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# SMC Roles and Responsibilities

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This page identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Search and Rescue Mission Co-ordinator (SMC)

## Responsibility

The SMC is the person in charge of a SAR Operation until a rescue has been effected or until it has become apparent that further efforts would be of no avail (IAMSAR Vol 1).

The SMC has the freedom to employ any facility, to request additional facilities and to accept or reject any suggestions made during the operation.

The person acting in the role of SMC must be SMC-qualified. If however incidents are running concurrently, the role may be delegated to a competent member of the watch, acting as 'Incident Officer', for training or development purposes. The qualified SMC however retains overall responsibility for the actions of the trainee.

Reference to the duties of the SMC can be found in the IAMSAR Manuals. Detailed advice relating to General Considerations for the SMC can be found in IAMSAR Manual Vol 2, Section 3.8.

## Duration of Responsibility

The SMC is in charge of a SAR operation until:

- A rescue has been effected and SAR operations terminated
- It becomes apparent that further effort would be of no avail and the search is terminated
- Relieved by another SMC
- Responsibility for co-ordination is accepted by another MRCC

## Specific Action by the SMC

The following actions or decisions are the specific responsibility of the SMC where appropriate depending on the nature of, and the severity of the incident:

- Classifying the incident into the appropriate emergency phase
  - Does the incident warrant declaring a major incident?
- Alerting/tasking SAR facilities and other organisations/specialists that may be needed e.g. doctors, local police, paramedics etc whose assistance may be required
- Informing the Duty Controller of the circumstances and intended plans, consider whether their presence is required in the ops room
- Informing the DCPSO if significant pollution or salvage is involved or likely to be involved
- Overseeing and implementing a SAR plan
- Designating communications channels / frequencies and maintaining a schedule with SAR facilities
- Designating an OSC or an ACO if required and advising them of the SAR plan
- Exercising overall co-ordination of all SAR facilities
- Assigned to the mission, including those of adjacent Ops Centres and foreign RCCs
- Forward planning what is likely to be needed next -
- Preparing a 'what if' contingency plan
- Debriefing Ops Centre personnel at regular intervals regarding action to date and planned action
- Regularly updating Duty Officers on current situation and future plans
- Obtaining regular progress and on scene SITREPs and evaluating carefully
- Reviewing SAR plans as the incident develops and further information becomes available
- Preparing handover notes for the relieving SMC
- Considering termination criteria and discussing with the OSC / ACO / Duty Controller / Duty Commander
- Releasing SAR facilities when assistance is no longer required
- Preparing final reports

## **Delegated Action**

The following actions may be performed by any member of the watch. The SMC however retains responsibility for ensuring that such actions are actually taken where appropriate:

- Acknowledging initial call & plot and assess the casualty's position
- Creating an incident in IMS at the onset of every incident or potential incident, ensuring that all details, actions and decisions are correctly logged in chronological order
- Obtaining and evaluating all data on the emergency
- Including position, course, speed, number of persons on board, assistance required, injuries, other vessels involved
- Ascertaining the type of emergency equipment carried by the missing or distressed craft including lifesaving and communications equipment
- Obtaining the weather and sea conditions on scene - past, present and forecast
- Determining the type and quantity of any pollution involved initiating distress alerts and broadcasts
- Plotting the position of additional SAR facilities responding
- Maintaining an up to date plot showing casualty and positions of SAR assets, areas searched etc.
- Plotting the search area, draw up a plan of operations, decide a search method and the deployment of SAR facilities
- Search area determination and effort allocation of a SAR plan
- Ascertaining the movements and location of other vessels, and alerting them to lookout or assist and maintain radio watch/communications with SAR facilities
- Liaising with flank MRCCs, including foreign flanks if appropriate
- Advising the Duty Press Officer
- Considering requesting a Press Liaison Officer attend the MRCC
- Advising the casualty of action taken and of all subsequent pertinent developments
- Maintaining incident boards and survivor/casualty tote as necessary
- Sending SAR SITREPs as necessary to keep all responders informed
- Contacting the casualty's shore based emergency response team if applicable
- Arranging for the refuelling of SAR facilities where appropriate
- During a prolonged incident, coordinating the relief of and refreshments for the SAR crews and Ops Centre teams if necessary

- Notifying accident investigation authorities

## **Considerations**

Does, or may, the situation require:

- The Powers of Intervention to be invoked
  - Keep under review - contact SOSREP via DCPSO as necessary
- The establishment of a TEZ, TDA or a Temporary Restriction of Flying Regulations
- Requesting attendance in the MRCC of MICOs from other responders as required
- The tasking of the SCOO as Coastguard Incident Officer shoreside
- Contacting local port authority if relevant for any additional resources available - tugs, launches, use of VTS systems for vessel movements etc.
- Contacting RN's Fleet Controller for available naval units
- Contacting Language Line Services / linguist if necessary
- Consider link calling foreign RCCs for assistance in this respect
- Contacting Aberdeen MRCC for available resources for specialist offshore industry vessels and helicopters
- Advising RNLi HQ if required
- Preparing a daily synopsis and progress report, giving areas searched, pattern, track spacing, coverage factors, probability of detection and intended plans
- Requesting pastoral care

## **Alerting & Briefing the Duty Controller**

The occasions when the Duty Controller should be alerted are listed in Alerting On Call Duty Personnel

The brief to the Duty Controller should be concise and factual and in accordance with the Mission Statement form in ViSION; i.e. a brief SITREP, action taken and proposed

SMCs should ask for advice as necessary and request further support if it is considered appropriate. Otherwise, SMCs should make a clear statement to the effect that they are content with the situation

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