

NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

Rapu Whakarauroa Aotearoa



Category I Search Suspension

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Reviewer(s): Malcolm Burgess MNZM

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Executive Summary

A Search and Rescue Operation (SAROP) is an operation undertaken by a Coordinating Authority to locate and retrieve persons missing or in distress. The Operational Framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region defines a SAROP as either Category I or Category II.

Category I SAROP include land operations, subterranean operations, river, lake and inland waterway operations, and close-to-shore marine operations. These operations are coordinated by the New Zealand Police. In that coordination role Police initiate, manage and suspend or terminate search operations.

This review was commissioned to consider the suitability of the processes currently in place to suspend Category I Search and Rescue operations.

A handful of searches are suspended each year. A search is typically suspended when the missing person cannot be located, further search effort is unlikely to locate them, and they are believed dead. The decision to suspend a search is always a difficult decision to make. It requires a careful balance between doing the most that can reasonably be done without unduly prolonging the search with the potential waste of resources.

The review considered the availability and relevance of expert advice and statistical data used to inform the decision to suspend a search. It confirmed that the information needed to reach a decision to suspend a search is readily available, both in relevant data and expert advice.

The review identified the need for improvements in the suspension process. These include greater clarity and consistency in the criteria for review of search operations, improved sign off processes to approve search suspension and the need for peer reviews to be carried out by trained and independent personnel.

It is recommended that national templates are developed for SAROP reviews and suspensions. The establishment of a pool of independent search reviewers for conducting SAROP peer reviews is also recommended. Police policy documents need to be amended to make clear who may authorise a search suspension.

1. Recommendations

1. NZSAR should develop peer review templates for the suspension of Category I search and rescue operations.

Review criteria should include:

- a. A clear link to Incident Action Plans to provide assurance that intended operational activity has been completed.
 - b. A record of liaison with the Coroner and the collection and retention of ante mortem data.
 - c. A record of liaison with next of kin and other interested parties as appropriate.
 - d. Expert medical advice on missing people and their survivability, which should be sought early in the search process and be explicit in the peer review.
 - e. A clear recommendation for suspension when satisfied the search is complete.
2. NZSAR should develop a standardised search suspension report to accompany the review documents
 3. A pool of qualified reviewers should be developed to ensure consistency, expertise and independence of peer reviews.

Action required:

- a. NZSAR establish the criteria required to be a qualified reviewer
 - b. NZSAR and Police establish a national pool of reviewers who can be made available to complete peer reviews
4. Police policy should be amended to clarify who is responsible for approval of search suspension.

Action required:

- a. Amend police policy to eliminate confusion regarding authority to suspend searches

2. Terms of Reference (TOR)

Search Suspension for Cat 1 SAR Operations

The decision to suspend a SAR operation assumes that additional search effort will not result in success. The information and processes used to make a search suspension decision are critical to avoiding a premature decision to suspend.

Purpose:

Establish the availability, relevance and appropriateness of the information, processes and criteria that are applied for the purpose of deciding whether to suspend Cat 1 SAR operations.

Tasks:

1. Review information and processes relating to consideration of whether to suspend Cat 1 SAR operations in a selection of operations from the last three years.
2. Review the information that is considered to inform a decision about whether to suspend Cat 1 SAR operations, by considering the *availability, relevance and appropriateness* of:
 - a. Lost person profiling
 - b. Scenario analysis
 - c. Statistical information on survivability
 - d. Any other information taken into account by the survivability expert
 - e. Any other information taken into account by suspension decision makers.
3. Review the process, criteria and critical analysis used to decide whether to suspend Cat 1 SAR operations.
4. Consult relevant subject matter experts.
5. Make evidence-based system-level recommendations relevant to validating and/or improving decision making for the purpose of suspending Cat 1 SAR operations.

