

UNITED KINGDOM SEARCH AND RESCUE (UKSAR) OPERATORS GROUP

REPORT OF MEETING OF 8 APRIL 2002

1. The minutes of the meeting of 30 October 2001 were agreed.
2. Generic risk assessments had been produced to look at the inherent risks associated with Search and Rescue provision, particularly in hostile environments. Concerns were raised within the Group that the public perception was that once a uniformed member of an emergency service arrived on scene that they would be able to affect a rescue. Concerns were raised that this perception may encourage un-trained personnel to attempt a rescue for which they are not equipped to undertake.
3. The Group noted that a number of extreme sports organisations were being formed and that it would be useful if links could be forged between UKSAR and these new organisations at the outset.
4. The National SAR Framework Document had been slightly amended prior to its final publication.
5. The Group were concerned about the number of requests for access to the VHF Marine Band Channels from a number of organisations. The Group acknowledge that the main issue was not access to Channels but inter operability in working practices.
6. The Group discussed the small attendance at the inland consultative committee. It was noted that the Marine Safety Co-ordinating Committee was actively encouraging people to make more use of water based leisure activities. The Group agreed that there needed to be more emphasis on education and prevention activities.
7. One of the major issues raised at the Maritime and Aviation consultative Committee was the use of mobile phones to alert the SAR services. It was thought that the Communications Working Group should lead on the subject and look towards issuing simple advice.
8. The Group welcomed the formation of the Confederation of Helicopter Ambulance Services (CHAS) and thought that it would be a major step forward in getting a consistent voice. It was agreed that an information link would be formed between UKSAR and CHAS.
9. It was agreed that owing to the ongoing problems with satellite communications issues that the Group would approve the formation of a UKSAR Satellite Communications Working Group to look at the wider issues of all satellite communications used for SAR.
10. An update was provided by the RNLI on the progress of their new beach rescue initiative.