

# REQUIREMENTS FOR SAR TEAM MEMBERS

## *Purpose*

NZ Police and NZLSAR have a responsibility to ensure that for the safety of participants, and the best outcome for missing / injured subjects, only trained personnel with suitable skills and experience will be used in search and rescue operations.

This document sets out the skills and attributes required of team members and serves as a checklist when considering a person's suitability for a particular role in SAR. It may also be used to guide the training programmes of search and rescue groups and individuals.

Performance standards based on this document set competency levels against which members may be assessed. Standards ensure that SAR personnel are suitably trained and experienced and can therefore be relied on to operate efficiently and safely

NZLSAR expects that people joining search and rescue groups will meet the Entry Criteria listed below, and will already have good basic bushcraft skills and reliable outdoor gear, as outlined under General Skills. A member having only these skills could be used on a search operation, provided the full complement of SAR skills is met by the other team members.

Search and rescue groups, through their local and national training programmes, will train individuals in skills specific to search and rescue operations. A fully trained team member would meet the NZLSAR standards in all of the skill areas listed below.

## *Outline*

1. Entry criteria
  - 1.1 Age
  - 1.2 Personal Fitness
  - 1.3 Commitment
  
2. General Skills
  - 2.1 Survival Skills
  - 2.2 Risk Management
  - 2.3 Bushcraft
  - 2.4 River Safety
  - 2.5 Navigation
  - 2.6 Weather forecasting
  
3. Search and rescue skills
  - 3.1 Search management
  - 3.2 Search methods
  - 3.3 Track and clue awareness
  - 3.4 Technical (Radio, GPS, ELB, etc.)
  - 3.5 First Aid
  - 3.6 Rope skills
  - 3.7 Helicopter Safety

## **1. Entry criteria**

### **1.1 Age**

- Minimum age is 16 years (with parental consent)

### **1.2 Personal Fitness**

- Must be physically fit
- Must be in good general health.
- Must be aware of own limitations and act appropriately.
- For bush / mountain search and rescue operations (SAROPS), must be able to carry a full pack over difficult terrain for extended periods.

### **1.3 Commitment**

A SAR team member should -

- Be available for SAROPS on a regular basis and be able to give an instant decision re availability when called out.
- Attend training programs in order to attain and maintain the standards required by NZLSAR and/or District Committees.
- Understand that team members will not be called to a search unless required standards have been met.
- Ensure that information re personal fitness and any relevant health problems is conveyed to the appropriate person within the organisation.
- Keep a personal log book recording training and operational experience.
- Have readily available: appropriate food and equipment for 48 hours in the field.
- Be able to coordinate and rationalise food and equipment within a SAR team. (party gear)

In addition, a SAR team member:

- Must demonstrate the right mental attitude for the situation. (patience, able to accept instruction, able to work as a team member, etc.)
- Must be aware of the importance of maintaining morale within a group.
- Needs to know how adverse conditions affect attitude and performance.
- Is aware of individual and group needs (pacing, food, rest, etc.)
- Can demonstrate good interpersonal skills in a group situation, (flexibility, empathy, respect, communication, physical and emotional stress, etc.)

## 2. *General Skills*

### 2.1 **Survival Skills**

- Understands the importance of the basic necessities of life (shelter, warmth, food).
- Knows how to react when "lost" and how to aid searchers (signs, signals).
- Has and knows how to use the contents of an "approved" survival kit.
- Can demonstrate various survival skills in a "below the bush line" environment (make/find shelter, light fire, collect water, maintain morale, gather wildfood).
- Understands hazards, behaviours, fears.

### 2.2 **Risk Management**

- Understands the concepts and principles of managing risk.
- Is aware of, and plans to reduce possible risks during a trip.
- Identifies and discloses risks to members of a group.
- Has contingency plans in case of emergencies.
- Shows an ongoing awareness of developing or potential risks.
- Can manage their personal response to a situation (illness, injury, missing person, fatality.)

### 2.3 **Bushcraft**

- Knows what clothing to take and how to care for it.
- Uses the appropriate clothing at all times.
- Has appropriate equipment for personal survival and comfort in the search environment.
- Cares for and maintains own equipment to high standard.
- Is aware and can cope with the hazards encountered in bush travel.
- Is capable of finding and following suitable routes in all types of terrain.
- Ensures that emergency food is carried.
- Understands food values and can organise suitable food for self and party.
- Can locate camp site and tents to be free of natural hazards.
- Can organise gear/cooking in tents in adverse conditions.
- Can light and maintain a range of gas and liquid fuel stoves.
- Is aware of the dangers of stoves.
- Demonstrates good camp hygiene practices.
- Understands principles of environmental care code. (DOC)

### 2.4 **River Safety**

- Shows understanding of river dynamics
- Can identify hazards in various types of rivers.
- Knows when and when not to attempt a crossing.
- Can identify best crossing points.
- Can prepare a group for a river crossing and manage the risks.
- Can demonstrate mutual support and individual crossing methods.
- Can recover from mishaps (has self rescue skills).
- Is aware of the hazards peculiar to coastal travel.