3. Evaluation Methodology

3.1 The agreed outcomes of the Review

The review makes available to NZSAR a final report which makes evidence-based system-level recommendations relevant to validating and/or improving decision making for the purpose of suspending Cat 1 SAR operations

3.2 Review scope

The review considered the existing Police and SAR policy and the information available to decision makers when recommending a search be suspended. It looked at the process followed to reach that decision and to have the decision validated as required by policy. It considered the adequacy of the existing peer review process. It considered how best to assign qualified and independent people to carry out these reviews. The review did not attempt to critique the adequacy of the individual search operations.

3.3 Information collection

Seven search operations were reviewed to identify the degree to which a suspension was considered and/or completed in accordance with existing Police and SAR policy¹. Six of the operations had, nominally at least, been suspended during the last three years². The seventh was a long running land SAROP which was being considered for suspension prior to the missing party being located.

The Aoraki SAR Operational Review, which was relevant to one of the operations, was considered, as was an earlier review of suspensions completed by Mr Mike Wright MNZM.

Subject matter experts (SME) in New Zealand and overseas were consulted to provide information on search practice and comparative policies and processes. The Rescue Coordination Centre manager was interviewed and the process for suspending Category II searches considered. Police SAR Coordinators from across the country were interviewed to gather their experience and observations on the existing policy and practice in search suspension.

Experts in survivability and in the statistical data modelling that informs search planning were consulted. The Coroner's office was consulted on liaison between Police and the Coroner in the event of a suspected death.

This report provides the outcome of those discussions, analysis and consultation.

¹ In the course of the review, information was volunteered about a number of other searches which had been suspended. While those searches were not included in the analysis, the suspension reports were considered for completeness and consistency.

² Only two of the six searches have completed the suspension process with approval to suspend signed off at the appropriate level.

4. Background

A Search and Rescue Operation (SAROP) is an operation undertaken by a Coordinating Authority to locate and retrieve persons missing or in distress. The Operational Framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region defines Search and Rescue operations as either Category I or Category II.

The intention of a SAROP 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 safety³. In some cases the search will continue to locate and recover the remains of missing people.

Category I SAROP include land operations, subterranean operations, river, lake and inland waterway operations, and close-to-shore marine operations. These operations are coordinated by the New Zealand Police. In that coordination role Police initiate, manage and suspend or terminate search operations. SAROP are run using the coordinated incident management system (CIMS) with an Incident Controller in charge.

The Police Operations Manual and the NZSAR guidelines set out the process for Incident Controllers to follow in suspending a Category I SAROP⁴. These guidelines require an independent operational review of the search, consultation with relevant experts, advice to next of kin of the proposed suspension activity and appropriate approval of the suspension decision. Where the person who is lost or missing is presumed dead consultation should include the Coroner. For Police coordinated searches the authority to suspend searches (excluding those which involved the activation of the National Security System) rests with District Commanders⁵.

The seven searches which were considered as part of this review were of varying types, involving lost or missing people in a range of circumstances. Three of the missing people were considered despondent and likely to have committed suicide, one was lost at sea, one went missing from home with possible drug and mental health issues, one went missing in an alpine environment and the final case, which was not suspended, was a traditional land based bush search.

The alpine search involved a missing climber who was located at the end of a two day private search after the earlier Police search had been suspended. He had sustained fatal fall injuries and would not have been saved even if found earlier. The body of one of the suicidal missing persons was found when the circumstances of the disappearance were re-examined as part of a search and rescue exercise (SAREX) some three months after the search suspension. The two trampers were located alive in the land based search, prior to search suspension. In the remaining cases the lost or missing people have not been found. Only two of the SAROP were formally suspended.

It is against that operational and policy background that this review was commissioned. The terms of reference outline the criteria for consideration and specifically identify the need to have processes that avoid prematurely suspending a search.

³ Glossary of terms, Operational Framework for NZSRR, pg. 8

⁴ Copies of the relevant Policy documents are attached at Appendix 1

⁵ The Police policy also provides for a “delegated person” to approve suspension.

