



Standard Operating Procedures
Version 1.05

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Declaration

Land and Water Search

WMSAR was originally formed in 2007 as a water search organisation to support the Fire & Rescue authority. However, search capabilities have now extended into Land Search and the organisation is affiliated to the Association of Lowland Search and Rescue (ALSAR). ALSAR governs the standards for land based search and rescue and WMSAR members follow ALSAR's training protocols etc.

The following procedures are therefore applicable to both land and water based searches. By necessity the water based searches have more detailed procedures as by their nature they use more technical and sophisticated equipment and the environment the members operate in is potentially more hostile and dangerous.

Officer & Member Job Descriptions

Charity Trustee Roles

Chairman (Elected)

Responsible for all management functions of the charity and cohesion of the team (excluding operational aspect) and chairing Executive Committee (trustee) meetings

Responsible for driving the organisational strategy.

Responsible to the Trustees of the charity. The official face/spokesman of the organisation.

Treasurer (Elected)

Responsible Executive for the finances and accounts of the organisation.

Secretary (Elected)

Responsible for accurate record keeping and dissemination of minutes and calling meetings as and when required.

Trustees without Portfolio (Five x Elected)

Charity Executive Roles

Fundraising Officer (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible to the Executive committee for raising funds and promoting the good name of the organisation.

Press Relations Officer (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible for all aspects of communications externally including the organisations social media accounts and dealing with the Press/Media. Reports directly to the Executive Committee.

Asset Manager (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible for maintenance accounting for and procurement of all of the assets of the organisation including communications equipment

Health and Safety Officer (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Health and Safety, and ensuring that legislation is adhered to. Responsible for maintenance of the D4H website and DBS checks. Reports directly to the Executive Committee.

Information and Data Compliance Officer (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible for ensuring compliance with data and privacy laws.

Operations Manager (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible for all operational aspects and holds absolute control over these functions. Responsible to the Trustees.

Land Search & Rescue Lead (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible for the oversight of all training requirements for the organisation's land search & rescue operations. Responsible to the Operations Manager.

Water Search & Rescue Lead (Appointed by Trustees)

Responsible for the oversight of all training requirements for the organisations water search & rescue operations. Responsible to the Operations Manager.

Training Section Head – Land Search (Appointed by SAR Leads)

Responsible for the management and provision of all training requirements for the organisations Land Search response during operations. Responsible to the Land SAR Lead.

Training Section Head - Medical (Appointed by SAR Leads)

Responsible for the management and provision of all training requirements for the organisations Medical/ First Aid response during operations. Responsible to the Land and Water SAR Leads.

Training Section Head - Navigation (Appointed by SAR Leads)

Responsible for the management and provision of all training requirements for the organisations Medical/ First Aid response during operations. Responsible to the Land and Water SAR Leads.

Training Section Head - Communications (Appointed by SAR Leads)

Responsible for the management and provision of all training requirements for the organisations Medical/ First Aid response during operations. Responsible to the Land and Water SAR Leads.

Training Section Head – Water Skills (Appointed by SAR Leads)

Responsible for the management and provision of all training requirements for the organisations Medical/ First Aid response during operations. Responsible to the Land and Water SAR Leads.

Training Section Head – Rescue Skills (Appointed by SAR Leads)

Responsible for the management and provision of all training requirements for the organisations Medical/ First Aid response during operations. Responsible to the Land and Water SAR Leads.

Training Section Head – Health & Safety (Appointed by SAR Leads)

Responsible for the management and provision of all training requirements for the organisations Medical/ First Aid response during operations. Responsible to the Land and Water SAR Leads.

Operational Roles

Operational Commander/Commander

This person is responsible for the safe working practices and resourcing whilst on operational duties. This person may change from operation to operation. In case of Land Search, this will be the Search Manager for the wider operation, and Team Leaders for individual teams.

Operational Member

A member of WMSAR who has exhibited competency in all operational areas and been designated as operational by the Committee and is, therefore, capable of attending call outs in support of the statutory agencies and DEFRA. Operational areas will be defined as Water and Land operations, and members will be required to show competency for both separately.

Non Operational Member

A member of the organisation not involved in operational duties but involved for example in fundraising. Operational Members who have not exhibited competency during training or callouts for a period of 3 months will be made non-operational until they can demonstrate competency at a training session.

Support Member

A member of the organisation not involved in searching, but involved in the running of the charity or operations. These members will be appointed to assist in aspects of team operations as needed, but will not be deployed as searchers.

Trainee Member

A member of the team undergoing training who is not yet deemed fully competent to perform operational duties.

Probationary Member.

A Member of the team who is within his/her 3month probationary Period. Their rights are defined under the membership agreement.

1.HEALTH AND SAFETY

Introduction

- 1.1 WMSAR is a voluntary organisation and is not bound by the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. However, that act shall be used where possible as a guide to best practice. This places an obligation on WMSAR to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its members as far as is practicable. The Act also requires Members to take care of their own health and safety at work, and that of others who might be affected by their acts or omissions, and to co-operate with WMSAR to meet these obligations.

- 1.2 The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 came into force on 6 April 2008, across the UK. The Act sets out a new offence for convicting an organisation or and Individual where a gross failure in the way activities were managed or organised results in a person's death. This will apply to a wide range of organisations across the public and private sectors. In England and Wales and Northern Ireland, the new offence will be called corporate manslaughter. It will be called corporate homicide in Scotland. Under a new approach, courts will look at management systems and practices across the organisation, providing a more effective means for prosecuting the worst corporate or Individual failures to manage health and safety properly.

Line management

- 1.3 Line management is responsible for the Health and Safety of members within the operational areas of their work. They must ensure that safe systems of work are implemented and, where necessary, that members are provided with relevant personal protective clothing and equipment which is properly maintained. Line managers should also provide training for operational health and safety purposes at all levels of membership as and when required.

Members should also be given the following information:-

- a) The name and location of their direct commander who shall act as their safety officer or safety adviser
- b) Who to contact for first aid treatment or where to get this information
- c) The evacuation procedure in instances where evacuation is required.
- d) Any other information necessary to do their work safely.

Personal responsibilities

- 1.4 Personal responsibilities:
 - 1.4.1. All individuals in the chain of management and ultimately the person issuing an instruction are personally responsible under H&S legislation.
 - 1.4.2. Adequate training and supervision must not only be provided, but this must be able to prove that this was given hence the importance of training records.
 - 1.4.3. Persons in charge of all equipment, premises and personnel must be aware of their responsibilities under H & S legislation.
 - 1.4.4. In the event of an accident, particularly a serious accident, where the H & S Executive

takes action, it is the person in charge who is deemed responsible. Fines may be made directly against an individual and cannot be recovered by insurance.

1.4.5. Anyone detecting a potential health and safety hazard must report it and it is in his best interest to copy such a report and any subsequent correspondence relating to it.

1.4.6. The organisation will provide suitable equipment fit for purpose.

Playing your Part

1.5 You should: -

- a) Co-operate with the organisation to meet its statutory obligation.
- b) Read all guidance on health and safety matters.
- c) Use safe systems of work as intended.
- d) Use personal protective equipment where necessary.
 - i. You must report injuries, safety hazards, dangerous situations or occurrences promptly to the officer in charge. Where action is not taken within a reasonable time, inform your safety representative.
 - ii. You must advise your commander on an operation if you feel unfit or unable to perform the work required. This will include standing down if you deem the situation to be dangerous.

