

# New Zealand Search and Rescue

## Contents

Overview .....	2
1. NZ SAR Structure .....	2
2. New Zealand's SAR Responsibilities .....	5
2.1 New Zealand Search and Rescue Region .....	5
3. The Role of Coastguard in Marine SAR .....	6
4. Categories of SAR Incidents .....	7
4.1 Category I Incident.....	7
4.2 Category II Incident.....	7
5. Coastguard Operations .....	7

*Search and Rescue (SAR) operations involve missing or injured persons on both land and at sea. Marine SAR involves people in distress on the water either at sea, in harbours, rivers or lakes.*

**Constructive feedback and suggestions for improvements to the SAR Training Matrix is appreciated. Please email feedback / suggestions to [sartrainingfeedback@coastguard.co.nz](mailto:sartrainingfeedback@coastguard.co.nz) providing as much detail as possible. Thank you.**

## Overview

Search and Rescue (SAR) operations involve missing or injured persons on both land and at sea. Marine SAR involves people in distress on the water either at sea, in harbours, rivers or lakes.

Coastguard's involvement in SAR includes activities on all these waterways. Coastguard utilises a variety of assets ranging from Coastguard Rescue Vessels (CRVs), Coastguard Air Patrol (CAP) aircraft, and land-based Coastguard assets such as radio networks and operation rooms.

### 1. NZ SAR Structure

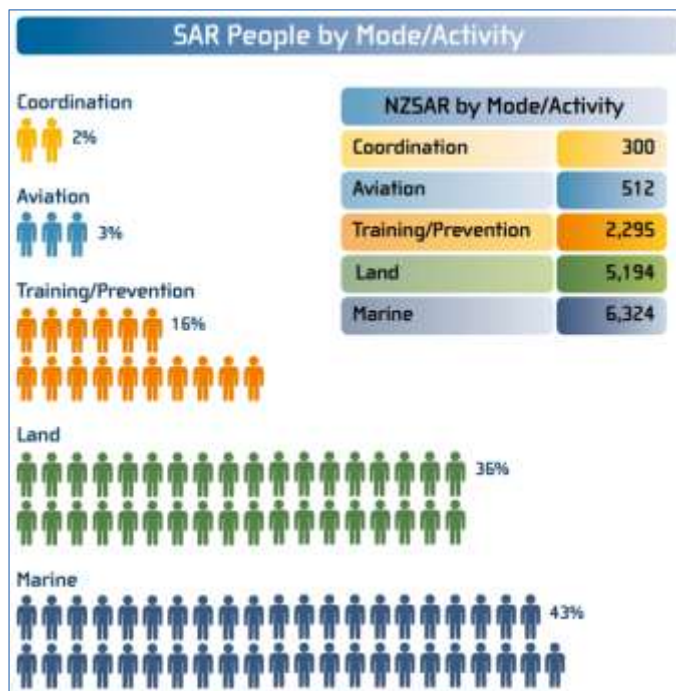
Volunteers make up about 90% of the personnel in the NZ SAR sector, which is one of the highest rates of volunteer involvement in the world. In New Zealand, there are about 15,000 people directly involved in Search and Rescue nationwide. People from all over the country and from all walks of life are involved in NZ SAR. The diagram below shows the data from the 2011/12 NZSAR Annual report.

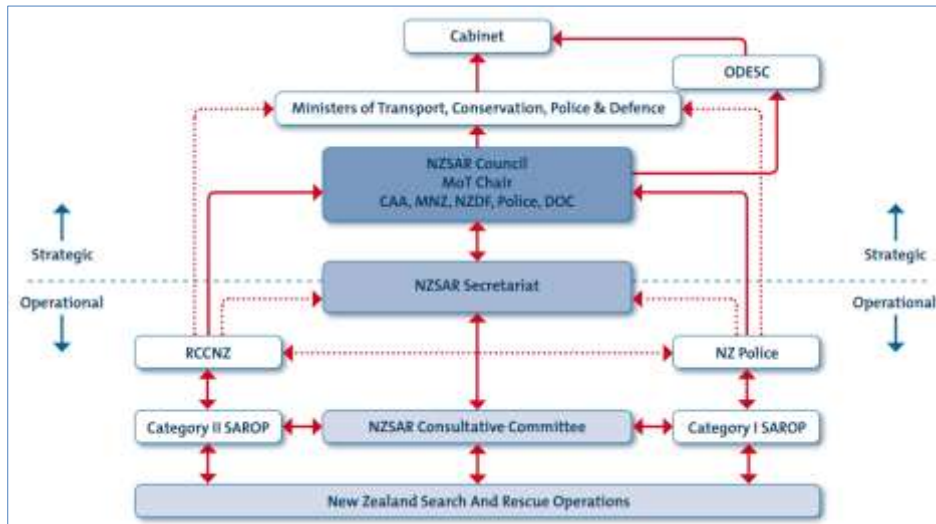
The different organisations and agencies involved all sit within a recognised national structure. The diagram below shows the various agencies involved in that structure.

