may include external expert advice, such as the RCCNZ).

The Coroner must be consulted prior to termination/suspension where it is thought a person is deceased.

See '[Family liaison](#)' in this chapter.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

The recommendation to terminate or suspend a search must be referred to the District Commander or delegated Operations Manager (at the level of Inspector or above) for a decision.

Factors to be addressed:

- distress position
- drift/movement factors
- intelligence
- search decisions
- assumptions
- scenarios
- search areas/plans
- coverage of search areas
- likelihood the missing party would be found in area (probability of detection for marine)
- time searched (air/marine/ground teams)
- survivability assessment (elapsed time, environmental factors including weather, physical condition of potential survivors, survival times).

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### Operational roles and responsibilities

#### Initial reports to Communications Centre and local Police

Many missing person's cases will first be reported to a Communications Centre and others to local Police. This table details the responsibilities in each case.

If the case is first reported to:	then...
a Communications Centre,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the Communications Centre must take initial command and control of the situation in accordance with the provisions of Master Standard Operating Procedures (<a href="#">MSOPs</a>) and District Mobilisation Plans (<a href="#">DMPs</a>) until local command and control is established, and</li><li>• the Communications Centre's supervising team leader must immediately inform senior district field supervisors of the situation and the area's on call SAR IC as per DMPs, and</li><li>• consider the urgent deployment of a SAR asset (see the '<a href="#">Police Air Operation</a>' chapter which allows Comms to arrange this), and</li><li>• if advised of a Category II SAROP by RCCNZ, advise the on call SAR member in the relevant District.</li></ul>
local Police (either on patrol or at a Police station),	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the report taker must immediately notify the senior district field supervisor of the situation, the area's on call SAR IC as per DMPs and their Communications Centre.</li></ul>

See also: [Information to be requested when receiving the call](#)

#### Roles and responsibilities (CIMS)

See [LandSAR CIMS for SAR](#).

SAROPS are supported by a toolkit of standard forms and worksheets. See '[NZSAR](#)' website.

#### Health and safety

Safe operations are essential. Good practice in terms of outdoor safety management must be applied in operations coordinated by Police.

Each SAR partner has a Health and Safety Policy developed in agreement with NZSAR.

The outdoor sector has developed [guidelines for safe practice](#).

The Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) [guidelines](#) on the Ministry of Education website outline current good practice in terms of risk management in the outdoors and should be applied as applicable, and adapted if necessary.

#### Family liaison

A SAROP is a significant event for family and kin. The Incident Controller must ensure the next of kin are regularly informed and updated on the operation's progress. Police have employees who are trained to assist with family liaison. Follow the general provisions for family liaison outlined in '[Part 2 Role of the OC Investigations in homicide](#)

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

[and serious crime investigations](#)' and '[Part 6 Family liaison in homicide and serious crime investigations](#)' of the 'Homicide and serious crime investigations' chapter of the Police Manual.

Where the incident involves a school or other training provider close liaison with the school or training provider is essential. See [MoE EOTC Incident Protocol](#).

It might also be useful to provide opportunity for any specialist (e.g. ACR, medical advisor) to brief next of kin.

### **Rescue Coordinator**

The Rescue Coordinator reports to the Operations Manager (OPSM) and:

- obtains briefing from the OPSM on the incident and the specific team task
- ensures the safety and welfare of team members
- briefs the team on the assigned task to ensure that hazards are identified, understood and standards maintained
- obtains the necessary equipment and supplies as required for the task
- assesses the person's condition, obtains medical advice and decides the best means of evacuation
- appoints a suitable person to look after the person
- organises and supervises the evacuation
- organises relief and refreshment stops for the rescue party
- provides regular SITREPS to the OPSM
- completes assigned task to the standard required
- keeps the OPSM informed of the status and progress on the assigned task team welfare
- considers and recommend to the OPSM any changes to tactics as conditions and new information comes to hand
- accounts for all equipment drawn by the team
- records quality of effort on returning to the ICP
- debriefs the team
- maintains team log.

### **Recovery of a deceased person**

A SAROP may extend to the recovery of a deceased person. See '[Sudden death](#)' chapter.

### **General procedures for land and marine operations**

The procedures for land and marine searches can be found in the [District Mobilisation Plans \(DMP\)](#), [Master Standard Operating Procedures \(MSOP\)](#) and District SAR response plans.

The procedures for land searches can be found in the '[LandSAR Field Guide](#)' which includes:

- roles
- food and equipment
- communications
- helicopters
- navigation
- searching and search techniques
- rescue
- specialist teams (ACR, avalanche, cave, swiftwater and dog teams).

See: '[Initial response guidelines](#)' in this chapter.

The procedures for marine searches can be found in the '[Marine SAR Management Manual](#)'.

### **Searches for missing aircraft**

Advise the RCCNZ of any missing aircraft as they are Category II searches.

**Note:** When the RCCNZ is coordinating the SAROP, Police must not use aircraft without advising the SMC at the RCCNZ.

### **Flare sightings**

See '[Search and Rescue: Flare Sightings](#)'.

### **MayDay calls**

See '[Search and Rescue: Marine Operations](#)'.

### **Marine towing**

Police are responsible for rescuing people, not vessels. However, on occasions it is more efficient to tow the vessels and their occupants to safety.

The skipper of the rescue vessel must ascertain the:

- possible danger to persons on board the distressed vessel
- the prevailing and projected weather and sea conditions, and pass this information on to the IC.

The IC must decide, in consultation with the rescue vessel skipper, whether to:

- transfer the people from the distressed vessel, or
- tow the vessel to the nearest point at which this can safely be done.

**Note:** Recovering the vessel from this point is the owner's responsibility, and should be done at the owner's expense.