Reporting of Accidents

1.6 Any Team members involved in an accident or near miss that arises out of or in the course of their official duties must report this to the Commanding Officer and it shall be entered into the accident book or online log. A prescribed disease contracted due to the nature of your duties must also be reported.

Notification of unfitness for duty - long term

1.7 All team members are reminded of the importance of maintaining the required standard of fitness to enable them properly to fulfil their duties, which may at times involve considerable physical exertion. Team members who know or suspect that they have a condition which may be adversely affected by physical exertion are reminded they must inform the officer in charge in writing of the fact as soon as they become aware of it.

Any significant loss of hearing in one or both ears should also be reported, as should any significant change in eye sight.

Notification of unfitness for duty - short term

1.8 The Officer in Charge/Coxswain/Land Search Team Leader/Planner/ Operational Commander/Commander should be informed if injury or sickness temporarily incapacitates a member of the crew and prevents them from carrying out their duties. WMSAR has a strict Zero tolerance on Drugs and Alcohol, any member found on duty whilst suspected of being under the influence will be immediately suspended.

1.81 Members must use their best endeavours to utilise the WMSAR on call/off call facility on whatever system is in use whether electronic or otherwise to show their availability for callouts and training.

The current system for booking on and off call is D4H and all members must familiarise

themselves with how to book on and off call. Training will be provided.

This is essential as there may be times when selective call outs are initiated based upon the data held at any particular time on D4H.

RIDDOR regulations

- 1.9 Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 (RIDDOR) the organisation is required to report:
1. Certain accidents such as those resulting in fatalities or minor injuries which result in a member of staff being away from duty for more than three days or being admitted to hospital for more than 24 hours.
 2. Prescribed diseases and dangerous occurrences (even if nobody injured)
- Must be reported to the enforcing authority which is the nearest health and safety office.

Dynamic Risk assessment

- 1.10 The following points should be considered when carrying out a Dynamic Risk Assessment:
- HAZARD - List the hazards. Look only for hazards that you could reasonable expect to result in significant harm under the conditions in your work place.
- WHO MIGHT BE HARMED - List groups of people who are especially at risk from the significant hazards that you have identified.
- IS THE RISK ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED - List the existing controls or note where information may be found e.g. training and procedures.
- WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS NECESSARY TO CONTROL THE RISK - List the risks which are not adequately controlled and the action you would take where it is reasonable practicable to do more, assess also the level of risk.

Exercise procedures

- 1.11 It is the responsibility of the Training Section Heads to ensure that a risk assessment has been completed & briefed. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure this is understood and that He/She has endorsed the Risk Assessment and Briefing Record form and where appropriate is included in the exercise orders. When external organisations are involved, they are to be consulted on the risk assessment. For internal exercises with non-conventional work patterns or non-standard equipment the draft risk assessment should be reviewed prior to the exercise taking place.

2. DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF TEAM MEMBERS

Operational Commander

- 2.1 The person shall be selected as an experienced, qualified and committed member.
- 2.2 The qualification shall be that deemed necessary by the Operational Management Team.
- 2.3 Shall be responsible for the decision and organisation as to what resources shall be safely deployed and dynamic appointment of Team leaders.
- 2.4 He/She will maintain ultimate Operational Control in "For Real" and training exercises.
- 2.5 Will ensure all appropriate records appertaining to the Incident are recorded and maintained.

Deputy Operational Commanders

- 2.6 The person(s) shall be selected as experienced, qualified and committed members(s).
- 2.7 The qualification shall be that deemed necessary by the organisation.
- 2.8 Shall be responsible for the decision and organisation as to what resources shall be safely deployed and dynamic appointment of team leaders.
- 2.9 Will deputise for the Operational Commander in his / her absence.
- 2.10 Will ensure all appropriate records appertaining to the Incident are recorded and maintained.

Coxswain/ Boat Team leader

- 2.11 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Water Search & Rescue Lead.
- 2.12 Shall be responsible for the safe and efficient running of the boat/unit under his/her control.
- 2.15 Will be responsible for the safety of the crew, boat and equipment whilst the boat is being launched and recovered.

Helmsman

- 2.26 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Water Search & Rescue Lead
- 2.27 Will Cox boat in daylight (and night-time if authorised and qualified) including in foul weather.
- 2.28 Operate under direction of Coxswain or Boat Team Leader.

Boat Crew

- 2.29 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Water Search & Rescue Lead.
- 2.30 Will show suitable commitment to the organisation.
- 2.31 Shall be able to perform reasonable tasks required of them to their level of training.
- 2.32 Are required to regularly attend training.

Trainee Team Members

- 2.33 Shall be members who have passed their probationary period and are training towards a Team member status
- 2.34 May be supporting staff
- 2.35 Are required to regularly attend training.

Probationary Team Members

- 2.36 Are accepted on a Three month probationary period in which their suitability as a Team member will be assessed
- 2.37 Should work towards crew status.

Water Team Leader

- 2.38 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Water Search & Rescue Lead
- 2.39 Shall be responsible for the safe and efficient running of a water rescue team under his/her control.
- 2.40 Will be responsible for the safety of the members, and equipment during an operation.

Water Incident Manager

- 2.41 Required under the Inter Agency agreement, and is the Person responsible for management functions on a "Call out". (Dynamically allocated by the Duty Ops Commander)

Lowland Rescue Search Technician

- 2.42 Required under the ALSAR Approved Code of Conduct (ACOP) to conduct Land and bank Searches.
- 2.43 Will Show suitable commitment to the organisation
- 2.44 Are required to regularly attend training.
- 2.45 Shall be able to perform reasonable tasks required of them to their level of training

Lowland Rescue Team Leader

- 2.46 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Land Search & Rescue Lead.
- 2.47 Shall be responsible for the safe and efficient running of a foot team under his/her control.
- 2.48 Will be responsible for the safety of the crew, and equipment during an operation.
- 2.48(a) Shall have passed an accredited Team Leader course in accordance with the ALSAR ACOP

Lowland Rescue Search Planner

- 2.49 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Land Search & Rescue Training Lead
- 2.50 Shall be responsible for the planning of a safe and efficient search of a Missing person
- 2.51 Shall have passed an accredited search planner course in accordance with the ALSAR ACOP

Lowland Rescue Search Operations/Manager

- 2.52 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Land Search & Rescue Training Lead
- 2.53 Shall be responsible for the planning of a safe and efficient search of a Missing person
- 2.54 Shall have passed an accredited search operations course in accordance with the ALSAR ACOP
- 2.55 Shall not plan search scenarios or priorities unless they have passed the accredited ALSAR Search Planner course.

Support Member

- 2.56 Shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the

organisation as decided and appointed by the Operational Management Team (for operational work) or Trustees (for charity work)

3. SAFETY

- 3.1 Safety is every team member's main priority.
- 3.2 All flammable liquids and pyrotechnics should be kept in the appropriate storage container at all times.
- 3.3 Smoking is prohibited in all internal areas and within 100m of Incident Control Points.
- 3.4 All team members must wear the correct safety equipment, including a life jacket or buoyancy aid, whilst they are on the water or operating within 3m (or the hot zone) of water.
- 3.4(a) Land search team members will wear suitable clothing and safety equipment for the expected conditions, and Land Search Team Leaders shall dynamically risk-assess the need for PPE including Hi-Viz, eyewear and impact protection.
- 3.4(b) Support Members must wear appropriate PPE, including a Class-3 Hi-Viz jacket if working outside a vehicle, on a road.
- 3.5 No team member shall be permitted to enter any water with an open wound.
- 3.6 Team members who enter the water shall have the necessary inoculations against waterborne diseases as decided by the Executive committee from time to time.

4. TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Every member (except Support Members) must ideally be a holder of a current First Aid Certificate (Emergency First Aid, FAW, FPOS, CFR etc,) and shall aim to achieve and maintain this qualification with relevant yearly updates.
- 4.2 Have adequate and reliable transport.
- 4.3 Have a mobile telephone or other reliable means of telecommunication for callouts
- 4.4 A new member will serve not less than three months probationary duties (unless otherwise agreed by the Executive Committee).
- 4.5 Members under the age of 18 years shall not be eligible for operational duties.
- 4.6 New members will be assessed for experience to qualify as a Team Member.
- 4.7 New members must declare any physical or mental disability.
- 4.8 All team members attending a search & rescue call-out must not break traffic laws, but safeguard the interest of public and personal safety and uphold the good name of WMSAR
- 4.9 Coxswains will be appointed on their ability by the Operational Management Team after recommendation from the Water Search & Rescue Lead, i.e. boat handling, competence, experience, length of service and a valid VHF Certificate of Competence, coupled with a sound knowledge of their turnout area and its conditions.
- 4.10 Team Leaders will be appointed on their ability by the Operational Management Team under recommendations from the Land Search & Rescue Lead and shall have suitable experience and be qualified to the standards required by the organisation i.e. competence, experience, length of service and a valid Lowland Rescue Team Leader Assessment Pass by ALSAR, coupled with a sound knowledge of their turnout area and its conditions..
- 4.11 Shall be responsible for the safe and efficient running of a foot team under his/her control.
- 4.12 Will be responsible for the safety of the crew, and equipment during an operation.
- 4.13 Search Planners will be appointed on their ability by the Operational Management Team, i.e.

- competence, experience, relevant Lowland Rescue Search Planner qualification, coupled with a sound knowledge of their turnout area and its conditions.
- 4.14 All members must maintain and inspect safety equipment and their PPE before and after use.
 - 4.15 Damaged or faulty equipment must be reported to the Asset Manager immediately (or as soon as practicable).
 - 4.16 No member shall alter/modify, disfigure or remove any equipment.
 - 4.17 All operational members shall be required to attend training sessions with sufficient regularity and diversity of subject-matter that they can remain deemed 'competent' in their abilities to operate. This will generally be a minimum of one subject-matter session per year. A break of more than 3-months between attendance at training or callouts will result in a member being presumed to have lapsed in competence and they will be made non-operational.
 - 4.18 Any person terminating his/her membership must immediately return any property belonging to the organisation.
 - 4.19 All members must participate in at least 4 recognised fund-raising events per year unless specifically exempted by the OMT or Trustees.
 - 4.20 It shall be the duty of each new team member to complete a membership form and complete all sections to the satisfaction of the organisation secretary.
 - 4.21 It shall be the duty of each new team member to complete a Data Barring Service check, existing team members must complete such checks at least once every three years. Should a team member be subject to any criminal proceedings then he/she must advise OMT immediately.
 - 4.22 It shall be the duty of each new team member to complete and sign the Commitment Contract and submit to the membership secretary.
 - 4.23 Land search team members must complete the requisite fitness tests as laid down by ALSAR every 12 months.
 - 4.24 All team members must carry on their persons a valid ID card issued by the organisation showing their name and an up to date photograph.
 - 4.25 Team members, trainees and supporters agree to allow their image to appear in photography used to promote the team by the Charity and its Sponsors. Acceptance of membership of the team grants a perpetual licence to the Charity to use any such imagery of members (current, retired and resigned) in publicity.

5. OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

General Operational Requirements

- 5.1 Any operational team member must keep their "on-call" availability up to date via the D4h System or any other system as determined by the Executive Committee from time to time..
- 5.2 On receiving a call out alert the team member shall be prepared for further instructions and shall proceed quickly but safely to the designated meet area.
- 5.2(a) Callouts will generally be by way of text message, page or email
- 5.3 All Operational team members must ensure their equipment is in a safe and useable condition prior to every deployment
- 5.4 All operational team members should ensure they have suitable, adequate and conforming personnel protective clothing as detailed in section 7.

- 5.5 All land search team members will carry a class 3 high visibility jacket whilst on operations. The decision to wear hi-viz jackets rests with each search team leader.

Water Search & Rescue Specific Requirements

- 5.7 Only team members that hold the relevant qualifications shall go afloat or operate within the "Hot Zone". Relevant qualifications shall be such as SRT, Water First Responder, Water Aware and similar.
- 5.8 The Duty Ops Commander will dynamically allocate Team Leaders. Team Leaders will be responsible for requesting appropriate assets, and managing their assets in an appropriate fashion such as to deliver the desired outcome co-ordinating with such assets as necessary. All operational activity in relation to the launching of the boat has to be authorised by the Ops Commander/Deputy, Coxswain/Team Leader.
- 5.9 On receiving a call out alert the team member shall be prepared for further instructions and shall proceed quickly but safely to the designated meet area.

6. ORGANISATION RECORDS

- 6.1 The Organisation shall maintain all necessary records required of it by current legislation, DEFRA, Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue, West Mercia Police, ALSAR and any other organisation that the Organisation is associated with.
- 6.2 The Organisation shall maintain all necessary internal documentation that it requires enabling internal controls to be effectively audited. These should include
- Routine maintenance check lists
 - Safety equipment records
 - Inventory
 - Team training records
 - Team member's personal details
 - Emergency incident reports
 - A full record of receipt and payments (Treasurer)
 - An accident book
- 6.3 The Chairman has overall responsibility for the maintenance of all records as listed above, except team member details, which shall be the responsibility of the Membership Officer, Training Leads and Secretary.
- 6.4 The Chairman can from time to time delegate the keeping of the Organisation's records to other suitably qualified and experienced members as and when required (e.g. equipment maintenance records to the asset manager).
- 6.5 The records should be examined as and when required during the year, by the Chairman, and in any account should be examined at least once per year, prior to the AGM.

7. ASSOCIATION CLOTHING

- 7.1 Members representing the organisation are only permitted to wear or display qualifications they are entitled to.
- 7.2 Members should never wear WMSAR shirts or insignia or act in such a manner or situation that may prejudice the good name of the Organisation and any organisation to which

WMSAR may be affiliated. e.g. ALSAR, West Mercia Police.

- 7.3 It is a condition that only current team members can wear WMSAR insignia that relates to them being "crew".
- 7.4 All members must maintain a high standard for their clothing, and should always look "smart" when wearing items of WMSAR clothing
- 7.5 Team members should always look after their personal issued equipment, i.e. undersuits, dry-suits, lifejackets, helmets, gloves, search jackets, etc.
- 7.6 Team Uniform, Fluorescent Jackets and similar Hi-Visibility clothing should not be worn in public unless on training exercise, a call out or specifically sanctioned by the Committee.
- 7.7 WMSAR clothing colours shall be determined by the Executive Committee from time to time.

