

NZSAR Awards

Searching for, and rescuing people is a complex, often difficult task that occurs in all kinds of weather and usually in demanding locations. The people who work or volunteer their time and skills in this area, and those that support them, often receive little public recognition for the feats they achieve and the sustained effort they put in to accomplish these tasks.

In recognition of this, the New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council has established an annual national award programme “to acknowledge worthy achievements in the field of search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region”.

The NZSAR Awards are intended to give formal and public recognition to those involved in SAR in New Zealand. They also raise community awareness about the efforts of volunteers and paid personnel in the SAR sector and celebrate their success. The NZSAR Awards are judged by the NZSAR Council, and presented at an annual NZSAR Awards ceremony at Parliament.

There are two categories of SAR related activity covered by the NZSAR Awards: **Operational Activity**

This category is for nominations relating to a specific SAR operation, or operations, that have occurred during the year.

Support Activity

This category is for nominations that relate to the wider range of SAR related activities (for example training, prevention, and long-service), and not to specific SAR operation(s).

For both of the categories, there are two levels of recognition:

New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Award

The Gold Award honours the person, group or organisation that has made a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year, or over a sustained period. One NZSAR Gold Award can be awarded each year.

New Zealand Search and Rescue Certificate of Achievement

The certificate is awarded to people, groups or organisations that have made an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year, or over a sustained period. A maximum of four NZSAR Certificates can be awarded in each category each year.

Frequently Asked Questions

When was the NZSAR Council Awards programme established?

The NZSAR Council Awards programme was introduced in 1999 to acknowledge outstanding search and rescue work by individuals, groups and organisations in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region. The programme also serves to raise awareness of SAR efforts across the country.

The structure of the awards programme was updated in 2007 to include the NZSAR Gold Award and Certificates of Achievement.

The awards were updated again in 2013 to establish the categories operational and support activity.

Are there separate awards for paid and volunteer SAR personnel?

No. Both the New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Award and the Certificate can be awarded to either paid or volunteer SAR personnel.

Are the awards only for lifetime achievement in SAR?

No. Any significant contribution to SAR in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region should be considered in nominating an individual or organization for the NZSAR Councils awards programme. The nominee must have performed outstanding work in the field of SAR above and beyond routine work and service. The contribution may be in the form of sustained effort over a period of time or for a particular incident or group of incidents.

Can organisations, groups and individuals be nominated?

Yes.

How many awards are given out each year?

No more than one Gold Award for Operational Activity, and no more than one Gold Award for Support Activity, can be presented each year.

Up to four Certificates of Achievement can be awarded in each category each year.

If, in the opinion of the NZSAR Council, there is no nomination of sufficiently high standard to qualify, a decision may be made not to present a Gold Award or Certificate for any given year.

Will the Gold Award and Certificates be presented each year?

The NZSAR Council may decide on occasion not to present the Gold Award or Certificate if, in their opinion, the nominations do not warrant their presentation.

Where can I find the names of previous recipients?

Information about past NZSAR Award recipients can be found on the NZSAR website.

Can a previous winner be nominated again?

Yes. The organisation/group/person will be judged only on achievements since the previous award was received. For those who have been nominated in the past (and have not won), previous nomination information can be updated and will be considered for the present nomination.

Can people from the same organisation be nominated?

Yes. You may nominate as many people as you like, but please fill out separate

forms for each nominee, unless you are nominating the group or organisation as a whole.

Do I have to fill out separate forms for the Gold Award and Certificate of Achievement?
No. All nominees are considered for both the NZSAR Gold Award and Certificates.

Are there guidelines for preparing nominations?

1. Fill out the candidate information on the application form.
2. Write the reasons for the nomination in the area provided and use a separate sheet if necessary. Describe in a qualitative manner:
 - Ø the nature of the candidate's contribution to SAR (achievements applying to this nomination)
 - Ø the significance of the candidate's contribution to SAR (including the importance of the contributions and the benefits resulting from them)
 - Ø the context of the contribution (including background against which the contributions were made and problems overcome)
3. For individuals, provide an up-to-date biographical sketch of the nominee on a separate sheet.
4. Fill out the nominator and seconder information on the application form. Ensure these are signed. You may include other references (with their names and contact information) to corroborate the information provided in the nomination if you wish.
5. Attach all relevant supporting documentation, including endorsements.
6. Submit the nomination to the NZSAR Secretariat by 31 January.
7. Details of the nomination and any supporting evidence (such as photographs, reports, letters, witness contact details etc) should be attached to the nomination form.

Are the nominations confidential?

Yes. We do not contact nominees unless asked to do so by the nominator. We contact the winners prior to the awards ceremony to confirm their attendance and other details.

When do nominations close?

Nominations close on 31 January.