

UNITED KINGDOM SEARCH AND RESCUE (UKSAR) OPERATORS GROUP

REPORT FROM THE MEETING OF 15 NOVEMBER 2000

1. The minutes of the meeting of the 19 September 2002 were agreed.
2. Representatives from the Home Office to sit on the Group were still being sought.
3. Work was being undertaken to publicise the work of the group to widest audience. Work was also underway to establish a UKSAR website. Members of the Group were asked what they would like to see on the website.
4. A definition of Search and Rescue had been agreed by the Strategic Committee, it was noted that the Framework Drafting Group were also looking at a definition of Search and Rescue. The Group agreed that the two draft definitions should be looked at to agree one final definitive definition, which would be used by all the UKSAR organisations.
5. The final draft of the Inland Water Safety Scoping Study was in production, but had not been finalised. The Groups comments had been incorporated by the author of the study.
6. The Standard Operational procedures for the Use of Helicopters for UK Fire Brigade – Offshore Operations were endorsed by the Group.
7. A Working Group had been established to look at the deconfliction of Emergency Service Helicopters at incidents.
8. The Group were concerned that there needed to be a better representation of Air Ambulance authorities on the Group, to ensure that all aspects of the emergency services were aware of the new approach to UK Search and Rescue.
9. There were concerns that not all statistical information on search and rescue was being captured because SAR incidents were being attended by non SAR assets. Operations Rooms were not always able to identify what was a SAR call upon first notification. The Group agreed that there was a lack of understanding of what the individual roles were for each organisation particularly with regard to air assets. There were also a number of health and safety issues associated with non SAR assets attending SAR incidents. Both Police and Air Ambulance were keen to become involved in SAR but there needed to be one overarching policy for the command and control of air assets. The Group agreed that a working group should be established to look at SAR taskings.
10. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Helicopter Provision Working Group were agreed. A risk assessment to identify high risk SAR casualty areas had been agreed. The Group were still having problems collecting meaningful statistical information.

11. An initial draft of the Framework Document had been circulated to the members of the working Group for comments.
12. The Terms of Reference for the SAR Communications Working Group were agreed following clarification that the National Controlling Committee would be amalgamated into the Communications Working Group.
13. Following discussions about the use of radio channel frequencies for inland SAR and air to ground communications it was suggested that Channel 73 could be used as a common air to ground frequency. The suggestion would be discussed with the Radiocommunications Agency (RA) to see if it was feasible and legal. If the suggestion was to be agreed formal applications would need to be made to the MCA and the RA for approval.
14. The Group look at the hazards of working within the crashed aircraft environment. It was noted that there were specific hazards for this type of SAR work and that specific guidance may be required. The Group agreed to look at the risk assessments already established.
15. It was noted that the costs for search and rescue within the UK lay where they fell within each organisation.