Where it is clear at the outset that only a tow is required, authorised commercial operators should be used. If recommending a tow operator Police must satisfy themselves that the vessel and operator complies with the maritime rules and [Maritime Transport Act 1994](#). If there are no commercial operators available, Police may facilitate a tow if those in charge of the vessel have asked them to, and have agreed to pay the charges. However, both the vessel and operator must be evidently capable of

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

undertaking the task safely and Police should continue to monitor the incident until it is safely concluded. The same conditions apply if Police are asked to continue towing a vessel past the point at which people can be safely transferred.

### **Evacuation of sick or injured people at sea**

A medical evacuation of people from vessels at sea:

- may, or may not be a SAROP
- covers both illness and accidents
- the deployment of an ambulance asset must be authorised by an Ambulance Communications Centre if Ministry of Health or ACC are to cover the cost.

The RCCNZ also handles notified cases within New Zealand's SAR Region and may:

- send medical advice
- obtain approval from the ship's agents for the proposed course of action
- arrange for the vessel to sail to the nearest port
- if necessary, arrange for a helicopter to collect the person as soon as the vessel is within range
- send the account to the ship's agents.

### **Dealing with injury or illness**

As a principle, when confronted with injury or illness Ambulance personnel are the experts and are able to give advice and/or provide transport.

### **Support services**

#### **Alpine and Cliff Rescue teams**

Alpine Cliff Rescue (ACR) teams are a specialist resource within the LandSAR organisation. Their competencies include rescue in steep and alpine terrain.

ACR teams are established at specified sites (Taranaki, Mt Ruapehu, West Coast South Island, Mt Cook, Christchurch, Queenstown, Wanaka). They are available to be deployed nationally.

Police make a financial contribution to ACR teams. District Commanders in Districts where there ACR teams are established support ACR teams, including to meet their training needs. A Liaison Officer is appointed to each ACR team (See [District Commander responsibilities](#) and [Police Liaison](#)).

District Commanders may call for assistance from the nearest ACR Team.

All requests should be directed to the District SAR Coordinator in the district where the team is located and be accompanied by full details of the terrain. The National Coordinator: SAR, PNHQ must be advised if the team is to be deployed to another district.

Districts must identify and record other high angle rescue assets in their area.

#### **Amateur Radio Emergency Communications**

Police together with Maritime New Zealand (Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand) and the Secretary for Transport have a service level agreement with AREC which sets out agreed levels of service. See '[SAR Liaison](#)' in this chapter.

#### **Cave rescue personnel**

Particulars of personnel and equipment for cave rescues must be listed as SAR assets. See '[SAR Liaison](#)' in this chapter.

#### **Civilian aircraft operators**

Each district's SAR plan must contain a list of available local civilian aircraft, including a schedule of permanently based helicopters with experienced pilots, and details of each machine's radio and specialised equipment.

#### **Department of Conservation and Local Authorities**

Many DOC and Local Authority staff, especially those employed at field locations, have SAR skills or local knowledge. They are usually available to assist Police with SAR incidents within their respective conservancies. See '[SAR Liaison](#)' in this chapter.

#### **Emergency Ambulance Service**

See '[Air Transport](#)' and [Emergency Ambulance Services](#) in this chapter.

#### **Search and rescue dogs**

Consider using Police dogs, LandSAR NZ search dogs or Land SAR alpine search dogs (including avalanche dogs) in appropriate circumstances. See '[SAR Liaison](#)' in this chapter.

Only trained and certified volunteer search dogs must be used on a SAR operation.

**Note:** A trained and certified volunteer dog is one that meets the standards for search dogs as certified by LandSAR NZ. LandSAR NZ maintain a list of qualified dogs and handlers.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

Untrained SAR dogs undergoing training as per the LandSAR NZ dog standards may be permitted to attend a SAREX.

This instruction does not preclude the use of Police dogs for SAR operations. See: '[New Zealand Police dogs](#)' chapters in the Police Manual.

### **Global Maritime Distress and Safety System**

The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System operates from the Maritime Operations Centre situated at Kordia's offices in Avalon Television Studios in Lower Hutt. Operators monitor marine VHF and HF calling and distress channels on a 24-hour basis by receiving and re-directing calls for assistance to respective SAR agencies. For 'all ships' broadcasts during marine SAROPs, the service can be contacted on:

- (Tel) 04 619 0628 or 04 619 0642 (restricted to Police, coastguards and helicopter operators), or
- (Tel) 04 619 0623 (limited confidentiality), or
- (Fax) 04 619 0844 (general use).

Other local agencies such as the Royal New Zealand Coastguard Federation affiliates, Harbour Radio and Fisherman's Radio may also be able to assist with all ships broadcasts. Their contact numbers should be in your local marine SAR plan. See '[SAR Liaison](#)' in this chapter.

### **Land Information New Zealand**

[Land Information New Zealand](#) maintains access to maps and charts and related services during emergencies. It has branches in all districts.

### **New Zealand Defence Force**

The three services of the New Zealand Defence Force (Royal New Zealand Navy, New Zealand Army and Royal New Zealand Air Force) may supply aircraft, vessels, transport, messing, tentage, personnel and the like. Usually, no charge is made, but this needs to be clarified before the service is used.

Requests should be made through Operations Group at PNHQ. If assets are required more urgently the request should be made through Strategic Commitments, NZDF HQ, Wellington. If this unit cannot be contacted, requests are made direct to:

Joint Forces Watchkeeper  
PH: 04 529 6333

#### **Note:**

- This number is staffed 24 hours a day.
- For requests for RNZAF aircraft, see '[Air Transport](#)'.

### **New Zealand Search and Rescue**

NZSAR supply Police with a variety of non operational support services (forms, guidelines, SAREX). NZSAR also coordinate service level agreements with SAR partners.

### **LandSAR NZ**

New Zealand Land Search and Rescue Inc is established under the [Incorporated Societies Act 1908](#).

Police and LandSAR NZ have a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) which sets out the roles and responsibilities of both parties.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

Police together with Maritime New Zealand (Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand) and the Secretary for Transport have a service level agreement with NZLSAR which sets out agreed levels of service. See [‘SAR Liaison’](#) in this chapter.

Also see [‘Volunteers’](#).

