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## Operational Manual

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

[Part 37 -- Table of Contents](#)

Amended: 2008-07-09

Bulletin

### 37.1. Search and Rescue

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(For information regarding this policy, contact National Criminal Operations, Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services Dir. at GroupWise address OPS POLICY HQ.)

#### 1. General

1. 1. The Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) is responsible for:
  1. 1. 1. conducting searches for people or vessels lost or in distress off the Canadian coastline, on the Great Lakes and on the St. Lawrence Seaway; and
  1. 1. 2. recreational boating safety across Canada, including operator proficiency and boating-related loss-of-life prevention.
1. 2. The CCG can be reached through the Joint Rescue Coordination Centers (JRCC) listed in sec. [2](#).
1. 3. National Defence is responsible for conducting searches for lost/downed aircraft and their missing occupants. See sec. [2](#).
1. 4. In a contract province, if requested, the RCMP will assist the JRCC in organizing a search.
1. 5. In a noncontract province, if requested, RCMP vessels or aircraft in the area will provide, if available, secondary resources for assistance.
  1. 5. 1. The search will be turned over to the responsible agency as soon as possible.
1. 6. The provincial/territorial government is responsible for conducting searches for lost/overdue persons, on land or in inland waters.
  1. 6. 1. In most of Canada, this responsibility is delegated to the policing agency having local jurisdiction.
 

EXCEPTION: National parks.
1. 7. If a province/territory directs that a search be continued after the CO determines it is no longer practical, all expenses, e.g. travel, overtime, equipment rental, will be recovered from the province/territory. See [FMM ch. 3.8](#).
1. 8. Where the RCMP does not have primary jurisdiction or primary responsibility, e.g. national parks, other agencies, a CO may provide search and rescue (SAR) assistance.

1. 9. An RCMP tactical troop, trained in SAR fundamentals, may be used in the absence of trained volunteers.

1. 10. The RCMP SAR Program focuses on prevention, response, intergovernmental and agency cooperation, and volunteers.

1. 11. An RCMP on-site SAR command structure usually consists of a **search/incident commander** (RM) who has overall authority and responsibility for the search; and a **search manager** who is responsible for the management of the search and who, with the search commander, determines SAR strategies and tactics and leads and directs SAR volunteer teams. The specific duties of the search/incident commander are outlined in ch. [37.2.5](#).

NOTE: In some training manuals, the search commander may be referred to as the "incident commander".

1. 12. A civilian search dog team may be used if it meets the criteria outlined in ch. [33.1.5](#).

## 2. Joint Rescue Coordination Centers

2. 1. The coordination of SAR operations for lost/downed aircraft and vessels lost or in distress off the Canadian coastline, on the Great Lakes and on the St. Lawrence Seaway, is the responsibility of the following Joint Rescue Coordination Centers (JRCC):

2. 1. 1. Joint Rescue Coordination Center Victoria - Esquimalt, B.C., Tel.: 1-800-567-5111 or 250-363-2333;

2. 1. 2. Joint Rescue Coordination Center Trenton - Trenton, Ont., Tel.: 1-800-267-7270 or 613-965-3870;

2. 1. 3. Maritime Rescue Coordination Sub-Center - Quebec City, Q.C., Tel.: 1-800-463-4393 or 418-648-3599;

2. 1. 4. Joint Rescue Coordination Center Halifax - Halifax, N.S., Tel.: 1-800-565-1582 or 902-427-8200;

2. 1. 5. Maritime Rescue Coordination Sub-Center - St. John's, Nfld., Tel.: 1-800-563-2444 or 709-772-5151.

## 3. Training

3. 1. The minimum requirements for a search manager are successful completion of recognized basic SAR and search management courses.

3. 2. Recognized basic, advanced and search management training courses include those produced by, or based on, the principles of the:

3. 2. 1. Emergency Response Institute (ERI); or

3. 2. 2. National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR).

3. 3. The RCMP will, to the extent possible:

3. 3. 1. include civilian volunteer search manager candidates on RCMP search management training courses, and

3. 3. 2. assist in the basic SAR training of civilian volunteers and other agencies/departments.

3. 4. When possible, the RCMP will use trained SAR volunteers to conduct a physical search.

3. 5. A trained volunteer is one who has completed the minimum level of SAR training established by the province/territory. A trained volunteer should be screened for working in the vulnerable sector as defined in [CPIC Reference Manual, ch. 1.2.14, para. 14.1.a.](#)

3. 6. If approved by the province/territory and search/incident commander, untrained civilian volunteers may be used in the absence of trained volunteers or to support a team of trained volunteers.

3. 6. 1. Untrained volunteers will be supervised by the search/incident commander or SAR-trained delegate. See ch. [37.2.5](#).

#### 4. Emergency Response

4. 1. The detachment commander will:

4. 1. 1. If informed that an aircraft/vessel is lost or in distress, immediately notify the nearest JRCC and his/her District Commander. See sec. [2](#).

4. 1. 2. If immediate action could save lives, request assistance from any aircraft/vessel near or within the area of a SAR operation.

4. 1. 3. Hand over the SAR responsibilities as soon as possible to National Defence, if it involves an aircraft, or CCG, if it involves waters under its jurisdiction.

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#### References

- Solicitor General's Manual, "*Police Procedures for Ground Search and Rescue for Lost and Missing Person*", 1994.
- [The New SAR Initiatives Fund Program Guide](#).
- [National Search and Rescue Secretariat](#).

