

30 May 2016

Members,  
National Exercise Programme

## **SEARCH AND RESCUE - MASS RESCUE EXERCISES**

### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides NEP with a brief report on the first series of Mass Rescue Operation (MRO) exercises (exercise series *Rauora*), and outlines the proposed approach for the next series of MRO exercises.
2. The paper also highlights the system level findings that were identified during the first series of exercises.

### **Introduction**

3. New Zealand's Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council directed that a series of exercises be conducted around the country, to ensure the recently developed MRO Operational Policy, and the Police and RCCNZ MRO Readiness Plans are fit for purpose. These exercises have been conducted as part of the NZSAR Council's National SAR Support Plan (NSSP) for 2014/15 and 2015/16, and were included on the National Security System calendar.
4. Nine individual Police Districts were exercised between October 2014 and October 2015. The three Auckland Districts held a combined exercise in March 2016.
5. The exercises were well attended by a wide range of agencies and participants. Feedback received from the attendees indicates these exercises have reinforced, or even created, relationships and engagement at the regional level.
6. **Exercise design & conduct.** Exercises were prepared using NEP templates. Each exercise was conducted in two parts:
  - a) An orientation exercise to step through the MRO Readiness Plans for each District.
  - b) A tabletop discussion exercise using a presented narrative scenario for that District.

### **Exercise findings**

7. The seven evaluators used during the exercise series identified three common themes of a system level nature in their recommendations. These are:
  - a) There is a lack of consistency in the MRO Readiness Plans across the Police Districts, and between the SAR Coordinating Authorities.
  - b) Many of the MRO Readiness Plans do not align with CIMS 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
  - c) Some of the MRO Readiness Plans have been prepared for localised marine incidents only, rather than for all MRO hazards across the Police District.

8. A corrective action to address the system level findings has been included in the updated MRO Operational Policy. This requires the SAR coordinating authorities to develop a generic MRO Response Plan that aligns with CIMS 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, with specific MRO hazards and locations addressed in a series of sub-plans or appendices.
9. Additionally, NZSAR Secretariat members noted there is an opportunity at the regional level to improve understanding of the National Security System, and how All-of-Government arrangements would support a nationally significant incident.

#### **Next exercise series**

10. The NZSAR Council has directed that another series of MRO exercises (exercise series *Rauora II*) be conducted as preparation for the MRO national level exercise in April 2019 (NEP 12).
11. The exercise objectives align with NEP national objectives 1, 5, 6 and 9 (Appendix A). One focus area of the exercises will be on the reconciliation of people to a notional passenger and crew manifest, as this is always identified as an issue in MRO case studies.
12. These will be free flow table top exercises at the 'walk' level, using an exercise game-board. Multi-agency involvement at the regional level will be required, particularly from the CDEM sector in order to test reconciliation processes. The exercises will not include any All-of-Government arrangements.

#### **Recommendations**

13. It is recommended that the NEP:
  - a) **note** the completion of the first series of MRO exercises;
  - b) **note** the system level findings from the exercise evaluations;
  - c) **note** the corrective action to address the system level findings;
  - d) **note** there is an opportunity at the regional level to improve understanding of the National Security System, and how All-of-Government arrangements would support a nationally significant incident; and,
  - e) **note** the NZSAR Council's intention to conduct a second series of MRO exercises at the 'walk' level, in preparation for a national level exercise (NEP 12) in April 2019.

Carl van der Meulen  
Senior Advisor  
NZSAR Secretariat

## Appendix A: Objectives for exercise series Rauora II

Exercise Objectives	Training Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
<b>1.0 Lead a coordinated interagency response to a mass rescue incident</b>	1.1 Identify threat of a mass rescue incident	tbc
	1.2 Recognise what coordination centres would require to be activated to respond to a mass rescue incident	tbc
	1.3 Develop an effective action plan	tbc
	1.4 Coordinate the response to a mass rescue incident in accordance with the MRO Readiness Plan and CIMS	tbc
	1.6 Recognise what specialist functional groups would need to be activated to respond to a mass rescue incident	tbc
<b>5.0 Effectively manage information horizontally and vertically</b>	5.1 Incident information is effectively managed and communicated by all agencies involved	tbc
	5.2 Support requirements are effectively communicated	tbc
<b>6.0 Deliver effective public information management</b>	6.1 Public communications reinforce confidence in the response and provide appropriate levels of public assurance	tbc
<b>9.0 Further develop collaborative relationships, to enhance interagency knowledge and understanding; creating capability and resilience</b>	9.1 Agencies share information to engender an all hazards approach to incident management	tbc