5. Findings

Overview

While the terms of reference alluded to the risk of premature suspension of a search, it was the lack of consistent and clear process to enable suspension decisions to be made and a reluctance to suspend searches until satisfied that every search possibility had been exhausted which were identified as recurrent themes during the review.

Not surprisingly, Police SAR staff and SAR volunteers are strongly motivated to find these missing people, even when there is no longer any realistic prospect of the person being alive. Failure to locate and retrieve the missing person, whether dead or alive, is generally considered “unfinished business”. While these case studies were provided as examples of search suspension, only two were formally suspended in accordance with policy. In the remaining cases searching ended without a formal suspension. The decision to suspend a search rests primarily with the Incident Controller and the Incident Management team.

The analysis of the seven operations found that most of the operational elements required to be completed by policy were done prior to the search ending (see table below). In the Mandik case, which was the subject of a separate operational review, there was criticism of the decision to suspend the search without a review and without better liaison with the next of kin.

Operation	Scenario Analysis	Lost Person Behaviour	CIB Support	Survival Advice	N O K	Peer Review	Coroner	Sign Off
Beattie	√	√	√	√	√	√	?	×
Raumai	√	√	√	?	√	×	√ [©]	×
Mandik	√	√*	×	√	®	×	×	×
Ewings	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√
Rolland	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	×
Campbell	√	√*	√	√	√	√	×	√
Cowin	√	√	√	√	√	+	+	N/A

*The alpine and marine searches considered factors such as drift patterns and presumed likely route of climb.

® The bulk of the family were resident overseas. There was some liaison with them, but this did not stop them being dissatisfied with the suspension decision and seeking a private search.

+ Although the missing people were found alive, an operational review was completed, and the Coroner was consulted.

©This case went to the Coroner but was never formally suspended

The availability of information on scenario analysis, lost person behaviour and survivability formed part of the original operation planning in each operation. It was not clear whether this information was explicitly re-considered as part of the suspension process.

The principal concerns arising from the case analyses surround the peer review process prior to suspension. There is a lack of consistency in how reviews are completed. The files showed variable methods of recording the peer review, with no nationally consistent reporting standard. Selection of the reviewer appears to be a matter left to the Incident Controller to initiate.

Failure to liaise with the Coroner, as required by the policy, and inconsistent or incomplete approval to suspend the search were also issues highlighted in the analysis.

Availability, Relevance and Appropriateness of Data

The terms of reference specifically sought advice on the availability, relevance and appropriateness of scenario analysis, lost person behaviour (LPB) and survivability data when considering search suspension.

The principal source of statistical data is the International Search and Rescue Incident Database (ISRID). This data defines different categories of lost people and provides statistical models to help identify the most likely locations within a search area to find the missing person. It provides data on how different categories of lost people might behave. It also provides some survivability statistics. The data is the subject of ongoing research.

It is clear, both from the cases analysed and from discussions with SAR Coordinators from across the country, that searches are being managed using this data, particularly lost person behaviour and scenario analysis. The data is used to help develop subject profiles and to help incident management teams (IMT) manage the search. It is less clear the degree to which survivability statistics are relied on. While the statistical data may be used as a guide, local expert advice on survivability appears to be the preferred source of this information.

The doctors providing this advice emphasised that survivability is not an exact science, each case needs to be determined on its merits, and it is frequently the case that people can survive longer than statistical models might predict. They also note their preference that consultation with them should occur at a far earlier stage than when suspension is being considered. It appears that opportunities for better information about missing people, particularly those with pre-existing medical conditions, are being missed by delaying contact with the experts.

Discussions with overseas counterparts confirmed the use of statistical data in those jurisdictions, although they too consider the data against the circumstances of each individual case.

It is not apparent that the data is explicitly reconsidered in the suspension process. This in part stems from a lack of consistent review criteria (see discussion at pg. 11 below). There are references in the suspension peer reviews to the use of the statistical data, as confirmation of operational activity such as scenario planning, search coverage and LPB. Only one of the reports prepared for search suspension specifically addressed survivability and then only to note that an expert had been consulted.