### **New Zealand Meteorological Service**

The New Zealand Meteorological Service provides Police with regular special weather bulletins and specific weather warnings.

### **Royal NZ Coastguard Federation Inc (Coastguard NZ)**

The RNZCGF is established under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908.

Police and the RNZCGF have a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) which sets out the roles and responsibilities of both parties.

Police together with Maritime New Zealand (Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand) and the Secretary for Transport have a service level agreement with RNZCGF which sets out agreed levels of service. See [‘SAR Liaison’](#) in this chapter.

Commercial fishermen are also a useful resource for SAR incidents.

### **Search and Rescue Air services**

Search and Rescue air assets deployed and tasked by Police and/or RCCNZ for the purposes of search and rescue. These differ from an asset tasked by another agency, such as Ambulance.

### **Surf Life Saving New Zealand**

Surf Life Saving New Zealand (SLSNZ) is a National Association with the purpose of “preventing drowning and injury in New Zealand”.

Police together with Maritime New Zealand (Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand) and the Secretary for Transport have a service level agreement with SLSNZ which sets out agreed levels of service. See [‘SAR Liaison’](#) in this chapter.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are valued partners and make considerable contribution to SAR in New Zealand. They enable Police and RCCNZ to fulfil their responsibilities as SAR coordinating authorities.

SAR volunteers are usually drawn from the sector to which they are offering their service (outdoor recreation sector, marine recreation sector etc).

Volunteers are approved and may be vetted by Police (see [vetting services](#) in the Police Manual).

Volunteers are trained and managed by the organisation to which they belong. Untrained people should not be included in search teams unless absolutely necessary. If used, they must be managed and closely supervised by trained SAR operators.

### **Recognition of volunteers**

Volunteers provide a valuable service to Police and their service should be acknowledged. This may include a social event or certificate of appreciation. Police should consider nominating qualifying SAR volunteers for a NZSAR award.

### **SAROP -volunteer rations and accommodation**

Whenever possible, volunteers should supply their own rations for the initial operational period. However, beyond this, rations packets or meals for volunteers must be provided by Police. Reimbursement of actual and reasonable cost should be considered.

District Commanders may consider the provision of refreshments to volunteers at Police expense on appropriate occasions, such as debriefs, or at the end of a protracted search. Care must be taken with the provision of alcohol particularly when personnel are required to drive a vehicle following an operation or other SAR activity.

Claims for rations supplied personally may be made in accordance with the General Expense Claims policy, which says that reasonable costs must be met by Police for a Category I operation.

These claims must not exceed the meal allowance provided by '[Travelling and Relieving Expenses](#)', calculated per employee per day.

SAR teams usually provide for their own accommodation in the field. Where teams are deployed for an extended operation, or where travel to or from an area of operation places volunteers at risk, accommodation must be provided at Police expense so that they may travel refreshed. This is a Health and Safety requirement.

### **SAREX expenses - Provisions for volunteers**

For the initial stages of a SAREX, volunteers should bring their own food and equipment. For later stages, Police should supply all meals. Financial provision should be made for this in the exercise directive.

Volunteers taking part in a SAREX are not, therefore, entitled to claim for rations or loss of wages.

Claims for property loss or damage, however, may be submitted on the [Expenses Claim Form](#) (NFB2) form.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Compensation for volunteers**

Claims for out-of-pocket expenses (including meals) must be made on [NFB2](#).

Claims for loss of, or damage to, personal property that are not covered by the volunteer's own insurance company (to which they should claim first) or ACC must be made on [NFB2](#). Follow these steps when dealing with claims.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Do not acknowledge liability, either verbally or in writing.
2	Where practicable, retain damaged articles for inspection.
3	Forward all claims to the appropriate <a href="#">Delegated Financial Authority</a> with a report of the circumstances relating to the loss or damage.
4	Follow the policy on ex gratia payments; that is, payments that Police may settle for the sake of equity, even though they are not legally obliged to.

When volunteers are called upon to assist in an operation, and, with the approval of Police use their own vehicle they may be paid mileage allowance at the rate as prescribed in the Police Collective Agreement for employees holding the Office of Constable [4.9.2](#). Claims for payment of motor vehicle allowance must be in the form set out in District Forms Folder (NFB2). Reasonable car pooling is expected.

The use of vessels is to be compensated at an agreed rate.

### **Loss of wages by volunteers**

Preference must be given to deploying volunteers whose employers grant paid leave for SAR purposes. Volunteers are to indicate prior to agreeing to deployment that they will claim for loss of wages (that is, obtain prior approval from Police). If a volunteer indicates that they will be seeking loss of wages, and it is necessary to deploy them, Police will cover wages for Category I operations.

A claim for a loss of wages must be submitted as an invoice to Police supported by [NFB1](#).

**Note:** Claims must be made by invoice supported by the [Loss of Wages Claim Form](#) (NFB1), which includes the employer's certificate. An IR12 tax certificate is not required.

### **Payment for the first week's income**

ACC covers claims for death or injury during an operation, but does not pay the first week's income. If the employer refuses to pay it, Police will meet the cost in accordance with the policy for loss of wages by volunteers. Claims under this section must be made on [NFB1](#).

### **Death of or injury to volunteers (including psychological trauma)**

The Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Act 1992 covers volunteers killed or injured while travelling to, from or participating in a SAR operation or exercise.

Where a volunteer is killed or seriously injured during a SAR operation or training, the District Commander must, as well as meeting any other requirement, investigate and report the facts to the National Manager: Operations as soon as practicable.

Claims for injury or death for volunteers involved in an accident in the course of a SAR operation or exercise must be made direct to the Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Corporation (ACC).

Consideration should be given to applying the [trauma policy](#) to volunteers in SAROPs.

### **Communications**

#### **Radios**

Radios used for Land SAR are listed in the [LandSAR Field Guide](#).

VHF FM marine handheld radios (issued to selected stations only). These radios are used for marine emergencies and searches, including exercises. For more information on their use, see '[VHF marine handheld radios](#)'.

