

July 5, 2013

Ms. Geraldine Underdown
Executive Director
National Search and Rescue Secretariat
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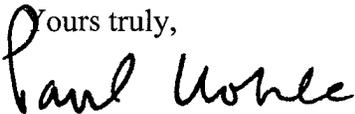
Email: QSR-EQRS@nss-snrs.gc.ca

Dear Ms. Underdown:

I am pleased to provide the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's response to the National Search and Rescue Secretariat - Quadrennial SAR Review.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our province's views on how search and rescue may be improved for the benefit of all residents in Newfoundland and Labrador. The QSAR review is timely and we trust the outcomes and subsequent actions will enhance these services to the satisfaction of all SAR stakeholders.

Should further information or clarification be required please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,


Paul G. Noble
Deputy Minister and
Deputy Attorney General (Acting)

Enclosure

- c. Mike Samson, Deputy Minister, Fire and Emergency Services
Sean Dutton, Deputy Minister, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs
Brent Meade, Deputy Minister, Transportation and Works
Bruce Cooper, Deputy Minister, Health and Community Services
Colleen Janes, Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs

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International and domestic obligations, including roles and mandates of federal, provincial and territorial partners.

<p>1. What are your roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities?</p>	<p>The National Search and Rescue Program guides the collective activities of both the federal government in the federally mandated areas of Canada's search and rescue (SAR) system, and the activities of provinces, territories and municipalities having either primary or secondary roles and responsibilities with respect to the provision of SAR services.</p> <p>The Federal Government is responsible for providing aeronautical SAR response in the entire country and in the surrounding oceans as established under international agreements and conventions. The federal responsibility for maritime SAR includes the above in addition to the Canadian portions of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Canada is also responsible for ground SAR within the National Parks system. All other ground and inland SAR incidents are provincial and territorial responsibility.</p> <p>Newfoundland and Labrador has two provincial police services – the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), who are responsible for the investigation of lost and missing persons and the coordination and tasking of GSAR operations. Federal assets can be requested for GSAR by the province for humanitarian efforts, if required.</p> <p>The Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association (NLSARA) is the only volunteer ground search and rescue organization recognized in the province and is comprised of 26 teams and 850+ volunteers. NLSARA are tasked by the police service of jurisdiction to perform ground search operations. The Province recently entered into a MOU with the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) for the provision of air support during ground searches. CASARA provides aircraft and 100+ volunteers who serve as pilots, navigators and spotters.</p>
<p>2. What international obligations define your contribution to the SAR system?</p>	<p>Provincial resources are available to assist other SAR agencies on international SAR operations as required.</p> <p>The Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers adopted an International Emergency Management Assistance Compact (IEMAC) in June 1998 to enable the participating states of the United States of America and the participating provinces of Canada to</p>

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	<p>assist and/or request assistance from other party jurisdictions. The International Emergency Management Group (IEMG) was established through the International Emergency Management Assistance Memorandum of Understanding (IEMAMOU) in July 2000 to develop and maintain mutual aid agreements and provide international leadership for Emergency Response cooperation, mutual aid and public safety for its member States and Provinces. A request for SAR assistance via this agreement would be solely limited to the management of emergency/disaster events when the Province has exhausted all of its own resources.</p>
3. What domestic obligations (i.e. legislation, policies) define your contribution to the SAR program?	<p>The RNC & RCMP have individualized GSAR policies and are responsible for the coordination of all GSAR operations within their respective jurisdictions.</p>
4. Who are your key partners and stakeholders in delivering SAR?	<p>A number of provincial government departments participate in delivering SAR in NL. These include:</p> <p>(1) <u>Department of Justice</u>: The Public Safety and Enforcement Division is responsible for the GSAR component of both provincial police forces – the RCMP and RNC. Justice is also the point of contact for the NLSARA. A departmental representative also sits on a national committee for GSAR and attends the national conference SARSCENE. Justice had taken the lead to enter an agreement with Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) to provide air support during GSAR incidents as required.</p> <p>(2) <u>Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL)</u>: FES-NL’s role is to facilitate the request from police service of jurisdiction for the search to Government Air Services in Gander for the provision of an air asset. If the contracted air resource is unable to comply with the request, then FES-NL is the recognized provincial authority to request humanitarian assistance from the Federal Government through the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC).</p> <p>(3) <u>Department of Transportation and Works</u>: The Air Services Division is responsible for the operation of the forest fire protection service, operation and maintenance of the government air ambulance service and administration of contract/charter aircraft for government. FES-NL requests air support for GSAR from the Air Services Division located in Gander.</p> <p>(4) <u>Department of Health and Community Services</u>: The Acute Health Services and Emergency Response Division ensures the provincial health system maintains a state of readiness to respond to and recover from an</p>

operational disruption or a disaster. They also coordinate the Road and Air Ambulance Program.