Peer Review for Suspension

Before making the decision to suspend a search, policy requires that the search be peer reviewed by an independent District SAR Coordinator. There was evidence that peer reviews were completed in four out six of the operations that were suspended.

Operation Mandik had no peer review completed. An initial approach for a peer review of Operation Raumai resulted in a draft document being prepared but no formal review was completed. Operation Cowin, which was terminated with the successful location of the lost trampers, was peer reviewed for search completeness during the search process but was not reviewed for the purpose of suspension.

The peer reviewers in most cases were independent of the search operation⁶. The reviews considered the operational activity completed and provided assurance to the Incident Controllers that a thorough search was completed. There is no suggestion that the reviews were lacking in rigour or failed to accurately assess the operational activity.

There were however a variety of ways in which the reviews were recorded across the various operations, with no consistent criteria universally applied. In one instance a Police 258 report was provided, in another an evidential statement and in the other two reviews a bespoke review document was created. The key criteria to be considered were not explicit in these documents, nor did they contain a clear recommendation for search suspension.

In two of the four cases a checklist was attached to the report to seek approval of search suspension⁷. This checklist was apparently created by SAR coordinators at a national conference some years ago. It usefully summarises the criteria required to be considered prior to suspension in the SAR guidelines and Police policy. The Auckland districts supplement this document with an executive summary of the search.

Operation	District	Reviewers District	Record of Review
Beattie	Canterbury	Wellington	Police 258 report
Raumai	Central	Wellington - not completed	N/A
Mandik	Canterbury	Not completed	N/A
Ewings	Tasman (Blenheim)	Tasman (West Coast)	Evidential statement and excel checklist
Rolland	Waitemata	Waikato	Bespoke report, excel checklist and executive summary
Campbell	Wellington	Wellington and Tasman (Nelson)	Bespoke report
Cowin	Tasman (Nelson)	Not suspended	N/A

⁶ In the Wellington marine operation, the Incident Controller authored the review report. This review appears to have been a search team effort with independent input from a neighbouring district.

⁷ For an example see Appendix 3

The peer review processes followed in Queensland and by Ontario Provincial Police were examined to determine how suspensions are reviewed in those jurisdictions.

In Queensland, the State Emergency Search and Rescue Coordinator personally reviews all SAROP. Using a very structured and comprehensive review document as a template, that person provides a recommendation, where appropriate, for search suspension. The search suspension process is initiated in a timely way. A similar response occurs in other Australian states and territories.

The Ontario process has the province's Search and Rescue Coordinator review the search documents, and with the Emergency Response Team coordinator overseeing the search (and First Nations advisers where appropriate) makes recommendations on suspension. The Ontario model does not have the same structured review document used in Queensland but again it is initiated promptly.

The process adopted by the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) for the suspension of Category II searches was also considered. The RCC suspension process is centrally managed and includes an operational review. The suspension review (referred to as a re-evaluation in RCC documents) forms part of a structured and well-documented suspension process. A copy of the suspension template is attached at Appendix 4. The RCC search suspension standard operating procedures (SOP) provide clarity on how the process works and the key decision points in that process.

The Category I suspension process would be improved with the adoption of a consistent process for recording the peer reviews which identifies and uses consistent evaluation criteria.

Peer Review Criteria

Just as there were differences in the style in which the peer reviews were reported, there was variability in the key criteria recorded by each reviewer. While on each occasion the reviewers were satisfied that the search was adequate (or provided some advice on minor additional action that could be completed) it was not always clear what key criteria were being reviewed. There was no clear link back to incident action plans or other documents setting out the planned operational activity. While survivability is a key consideration in deciding whether a search should be suspended, it was not directly addressed in the peer reviews.