#### **Sources for radio equipment**

SAR radio equipment is generally stored at Police stations or:

- LandSAR
- AREC
- Land Information New Zealand
- Department of Conservation
- New Zealand Defence Force
- Community organisations (these usually have their own radios and radio frequencies).

#### **VHF marine handheld radios**

Marine radio operators must have a current Marine Restricted Operator's Certificate. In genuine emergencies this legal requirement may be waived and the radios operated by non-certified Police personnel.

LandSAR VUH hand held radios include marine channels.

The radios must be stored in a secure area (not necessarily Police premises) and accounted for when issued and returned. They may be issued by the:

- duty senior sergeant or O/C Station
- SAR squad sergeant/senior sergeant.

**Note:** The district must pay the annual licence fee.

#### **Custody and maintenance of radio equipment**

Police instructions relating to the care, maintenance and security of [digital radios](#) also applies to SAR radios.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Communications procedures**

In a Category I operation, the Police IC and the IMT are responsible for communications.

Advice should be taken from an AREC member. See '[Amateur Radio Emergency Communications](#)'.

### **Call signs**

The Police IC in consultation with the Operations Manager determines the radio call signs for a land operation. Particularly in the case of the base (ICP), preference should always be given to a name that is simple to pronounce and clearly recognisable on a national basis.

The call sign of a military aircraft is the type of aircraft, followed by the last two numerals of the aircraft's number; for example, "Orion 14".

The call sign of a civilian aircraft is the type of aircraft, followed by the last three letters of the aircraft's registration; for example, "Cessna BBM". It may also be the officially designated call sign for that aircraft.

See also '[Radio and Communication Centre Protocols](#)' in the Police Manual.

### **Communicating with boats**

Channel 16 is the internationally recognised distress frequency. The IC will determine the appropriate channel for any SAROP.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Land/marine transport**

#### **Transport for emergency and SAR operations and to meet abnormal circumstances**

As far as practicable, transport for Police employees in connection with emergency and SAR operations must be provided on the same basis as for other Police duties. The District Commander may hire such transport as is necessary for emergency and SAR operations and for duties requiring transport not otherwise available.

The charter of aircraft is subject to [‘Air transport’](#).

When privately owned transport is hired for on scene operational requirements, e.g., four wheel drive vehicle and driver, launch and crew, an inclusive charge reflecting an element of depreciation, insurance, fuel costs, etc., should be agreed upon prior to deployment.

Vehicles and craft (not being dedicated marine rescue craft) not having appropriate insurance cover may be hired only in cases of extreme emergency when it is not possible to obtain adequately insured transport in the time available.

Where the power craft to be hired for an operation which is one which is not used exclusively for pleasure, the Police employee responsible must, except in the case of an emergency, ensure the craft has a current certificate of survey as required by the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

Vessels that are not commercial vessels may be used as a resource of opportunity, but cannot be pre planned unless there is no commercial alternative.

Police employees in charge of stations in coastal and lake areas must maintain lists of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons owning power craft suitable for SAR operations, and who are agreeable to make their craft available if required. Essential details of the craft, including extent of insurance cover, must be included in the lists.

Persons outside the Police organisation who are called upon to assist in a search or rescue operation should, as far as practicable, be conveyed to and from the area of operation in transport provided by Police.

When volunteers are called upon to assist in an operation, and, with the approval of Police use their own vehicle they may be paid mileage allowance at the rate as prescribed in the Police Collective Agreement for employees holding the Office of Constable [4.9.2](#). Claims for payment of motor vehicle allowance must be in the form set out in District Forms Folder (NFB2). Reasonable car pooling is expected.

The use of vessels must be compensated at an agreed rate.

#### **Support from Defence Force**

Any request for urgent operational naval, airforce or army support must be made through the Joint Forces Watchkeeper Ph: 04 529 6333

**Note:** This number is accessible 24 hours a day.

All other requests such as training and planned operations must be made to the National Maritime Coordination Centre (NMCC) through the PNHQ SAR Coordinator.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Air transport**

#### **General principle**

Aircraft used should be preferred aircraft specified in the local SAR plans.

Also see: '[Police air operations](#)' chapter in the Police Manual.

#### **Air Travel - unscheduled flights**

The District Commander, or employees authorised by the District Commander in writing, may approve Police employees to travel and carry out emergency SAR operations work in aircraft engaged by Police or by the SAR organisation. Only the National Manager: Operations (under delegated authority of the Commissioner) can approve other official travel on unscheduled flights.

#### **Fixed wing aircraft**

Fixed wing aircraft should generally be used only for:

- limited specific search when the terrain permits
- supply or equipment drops
- carrying equipment or personnel to a strategic location
- aircraft deployed by Police require [certification](#).

#### **Helicopters**

Helicopters should generally be used only for:

- rescuing severely injured or dangerously ill people whose lives are in immediate danger and who cannot be rescued by other means
- rescuing people who are in a particularly remote or hazardous area, who cannot walk safely and whose rescue other than by helicopter would be uneconomic
- carrying personnel and equipment to strategic locations
- searching particularly small or confined areas where fixed wing aircraft could not operate safely
- aircraft deployed by Police require [certification](#).

#### **Briefing pilots**

When circumstances permit, the OPSM should brief pilots personally.

Pilots must be set specific tasks and briefed in a clear and methodical fashion so that they understand exactly what is required to be achieved. They should be asked if they and their machines are capable of carrying out the tasks. Tasking must include primary and secondary means of communicating with the IMT.

Operating limits should be set where practicable and relate to a time, area or task. Pilots must understand who they are responsible to and who will give instructions.

Where an operator declines a tasking, and another is requested to carry out the task, the pilot must be advised that the first operator declined and the reason.

#### **Civilian aircraft**

See '[Civilian aircraft operators](#)' and '[Police air operations](#)'.

District DMP and SAR response plans must specify who may deploy SAR assets and within what financial and/or time limits.