*During the 2011-2012 year, the Police coordinated 1,675 Category I incidents, and RCCNZ coordinated 666 Category II incidents. This is a total of 2,341 incidents, which is an average of 6.4 per day, and a slight decrease on the previous year.*

*Annual reports of the Search and Rescue Council (NZSAR) can be found on their website*

<http://searchandrescuecouncil.org.nz>





(Diagram from NZ SAR Annual Report 2011/12)

In 2003 the Government established the NZ SAR Council to provide more strategic governance of the NZ search and rescue sector. The council consists of delegates from governmental organisations such as the Ministry of Transport, Maritime NZ, Civil Aviation Authority, NZ Police and the New Zealand Defence Force.

The NZ SAR Council has the support of the NZ SAR Secretariat which was tasked to provide SAR leadership to the sector.

The NZ SAR Consultative committee was also established in 2003 to provide specific advice on SAR related matters to the Council. This committee is chaired by a representative from the NZ SAR Secretariat.

Government funding for SAR is distributed through the NZ SAR Secretariat to all recognised SAR agencies. In 2012 they provided \$1,800,000 funding to NZ Coastguard. As a charity, NZ Coastguard is also reliant on funding from NZ Lottery Grants, receiving an additional \$1,700,000 and over \$500,000 from a range of other sources.

The diagram below shows the complex relationships and links between the different organisations involved in SAR governance, strategy and operations. For further information refer to the NZSAR website <http://searchandrescuecouncil.org.nz/>

*An overview of the history of SAR can be found at the NZSAR website*

<http://searchandrescuecouncil.org.nz/About-Us/History-of-SAR>



## 2. New Zealand's SAR Responsibilities

The Maritime Transport Act (1994) is the applicable legislation in relation to maritime safety in New Zealand.

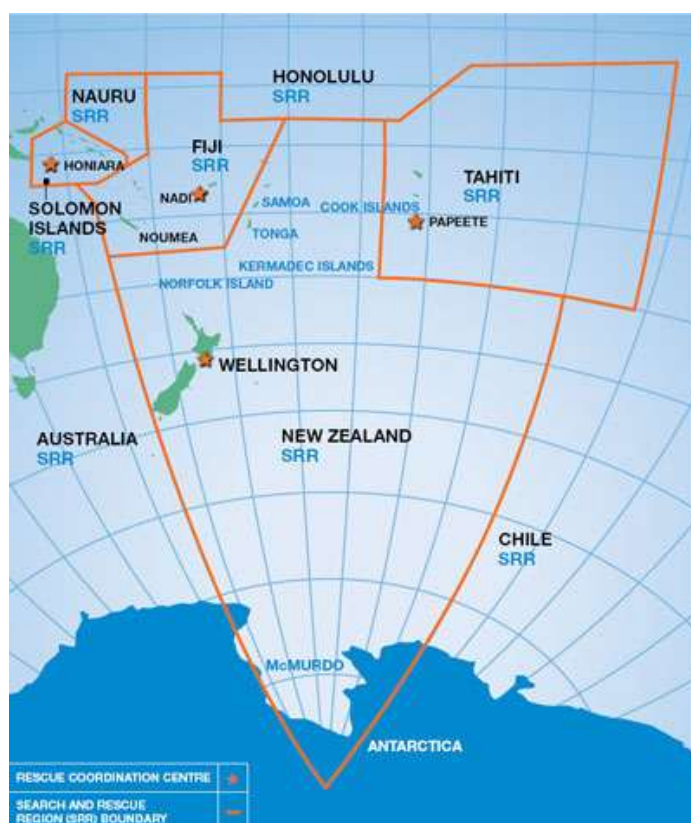
Maritime search and rescue operations are conducted in New Zealand in compliance with two international conventions to which New Zealand is party.