As discussed above the Queensland review has clearly defined review criteria included in a detailed template. The Ontario model has no standard criteria recorded but benefits from being centrally reviewed by one expert practitioner. The RCC reviews are based on aide memoire which detail the factors to be considered and are supported by the suspension template.

The development of a review template, with consistent criteria for evaluation and a link to the planning documents developed for the search, would provide reviewers and decision makers with a document that properly informs their decision to suspend a search. It would make clear that operational activity was completed as intended or identify shortcomings if they exist. It should address the key criteria, including survivability, needed to provide

assurance that the search can be suspended. All SAR Coordinators spoken to during the review support the development of a consistent template for these reviews⁸.

Selection of Peer Reviewer

The selection of an independent District SAR Coordinator to complete a peer review appears to be left to the individual Incident Controller to initiate. It seems likely this has developed in an ad hoc way with little organisational oversight. There does not appear to be any independent input into the selection. Some SAR Coordinators are called on to complete multiple reviews while others, with similar experience and expertise, have done none. In some cases, this appears to stem from geographic proximity, in others there appears to be a reliance on personal connections.

To provide assurance that the reviews are indeed independent there would be value in the selection of the reviewer also being independent. It is noted that NZSAR retain a panel of registered experts for evaluation of search and rescue exercises. These are all experienced practitioners, some of whom are already completing suspension peer reviews on behalf of Police Districts. This would appear to be a useful resource which could be used for SAROP suspension reviews.

Coronial Process

The policy documents make it clear that where a search is going to be suspended, and the missing person is presumed dead, there should be consultation with the Coroner. Only one case review identified consultation with the Coroner prior to suspension and that was, somewhat ironically, the one operation where the missing people were found alive. Operation Raumai was reported to the Coroner but this was not done prior to any suspension. It seems that in that case the Coronial process effectively took the place of suspension.

Discussion with a representative from the Coroner's office confirmed that notification to the Coroner's office is helpful. Given it is also a requirement of the suspension policy, confirmation of the notification should be one of the aspects covered off in any recommendation for suspension.

Of arguably greater importance to the coronial process is the requirement to gather ante mortem data for later identification purposes. While there was evidence on some files this had been done it was not always explicit. Confirmation of the capture of ante mortem data should be one of the key criteria covered in the suspension recommendation

Next of Kin Liaison

Another key factor in successfully completing a search suspension is effective engagement with next of kin and other relevant interest groups such as local Iwi. It was the unanimous view of the District SAR Coordinators that this was one of the critical factors to consider

⁸ It is worth noting that a number of these operations had undergone a form of operational peer review prior to the suspension review. Those peer reviews, while undoubtedly useful, failed to follow a structured process or reporting criteria. That review process would be improved by reliance on a template to record the review in a consistent way.

when suspending a search. Failure to properly engage with family and inform them about the search process, including recommendations to suspend, is likely to lead to adverse criticism.

The RCC suspension policy requires next of kin to be advised of proposed suspension 24 hours before it takes effect. The Police policy is similar although not quite as emphatically stated. A record of this liaison should be included as one of the criteria in the report seeking approval to suspend.

Approval of Suspension

Only two out of the six so called suspended operations were approved for suspension. Only one of the six reports examined in this process recommended search suspension to an appropriate decision maker. It is considered that the lack of a consistent method of reporting reviews and suspension contribute to this failure. The development of a search suspension report, which is accompanied by a peer review document, would provide decision makers with the information required for suspending a search.

By contrast the RCC search suspension process for Category II searches is clear and well documented. Following review, a documented recommendation to suspend is made to the relevant decision maker for search suspension (see Appendix 4 for details).

Discussion with Australian and Canadian Police identified different approaches to the level at which authority could be given to suspend searches. In Queensland, the sign off for a search goes through the chain of command to a Deputy Commissioner for approval to suspend. The recommendation and decision process are supported by clear documentation.

In Ontario, approval to suspend rests with the detachment commander in charge of the area where the search takes place following documented consultation with the SAR Coordinator. The detachment commander would be the equivalent of a Police Area Commander.