A number of federal departments and agencies are also involved in delivering SAR in NL. The Province's understanding of the operation of the federal SAR system is provided below. NL's federal partners are managed through the federal Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue (ICSAR), which includes senior representatives from the Canadian Forces (CF), Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), Environment Canada/Meteorological Service of Canada (EC), Parks Canada Agency (PCA), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Transport Canada (TC). The committee includes observers from Public Safety Canada (PSC), Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), the Privy Council Office (PCO), Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan). More specifically:

(1) Department of National Defence: DND is operationally the lead ministry for response to aeronautical and maritime incidents in federal jurisdiction. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the CCG staffs a Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax, NS that serves NL. CF Bases in the region support the Halifax JRCC.

(2) Canadian Coast Guard: The CCG, as part of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is the primary provider for maritime SAR, and provides services such as detecting maritime incidents and with the assistance of the DND, coordinating, controlling and conducting SAR operations in maritime SAR situations within Canadian areas of federal responsibility; providing maritime resources to help with aeronautical SAR operations as necessary; and, when and where available, providing the provision of SAR resources to assist in humanitarian and civil incidents within provincial, territorial or municipal areas. The CCG also co-ordinates, controls and conducts SAR Prevention programs to reduce the number and severity of maritime SAR incidents.

(3) Marine Rescue Sub Center (MRSC): The CCG operated two MRSCs, one of which was in St. John's. The function of a MRSC was to reduce the JRCC's workload in areas of high marine activity. These centres were staffed by SAR coordinators who operated 24/7. The St. John's sub-centre handled an average of 500 incidents involving 2,900 people annually. Of those, 28 per cent were classified as distress incidents. On April 30 2012, amid significant public protest, the Marine Rescue Sub Center in St. John's

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was closed. All distress calls are now vetted through the JRCC in Halifax. The Government of NL continues to oppose this closure and encourages the reinstatement of this office in St. John's.

(4) Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centres (MCTSC): MCTSC provides the initial response to ships in a distress situation; reduces the probability of ships being involved in collisions, groundings, and strikings; and is a cornerstone in the marine information collection and dissemination infrastructure. On May 17, 2012, employees at MCTSCs in St. John's and St. Anthony learned that their centres were also slated to close. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador opposes the closure of these offices.

(5) Joint Rescue Command Centres (JRCC): The JRCC in Halifax coordinates all SAR operations associated with aircraft and marine emergencies in its region – which comprises of eastern Quebec, the Atlantic Provinces and the southern portion of Baffin Island (Arctic South). The Centre collects and distributes essential information concerning a distress situation, arranges the dispatch of rescue assets and personnel to ships or aircraft in distress and coordinates the efforts of all responding resources. The JRCC ultimately makes the decision on how to respond to an aeronautical or marine emergency and whether or not to deploy federal assets for ground/inland searches in a humanitarian capacity.

(6) 9 Wing Gander: 9 Wing is a CF Base and home to 103 Search and Rescue Squadron. 9 Wing is responsible for providing primary SAR services throughout NL and northeastern QC – one of the busiest SAR regions in Canada at twice the national average. Given the proximity to major fishing grounds and shipping routes, the majority of its missions are marine-based.

(7) 14 Wing Greenwood: 14 Wing is a Canadian Forces (CF) Base located in NS and home to three operational squadrons, one of which is the 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron. The squadron is responsible for SAR throughout the JRCC Halifax region with four CC-130 Hercules aircraft and a fleet of CH-149 Cormorant helicopters.

(8) 5 Wing Goose Bay: 5 Wing is a CF Base and home to 444 Combat Support Squadron, which provides secondary SAR response. Minister MacKay indicated in the House of Commons in March 2013 that SAR

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capacity at 5 Wing had been enhanced. NL supports this and is interested in clarification on what those enhancements entail.

(9) Fifth Canadian Rangers Patrol Group (5 CRPG): Canadian Rangers provide surveillance and act as local subject matter experts for the regular forces. The 5 CRPG are stationed in Gander and is the division covering the province. There are 12 patrols located in Labrador and 19 on the island portion of the province. 5CRPGs are tasked by the Canadian Forces.

(10) Parks Canada: Parks Canada is responsible for GSAR operations with assistance roles in aeronautical and marine SAR within park boundaries. Park staff focus on providing safety education to visitors, preventing incidents and cooperating with SAR partners. Park resources are limited and NLSARA teams, tasked by police services of jurisdiction, now perform GSAR operations within National Parks (Gros Morne, Terra Nova, and Torngat Mountains) as well as National Historic Sites (Signal Hill, Cape Spear)

(11) Environment Canada (EC) / Meteorological Service of Canada: EC provides information related to local weather, ice conditions and warnings. In support of SAR, detailed information can be requested from 6:00am to midnight.