- The International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue.
- The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires that signatory governments provide for the rescue of persons in distress at sea within their Search and Rescue Region (SRR).

### 2.1 New Zealand Search and Rescue Region

New Zealand's SRR is a huge area stretching from just south of the equator to the South Pole, and from about halfway between New Zealand and Australia to about halfway between New Zealand and South America.





### 3. The Role of Coastguard in Marine SAR

In New Zealand, there are two Coordinating Authorities that have been directed by the government to be accountable, and responsible for marine Search and Rescue Operations (SAROPs). These Coordinating Authorities are;

- New Zealand Police.
- Maritime New Zealand (MNZ).

In general, the Police are responsible for 'close to shore' SAR incidents (including rivers & lakes), whilst MNZ delegates responsibility to the Rescue Co-ordination Centre of New Zealand (RCCNZ) for both 'close to shore' and 'off shore' SAR incidents.

RCCNZ is New Zealand's national SAR organisation.



There are Police vessels situated in Auckland and Wellington. Both the NZ Police and the RCCNZ deploy other physical resources, including Coastguard assets, to meet the requirements of the SOLAS convention.

The NZ Defence Force (Air force and Navy) also provide the key physical resources for 'off shore' SAR incidents.

Depending on specific local and / or regional operating procedures, Coastguard units can be tasked by;

- The Police
- RCCNZ

Coastguard Units can also 'self-task' in a SAROP from within their Unit, ensuring that the appropriate authority is informed. In other words if a Coastguard Unit or Skipper is the first to be informed of a distress situation, they can self-task rather than waiting to be tasked by a Coordinating Authority.

*The term SAROP stands for Search and Rescue Operation, and there are different categories of SAROPs depending on whether MNZ or NZ Police is coordinating the operation.*

*RCCNZ was established in 2004.*

## 4. Categories of SAR Incidents

There are two categories of SAR incidents which are defined by who the coordinating authority is:

### 4.1 Category I Incident

Operations are carried out under the authority of the **NZ Police**. Category I operations are co-ordinated at a local level and may include:

- marine incidents such as a vehicle crashing into a river
- a person falling off a wharf
- overdue vessels, missing paddle boarders

### 4.2 Category II Incident

Operations are carried out under the authority of the **RCCNZ**. Category II operations are co-ordinated at a national level and may include:

- All searches associated with missing or distressed aircraft.
- All searches where there has been distress beacon activation.
- The co-ordination international SAR operations that involve the use of national civil and military resources or foreign shipping
- Any operation where responsibility is transferred by mutual agreement from the Police to the Rescue Coordination Centre.

Incidents by Coordinating Authorities			
Mode	POLICE – Category 1	RCCNZ – Category 2	Total
Land	920	111	1,031
Marine	755	234	989
Aviation	...	273	273
Undetermined	...	48	48

*(Data for 2011-2012 taken from the NZ SAR Annual Report (2011-12) p5)*

The category of an incident may be changed depending on the circumstances and by the mutual consent of both RCCNZ and Police. The use of different categories in SAROPs is to clarify operational and financial responsibility.