8. TRAINING AND EVALUATION

- 8.1 Training shall only be carried out under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced person or authorised by the Chairman.
- 8.2 Whilst exercising or on an emergency call out with equipment or practising techniques, team members should always be aware that safety is always the first priority. The basic premise being "Self, Team, Casualty, in that order.
- 8.3 The minimum, and any specialist training requirements, shall be set by the Executive Committee from time to time.
- 8.4 Training standards will be those appropriate at the time, but in any event will be to nationally agreed and recognised standards. Training will include any 'related' subjects and topics.
- 8.5 Records of member training, member attendance and standards achieved will be kept by the organisation and each member
- 8.6 The relevant training officers will ensure that periodic examination and testing of team members is undertaken to ensure the team are fully aware of current techniques, methods and legislation and that skill sets are maintained in relation to their role in the Organisation.
- 8.7 Team members sitting external examinations shall be verified by recognised national Governing bodies and institutions.
- 8.8 The SAR Leads and Operations Manager shall be responsible for the evaluation of the suitability of persons to become team members. This decision is to be ratified by the Executive Committee.
- 8.9 Should the Operations Manager or SAR Leads deem it necessary, they may ask the Executive Committee to re-classify a team member (whatever position or responsibility the team member holds) or request that the said team member is re-trained at any time.

9. EMERGENCY CALL-OUT PROCEDURES

- 9.1 WMSAR is a voluntary organisation, which unlike some declared facilities does not have a crew room with duty personnel waiting to respond to a call out. The members of the team need to be called out from home, workplace or leisure activities. The main methods of calling out the team are by mobile phone, text or radio pager. These allow greater freedom of movement with the ability to remain contactable.

Responding to a Call-out

- 9.2 The Duty Ops Commander, usually the Operations Manager handles the initial alert. If team members also receive this initial alert (e.g. a radio page from Fire Control) they must not respond to that alert but await the second alert. The first alert should be used to begin preparations for the actual call out e.g. begin assembling gear etc
A second alert will be issued mobilising crew, normally requiring attendance at an arranged meeting point.
- 9.3 Operational crew must respond to all callout alerts to confirm their attendance or otherwise.

10. Vehicle Operations

- 10.1 Only authorised team members over the age of 25 are permitted to drive WMSAR vehicles.
- 10.2 All drivers must have a current full driving licence (With appropriate endorsements to tow). Any Penalty points or Driving Convictions to be advised to the Chairman and Membership Secretary.
- 10.3 Only a Competent Mechanic is authorised to carry out full servicing. The driver prior to use shall carry out appropriate routine maintenance checks.
- 10.4 Blue lights shall only be used by Trained Emergency Service Personnel holding a valid certificate and whilst operating under the Insurance cover of the appropriate service. **Blue lights shall NOT be used in West Mercia Police area under any circumstances** and may only be used in other force areas when authorised to do so by the said force and only as identifiers as part of a “convoy” or to clear through slow moving or stationary traffic. No road traffic exemptions shall apply when using blue lights and normal road speeds etc MUST be maintained. If blue light authorisation is given then a note of the officer authorising their use MUST be made.
- 10.5 During water search & rescue operations the driver must remain in the vehicle cab at all times during the launch and recovery of the boats.
- 10.6 During water search & rescue operations the driver should only follow the coxswain’s instructions via the launch crew.
- 10.7 After use the vehicle should be washed and cleaned when practicable
- 10.8 It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure the vehicle is left in a secure state and is appropriately parked with adequate fuel
- 10.9 No person shall drive a vehicle in hilly mountainous terrain without having undertaken an appropriate off road competency course or have been approved through experience by the Executive
- 10.10 Vehicles will not be waded in fast flowing water or in any condition where there is a fast flowing cross current.
- 10.11 Hazard lights will be used at all times whilst manoeuvring.
- 10.12 The Vehicle Mileage Log must be completed by every driver

Use of Private Vehicles

- 10.12 There may be circumstances where it is necessary to request assistance from members to use their private vehicles, in providing transport to the scene of an incident. In such cases, the private car owner must not be given the impression that the Organisation accepts any responsibility for any damage or injury that may result. Private Vehicles are used at the

Owners risk and must be covered by their own insurance and meet all legal Road Traffic requirements. Written confirmation from the member's insurer that cover is applicable during a WMSAR activity must be obtained.

11. EQUIPMENT

- 11.1 If any member is of the opinion that there is a case for changing the general application of any of the procedures, he should make representations through the Executive Committee.
- 11.2 All rescue equipment is to be kept in a clean and serviceable condition, and should be frequently examined to ensure that it is in good order. It should be stowed in the correct place ready for immediate use. The responsibility for this rests with each of the officers, coxswains, Team Leaders and Operational Commanders.
- 11.3 Equipment, which is liable to damage, should be examined after use and repaired or replaced if necessary. All equipment and stores should be checked at least once a quarter, and after every use.
- 11.4 Any item of equipment which is, or is suspected of being, unserviceable, for whatever reason must be immediately withdrawn from service, and the asset manager informed.
- 11.5 Safety equipment is only to be used by members of the Organisation, except where specific authority has been given for use by other persons.
- 11.6 The user of the equipment is responsible for its safekeeping and reasonable care.
- 11.7 All personal water search & rescue equipment should be correctly fitted prior to leaving the shore, e.g. dry suits fully zipped, lifejackets/buoyancy aids, and helmets correctly fitted.
- 11.8 All personal land search & rescue equipment should be checked and present prior to leaving the control point or meeting point.
- 11.8 All equipment should be stored away from direct sunlight, dry suits, lifejackets, helmets, gloves, and all other equipment should be cleaned and prepared for next exercise.
- 11.9 The Organisation cannot take any responsibility for the loss or damage of personal property or belongings; team members should make arrangements for their safe keeping whilst on exercise.

Dry suits

- 11.10 Sharp objects such as rings and watches shall be removed to protect the seals prior to donning/doffing the suit.
- 11.11 After donning the suit the user shall ensure the suit zip is fully closed to ensure the integrity of the suit
- 11.12 The dry suit shall be correctly vented
- 11.13 On completion of service the user of a dry suit shall ensure its decontamination before obtaining assistance to remove the suit
- 11.14 The dry suit shall then be washed with fresh water to remove any mud/sand, and checked for any damage. The zip should be waxed and the seals dusted with powder.
- 11.15 Any problems or issues with a drysuit should be reported to the assets manager immediately

Synthetic Fibre Cordage

- 11.15 The outer sheaths of braided ropes contribute approximately 30% to the rope's total strength and are constructed of individual plaited strands around a centre core. The core provides the remaining 70% of the rope's strength

- 11.16 Synthetic ropes degrade in normal use but can also be damaged as follows
- Melting
 - Cutting
 - Abrasion (especially unnecessary dragging through mud or sand)
 - Deterioration from acids and alkaline; nylon fibres are affected by acid and to a lesser extent by alkaline; polyester fibres are affected by alkaline and to a lesser extent acids.
- 11.17 After use the lines must always be rinsed in fresh water to remove any small particles of solid matter and salt crystals which can hasten degradation. Detergents whose chemical properties are unknown should not be used, only pure soap.
- 11.18 Synthetic fibres are generally not affected by damp; however lines must be dried before storing to avoid the formation of mildew. Ropes must be stowed in suitable containers and stored on shelves above floor level out of direct sunlight.

Visual Inspection

- 11.19 The importance of visual inspection as the foremost accident preventative measure cannot be over-emphasised. Equipment must always be inspected for damage after use and immediately prior to deployment. All team members must bear this in mind when deploying, recovering and storing equipment regardless of usage.