## **2.5 Navigation**

- Understands the features of a Silva type compass.
- Is familiar with NZMS 260 series topographical maps, and can interpret symbols used.
- Is aware of other map types and their uses.
- Understands scales and can use them to measure distances on maps.
- Understands contours and can interpret relief shading.
- Can orient a map using natural features and/or the sun.
- Can orient map with the compass.
- Can determine position on the map using features.
- Can determine and plot position using a compass and map.
- Can determine grid and magnetic bearings.
- Can transfer bearings to and from a map.
- Can plan a route from a map, and follow it using map, compass bearings, and geographical features.
- Can calculate travel time and distance from a map.
- Can measure distance by pacing.
- Can give and plot grid references.

## **2.6 Weather forecasting**

- Has a good general knowledge of weather patterns and forecasting.
- Can recognise weather signs in the field and react accordingly.
- Is aware of the limitations of commercial weather maps and forecasts.

### 3. *Search and rescue skills*

#### 3.1 **Search and rescue management**

- Understands how the New Zealand search and rescue system works.
- Understands responsibilities at district level.
- Understands the basic principles of the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) and can define the major functions.
- Understands the roles and responsibilities of Team Leader and Team Member.
- Understands the Incident Control Post's need for documentation: logging in, team briefing, equipment issue and checking, frequency confirmations, call signs.

#### 3.2 **Search methods**

- Demonstrates understanding of current search methods
- Can describe different search techniques and understands when each technique is appropriate (attraction, containment, hasty search, sign cutting, purposeful wandering, sound sweep, sound line, sound/light line, contact search).
- Understands the principals of lost person behaviour.
- Understands procedures for working with search dogs.

#### 3.3 **Track and clue awareness**

- Can apply basic observation skills for track and clue awareness
- Demonstrates ability to apply basic tracking skills
- Can identify and process clues

#### 3.4 **Technical (Radio, GPS, ELB etc.)**

- Can demonstrate an understanding of HF, VHF, and UHF radio.
- Is aware of the limitations of the various radios used in SAROPS.
- Can demonstrate how to set up, tune, operate, and care for radios.
- Can diagnose and fix basic problems.
- Has an understanding of correct operating procedure, including format, courtesy, security, brevity, and use of the phonetic alphabet.
- Has a working knowledge of GPS system.
- Can use a GPS receiver to mark waypoints and go to waypoints.
- Has a working knowledge of PLBs / ELBs

#### 3.5 **First Aid**

- Holds current First Aid Certificate.
- Has, and carries, a suitable first aid kit.
- Can prevent / treat minor ailments.
- Understands the theory and treatment of hypothermia.
- Can manage the stretcher type(s) used in local SAROPS, and can improvise if necessary.
- Demonstrates appropriate patient packaging
- Demonstrates stretcher lift, carry, and lower techniques, with appropriate calls.

### **3.6 Rope skills**

- O Has a basic awareness of the use of ropes in assisting searchers or rescuers over steep ground.
- O Demonstrates general safety knowledge
- O Is able to tie the following knots:
  - Figure 8, Prussik, Tape knot, Double fishermans, Italian Hitch, stopper knot
- O Demonstrates correct use of the following equipment :
  - Harnesses, improvised harnesses, karabiners, helmets, ropes, tapes
- O Understands correct equipment care
- O Demonstrates understanding of a Rescue System set up:
  - Site safety, anchors, rescuer, belayer, edge person
- O Can attach a belay line to stretcher

### **3.7 Helicopter Safety**

- O Can demonstrate specific safety procedures -
  - o approaching (safety zone and pilot signals)
  - o clothing and carriage of equipment.
  - o boarding, both on ground and at a hover.
  - o loading and unloading procedures (incl. slings, hooks etc.)
  - o winching
- O Has a knowledge of -
  - o landing point needs in terms of location, size, approach angles, marking, etc.
  - o wind strengths and can indicate strength and direction to the pilot.
  - o ground to air communication by radio and signals.
  - o what to do in emergency situations.

# REQUIREMENTS FOR SAR TEAM LEADERS

## *Purpose*

- Can manage a medical emergency and care for a patient for up to 24hrs.
- Can apply decision pointing.