(12) Transport Canada (TC): TC provides regulations and programs that assist in reducing the probability of an incident occurring and mitigates potential consequences. TC also provides regulations concerning the emergency equipment and alerting devices.

There are also a number of non-government voluntary and arms-length organizations involved in the provision of SAR in NL. These include:

(1) National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS): The NSS is an autonomous arm's length organization within DND that is the central coordinating point for the National SAR Program for the federal element of SAR. While it does not direct or manage the work of its partners, the NSS brings them together to encourage collaboration and to ensure best use is made of their diverse resources and capabilities. NSS works directly with provincial and territorial SAR authorities and police services to develop and standardize the quantity and quality of SAR service available to the provinces and territories

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(2) Northern SAR Roundtable: The Northern SAR Roundtable is an initiative of the NSS and is mandated to focus on SAR program and policy issues that are common to Northern territories and regions. Its members include FPT government representatives and volunteer organizations.

(3) Ground Search and Rescue Council of Canada (GSARCC): The GSARCC represents the SAR authorities in the provinces and territories in an effort to enhance the delivery of GSAR programs the coordinated development of GSAR policies and programs.

(4) Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC): SARVAC is a federally incorporated registered Canadian Charity that provides a national voice for GSAR volunteers in Canada. SARVAC represents the 13 thirteen provincial and territorial volunteer GSAR Associations in Canada.

(5) Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA): The CCGA is a volunteer organization that works to augment the maritime SAR response in conjunction with the CCG.

(6) Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA): CASARA is a Canada-wide volunteer aviation association dedicated to the promotion of aviation safety, and to the provision of air search support services to the National SAR Program. CASARA will provide air support during GSAR operations as required by the tasking police service.

(7) Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association (NLSARA) - NLSARA is the province-wide ground search and rescue association comprised of 26 teams and 850+ volunteers. NLSARA was successful in securing annual funding from the provincial government for training and equipment purchases; the establishment of an indemnification agreement with the province against injury and property loss for volunteers; obtaining workers' compensation coverage for volunteers; and securing federal government contributions for the implementation of standardized training programs for volunteers.

(8) Canadian Red Cross (CRC): NL's Department of Advanced Education and Skills (AES) has a MOU with CRC for Emergency Social Services (ESS) services during emergencies. The RCMP and RNC have called upon the CRC to assist with operations under the AES MOU as well as their own Letter of Offer for smaller operations.

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	<p>(9) <u>Salvation Army</u>: NLSARA, RNC and RCMP call upon the Salvation Army for miscellaneous services including de-briefing/counseling, meals on site during certain operations, etc.</p>
<p>The key components that contribute to operational readiness and response</p>	
<p>1. How many and what type of personnel are engaged in SAR response activities in your organization/jurisdiction?</p>	<p>Each provincial police service (RNC & RCMP) has one dedicated GSAR Coordinator in the province. Responders include a mix of police and volunteer GSAR and CASARA resources depending on each operation.</p> <p>GSAR volunteers – 1,000 (includes NLSARA and CASARA)</p>
<p>2. What type of training do your personnel receive? And to what standard?</p>	<p>GSAR training standards as per NLSARA’s provincial standards. NLSARA ensures volunteers are up-to-date on training requirements. In 2002, all provinces and territories agreed to adopt a common set of training standards to serve as a basis for harmonization and certification of GSAR skills across Canada. NLSARA provides training to volunteers for the Searcher I, Searcher II, Searcher III, Search Manager and Incident Commander certifications. Training covers a plethora of topics ranging from search techniques to using specialized equipment.</p>
<p>3. Do you have defined levels of service? If so, how are they defined?</p>	<p>Both provincial police services operate a Communication Centre 24/7/365 and respond immediately to lost and missing persons, where a preliminary investigation is conducted and a determination made as to whether or not further resources should be deployed.</p>
<p>4. What key pieces of equipment/assets are used for SAR? Identify dedicated and multi-tasked equipment/assets</p>	<p>Noted equipment is multi-tasked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Command post - Marine units/hovercraft - Snowmobiles, ATVs - Canine units - Miscellaneous (e.g. high-angle rescue, thermal imaging) - Aircraft as required
<p>5. Where are your SAR assets located?</p>	<p>Throughout the province with both police services as well as with individual GSAR and CASARA teams.</p>

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<p>6. Over the last two years, how many and what type of SAR incidents do you respond to most often on an annual basis? How may they be changing?</p>	<p>GSAR - Approximately 150 lost/missing and despondent persons.</p> <p>Air & Marine– Assisting with shoreline searches when required (approximately 10-12% of GSAR searches)</p> <p>The increased attention to tourism and the availability of more complex technology leads individuals to become more adventurous, but with a false sense of security.</p>
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SAR prevention efforts currently in place

