

Connecting the Search and Rescue Sector

news



Before you go

KNOW THE BOATING SAFETY

CODE

Before you go boating on our seas, lakes and rivers, get familiar with New Zealand's Boating Safety Code.

Five simple rules will help you to stay safe, no matter what kind of boat you use.

5 simple rules to help you stay safe:

- 1 Life Jackets**
Take them - Wear them.
Boats, especially ones under 6m in length, can sink very quickly. Wearing a life jacket increases your survival time in the water.
- 2 Skipper Responsibility**
The skipper is responsible for the safety of everyone on board and for the safe operation of the boat. Stay within the limits of your vessel and your experience.
- 3 Communications**
Take two separate waterproof ways of communicating so we can help you if you get into difficulties.
- 4 Marine Weather**
New Zealand's weather can be highly unpredictable. Check the local marine weather forecast before you go and expect both weather and sea state changes.
- 5 Avoid Alcohol**
Safe boating and alcohol do not mix. Things can change quickly on the water. You need to stay alert and aware.

For more information about safe boating education and how to prepare for your boating experience, visit www.adventuresmart.org.nz

The Boating Safety Code

As marine SAR organisations gear up for what is expected to be another busy summer period the NZSAR Council is participating in the launch of the Boating Safety Code.

The Boating Safety Code aims to make boating safety messages consistent and easy to understand. It applies to all forms of boating from kayaks, to waka's; powerboats to launches; Dingy's to yachts etc. It follows on from last year's successful release of the land based Outdoor Safety Code which contains 5 simple rules to help you stay safe before you head outdoors.

The Boating Safety Code has the endorsement of the National Pleasure Boating Safety Forum. The Code will encourage people to participate in recreational boating activities and asks them to make smart decisions about the safety of everybody onboard – before they go out on the water.

DoC Joins the NZSAR Council

The Director-General of Conservation, Al Morrison, has accepted an invitation to join the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council. This increases the number of organisations represented at the Council to six. The Department of Conservation (DoC) manages nearly a third of New Zealand's land. The DoC estate is hugely popular for tourists and Kiwis alike and many search and rescue operations take place there every year. DoC membership will strengthen the SAR governance role of the Council and assist in improving the cohesion of the wider SAR sector.



news continued



Surf Life Saving Celebrates 100 Years

Over the past 100 years Surf Lifeguards have saved more than 50,000 lives on our nation's beaches – and during the summer of 2010/11 Surf Life Saving will celebrate this legacy of dedication and leadership from the men and women who have served New Zealand for 100 years.

Drowning was once known as the “New Zealand death”. That started to change in 1910 when a group of community leaders gathered around the light of a smoky kerosene lantern in a New Brighton schoolroom. All were concerned by a rash of drowning deaths at their local surf beach. They decided to form New Zealand's first Surf Life Saving club.

That night was the start of a movement that would shape the Kiwi summer. Soon more lifesaving clubs were formed in Lyall Bay, Worsler Bay, St Clair and Castlecliff. Lifesaving rapidly became a recognised and respected volunteer movement.

Today Surf Life Saving New Zealand is an organisation of over 15,800 members and 73 clubs. Each year, trained volunteer Surf Lifeguards provide more than 190,000 hours of patrol time on weekends and public holidays. Last summer alone they made over 1470 rescues and dedicated over 198,000 volunteer hours.

“Surf Life Saving is as much a part of our sense of community today as it was in 1910. It's the celebration of 100 years of community spirit, camaraderie and sense of responsibility for others in our community,” said Grant Florence, Surf Life Saving Chief Executive.

The coming summer months will see centenary celebrations roll out nationwide through planned activities including an interactive travelling road exhibition, which will tour the country.

“It is our opportunity to promote our proud history and acknowledge the fundamental role Surf Lifeguards play in keeping New Zealand's favourite playground safer for everyone.”

For more information about the centenary celebrations and details of the travelling exhibition titled “Between the Flags – 100 Years of Surf Life Saving” visit : www.100yearsofsurflifesaving.org.nz.



SAR People Help Out in Canterbury

It wasn't the usual mode of practice but SAR volunteers used their skills and training to good use in the aftermath of Canterbury's September 4 earthquake.

One such case involved Coastguard Southern Region's volunteers running the Linwood Welfare Centre during its last days.

Coastguard Volunteer Glenn Scott says because they have been trained in the Incident Management System (CIMS) they were able to step up and help out.

“There was a personnel shortage at the Centre so we started helping out there. We ended up filling the management roles and running the Centre – looking after the needs of about 100 people – for quite some time.”

Glen and his team say they were not dealing with their usual tasks: ‘We are normally involved with the marine aspect of SAR, so to be looking after up to 100 or so people with large numbers of volunteers was quite challenging. There were lots of things to organise, such as food and medical care, helping people who were stressed, and ensuring they were all comfortable and safe.’