The Police policy on where the authority for suspension sits lacks clarity. It initially states approval for suspension should be at District Commander level. Sign off by District Commanders retains executive oversight and is broadly consistent with suspension of Category II search suspension. The policy later states that sign off can be done by a “delegated person”. It is not clear who this might be although it appears likely that this responsibility has been delegated to Operations Managers or their equivalents in some Police Districts.

There should be a clear process developed for recommending search suspension and the Police policy should be amended to eliminate the current uncertainty over who is responsible for authorising suspension.

6. Conclusions

1. The existing suspension process is managed differently across the 12 Police districts leading to inconsistent recording and suspension processes.
2. The existing process for suspending search operations does not provide assurance that peer reviews have considered key criteria before suspending a search.
3. Scenario analysis, lost person behaviour and survivability data are relevant, available, and used in operational decision making during a SAROP. There is limited evidence of their explicit consideration in the peer review and suspension process.
4. Consultation with doctors who provide advice on missing person behaviour and survivability should occur at an early stage in the SAROP rather than when considering suspension.
5. Templates for peer reviews and for seeking approval for suspension would assist in developing consistent and robust decision making around suspensions. These should be consistent with the RCC guidelines for suspension.
6. The peer review template should be linked back to Incident Action Plans to provide assurance that appropriate consideration has been given to statistical data and intended operational activity has been completed
7. Policy requirements to notify the Coroner and gather ante mortem data prior to suspension need to be completed. These should be explicit criteria included in the suspension reviews and recorded on the report seeking approval to suspend.
8. Recording liaison with next of kin and where appropriate with other interest groups such as local Iwi should be key criteria included in the suspension report.
9. Peer reviewers should not be selected by the Incident Controller. A pool of qualified reviewers, managed by NZSAR, should be available for peer reviews.
10. The peer review process for Category I searches should, as far as possible, be consistent with the model used for suspension of Category II searches.
11. The Police policy on approval of search suspension needs to be clarified to identify where that delegation sits.

Acknowledgement

The review was significantly assisted by the knowledge of search and rescue and survivability experts, both here and overseas, who provided information and advice in developing the review recommendations and by those who provided feedback on the draft report. The reviewer is indebted to the following people for their time and their contribution to the review.

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Sergeant Malcolm York, Nelson
Sergeant Phillip Simmonds MNZM, Canterbury
Senior Sergeant Dave Houston, Wellington
Sergeant Andy Brooke, Palmerston North
Sergeant Ian Martin, Invercargill
Detective Sergeant Derek Shaw, Alexandra
Robert J. Koester, Ph.D., Charlottesville, Virginia
Dr Sara Gordon, Queenstown
Dr Charmaine Tait, Wellington
Coroner Peter Ryan
Paul Craven, Maritime NZ Manager RCC and Safety Services
Senior Sergeant Jim Whitehead, Queensland Police
Sergeant John Meaker, SAR Coordinator, Ontario Provincial Police
Mr Rhett Emery, NZSAR Secretariat
Mr Win van der Velde, Wellington

Appendix 1

Suspending a SAROP (Excerpt from the Police Chapter for Search and Rescue Operations)

A search suspension is a difficult decision involving humanitarian considerations and has a broad range of impacts. The approval to suspend resides at the executive level for both Category I and Category II searches.

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 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).

Responsibilities for search suspension are as follows:

Type of Operation	Approver
Any Category I search	Police District Commander
Category II aeronautical search	Director Civil Aviation Authority
Category II land search	Director Maritime New Zealand
Category II maritime search	Director Maritime New Zealand

For instances where the SAR operation involved the activation of the National Security System, then the approver (Police Commissioner for the Police District Commander) must bring the decision to suspend to the relevant level of the NSS for approval to suspend.