<p>1. How does your organization/jurisdiction define prevention (i.e. education, regulations, enforcement, and investigation)?</p>	<p>The Province is very committed to the national vision for prevention and SAR objectives as demonstrated in the utilization of the Adventure Smart Program (Hug-A-Tree and Survive Canada, Snow Safety Education Program, Survive Outside Program and Survive Outside Snowmobiling) coordinated through the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC).</p>
<p>2. What does your organization do to prevent/minimize SAR incidents?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education programs in schools, malls, special events, public forums, etc. ▪ Enforcement (e.g. marine patrols)
<p>3. How many and what type of resources are committed to prevention programs?</p>	<p>Province-wide NLSARA volunteers (850+) are committed on an as-needed basis to such groups as schools, senior citizens, hunters, anglers, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, and community events, etc. Where regulations exist, the policing service of jurisdiction enforces standards. (e.g. boating safety)</p>

Technology's role in SAR

<p>1. What technology do you use to manage SAR decision making?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ArcGIS • NSS New Initiative Funding (NIF) project underway to implement province-wide Live Radio tracking system • Incident Command System • DeLorme inReach Satellite Tracking System
<p>2. What key pieces of technology do you use to reduce the frequency and severity of SAR incidents?</p>	<p>Province-wide SAR prevention program</p>

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3. Is your technology interoperable with that of your key SAR partners?	Radio communications (VHF)
4. What pieces of technology do you expect to bring on-line in the next four years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement radio system (Live Tracking) • Next Generation GIS • Knowledge Management System (KMS) • Deployable repeaters and related equipment

The state of Canada’s SAR system

1. How do you measure the effectiveness/efficiency of your SAR program (e.g. response times, prevention)	<p>Debriefs take place at team level. Both provincial police services generate files for each incident and are maintained on their respective file management systems.</p> <p>The Province and NLSARA are open to exploring the province-wide implementation of the KMS.</p>
2. What are the strengths of Canada’s SAR system?	<p>Volunteers are integral in Canada’s SAR system.</p> <p>SARVAC is the national association which provides guidance to all provincial and territorial GSAR groups. This association provides an open line of communication amongst all GSAR volunteers.</p> <p>Once deployed, front-line operations work well.</p>
3. What are the gaps and seams within Canada’s SAR system?	<p>As has been publically articulated by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, there are a number of serious concerns the Province has with the readiness of the air and marine SAR system in Canada. In 2013, the Federal Auditor General made a number of recommendations to improve the air and marine SAR system in Canada. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and CCG should systematically analyze its SAR data, so that its provision of service is based on current and expected SAR needs. • DND should systematically analyze its SAR data, so that its provision of service is based on current and anticipated SAR needs. • DND should assign a sufficient number of SAR personnel to continue to meet operational needs and provide for the necessary training, professional development, and leave of SAR personnel.

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- To identify and implement staffing and training needs, the CCG should review its SAR rescue training requirements to ensure that they are in alignment with crewing profiles, and track the number of exemptions granted for vessels to proceed without a rescue specialist.
- DND should give priority to the acquisition of new aircraft that are best suited for SAR activities and ensure it has sufficient numbers of these resources to meet SAR needs on an ongoing basis.
- DND, in consultation with DFO, should develop an information system that meets current and future requirements and develop a plan to cover the gap until the system is replaced.
- DND should ensure that SAR New Initiatives Fund project results are used to improve future SAR activities.
- TC should consider whether requirements for the use of digital emergency beacons should be applied to additional classes of boats and airplanes.
- DND, in consultation with DFO, TC and other federal departments, and provinces and territories, should take steps to improve the governance structure, including developing objectives, performance indicators, and reporting that would enhance SAR service and coordination.

NL supports the Federal Government implementing these recommendations.

While the following outlines key problems facing the SAR system, the two critical areas proposed for discussion at the SAR Forum are (1) and (2) below:

(1) Personnel shortages and training challenges that limit the ability of the CF and CCG to maintain SAR operations. There needs to be dedicated SAR personnel and in-service assets available at all times.

(2) There is a need to commit to 24/7/365 30 minute response times.

(3) The CF aircraft and helicopters are in need of maintenance and replacement.

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	<p>(4) The closure of the CCG Marine Rescue Sub-Centre has limited the ability to respond to maritime disasters in NL and has placed staffing pressure on the JRCC.</p>
<p>4. What challenges do you see for the Canada SAR system over the next four years?</p>	<p>Challenges going forward for Canada’s SAR system include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Fulfilling the staffing and asset upgrades recommended by the federal Auditor General in a time of federal fiscal restraint.2) Increasing competition from the private sector for SAR techs and their skill sets. These retention challenges will further exacerbate the recruitment challenges facing the SAR system.3) As the GSAR system, in particular, is heavily dependent on volunteers, ensuring this base of support is sustainable may be a challenge.4) Ensuring the sustainability of the volunteer base.