Routine Weekly and Monthly Checks

- 11.21 All equipment must be checked as per the routine equipment check list on a weekly or monthly basis as and when the schedules require or otherwise before and after use

12. FUEL

Storage

- 12.1 All fuel shall be stored in the appropriate metal containers
- 12.2 The storage of diesel fuel should be kept in clearly marked containers, and must be stored separately from petrol, to avoid incorrect use.

Handling

- 12.3 There must be no smoking during any fuel handling operations or within 20 meters of such operations
- 12.4 Care should be taken to avoid contact with the skin and eyes. Inhalation of the vapour should be avoided at all times
- 12.5 Care should be taken to avoid spillage, particularly when re-fuelling the boat
- 12.6 When re-fuelling a boat or generator, team members should ensure that a suitable fire extinguisher is on hand.
- 12.7 Re-fuelling should be undertaken by two team members.
- 12.8 Care should be taken to avoid the fuel becoming contaminated with water during the re-fuelling of a boat. Should the fuel become contaminated it should be changed with new fuel and the old fuel disposed of correctly.

13. BOAT LAUNCH AND RECOVERY

Pre-Launch

- 13.1 Prior to the boat leaving the station, driver should carry out a visual inspection of the boat, engines, trailer and vehicle to ensure that all appears to be in a correct and working order.
- 13.2 The boat should be coupled to the Vehicle ensuring the launch trailer safety wire is always attached.
- 13.3 The coxswain/ Water Team Leader shall ensure that all his crew is dressed in the appropriate safety equipment before approaching within 3m of the water (or into the hot zone).
- 13.4 During an emergency call, The Co-ordinating Emergency service shall be contacted by telephone to ascertain the following details, it should be noted that obtaining the correct information is more important than speed. The following information should be obtained:
 - Location
 - Number of persons involved
 - Number of vessels/vehicles involved
 - Description of casualties
 - Equipment carried by casualties
 - Nature of incident
 - Time of initial call
 - Any other relevant information
- 13.5 The above information should be recorded for formal records and to enable other team members arriving after the Team has left, to be informed of the nature and location of the callout.
- 13.6 The priority for launching the boat is getting it right the first time. Speed is NOT the priority.
- 13.7 Team members should ensure that the slipway is accessible and clear of any vehicles and obstructions. A Banksman shall be used at all times whilst manoeuvring the trailer. Hazard lights will also be used on the towing vehicle.

Launching

- 13.8 Ensure the winch and safety line is attached to the boat prior to the boat leaving the station.
- 13.9 The main power switch on the boat should be in the on position. (IF APPLICABLE)
- 13.10 Check engine clearance before the boat approaches the slipway.
- 13.11 The engine kill cords should be attached to the coxswain prior to him starting the engine(s).
- 13.12 The engine(s) should only be started when the Helmsman/Coxswain/ Water Team Leader is satisfied that the propellers are in sufficient depth of water. Ensure the engines are cooling correctly by ensuring that water is coming out of the tell-tales.
- 13.13 The boat is only to be slipped on the authority of the Operations Commander/Deputy.
- 13.14 All persons not involved with the launch of the boat to stay clear of the slipway and equipment.
- 13.15 The Coxswain/Helmsman should ensure there are no personnel near the stern of the boat and engine area whilst the engines are running.
- 13.16 Crew will only enter the boat at the waters edge after a final pre-launch check not at the top of the slip way.
- 13.17 All WMSAR boats shall be fitted with a suitable prop guard to prevent injury where practicable

Recovery

- 13.16 The Vehicle and trailer shall be made ready to receive the boat on its return.
- 13.17 All team members should be aware of the danger from the trailer winch handle.
- 13.18 Crew recovering the boat should connect the winch cable to the boat, ensure the boat is central on the trailer and only when the team member is happy should the boat be winched back on the trailer. The safety line should be attached to the boat.
- 13.19 Only when the coxswain/helmsman is satisfied should he signal to the Vehicle driver to recover the boat from the water
- 13.20 No personnel except the nominated personnel should remain on the boat when it is being recovered. He/She will exit the boat once the boat is clear of the water.

Post Recovery

- 13.21 Ensure the boat's master power switch is in the off position. (If applicable).
- 13.22 All equipment used should be removed from the boat, cleaned and checked. The boat should be re-fuelled.
- 13.23 The boat should be thoroughly washed using fresh water and detergent and rinsed clean.
- 13.24 Each team member should ensure that all personal safety equipment used is cleaned, checked and stored correctly.
- 13.26 The Coxswain/Team Leader/Training Co-ordinator or Operational Commander should ensure that after each exercise or call out a full and complete crew debriefing is undertaken. The results of which should be recorded.
- 13.27 The boat should be securely attached to the boat trailer and it is the responsibility of the Coxswain to ensure this is adequate.

14. BOAT AFLOAT PROCEDURES

- 14.1 Boat operations are high profile and are likely to be observed by members of the public and mariners from a wide range of disciplines. It is therefore extremely important that all helmsmen and crew demonstrate the highest level of seamanship and professional conduct whilst afloat and during launching and recovery.

Towing Operations

- 14.2 Towing operations should only be attempted where there is an imminent and actual threat to life. Towing another vessel astern or alongside can be potentially dangerous, and the coxswain should fully consider the situation before attempting a tow. If in any doubt the coxswain should summon assistance and ensure the safety of persons by taking them on board the lifeboat.

Survivor Capacity

- 14.3 If the situation demands that large numbers of survivors be taken on board, the coxswain must consider the effect upon stability and trim. Grab lines should be employed in the event that some survivors cannot be embarked. The maximum number of survivors in any one trip generally should not exceed the manufacturer's recommendations for the craft.
- 14.4 If casualties are in the water, consideration **MUST** be given to their position relative to the propeller and, unless the situation demands that power is required, the engine should be switched off.

- 14.5 If a casualty has to be towed while in the water, where practicable, the tow should be made in reverse. Towing casualties whilst in the water is to be avoided because of the inherent dangers in respect to the propeller (even when prop guards are fitted) and the extreme difficulty for the casualty to actually hold on.

Operational Area

- 14.6 The operational area of the boat is at the discretion of the coxswain upon approval from the Ops Commander. When defining the operational area he should take into account the effects of wind and current, and the available depth of water in certain locations. These effects may require conditions to be placed on any geographical limits set.

Night Operations

- 14.5 The boat can be operated by day or night. No exercise or call out is to be undertaken if the conditions are or likely to become more than that which the craft could normally be expected to handle safely.
- Under no circumstances are live man overboard drills to be conducted at night.
- Night operations must be authorised by the Ops Commander or in his absence a Deputy Ops Commander, who must satisfy himself as to the competence and experience of the crew.
- Only suitably qualified helmsmen may operate at night.

Maintaining Safety Checks

- 14.6 Routine position safety calls should be carried out with the appropriate Incident Commander and/or WMSAR control at the locally determined time intervals, but in any case they should not exceed 30 minutes.

Failure to Establish a Routine Safety Check

- 14.7 Should the boat lose communication with Ops Commander or other shore based station, on the designated frequency and at the pre-determined time interval, the Commander and/or WMSAR Control will make every effort to determine the status of the boat and crew.
- The coxswain must make other arrangements to contact the co-ordinating authority, by whatever means, to confirm the safety of the crew and boat.

