

UNITED KINGDOM SEARCH AND RESCUE (UKSAR) OPERATORS GROUP

MARITIME AND AVIATION CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF MEETING OF 26 NOVEMBER 2002

1. The minutes of the meeting of 12 June 2002 were agreed.
2. The Committee were advised that the UKSAR Framework Document had been completed, hard copies were available from the MCA. Copies were also available from the MCA's website and would also be available from the UKSAR website.
3. Following the introduction of the revised SAR arrangements on the Thames on 2 January 2002, 672 incidents had been dealt with.
4. The Committee were provided with a brief on the issues surrounding the use of mobile phones. It was noted that the advancement in both mobile phone technology and command and control technology would allow more accurate identification of the caller.
5. The MCA had agreed with the Radiocommunications Agency that the inland SAR community are to be allocated 5 dedicated VHF channels.
6. The RNLI had no plans to expand their Beach Rescue facilities to any additional beaches in 2003, but would be concentrating on consolidating and developing those beaches which had facilities.
7. The RYA Sea Sense project had been well received by both the public and harbour masters.
8. The Committee were provided with an update on the SAR helicopter Harmonisation project.
9. The Committee were briefed on the recent meeting of the UKSAR Operators Group meeting. One of the major initiatives being introduced was the development of an Inland SAR database to collect information on inland SAR incidents.
10. The Committee were provided with an update on the progress of the Inland SAR Consultative Committee. One of the major issues raised was the lack of commonality with regard to insurance for volunteers across the country. Concern had also raised with regard to the deployment of Air Ambulances to SAR incidents which they not equipped to deal with. These concerns had been raised with the UKSAR Resource Tasking Working Group.
11. The MCA draft rescue boat code would be available for consultation early in 2003, the code had been drawn up in conjunction with the RNLI.

12. No decision had been taken with regard to the retention of the Portland SAR helicopter. The Committee were also briefed of the recent loss of one of the Portland SAR helicopters.
13. The Committee raised concerns with regard to the SAR within the boundaries of windfarms. It was noted that the Operator Group were already looking at all the issues surrounding the sighting and building of offshore windfarms.
14. The MCA's recently appointed SAR prevention manager gave the Committee a briefing on his role and the future MCA prevention strategy. He explained that the Agency's concept was to work in partnership with other SAR organisations and to work in close co-operation with the MAIB.
15. The MCA were involved in the maritime security process but its role was still to be clearly defined.
16. The committee were provided with an update on the progress of the firefighting at sea project currently being undertaken by the MCA.
17. Concerns were raised over the escalating costs of insurance for independent lifeboats, which was threatening the continued availability of these SAR assets.
18. The RYA had set up a task force to look at improving the safety record of motor boats.