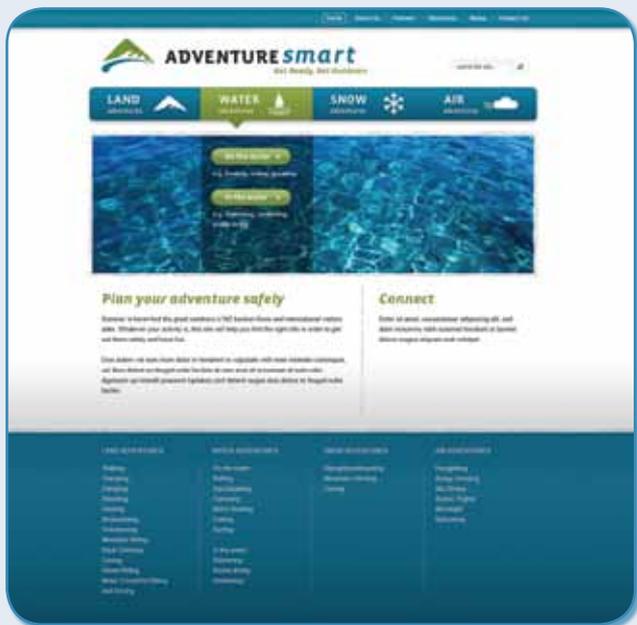
Coastguard was not part of the official response team, “but as we had been trained in CIMS we were able to work effectively alongside the disaster management teams like the Police and Red Cross because we were all speaking the same language. We just got on-board and hopefully helped make lives easier for people during what was an extremely difficult time.”

New “AdventureSmart” Website

Every year thousands of people enjoy New Zealand’s beautiful outdoors – unfortunately this goes hand in hand with some mishaps, whether it be trampers getting lost, or boats and swimmers getting into trouble. However, many of these incidents are easily preventable with good planning, knowledge and skills.

With this in mind, NZSAR and the Mountain Safety Council have worked with a wide range of organisations to develop www.AdventureSmart.org.nz – a singular online destination where all outdoor and water enthusiasts can visit and be directed to safety information about the pursuit of their choice. It houses good information on recreational activities available to New Zealanders and international tourists, so that they can find the essential info and then get into their activity safely.

The need for a centralised portal across all sectors (water, land and air) acknowledges that making it easy for people to find safety information means better decisions and hopefully less incidents.



The website will go live soon and initially will contain both generic safety information relevant for all activities (such as the Outdoor Safety Code and the Boating Safety Code) and specific safety info with links to relevant organisations. More content will be added over time.

Visit: www.adventuresmart.org.nz

Search and Rescue Training and Education Update

Managing Search and Rescue (SAR) incidents effectively is a vital part of our primary purpose – which is saving lives. Training the managers is key to getting a successful outcome. The NZSAR Core Curriculum flagged the need for us to take a good look at what training we have (and haven’t) been delivering for SAR managers, controllers and coordinators. So, together with SAR organisations, the Secretariat has begun developing new and improved SAR management training.

This work has been broken into two projects. The first focuses on the On Scene Coordinator (OSC) – an important role in large and complex SAR operations. Our sector has not had formal OSC training previously, despite fairly regular appointments of OSCs – particularly during large search operations. In fact, there hasn’t been an agreed description of what the role entails. The OSC workshop, run by the Rescue Coordination Centre earlier this year, established common expectations of the role and what was needed to train coordinators.

The purpose of this project is to create and document a repeatable programme of training and assessment that provides selected individuals with the skills, attributes and attitudes of an effective OSC for SAR operations. The project also includes the delivery of a pilot programme, the incorporation of changes following feedback from participants in the pilot, and up to two additional programmes.

A look at the existing Incident Management/Controller (IM/C) training showed that we generally deliver sound training of direct relevance to the performance of the operational IM/C function. However, gaps exist between what we do and what was agreed we should do as laid out in the NZSAR Core Curriculum.

The purpose of the IM/C training development project is to redevelop the content and delivery of the technical and managerial training – keeping the best of what we have while adding some new features – to ensure it is coherent and suitable for the current and future requirements of the SAR IM/C function.

Both the revised IM/C training and the new OSC training will conform to the NZSAR Core Curriculum, and the needs of the NZ Qualifications Framework, to make effective use of alternate training delivery methods such as e-learning and/or extramural learning and to be as efficient as possible in the use of people’s time and sector resources.

SAR in action



The New Faces of SAR

When Katherine Dyer joined YSAR Tauranga she knew she was signing up for an exciting challenge, but the programme has well exceeded her expectations: "I have had a lot of fun doing YSAR and been able to do such an awesome variety of things I thought I would never do, such as a scuba diving course, Coastguard's NZ Day Skipper Certificate and a two-day solo in the bush, to name just a few. It's made me grow a lot in confidence and in my ability to relate to all sorts of different people effectively, which has all definitely helped me to be selected for Head Girl at my school this year."