Passage Planning

- 14.8 The Coxswain shall plan every passage before departing. The responsibility for monitoring the passage remains with the Coxswain/Water Team Leader.

Limiting Factors

- 14.9 When planning passages due regard should be given to navigational hazards, and the means by which it is practicable to accurately fix and plot the position of the boat. The shallow draught of the boat enables it to be safely operated in shallow water, but helmsmen must guard against overconfidence when navigating in such waters.

Briefing the Crew

- 14.10 The coxswain must ensure that all the crew are fully briefed on the passage before departing station

Methods of Navigation

14.11 The primary method of navigation is by visual lookout, comparing the boats position to land marks on shore (a hand bearing compass and transits on the shore may be used where practicable).

The secondary method of navigation is electronic, utilising the boats or handheld GPS with mapping facilities.

Reliance on fixing position by one means alone is dangerous practice. The coxswain/Team Leader must allow for the unexpected loss of one means of position fixing. In confined waters, or in restricted visibility, or at night both primary and secondary means of navigation must be continually compared.

Equipment Carried

14.12 All equipment is to be kept clean and in good working order. All equipment should be properly stowed in accordance with the safe working practices.

Manning on

14.13 The minimum manning for exercise or call out is three persons (coxswain plus two team members). One of the two team members should be SRT qualified swimmer. If it is deemed adequate to maintain a safe working practise with only two team members then the Coxswain may make an assessment at the time. I.e. the rescue of a person out of the water and it is not practicable to wait for the third team member.

Safety of Boat and Crew

14.14 The safety of the boat and crew is of paramount importance, and is the direct responsibility of the coxswain/helmsman. This does not relieve the other team members or passengers of any responsibility for the safety of themselves or others on-board.

When team members are unable to gain direct access to a casualty and have to leave the boat and proceed on foot, they should always remain in radio contact with boat by means of a portable radio set. It is the coxswain's responsibility to ensure that under no circumstances should the boat be left unattended, a team member should remain with the boat at all times, to ensure the safety, security and operational readiness of the boat.

14.15 If team members are unable to gain direct access to causality and have to leave the boat and proceed through the water, they should always be secured by a floating line attached to a quick release harness. This is only permitted if the team member has a current SRT certificate and the boat is being helmed by a team member that has completed a Swift Water Rescue Boat Operators course.

Engine Kill Cord

14.16 The engine kill cords must be worn by the Coxswain/Helmsman at all times and fitted prior to starting the engines. Two spares must also be stored on the Vessel in readily accessible positions. The kill cord must NOT be fastened to the wrist but preferably to the coxswain/helmsman's leg

Security of Crew

14.17 The coxswain must ensure that every person carried is securely seated with adequate handholds. Sitting on the sponsons is not recommended. If this becomes necessary, the crew

must keep such persons under continuous observation. The coxswain must adjust the speed of the boat so that persons on the sponsons are not endangered and should take extreme care when manoeuvring.

Protective Clothing

- 14.18 Every team member must wear a dry suit or suitable protective clothing, a lifejacket/ PFD and head protection at all times during callouts. In the case of Event Support (not callouts) the team may take a dynamic risk assessment regarding the need for drysuits. The safety equipment must be donned before boarding the boat. All team members and passengers must wear correctly fitted and approved lifejackets/buoyancy jackets at all times.

Dry suits

- 14.19 Dry suits depend on correctly fitting neck and cuff seals for maintaining watertight integrity. They do not lend themselves to rough treatment, nor will a particular size suit effectively protect users of different stature. Gloves shall also be worn.

Lifejackets//Buoyancy Aids

- 14.20 WMSAR has adopted Palm PFD's as a standard Personal Floatation Device (buoyancy aid) although others may be acceptable subject to the Coxswains/ Water Team leaders' approval. If a lifejacket is worn then it must provide at least 150 Newton's of buoyancy

Coxswain's Responsibility

- 14.21 Before launching it is the responsibility of the coxswain and crew to ensure they, and any passengers, are fully dressed for their safety and protection against the elements.

Smoking

- 14.22 Smoking is not permitted at any time on board or within 20M of the boat, either whilst afloat or on the trailer.

Alcohol and Drugs

- 14.23 Alcohol is not permitted on the boat any time. Team members should be aware of the affects of alcohol on their ability to crew the boat, any person who in the view of the coxswain appears to have consumed alcohol, will not be allowed to crew the boat and may be subject to disciplinary action. This also applies to drug usage. Any Team member taking prescribed drugs that make the consumer feel drowsy must inform the Coxswain.

Miscellaneous

- 14.24 Under no circumstances should the boat leave the shore unless under the control of a qualified coxswain/helmsman.
- 14.25 After service a post recovery check will be carried out by a designated person on the boat and all equipment used.
- 14.26 If a repair is to be made to the boat or equipment that require the boat being taken off service the relevant Authority is to be informed immediately, unless alternative and equivalent rescue cover can be maintained.

15 SWIFTWATER OPERATIONS

- 15.1 Only team members who have undertaken a recognised and independently assessed training course in Swift Water Rescue will be permitted to undertake operations “in water”.
- 15.2 These qualifications will be independently re-assessed by an outside organisation at the intervals laid down by the competency.
- 15.3 Team members will only undertake SRT operations for which their competency has been assessed.
- 15.4 Trainee members shall only undertake basic “in water” training where there is assessed to be a low risk.
- 15.5 Other members operating within 3m of the water in a swift water environment will have appropriate swift water banks person training.

16 LAND SEARCH OPERATIONS

Operational Area

- 16.1 The operational area of the foot team is at the discretion of the Team Leader, having been given a target area by the Search Planner/Manager, and will be based on a dynamic risk assessment of the ‘on the ground’ situation. When defining the operational area the Team Leader should take into account the effects of present, past and forecasted weather. These effects may require conditions to be placed on any geographical limits set. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader to note any areas upon the search plan that have not been searched and report this back to the Planner.

Night Operations

- 16.2 Any land search can be conducted by day or night. No exercise or call out is to be undertaken if the conditions are such that they are or are likely to become more than that which the team members and equipment could normally be expected to handle safely. Night operations must be authorised by the Operations Manager or in his absence the Search Manager/Operations who must satisfy himself as to the competence and experience of the team members attending. Team Leaders are authorised to cease local operations if they feel this is the best course of action through risk assessment.

Maintaining Safety Checks

- 16.3 Routine position safety calls should be carried out with the appropriate Search Planner or Search Manager and/or WMSAR control at the locally determined time intervals, but in any case they should not exceed 30 minutes.

Failure to Establish a Routine Safety Check

- 16.4 Should the foot team lose communication with Search Planner or Search operations Manager and/or WMSAR control, on the designated frequency and at the pre-determined time interval, the Search Planner or Search operations Manager and/or WMSAR control, will make every effort to determine the status of the foot team.
- 16.5 In the event established communications have failed the Team Leader must make arrangements to contact the co-ordinating authority, by whatever means, to confirm the

safety of the team members.

Route Planning

- 16.6 The Team Leader shall plan every route before departing for their search area. The responsibility for monitoring the route remains with the Team Leader

Limiting Factors

- 16.7 When planning routes due regard should be given to any hazards, and the means by which it is practicable to accurately fix and plot the position of the foot team.