Details on both review and suspension considerations can be found in the NZSAR Operational Framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

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

Where possible, prior notification of the intention to suspend a search should be given to the Next of Kin (NoK) at least 24 hours before suspension is effected and media notified

See 'Family liaison' in this chapter.

The recommendation to suspend a search must be referred to the **District Commander or delegated person** for a decision.

Factors to be addressed

Survivability of missing person(s), taking into account:

- time elapsed since the incident;
- environmental conditions;
- age, experience and physical condition of (potential) survivors;
- survival equipment available;

• studies or information relating to survival in similar circumstances. Determination of survivability should be made by a suitably qualified and experienced medical professional. Other factors to consider:

- Sustainability and availability of resources
- Political pressure to continue
- CIB involvement
- Staff welfare and safety.

Ante-mortem information must be gathered for each missing person.

Appendix 2

SAR Guidelines – Suspension Overview

If you're the Incident Controller, you need to complete a number of actions to suspend a SAR operation.

- **Consider suspending an operation when rescue or recovery is very unlikely**

You can consider suspending the operation if these conditions apply.

- You cannot locate the subject and further SAR activity is not likely to result in rescue or recovery of the subject.
- You have evidence the subject is likely to be deceased and cannot be recovered.

- **Follow a process when suspending an operation**

To suspend an operation, you must complete these steps.

1. Examine the evidence and verify that no further options exist for investigation or SAR activity.
2. Get a survivability report from a specialist.
3. Complete all documentation for the SAR operation.
4. Get a person who is suitably qualified to peer review the SAR operation.
5. Let the family of the subject know that you intend to suspend the SAR operation.
6. Get approval to suspend the SAR operation.

You must get approval from the correct person to suspend SAR operations:

- For Category 1 searches, you need approval from the Police District Commander.
- For Category 2 aeronautical searches, you need approval from the Director of the Civil Aviation Authority.
- For Category 2 land and maritime searches, you need approval from the Director of Maritime New Zealand.
- For a search for an NZDF asset, you need approval from the Chief of Defence.

- **Don't suspend the SAR operation too quickly**

You need to wait at least 24 hours from when you began the suspension process to officially suspend the operation.

- **Understand what a suspension is not**

A suspension does not involve:

- recalling or standing down resources temporarily for refreshment because of increased risk from environmental conditions or fatigue
- redirecting limited resources to tasks that are higher priority, including non-search tasks such as investigation
- recalling SAR resources for refreshment because the plan is not achieving the expected results and needs to be refocused.

Appendix 3

Suspension of a Search		Y/N/NA
1	Survivability Considered	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Name of specialist	
2	Search Plan Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	All areas searched multiple/appropriate method	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Unresolved clues	<input type="checkbox"/>
	All info collected/collated	<input type="checkbox"/>
	All scenarios investigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Additional intel to be collected	<input type="checkbox"/>
	ROW investigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
	All documentation completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Safety for searchers	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Weather	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Terrain	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sea state	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Peer Review Completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Name of Reviewer	
5	Coroner/1S	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Name of Coroner	
	Invited to view	<input type="checkbox"/>
	AM data collected	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	CIB involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Search Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>
	resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
	cost	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Media	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Political / International Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suspension should be authorised by a Commissioned Officer on your advice		

Survivability Assessment

Insert Values

Elapsed Time of Incident:	
Environmental Conditions: <i>(Water Temp/Chill Factors)</i>	
Physical Condition of Casualty:	
Survival Times: <i>(CESM/ Graph) circle applicable</i>	
Survivability Experts	

Recommendations for Suspension

(State Reasons):

Suspension Request

.....
SMC

.....
Date

.....
Signature

.....
Time

.....
RCCNZ Operations Manager / Duty Manager

.....
Date

.....
Signature

.....
Time

Suspending Authority

Maritime New Zealand / Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand

delete not applicable

Briefed by (SMC/RCCNZ Manager)

Date

Time

CEO Delegated Authority

Date

Signature

Time

Suspension Request:

Approved / Not Approved *(delete not applicable)*