Youth Search and Rescue (YSAR) is a programme offered in Hamilton, Tauranga and Nelson, supported by LandSAR. The three-year programme involves weekly training sessions and regular weekend training camps for fit and dedicated 14-18 year-olds. During their first training year, YSAR members participate in 14 training camps and weekly training sessions, which can all add up to 730 hours – quite a big commitment to ask of a teenager. However, according to YSAR Hamilton's Barry Were, "the kids see this as a meaningful use of their time – they really love it."

Barry is a veteran LandSAR member and founder of the first YSAR group, in Hamilton. Inspiration for this group came after Barry attended the annual Washington State Search and Rescue conference where he met two representatives of Explorer Search and Rescue (ESAR), an affiliation of the Learning for Life division of the Boy Scouts. They were so enthusiastic about the benefits of ESAR that Barry left the conference determined to introduce something similar at home. He set up his new group based on the ESAR model and five years on YSAR is not only a continuing success but is also spreading to other regions.

Steve Campbell's role on Tauranga's Police Search and Rescue Squad meant that he would often "rub shoulders" with SAR groups from his neighbouring district Waikato, including Barry's YSAR group. Steve says he was very interested in the same idea for Tauranga, but it wasn't until his role within the Police changed that he was able to find the time to establish YSAR Tauranga in 2008.

"We were fortunate that we had the support of Hamilton YSAR to help get our group off the ground, although we vary slightly from

the Hamilton training programme as a large portion of our work is marine and coastal. So in our case, LandSAR, Coastguard and other agencies are often working very closely together."

Steve says there are no "typical" YSAR members: "If the interest is there, the commitment strong and the applicants are physically capable, we can use them. Although there is a strong emphasis on map and compass work, SAR is not all about bashing your way through supplejack; it's a multi-disciplinary public service and our training package reflects that. Some of our applicants had never spent a night in the bush in their lives prior to submitting their applications forms. They range from those who find academia very difficult, to head students in their final years at college.

"We have 37 members and 10 of those are females. Gender differential seems to play no significant part in their ability to perform. To begin with I wasn't convinced that the social dynamics would work, however, my views very quickly changed when we started to deploy them on activities. The weekends they are not involved in YSAR, they are often spending time together in leisure."



When Katherine leaves the programme she will not only have excellent leadership, teamwork and time-management skills, she will also have gained SARINZ qualifications and real-life SAR experience.

"Getting to be involved in a real search is exciting as we get to use the skills we have been learning and feel like we are having a real, positive impact on people's lives in our community – and I'm braver!"

Steve says YSAR definitely has the potential to operate elsewhere in New Zealand. However, it relies heavily on the commitment and experience of the leadership and the ability to be flexible enough to reflect the unique characteristics of an area.

"YSAR wouldn't exist without the support and dedication of the leaders involved. Their ability to turn up every Wednesday night for the two-hour training, week after week, and lead 14 camps per year is a huge commitment to the programme. We also have a fantastic relationship with Tauranga LandSAR. This is a multi-agency approach to youth development relating to search and rescue."

news continued

Charging for SAR

The NZSAR Council has confirmed that all SAR services will continue to be provided without charge to the individuals concerned.

This issue of charging costs rears its head from time to time, usually after a search or rescue thought to have been unnecessary, initiated on a false basis, or involving someone who has required repeated SAR assistance. While such incidents are infrequent, they often attract interest.

The following messages have been developed to help the sector respond to such enquiries in a more coordinated manner, to avoid confusion both within the SAR community and with the general public.

- *New Zealand does not charge for search and rescue services.*
- *We prefer to educate and inform about the potential risks and have people plan and take responsibility for their activities.*
- *We don't want people to hesitate to request assistance if they are in distress or if their loved ones are missing.*
- *We don't want people hiding from SAR agencies to avoid costs when we are searching for them.*
- *Most foreign jurisdictions also do not charge for the provision of SAR services.*
- *The number of problem SAR incidents in New Zealand is thought to be small.*

Police and RCCNZ are collecting information about the nature of unnecessary, false, hoax and repeat SAR incidents to build a better understanding of this issue.

NZSAR Awards

Do you know of an organisation, group or individual who should to be acknowledged by their search and rescue peers?

What about someone who has dedicated hours of their time to your organisation or those involved in a courageous rescue or difficult search – do they deserve national recognition?

The NZSAR Awards celebrate the success and effort of people who work or volunteer their time and skills in the field of search and rescue in New Zealand's Search and Rescue Region.