In any case; in a life threatening situation the Communications Centre has authority to commit resources for Category I SAROPs. Having done so, the district must be advised and the ongoing deployment is to come within standard financial approvals processes.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

If tasking more than one aircraft there is an issue of maintaining separation. The IC must consider the appointment of an Air Directing Officer (ADO) if more than one aircraft is deployed. Controlling aircraft is a specialised task and such personnel should be named in the district SAR plan.

Do **not** accept an offer of free air transport. There is considerable risk in accepting such offers.

### **RNZAF aircraft**

Requests from all districts for RNZAF aircraft must be made through Police Operations Group at PNHQ. If assets are required more urgently the request should be made through Strategic Commitments, NZDF HQ, Wellington. If this unit cannot be contacted, requests are made direct to:

Joint Forces Watchkeeper

PH: 04 529 6333

**Note:** This number is staffed 24 hours a day.

RNZAF helicopters are on standby at two hours' notice. They are best used for the deployment of a large number of search teams or for specialist winching. For a short task, or for the initial stages of a search, it is more economical to use readily available civilian helicopters.

RNZAF require completion of an indemnity form for each deployment.

The Police 'Eagle' helicopter is a national resource and may be considered for extended operations. The request should be channelled through district management.

### **Air observers**

A trained air observer is one who has completed a recognised Air Observers Course.

Trained air observers should be used in aircraft deployed for searching both for enhanced safety and enhanced search ability. Search personnel working in aircraft must have safety briefings prior to boarding.

### **Aircraft safety**

Chapter 6 of the [LandSAR Field Guide](#) provides instruction on safety around aircraft, including helicopters.

Police employees working with helicopters must be trained and have had refresher training at least annually. Untrained employees must be managed and supervised more closely.

Consideration should be given to requesting the RCCNZ to apply for a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) where it can be shown a safety/operational need to exclude other aircraft.

**Note:** For more details, see 'Airspace restriction over Police operations' in the '[Operation Headquarters](#)' chapter.

### **Emergency Ambulance Services (EAS)**

Emergency Ambulance Services (EAS) are part of the first line in the continuum of health care. They respond to medical emergencies and accidents, treat patients at the scene and, if necessary, transport them to hospital. EAS providers' primary role is to meet emergency pre-hospital care needs. EAS aims to make a positive impact on patient outcomes by providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place, delivered by the right person.<sup>1</sup>

EAS (road and air) are authorised and dispatched through the Ambulance Communications Centre. This ensures:

- calls are clinically triaged and the most appropriate resource (road or air) is dispatched based on patient need
- ACC or the Ministry can pay for the emergency ambulance mission.

### **Emergency Air Ambulance Service (EAAS)**

The Emergency Air Ambulance Service is used to transport severely injured or critically ill people whose lives are in immediate danger and who cannot be transported by other means. Early communication with the Ambulance Communications Centre is essential. They are able to provide advice before transporting any critically ill or injured person by air. If necessary, the Ambulance Communications Centre will dispatch medical assistance to the scene. See [LOA with RCCNZ and Ambulance](#).

**Note:** For more details, see '[Responsibility for aircraft costs](#)'.

**Note:**

- At times an air provider, who is also a certified contracted Emergency Air Ambulance Service provider, could be on site having just providing SAR services.
- Given the severity of patient need, a road ambulance rather than an air ambulance may be more appropriate to provide EAS.
- The Ambulance Communications Centre triages the request and makes this decision.
- This ensures that as more urgent calls come into the Ambulance Communications Centre, the helicopter is then available for more urgent missions.

### **Primary Retrieval missions**

Emergency Air Ambulance Service Primary Retrieval missions:

- are authorised and dispatched by the Ambulance Communications Centre
- have an advanced level paramedic, and/or doctor on board
- may pick-up specialised clinical staff on the way to the scene
- treat the patient at the scene and may provide transport to a place of definitive care if required.

**Note:** Mission conditions to be met:

- The person's location is known and the pick-up is from a safe environment where the patient can be treated and if possible stabilised prior to transporting the patient, if this is required.
- The person is not in a location that requires a 'rescue' in an unsafe environment such as on a glacier, in mountainous terrain or offshore. This is a SAR operation.

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<sup>1</sup> National Ambulance Sector Office website: <http://www.naso.govt.nz/emergency-ambulance-services-eas>

### **Equipment**

#### **SAR stores**

Where SAR squads are established, District Commanders must maintain a store and appoint suitable employees to be in charge. Each store holds items of Police SAR equipment and clothing not on personal issue, and may store SAR equipment that is not Police property. Standard contents should include but not necessarily be limited to:

- tents/tent flies
- stretchers
- ropes
- first aid equipment
- rescue packs
- emergency lighting
- communication equipment
- [DVI](#) equipment.

The employee in charge must maintain accurate records of all items, with their descriptions, dates of receipt, and the names of owners if the item is not Police owned. When items are issued or returned, the date and name of the borrower must be recorded.

#### **Equipment other than Police equipment**

Equipment should be drawn without charge from local sources whenever possible. If this is not practicable, items may be purchased locally as directed by Police IC. The Police IC is responsible to ensure that all equipment is recorded, whether it has been purchased or borrowed, and, if borrowed, the names of owners and of the borrowers. Borrowed equipment should be returned without delay.

District Commanders may allow non-Police equipment to be held at Police stations. This includes specialised rescue equipment for the ACR teams. All such equipment must be:

- clearly marked as to ownership
- properly stored in a secure dry place
- maintained in a clean and serviceable condition
- inspected regularly by the O/C SAR squad.

### **Rations**

#### **Police provisions**

Police employees on operations or exercises may claim expenses as provided by ['Travelling and Relieving Expenses'](#) in the appropriate Police Employment Agreement.

Purchased rations or supplies must not cost more than the meal allowance provided by ['Travelling and Relieving Expenses'](#). The allowance is calculated per employee per day.

**Note:** Receipts must be produced.

Ration packs may be purchased and held as reserve stock for operational use.

