



New Zealand Search and Rescue Strategic Occupational Health and Safety Committee Meeting

Thursday 21 August 2014
10.00am – 12.00pm
Ministry of Transport
Level 6, 89 The Terrace
Wellington

MINUTES

Attendees:

- Phil Burgess – NZSAR
- Duncan Ferner – NZSAR
- Carl van der Meulen – NZSAR
- Amy Greig – MoT (Minutes)
- Samantha Shariff – Aviation NZ
- Joe Green - Police
- Harry Maher - LandSAR
- Gareth Bradshaw - AREC
- Bruce Johnston - Police
- Paul Dalton - SLSNZ
- Allan Mundy - SLSNZ
- Nigel Clifford - MNZ
- John Seward – MNZ
- David Waters – Ambulance NZ

Present for Item 3:

- Alan Cooper – Worksafe NZ
- Nigel Hubbard - Worksafe NZ

1. Welcome and introduction

Duncan opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record. All actions from last meeting were completed.

2. Apologies

- Patrick Holmes – Coastguard NZ

3. Update from Worksafe NZ on Health and Safety Legislation

Representatives from Worksafe NZ attended the meeting to provide an update on the Health and Safety Reform Bill and how this may affect the SAR sector. They noted that:

- The proposed legislation was still being debated in Parliament. Its final form will not be known for some months.
- It is likely that, unless a specific organisation is made up entirely of volunteers, health and safety legislation may impact paid staff depending on the structure of the organisation and their responsibilities.

The meeting then had a broad H&S discussion traversing a number issues including:

- Questions exist for the SAR sector in terms of who is ultimately responsible for health and safety in their exercises. Is there adequate training and knowledge in place to ensure that in the event of an incident or fatality that health and safety regulations have been adhered to?
- Are the linkages between comms reporting of emergency calls and the people completing the tasks on the ground strong enough that all adequate steps are being taken to ensure workplace health and safety is being recognised?. The nature of search and rescue exercises emphasises the need for extensive cohesion and collaboration across the sector to ensure workplace health and safety responsibilities are adhered to.
- The possibility that the proposed legislation may have a negative impact on recruiting volunteers as it may be perceived that there are too many rules and risks for which they become responsible. Worksafe NZ reiterated that they recognise the nature of the work the sector does. WorkSafe's expectations will take into account what is reasonable in the circumstances of a search and rescue operation. There is no expectation that all risk can be eliminated.
- The sector are taking the opportunity with the proposed legislation to refocus on their individual health and safety plans to ensure they are adequate and fit for purpose. They felt it would be good to do some case studies/modelling as group and run this thinking past Worksafe NZ.

Action: *Duncan is going to follow this up and look to have Worksafe NZ attend the next meeting of this group in 6 months' time for a further update.*

4. SAR Sector Health and Safety Performance (last 6 months)

NZSAR will seek H&S reports from SAR organisations approximately one month before each scheduled healthy and safety meeting providing a brief update on their health and safety incidents and progress.

Action: *The group agreed to do this.*

SAR Organisations present briefed the meeting:

LandSAR

- LandSAR are currently working on enhancing their H&S systems and documenting their expectations and procedures. All LandSAR 'volunteers' will be considered 'employees'.
- Two work safe incidents to report from the last 6 months. One involved a dog handler and the other an incident at Lake Taupo
- LandSAR will workshop scenarios with the coordinating authorities to clarify H&S issues as the 'person in charge' transitions during an operation or exercise.

AREC

- AREC has received a health and safety report which has identified considerable work to be done to improve its internal systems and reports.
- AREC had no workplace incidents to report from the last 6 months.
- AREC is working on improving health and safety systems and providing information to members about the need and, process and responsibilities. AREC recognises that it's important for volunteers to have adequate plans in place.

Police

- Police commented that their health and safety workplace incidents are being reported directly to Police HR – but that this was under specific categories and only for police staff. Incidents involving non-Police persons are not captured within the Police system.

SLSNZ

- SLSNZ health and safety processes are still being developed. There is a framework for capturing this information but processes needs to be formalised and members/staff need better information about expectations and requirements.
- There have been a few SLSNZ workplace H&S incidents over the last 6 months but none that involved the 'rescue' side of the business.

RCCNZ

- RCCNZ is still developing a formal process for reporting of workplace incidents.
- A formal review process takes place after large incidents. RCCNZ will incorporate a health and safety aspect to post incident reviews in the future.

Ambulance

- There have been a small number of incidents over the last 6 months. Chief pilots meet 6 monthly to review incidents and conduct reviews with a safety focus.
- Air Ambulance health and safety standards are due for review, a small list of issues need to be considered. Ambulance has moved to public reporting of major incidents as part of a Ministry of Health requirement.

Attendees had a general discussion around liability and gaining clarity around exactly who would be ultimately responsible for SAR health and safety related incidents should they occur. Everyone agreed that it would be good to see robust health and safety processes for all SAR organisations up and running within the next 6 months.

The group discussed the possibility of recording 'near-miss' type accidents. Currently this is not recorded but could provide helpful information, especially in the sense of ensuring the same incidents are not being repeated and learning's are being taken from these types of events.

Action: David to keep Duncan in the loop regarding any changes to the Air Ambulance health and safety standard. A further discussion offline may be helpful.

Action: Recording of 'near-miss' type incidents to be discussed further at the next meeting.

5. Review of Health and Safety Objectives

The group agreed the current health and safety objectives correctly reflect the NZSAR and coordinating authority approach to health and safety management. However, it was suggested that during the next review some wording around 'near-miss' type incidents could be incorporated.

Aviation NZ asked to be added to the list of members included in the terms of reference.

Actions:

- *Include the option for near miss reporting*
- *Add Aviation NZ to list of members in the Terms of Reference*

6. Health and Safety Objectives for Next 6 Months

Covered throughout earlier parts of the meeting.

7. Actions and/or Resources Required to Improve Health and Safety Performance

Helen Parkes is available for those organisations who wish to utilise her expertise in preparing health and safety plans. The NZSAR Secretariat will now step back from facilitating her support and organisations can take the lead directly with Helen should they wish.

8. Health and Safety Clauses

These are formalised as part of the service level agreements for the next three years.

9. Agency Approaches and Developments Update

Coastguard has recently appointed Pete Healey as the health and safety manager.

10. Other Business

Use of Spontaneous Volunteers

RCCNZ have revised their volunteer and planning documents following the Rena exercise, including information on spontaneous volunteers. They will distribute this to other organisations for their information.

Action: RCCNZ to send relevant spontaneous volunteers information to sector

Meeting Ended: 12.00pm

Next meeting: TBC – February 2015

Duncan Ferner
Chair
NZSAR Strategic Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Actions

Action	Responsibility
Provide a health and safety update to Duncan approximately one month prior to scheduled health and safety SAR meetings	All
Connect with Duncan regarding any changes to the Air Ambulance health and safety standard. Possible meeting to be held offline.	David Waters
Recording of 'near miss' type incidents to be discuss further at next meeting.	Duncan Ferner
Invite Worksafe NZ to attend the next health and safety meeting for legislation update	Duncan Ferner
Add Aviation NZ to list of members in the Terms of Reference	Duncan Ferner
Send relevant spontaneous volunteer information to group	RCCNZ