

UNITED KINGDOM SEARCH AND RESCUE (UKSAR) OPERATORS GROUP

MARITIME AND AVIATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF MEETING OF 9 DECEMBER 2003

1. The minutes of the meeting of 13 June were agreed.
2. The Chairman noted his disappointment with regard to the number of Committee members who had attended the meeting.
3. No items had been submitted for inclusion on the UKSAR website, the Committee were urged to consider ideas for the site. Since its launch the site had received approx.26,000 hits. The site could be found at www.uk-sar.org.
4. The Committee were provided with an update on the helicopter harmonisation project. Discussions were still ongoing between the MCA and the MoD with regard to the establishment of a Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre (JRCC).
5. One issue which was discussed was the difficulties of communications between SAR services, particularly with regard to the introduction of AIRWAVE.
6. The Committee were provided with an update on the current position on the development of the Inland SAR database (INREM).
7. One notable success of the UKSAR organisation was the provision of 10 new VHF frequencies for the use by inland SAR. The Channels had been provided by the MCA, but strict licensing conditions had also been established to ensure that there were no breaches of the licence conditions. Copies of the Implementation and Control Document for inland SAR communications was available on the UKSAR Website.
8. The Committee were provided with an update on the progress of the Firefighting at Sea project.
9. Concerns had been raised at the Operators Group with regard to the draft working at heights regulations which had been proposed by the Health and Safety Executive and were currently out for public consultation.
10. Discussions had been established between the UK and French SAR authorities to look at the possibility of establishing a joint Anglo/French Channel Navigation Information Service at Dover Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre.
11. A six month trail of the SAR risk assessment methodology had been established on the River Mersey.

12. The Committee were asked to note that the UKSAR Framework Document was due to be updated, any amendments were to be forward to the MCA.
13. Concerns had been raised following the Home Office's consultation paper on the reformation of the law on involuntary manslaughter, it was thought that this may have a knock on effect on volunteer SAR teams.
14. The Committee were provided a brief on the latest position with regard to the establishment of offshore wind farms. Discussions were ongoing with the operators on SAR incidents within windfarms. The MCA hoped to establish exercises with operators of the windfarms to test SAR response procedure.
15. The Committee were provided with an update on the latest developments on the MCA's SAR prevention strategy. The Committee were reassured that the MCA intended to take forward any strategy in partnership with all the other SAR providers.
16. No membership requests had been received.