Briefing the Crew

- 16.8 The team leader must ensure that all the crew is fully briefed on the route and search area before departing the muster point.
- 16.9 The Team Leader should designate roles to each of its team members prior to departing the muster point. The following roles should be allocated in every foot search. More than one role can be allocated to one foot searcher but it is recommended no more than two per team member;

First Aider – This role should be allocated to the team member holding the highest current first aid or medical qualification. They should ensure adequate first aid equipment is carried, for its own team members and any potential casualty prior to departing the muster point.

Navigator – This role should be allocated to a team member that is experienced in navigation and can operate in poor weather. Ideally someone that has adequate experience to accurately navigate the team to and, around their desired area.

Radio Operator – This role should be allocated to a team member that holds a VHF SRC radio operators certificate or supervised by a VHF SRC radio operator whilst operating the radio. If no licence holder is available, then VHF should be operated by a member who has been deemed competent after in-house training

Methods of Navigation

- 16.10 The primary method of navigation is by visual look out; comparing the foot team's position to land marks a hand bearing compass and routes across the land may be used where possible.

The secondary method of navigation is electronic, utilising a handheld GPS with mapping facilities or a mobile GPS application with adequate OS mapping.

Reliance on fixing position by one means alone is dangerous practice. The Team Leader must allow for the unexpected loss of one means of position fixing. In a confined area, or in restricted visibility, or at night both primary and secondary means of navigation must be continually compared.

Equipment Carried

- 16.11 All equipment is to be kept clean and in good working order. All equipment should be properly stowed in accordance with the safe working practices.

Minimum Requirement for Land Search Operations

- 16.12 The minimum manning for a land search exercise or call out is eight persons (one Search

Planner, two Lowland Rescue Team Leaders and four Lowland Rescue Search Technicians). This should be monitored using the "On Call Planner" on the D4h System.

Safety of Equipment and Team members

- 16.13 The safety of the equipment and team members is of paramount importance, and is the direct responsibility of the Team Leader or Search Operations Manager. This does not relieve the other team members of any responsibility for the safety of themselves or others.
- 16.14 If team members cannot gain direct access to a casualty or missing person they should use adequate aids and/or equipment and be suitably qualified and/ or experienced. If any of the approved methods employed are not effective specialist resources should be requested via WMSAR control or a statutory authority at the scene.

Any attempts at rescuing a casualty or missing person should be communicated to the WMSAR control point prior to any attempt.

Protective Clothing

- 16.15 Every team member must wear adequate clothing protective clothing, Waterproofs, warm clothing, suitable walking shoes/boots. A Class 3 High Visibility jacket should be carried with each team member during every search and worn during any search operation on a public highway, or as the Team Leader deems it necessary as PPE. Any safety equipment must be donned prior to entering a hazardous area, and in the case of a Hi-Viz being worn as PPE, must not be covered or obscured by other kit.

Lowland Team Leaders Responsibility

- 16.16 Before departing for a search area it is the responsibility of the Lowland Team Leader and team members to ensure they are fully dressed for their safety and protection against the elements. Team Leaders have the authority to bar a search team member from deploying based on insufficient equipment.

Arriving on Scene

- 16.17 On arrival at an incident the first person to arrive at the designated meeting point should start a register of attending team members as they arrive on scene.
- 16.19 Adequate car parking and permissions should be decided and obtained prior to nominating an operational meeting point.
- 16.20 All team members should ensure they are correctly dressed, have all of their equipment ready and ID badge present before presenting themselves at the designated muster area.
- 16.21 On Arrival the Operational Command Unit stabilising legs, radio mast and generator should be deployed to allow the attending search planner to plan a search.
- 16.22 The Search planner must not be disturbed by any team member and will normally communicate their plan through the search operations manager.
- 16.23 All team members waiting for instruction should congregate in the designated muster point and act in a professional manor. Searches may either start or continue during the night so particular attention should be paid to the level of noise being created.

Smoking

- 16.24 Smoking is not permitted at any time during a search. During a pro-longed search the search

operations manager or team leader will highlight designated smoking areas within the muster point to you. Missing person searches may be observed by members of the public, media and press so due diligence should be taken to ensure the professional image of the organisation and any other organisations we may represent, i.e. West Mercia Police, ALSAR etc.

Alcohol and Drugs

- 16.25 Alcohol is not permitted on a search at any time. Team members should be aware of the affects of alcohol on their ability to operate, any person who in the view of the Team Leader, Search operations Manager or any other team member appears to have consumed alcohol or drugs, will not be allowed to participate in any activity and will be asked to leave the search and muster area. Any Team member taking prescribed drugs that make the consumer feel drowsy must inform the Search Operations Manager and their Team Leader immediately.

Miscellaneous

- 16.26 After service a post search check will be carried out by a designated person on all equipment used.
- 16.27 If a repair is to be made to any equipment that requires that piece of equipment being taken off service the operations manager should be notified immediately. Should this incapacitate the service WMSAR can provide then the relevant Authorities are to be informed immediately, unless alternative and equivalent rescue cover can be maintained.

17. TREATMENT OF THE DECEASED / HANDLING BODIES.

Responsibilities

- 17.1 It is not the organisation's responsibility to recover bodies, however, experience has shown that there are times and circumstances that there is no one else to undertake this task. The Police have a statutory responsibility to investigate the cause of death where a body is found. They will arrange for a Doctor to certify the person dead, provide a body bag and arrange to have it removed on completion of their initial investigations. Our involvement should only be to recover the body when instructed by the statutory authority to do so, to the shoreline in the case of water rescue/recovery or a safe place and then hand over to the Police.

Actions on finding a body

- 17.2 We may find a body when we have been specifically tasked i.e. searching for a missing person, or unexpectedly when on exercise. The first actions required are to establish whether the person is living or not and to call for assistance. Try if possible to avoid direct reference to "bodies" over the radio. Check the pulse for signs of life. It should be noted that a hypothermic person usually has a weak and slow pulse. If there is no pulse CPR should be started and maintained until professional help arrives or the pulse and breathing returns. To avoid undue delay, particularly in a public place, details should be made clear to ambulance control and the presence of a

doctor be requested.

Ambulance crews are not allowed to remove dead bodies due the risk of contamination of future patients. This point should be borne in mind and if it is obvious or there is a strong suspicion that the casualty is dead, the Police are to be contacted and a request for them to arrange a doctor should be involved at the earliest stage.

In cases where it is obvious that the body is dead, the immediate surroundings should not be disturbed in case the Police need to undertake forensic investigations. The public should be invited to leave the area, which should be cordoned off. If the body is subject to public gaze, it should be covered with a blanket to protect privacy. Due respect should be afforded the body, as others including relatives and the media may be watching.

Recovery of Bodies

- 17.3 When it is necessary for us to recover a body it is necessary to obtain permission from the statutory authority, usually this will be done through the Police, except in exceptional circumstances where this would prove impractical. They should however be advised at the earliest opportunity. Arrangements need to be made for receiving the body from our care by control.

Risks associated with Recovering Bodies.

- 17.4 If team members are requested to move a body consideration should be taken to the potential psychological affects. If a team member is unsure on the affect it may have on them they should be replaced by another team member that is more comfortable with completing the task.
- 17.5 Post Recovery, it is the responsibility of the Search Planner, Search Operations Manager and/or Team Leader to hold a "Hot" debrief. Considerations of the WMSAR TRIM policy should be taken into account.
- 17.6 Details of how to contact any relevant support should be given prior to any team member leaving the muster point.
- 17.7 It is good practice for the operations Manager or duty officer to hold a debrief some days after the event to ensure no team members have sustained any psychological effects.
- 17.8 A monitoring and buddy system should be implemented post any body recovery. Refer to the "WMSAR TRIM policy" for further details and best practice.