See ['Volunteers'](#) in this chapter.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### Administration

#### SAR Liaison

District Commanders must initiate and support relationships with the SAR sector and SAR partners including:

- liaison with all organisations assisting Police
- maintaining lists of people competent to help in operations
- planning and organising exercises in accordance with SAR exercises
- planning and arranging lectures, demonstrations and other SAR educational activities.

A Police Liaison Officer may be appointed to maintain liaison with specific SAR partners. This will usually be a Police SAR Squad member. The Police Liaison Officer may participate in training courses as provided in SAR squad training, and may organise or coordinate the logistics for this training.

<b>Land Search and Rescue Liaison</b>	Volunteers and others with interest, knowledge and skills allied to land search and rescue activities, from applicable SAR resource groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Government departments</li><li>• Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC)</li><li>• Land SAR NZ affiliated groups</li><li>• Tramping clubs</li><li>• Deerstalkers associations.</li></ul>
<b>Close to Shore Marine Search and Rescue Liaison</b>	Volunteers and others able to supply knowledge, expertise and equipment to carry out marine rescues, from applicable SAR resource groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Government departments</li><li>• Port companies (Harbour Boards)</li><li>• Yachting and Boating clubs</li><li>• Coast Guard</li><li>• Surf Life Saving</li><li>• Similar organisations or persons.</li></ul>

Representatives of other organisations may be invited to attend meetings as required.

To ensure maximum cooperation between SAR organisations, liaison between adjacent areas should be established, particularly where Police district boundaries traverse areas prone to SAR incidents.

There should be regular meetings to ensure the maintenance of a viable and efficient SAR service.

#### Police SAR squads

See [definition](#).

As part of succession planning districts may identify employees who may be offered a development opportunity as 'reserve' squad members. These employees can be placed on the [training pathway](#).

SAR squads, because of their particular skill set, may be deployed in other than SAR operations. (e.g: evidential searching, coronial and other investigations, working with helicopters, logistical support to remote locations).

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### Police SAR squad establishment

The establishment and location of Police SAR squads is a district responsibility. A SAR squad must have sergeants or senior sergeants appointed for the purposes of supervision, training and logistical requirements. This table illustrates the recommended strength for the different SAR squads nationally.

Districts	Location	Sgt/SSgt	Constable
Northland	Whangārei	2	11
Auckland	Auckland	2	16
Waikato	Hamilton	2	10
Bay of Plenty	Rotorua	1	6
	Taupo	1	7
	Tauranga	1	7
Eastern	Gisborne	1	8
	Hawkes Bay	2	10
Central	New Plymouth	3	10
	Wanganui	1	9
	Manawatu	2	13
Wellington	Masterton	1	5
	Wellington	2	10
Tasman	Nelson	1	8
	Marlborough	1	8
	West Coast	1	8
Canterbury	Christchurch	3	10
	Timaru	2	6
Southern	Dunedin	2	8
	Invercargill	2	8
	Queenstown	1	4
	Wanaka	1	2

### Personal equipment and clothing

SAR squad members work in environments that have inherent hazards. They are issued with personal equipment and clothing for SAR purposes and to protect them from any harm that may be caused or may arise out of those hazards. Clothing and equipment issued must meet best practice for the outdoors. A SAR squad member should be issued with the following items (taking into account specialist and environmental factors).

Quantity	Item
2	Balaclavas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one heavy</li> <li>• one light</li> </ul>
1 pair	Snowgaiters
1 pair	Overtrousers* (outer shell)
1 set	Gloves and overgloves*
1	Parka* (outer shell)
1	Jacket* (mid layers)
1	Winter weight shirt (mid layers)
1 pair	Shorts
1 set	Base layer (underwear)
1 pair	Boots
4 pairs	Socks
1	Pack*
1	Day pack*
1	Inflatable sleeping mat*
1	Sleeping bag*

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

1	Sleeping bag cover (bivvy bag)*
1	Sleeping bag liner
2	Plates*
1	Mug*
1	Cutlery set*
1	Compass*
1	Cooker*
1	Headlamp*
1	Whistle
1	First aid kit
1	Tentfly*
1 pair	Overalls*

If a person leaves a SAR squad within 5 years of joining, items marked \*above must be returned to store. After 5 years they may be retained by the employee as having worn out.

Replacement is based on need (wear and tear and continued fit for purpose).

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### Training

#### SAR squad training

District Commanders must ensure that the SAR squad members undergo regular training exercises, appropriate to SAR, totaling 12 days duration in each year per squad member. 'Reserve' squad members must be included, subject to operational priority.

- Training must include both Land and Marine SAR.
- At least one training day must be utilised for training in [DVI procedures](#).
- Five of the training days of each squad member should be devoted to joint volunteer training initiatives.
- A training programme may be developed based on the [LandSAR competency model](#), activities described in the [LandSAR Field Guide](#), and command and control capability ([CIMS](#) and [DMP/MSOPs](#)).
- Helicopter training must be refreshed annually.
- OC SAR squads are to maintain members' training records.

By 30 June each year, a copy of the proposed training programme for the forthcoming financial year must be forwarded to the National Coordinator: SAR, including:

- dates of the proposed training
- areas where the training is to be held
- details of radio equipment and frequencies to be used
- where applicable, the Alpine and Cliff Rescue team's training programme.

In liaison with RNZPC, residential courses of instruction for SAR must be held annually at the RNZPC or at some other suitable venue.

District Commanders may allow SAR members to attend training exercises held in adjoining districts and SAR related courses arranged by other organisations. Such attendance must be a district expense.

The National Coordinator: SAR must:

- monitor the training programmes
- raise issues as to appropriateness of the programme with the District Commander.

#### SAR exercises (SAREX)

Each year District Commanders must conduct at least one Police controlled Category I land and separate marine SAR exercise (SAREX) annually. Additionally, districts with a large geographical spread or unique or individual areas of risk should hold more than one SAREX.