There are two awards:

1. The NZSAR Gold Award honours the person, group or organisation that has made the **most significant** contribution to search and rescue.
2. The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement are awarded for an **important** contribution. More than one NZSAR Certificate can be awarded each year.

international observations

Lifejackets

(Personal Flotation Devices - PFDs)

Throughout the Canadian Safe Boating Council's 2010 symposium, considerable emphasis was placed upon getting people to carry and wear lifejackets when boating.

The issue is perceived as a cultural one, similar to previous public safety efforts to get people to wear seatbelts in vehicles. A number of methods are utilised to present a common and coordinated 'message' about wearing lifejackets to the boating public.

- The term "lifejacket" was generally preferred to "PFD" as it gave greater meaning to the public.
- Inflatable lifejackets are promoted as a good option due to their comfort and wearability.
- The www.readysetinflate.com programme promotes ownership, wear and familiarity of inflatable lifejackets.
- To promote acceptance and wear, Canadian Safe Boating Council attendees wanted to see lifejackets made in stylish colours.
- The testimonials of survivors due to wearing lifejackets are being used as part of the campaign.
- Efforts are being made to engage with the public via social media and video clips (Facebook /Twitter/ YouTube/online games, etc).
- The UK's MCA and RNLI have produced a joint report 'Lifejacket Wear: Behavioural Change'. It looks at why people don't wear lifejackets and explores ways to encourage them to change their minds. The report can be found at: www.mcga.gov.uk.

These awards are valuable not only for the contribution they acknowledge but also for raising community awareness about the efforts SAR people go to in this often complex and difficult work.

Go to www.nzsar.org.nz. You will find more information about the awards along with details on the simple nominations process.

Nominations for the 2010 awards close on 31 January 2011.

Carl's corner



This has been a busy but enjoyable time of the year for me, with some opportunities to get out of the office. Coastguard NZ and LandSAR NZ organised very successful conferences in the last few months. Both events were very well attended and a huge amount of topics were covered in both formal and informal sessions. It was pleasing

to see the positive evolution made within each organisation over the past few years. In particular, it is very encouraging to observe the change everyone has made towards achieving a culture of "one SAR body". There is no doubt that we are setting ourselves up well for future challenges.

I also spent some time in Darwin, in Australia's Northern Territory, which was slightly warmer than Wellington! In addition to my close encounters with crocodiles and snakes, I attended the 34th meeting of the Australian National SAR Council (NATSAR). This is the one time during the year when representatives from each State, Territory, and the Australian Commonwealth can meet together. While Australia and New Zealand have our own unique SAR challenges, there are many SAR issues that are similar to both countries.

Like New Zealand, Australia has an aging population which has led to an increase in dementia-related searches. We have agreed to share information on how both our countries are addressing this issue. Australia is also looking at developing consistency in statistical reporting. This provides a good understanding of what is happening

across the country, and helps inform the strategic decision-making process. I'm glad to say that New Zealand is already well into this process, with the work that has gone on for the last couple of years around reporting. Check out our 2009/10 Annual Report on our website (www.nzsar.org.nz) to see how we are starting to use these consolidated statistics.

There was also some discussion about the challenges that new technology is having on SAR; from new commercial alerting systems to the use of FLIR and other imagery enhancing technologies as search tools. Our last NZSAR workshop for the year, held recently, focused on the technology challenge to SAR. A report on that workshop will feature in the next Link newsletter and will be available on our website soon.

Our thoughts have certainly turned to the tragic events near Greymouth. Our condolences go to the families who have lost loved ones and our support to the response teams.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer holiday.

Carl van der Meulen
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calendar

- 31 January** – nominations for the NZSAR Awards close
- 9 Feb** – NZSAR Consultative Committee meeting, Wellington
- 23 Feb** – NZSAR Council meeting, Wellington
- 6-9 March** – International Boating and Water Safety Summit, Savannah, USA
- Major SAREXs are planned for the following Police Districts:**
- February** – Wellington, Waikato
- March** – Central, Tasman, Southern, Eastern, Canterbury, Wellington
- See the online calendar for more information about these significant SAR events – www.nzsar.org.nz**

useful website links

- www.nzsar.org.nz – Information and resources for the New Zealand Search and Rescue community. The Training and Workshops section includes material from all the workshops run to date, as well as the SAREX Guidelines. This newsletter is also available as a PDF on this website.
- www.beacons.org.nz – Information about 406 Beacons, including where to purchase, rent and register a distress beacon.
- www.bcsara.com – British Columbia Search and Rescue Association.
- www.safeboatingcampaign.com – A US based safe boating website.
- www.safelyhome.ca – A Canadian site to assist in finding a person who is lost due to dementia and returning them safely to their home.
- www.smartboater.ca – A site for boaters to find interesting and entertaining boating safety information.