Risks associated with handling bodies

- 17.9 There are two major risks to us when recovering a body.

(a) Contamination by bodily fluids

All bodily fluids should be considered potentially infectious and harmful. Direct contacts with such fluids should be avoided.

Protective clothing should be worn before handling a body, including disposable first aid gloves and also goggles. Other items of equipment can be utilised as required.

The body should be placed in a body bag, together with contaminated items. Somebody wearing a clean pair of first aid gloves should close the zip.

On completion of such incidents, personnel, clothing and equipment should be thoroughly washed down. Any contaminated equipment should be disposed of carefully to avoid risk of further contamination.

Should a team member come into direct contact with bodily fluids from the deceased a

rigorous washing process should be undertaken. The event should be recorded in the accident book and should then seek immediate medical advice.

The team member shall immediately attend hospital and advise them of the contact made.

(b) Incorrect Manual Handling

All activities that require Manual Handling are covered in the Manual Handling Guidance notes.

18. DECONTAMINATION – INFECTION CONTROL

The environment that WMSAR is expected to operate in, presents a significant increase in Risk of Disease. The most likely occurrences are Weils Disease and Leptospyrosis, however there are many other diseases and infections that can occur.

In order to assist WMSAR to manage this risk, this section must be practised with commitment.

- 18.1 Members who are or may be exposed to water should have and maintain the following inoculations: Hepatitis A, B, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio
- 18.1 After all immersions in water, no matter how shallow or even just a small amount in the boat, Crew will undertake a full decontamination of all PPE being worn.
- 18.1 This will start with the Drysuit (PFD and other equipment removed)
- 18.1 PFD and other equipment shall follow.
- 18.1 Equipment should be washed down with fresh water and allow to dry off.
- 18.1 The suit should be removed and equipment should be stowed in a water proof bag for transportation.
- 18.1 Finally, hands and face will be wiped using wipes for the face and hands and alcohol rub as a secondary precaution on hands.
- 18.1 There will be NO Smoking during this process because of the cross contamination and the risk of fire from the alcohol rub!
- 18.1 Decontamination of the steering wheel of the vehicle should also take place allowing time for the moisture to dry before attempting to drive off.
- 18.1 Anti-bacterial soap should be used after handling any waterborne PPE as a matter of course if full Decontamination kit is not available.
- 18.1 WMSAR currently used Clinel Anti-bacterial wipes for face and hands and any exposed skin, Bioguard antibacterial wash for suits and equipment and Alcohol hands rub.(Not to be used on sensitive skin)
- 18.1 It shall be noted that there are no COSH sheets for these products since they are regularly used in hospitals. Any reaction to these products shall be immediately reported to the Asset Manager giving a brief description of the effects.
- 18.1 Clean water shall be used to wash out eyes or mouth should any of these products get into eyes or mouth.
- 18.1 Any persons accidentally swallowing River Water/Flood water shall enter this in the Accident book

19 CLOTHING AND BRANDING

- 19.1 All team members should wear or have with them clothing of a colour and style as determined by the Executive Committee from time to time.
- 19.2 All team members should have at least two WMSAR branded polo/round neck tops as a minimum. The colours of the clothing shall be determined by the Executive Committee from time to time. This will display the WMSAR crest over the left breast.
- 19.3 WMSAR branded clothing should only be worn during any official WMSAR business. Any member that leaves the organisation will be asked to forfeit any WMSAR badges and/or clothing. This will be at the expense of the individual should they not find a current team member willing to purchase their equipment.
- 19.4 Team members must not alter, adapt or create WMSAR branded clothing without prior Committee approval, including the ordering of non-standard jackets or vests which are not part of the approved supplier list.
- 19.5 As per ALSAR guidelines, Land Search members must avoid looking like police or military staff. The use of tactical-wear is prohibited at all times.
- 19.6 The wearing of denim or trainers is forbidden at all times when representing the team at callouts, training or fundraising unless exception is granted by the Incident Manager, usually for Control-based support members. Denim and trainers are never to be worn by operational searchers.
- 19.7 With the exception of 'mispering/dogsbodying' during training sessions, the wearing of camouflage or 'army surplus' style clothing is prohibited.

20. DISCIPLINARY MATTERS AND MEMBERS CONDUCT

This subject is covered in:

- Code of Conduct WMSAR/HR/001.
- Disciplinary Procedure WMSAR/HR/004.

21. SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Social media can help build a stronger, more successful brand for WMSAR and is very useful. But it can also go very wrong very quickly. It is very easy for written items to be taken out of context or mis-interpreted, and this can have a significant negative effect which you may not have intended or wished to have happened.

- 21.1 *Protect the Misper, their family and their friends.*
Never comment on any search; past, present or future in any way - even if somebody else starts the conversation. The only exception to this is to share information from the official Lowland Rescue, or WMSAR social media accounts once they go live - but do not add to this information in any way – not even to say that you're going to that search.
- 21.2 *Protect your Team and its members.*
Avoid commenting on other members' progress, role or performance unless it is to congratulate something like a test-pass. Never comment on anything negative or express frustration that things are not perfect (e.g. I wish we had more members, I wish we had more/less callouts, I wish we had better jackets, ExSAR's trailer is better than ours, I hate having wet search boots etc.)
- 21.3 *Protect the Charity.*
Avoid any fundraising calls unless you are clear on the Charity Commission guidelines. You're not

allowed to do certain things before they happen (i.e. selling raffle tickets before an event). If in any doubt, ask the Fundraising Coordinator or WMSAR Treasurer.

Never make any claims on the state of a Charity's finances, membership or structure.

However, setting up your own Justgiving page for a specific sponsored event is fine.

Examples of good Social Media usage:

- Liking posts by Lowland Rescue and other SAR teams, including simple positive terms, "Awesome!" etc.
- Retweeting without adding comment.
- Adding photos of non-search events, fundraising and training which reflect positively on the team, along with statuses like "We're collecting at Sainsburys today, pop along and say Hi".
- Generic status updates such as 'Great SAR training tonight', 'Brilliant day fundraising in X', 'Hiding in a hole waiting to be found by Search Dog Dave'.

Examples of unacceptable Social Media usage:

- Specific status updates such as 'Knackered after a long day of searching for a lady near Brighton*', 'Sweating like a pig in my SAR gear**', 'Wish we were on that search***'.
- Adding personal opinion to retweet or shared SAR statuses - too easily misconstrued.
- Adding any details of searches, including photos of locations****
- Commenting in any way on a search being stood down, or going home.*****
- Posting GPX tracks of real searches to Viewranger or other public forums.
- Supplying details of any search to YOUR family, which they could potentially post – even unwittingly – and cause problems. Their posts are your responsibility, so tell them please.

*Status could be shared to an extent that a misper's family member sees it and questions why we went home when their loved one is still missing. It's best not to get in to that situation.

** Status gets shared, someone from jacket manufacturer reads it, good-bye pro deal.

*** Status gets shared, family see it, publicly question why 'spare' resource hasn't been called in.

**** If a Misper is found alive and well, the team account MAY possibly post some interesting detail after the event, for example a building that was searched or an area, but they won't relate it to a specific search.

***** The Misper's family could take that as a sign that hope is lost, even if stand-down is for another reason.

[end]