Planning for a SAREX for the following financial year must be completed by 30 June of each year. An [Exercise Directive](#) must be forwarded to the National Coordinator: SAR.

Where air support is required from RNZAF, details of the [support required](#) must be forwarded with the Exercise Directive [form](#).

At least two weeks prior to a SAREX, an [Exercise Plan](#) must be prepared and distributed to the organisations taking part.

Each district must forward an annual 'exercise directive' to the National Coordinator: SAR at PNHQ. This directive contains details of the district's proposed SAREX. The National Coordinator uses such directives to prepare a national SAREX programme for the forthcoming financial year. Some dates may need re-scheduling as the programme is compiled.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

NZSAR maintains a national SAREX calendar, hosts SAREX and training planning meetings, sponsors Police coordinated SAREXs and has a range of guidelines to assist with SAREX planning and evaluation.

No more than one SAREX using the HF frequencies 5680 and 3023 should be held at the same time, because high frequency radio communications can be picked up all over the country. These problems do not arise with VHF communications.

The National SAR Coordinator manages a SAREX calendar. SAREX dates should be coordinated through the National Coordinator: SAR at PNHQ.

See ['Volunteers'](#) in this chapter.

### **Conducting a SAREX**

A SAREX remains the cornerstone of interagency training. The quality of the exercise will be significantly improved if attention is given to the pre planning stage and to post operation evaluations. There is a direct feedback link from evaluation to confirmations of good practice but also to improvements to be made to future planning and training activities. Therefore, SAREX should feature evaluation activities carried out by moderators and referees during the exercise. In some circumstances, consideration should be made to bringing in a person from outside the group that planned the SAREX.

The SAREX organiser must follow these steps when conducting a SAREX.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Assemble a SAREX planning committee comprised of representatives of the organisations taking part. See <a href="#">SAREX planning guidelines</a> .
2	Attend and oversee all exercises.
3	Ensure that safety procedures are in place.
4	Ensure that all participants have been briefed on safety before the exercise.
5	Aim to hold a debrief within 21 days after the exercise.
6	Evaluates the SAREX using NZSAR guidelines (see <a href="#">NZSAR website</a> )

**Note:** When an operation occurs during an exercise, the controller of communications for the operation co-ordinates all communications and has priority over the frequency.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Expenses**

Expenses are approved following standard Police financial processes. The IC should authorise, approve or recommend payment of expenses.

#### **SAREX expenses**

The District Commander or other authorised officer approves:

- accounts for goods or services,
  - claims for loss or damage to property,
- incurred during a SAREX. Claims are dealt with in terms of finance policy that deals with [ex-gratia payments](#); that is, payments that Police may settle for the sake of equity, even though they are not legally obliged to.

See [‘Volunteers’](#) in this chapter.

#### **SAROP expenses**

Costs of Category I operations are usually met by Police. The District Commander or other authorised officer will approve:

- accounts for goods or services
- claims concerning loss or damage to property.

Claims for Category II operations are usually met by the RCCNZ in accordance with Treasury instructions. When an operation begins as a Category I and is transferred to a Category II, claims are dealt with by the RCCNZ.

Where a SAROP extends to Police responsibilities other than SAR, for example body recovery, Police may contract for that purpose.

See [‘Volunteers’](#) in this chapter.

#### **SAR general expense claims**

Public Service departments (government departments) must bear their own expenses when participating in SAR operations.

Government trading departments and state owned enterprises must lodge claims for reasonable expenses in Category I operations with Police, and in Category II operations with the Rescue Coordination Centre.

Other claims for reasonable expenses incurred in Category I operations will be met by Police. Where an operation is a Category II, or subsequently steps up to a Category II, claims will be dealt with by the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand.

Any claims received by Police for payment by the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand must be passed on through the District Commander to the National Manager: Operations.

See [‘Volunteers’](#) in this chapter.

#### **Donations by the public**

Police have a duty to save life and are not entitled to recover costs relating to SAR operations.

While Police may not accept offers of payment for SAR, volunteer groups assisting Police cannot function without some financial support. Therefore, persons wishing to make

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

donations to SAR should be referred to an appropriate volunteer organisation or SAR Trust.

### **Recovery of expenses**

Where it is considered there has been a breach of section [24](#) of the Summary Offences Act 1981 regarding an intentional, reckless or wasteful diversion or deployment of Police personnel or resources on a SAR operation, a prosecution must not be commenced without the approval of the National Manager: Prosecutions.

### **Responsibility for aircraft costs**

Police meet the costs when:

- as part of a SAROP, an aircraft is used to transport injured or ill persons whose recovery by other means would be uneconomic and/or unsafe, including where the Ambulance Communications Centre has requested the person be moved to an agreed safe location where an ambulance service can provide treatment and transport (either by road or air) to a place of definitive care if required
- a call comes into the Ambulance Communications Centre that is identified as a SAROP and transferred to Police
- a deceased person is transported from the scene (this applies even if the person was not known to be deceased at the time of hire).

### **Responsibility for Emergency Ambulance Services Costs**

ACC and Ministry of Health meets the costs of Emergency Ambulance Services (EAS) when:

- missions are authorised and dispatched by Ambulance Communications Centre
- missions have on board an advanced level paramedic, and/or a doctor
- the person's location is known and the pickup is from a safe environment where the patient can be treated and if possible stabilised prior to transporting the patient, if this is required
- the person is not in a location that requires a 'rescue' in unsafe environment such as on a glacier, at the top of a mountain, etc. This is a SAR mission.

The Ambulance Communications Centre must be advised as soon as possible when a SAROP is commenced that may require ambulance services. The Ambulance Communications Centre must also be advised if an air ambulance is being used in the SAROP and the status of that air ambulance (i.e: it is equipped and staffed to the standard set by ACC/MOH)

Emergency Air Ambulance Service providers are required to keep the Ambulance Communications Centre informed of their availability.