## 5. Coastguard Operations

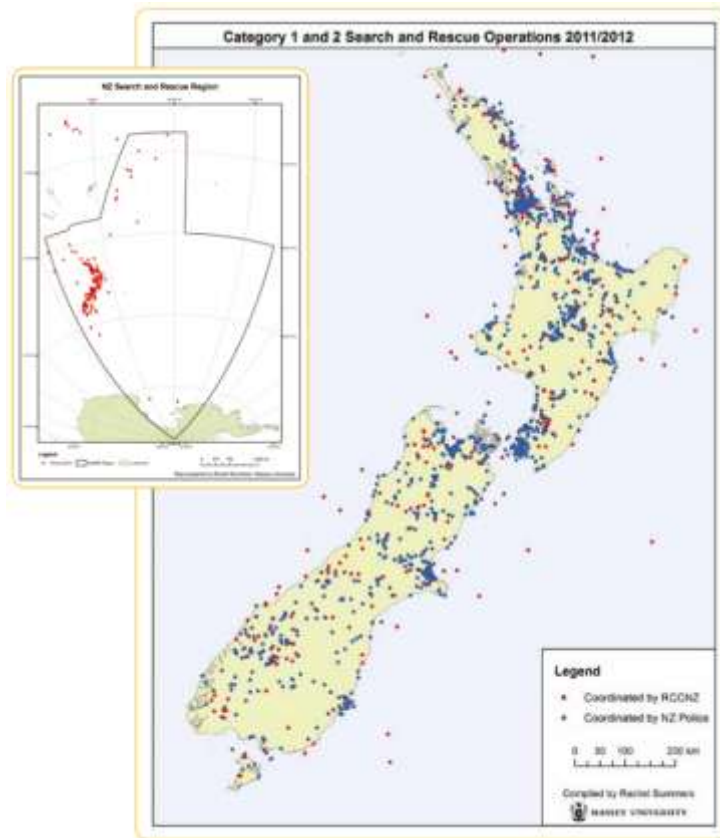
Preventative operations are also carried out by Coastguard. These operations provide 'Good Samaritan Assistance', for example, going to the assistance of a broken down vessel that is not in imminent danger. Preventative operations are not distress situations and the Coordinating Authorities do not need to be involved.

If during a preventative operation, a situation develops where human life

*Land Information New Zealand issues an annual notice to mariners entitled 'Search and Rescue Information and Procedures'. It provides a summary of the NZ Search and Rescue Sector (NZSAR).*

*This can be accessed from the LINZ website or at <http://www.linz.govt.nz/sites/default/files/docs/hydro/ntm/summary/annual/nz04.pdf>*

is in imminent danger, coordinating authorities should be informed immediately.



Each year Coastguard New Zealand publishes its Annual Report. Within the report details of the annual statistics are provided.

The reports can be accessed from the Coastguard NZ website at <http://www.coastguard.co.nz/index.php?page=annual-report>

(Data for 2011-2012 taken from the NZ SAR Annual Report (2011-12) p8)

#### ANNUAL STATISTICS – JULY 2011 TO JUNE 2012

Definitions	July 2011 to June 2012	July 2010 to June 2011
<b>Category 1</b> Search and Rescue operation where Police is the lead agency		
<b>Category 2</b> Search and Rescue operation where Rescue Coordination Centre (RCNZ) is the lead agency		
<b>Lives Saved</b> Where, if SAR agencies had not intervened, life would definitely have been lost		
<b>Lives Rescued</b> Where SAR agencies locate and rescue a person or people at risk and return them to a safe location		
<b>Lives Assisted</b> Where SAR agencies aid a person or people at low risk, but who, if left, would be at risk		
<b>Number Perished</b> - Where SAR agencies respond to an incident and locate a person or people who have perished		
<b>Not Located</b> - Where SAR agencies respond to an incident and the person/s are not located or crews are stood down		
<b>Needing Help</b> - Number of Persons Needing Coastguard Help		
	<b>3,339</b>	<b>3,337</b>
<b>Total Coastguard Missions</b>	6,634	6,996
Total SAROPS	462	387
CATEGORY 1	443	359
CATEGORY 2	19	28
Northern Region	210	127
Eastern Region	98	101
Central Region	41	50
Southern Region	113	109
<b>Coastguard Volunteers Involved in SAROPS</b>	<b>3,498</b>	<b>2,961</b>
<b>Coastguard Volunteer Hours on SAROPS</b>	<b>9,702</b>	<b>7,642</b>
<b>Lives Saved</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Lives Rescued</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Lives Assisted</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Number Perished</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Not Located*</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Needing Help*</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>558</b>

\* these hours are in addition to Coastguard rescue missions

(Annual statistics from Coastguard NZ Annual Report 2012, p31)