If a contracted certified Emergency Air Ambulance helicopter is being used for a SAROP, and is then authorised and dispatched by the Ambulance Communications Centre to provide Emergency Ambulance Services, the costs are shared between Police (for the SAROP) and ACC/Ministry of Health (for Emergency Ambulance Services).

Any inquiry as to responsibility for aircraft costs, including air ambulance must be directed to the O/C Operations Support Group (National Coordinator: SAR at PNHQ).

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### Debriefing

Following a Category I operation, it is necessary to give volunteers and other agency representatives assisting Police an opportunity to review what took place. It is therefore important to debrief for significant Category I operations where improvements to SAR responses can be learned, inviting key personnel to attend. Such debriefs should be held within 21 days of the operation.

A SAR incident can involve many persons and there may be issues arising, which require a formal debriefing process.

A debrief should be held if a land SAR exceeds 300 hours (total time contributed), or marine SAR 50 hours, a loss of life has occurred (except for a suicide), or when directed to do so by a District Commander.

The debrief must be chaired by a senior Police employee, or other suitable person who should not have been directly involved in the search.

Any SAR Support agency can request that Police conduct a debrief into a Category I operation. Should Police decline to run a debrief, the matter can be referred to the National Manager: Operations at PNHQ.

The format of the debrief should follow the process in the ['Debriefs'](#) chapter.

A suggested two step model for participants, or participating agencies to discuss the SAROP/SAREX:

- Firstly, they identify those things that require improvement using the DESC model (**D**escribe what happened; **E**xplain the consequences; **S**uggest an alternate approach; explain the **C**onsequence, how the outcome would have been different if that alternate approach were followed).
- Secondly, they then identify those things that went well and that should be retained in any future SAROP/SAREX.

The debrief for a Category II operation is the responsibility of the RCCNZ. Police should also debrief personnel under their direction so that comment can be conveyed to the RCCNZ debrief. In appropriate cases, key personnel should attend both Police and the RCCNZ debriefs.

**Note:** Police transport, or reimbursement of travelling expenses, can be provided for volunteers attending debriefs.

### Format of a formal debrief

A debrief should be chaired by a senior Police employee or other suitable person who did **not** have an active part in the search. A debrief should be run in a formal manner in this recommended format:

- The chair commences the debrief by outlining the order.
- Reports should be presented by the incident controller, planning intelligence, operations and logistics managers. Issues to be covered should include all phases of the SAROP.
- The team leaders from each team must be invited to report.
- Resources such as the rescue helicopters must be asked to comment.
- The debrief should cover the incident, call out, search and stand-down phases.
- A copy of any written report must be forwarded to the National Coordinator: SAR. The written report should cover these points:
  - Outline (what happened?).
  - Key events (brief chronological abridged version of events).

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

- Key conditions (short statements such as experience, weather conditions, what eye witness saw).
- Contributing factors (anything else that may have contributed to the incident).
- Cause (what caused the incident to happen etc).
- Recommendations (any changes to local or national policy regarding search procedures).
- Outcome (how the recommendations have been implemented/noted/ignored).

Copies of the notes from the debrief must be provided to the National Coordinator SAR at PNHQ and may be provided to NZSAR and to SAR partners. See the ['Debriefs'](#) chapter.

## Search and Rescue operations, Continued...

### **Reports and forms**

#### **Search and Rescue Report (Police 130)**

After an operation, the Police IC completes a Search and Rescue Report (Police 130) as soon as possible. There is one form for water, and another for land. It is important that these forms are completed correctly, fully and submitted in a timely manner as this enables the information to be analysed and reported on. This information is important as funding is also dependant on the correct capture of information.

A copy of the Pol130 must be provided to NZSAR Council Secretariat.

#### **RCCNZ Category I to Category II Transfer of Coordination form Handover of Coordination form**

See Annexes [four](#) and [five](#).

#### **Loss of Wages Claim Form (NFB1)**

Claims for loss of wages must be made on the [Loss of Wages form](#) (NFB1), which includes the employer's certificate. An invoice for lost wages must be attached but a tax form is not required.

#### **Expenses Claim Form (NFB2)**

Volunteers who suffer loss or damage to personal property, not covered by Accident Compensation, while engaged in a Police controlled SAR operation or exercise, may be compensated by way of an ex-gratia payment in accordance with the merits of the claim. The [Expenses form](#) (NFB2) is used for:

- claims by non-Police personnel for out-of-pocket expenses
- claims for loss of, or damage to, personal property.

These must be forwarded to the District Commander with a report of the circumstances relating to the loss or damage.

#### **Maintaining a personal log of experience**

A personal log is commonly maintained by those involved in the outdoors. It is useful for demonstrating experience and current competency in any outdoor activity. It also makes a useful reference when completing a CV. A log includes narrative and may include photographs, media clippings etc. A copy will be made available to Districts and National SAR Coordinators if requested.

SAR squad members should maintain a log which should include:

- SAROPs and SAREXs, and team members
- role in each
- any technical activity carried (deployment in any aircraft, winching, steep angle, etc)
- any conferences or training events
- any community or educational activity utilising SAR/outdoor skills
- personal outdoor experience.

**Annex one - Search and Rescue loss of wages claim form (NFB1)**

Download the [search and rescue loss of wages claim form \(NFB1\)](#) (word doc, 33 KB).

**Annex two - Search and Rescue expenses claim form (NFB2)**

Download the [search and rescue expenses claim form \(NFB2\)](#) (word doc, 37 KB).

**Annex three - Sample Exercise Directive**

Download a sample of the [exercise directive](#) (word doc, 39 KB).

**Annex four - Transfer of SAR co-ordination responsibility  
RCCNZ (Category II) to NZ Police (Category I)**

Download the [transfer of SAR Co-ordination responsibility RCCNZ to NZ Police](#) form  
(word doc, 48 KB).

**Annex five - Transfer of SAR co-ordination responsibility  
NZ Police (Category I) to RCCNZ (Category II)**

Download [transfer of SAR Co-ordination responsibility NZ Police to RCCNZ form](#) (word doc, 54 KB).