

**Makkovik Incident: Ground Search and Rescue Operations
Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador
February 08, 2012**

General

The death of the boy from Makkovik is tragic and I offer my condolences to his family, friends and the entire community of Makkovik.

This should never have happened and should never happen again.

Increasing Search and Rescue (SAR) capacity in Newfoundland and Labrador is critically important to our government.

We continue to press the federal government to work with us to improve SAR capacity for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Federal Report in Makkovik Incident

This investigation undertaken by the Department of National Defence is important to identify all the facts in this case.

Any delay in SAR response should never have happened and can never happen again.

PG Engaging Air Services for Ground Search and Rescue

The Provincial Government engages air services for ground search and rescue operations at the request of policing agencies. The police force who has jurisdiction is always the lead agency. In this case, the lead agency was the RCMP.

In ground search and rescue operations, provincial and federal resources are considered 'support services' to the lead agency.

When requested to provide air search capabilities to a missing person search Fire and Emergency Services contacts the Government Air Services division of the Department of Transportation and Works to engage a private operator for air searches.

The request to provide air search capabilities to a missing person search must come from the Criminal Operations Division of the RCMP (not a local

detachment) or the Emergency Management division of the RNC for FES-NL to engage.

The Provincial Government has a helicopter services contract with Universal Helicopters Newfoundland Limited which provides access to a minimum of 5 helicopters. These helicopters are not capable of night flying.

They are located in:

- Happy Valley-Goose Bay;
- Gander;
- St. Alban's;
- St. John's; and,
- Pasadena where an extra one is available May 20th – August 31

The agreement dictates that helicopter service shall be available at all times during the term of the contract, subject only to adverse weather conditions and can be used by the Provincial Government or anyone named by the Minister for any purpose, including aerial search.

FES-NL may also request the assistance of federal resources through the Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC), based on the time of day of the request and the resources available. For example, if it is recognized that a contract resource cannot fly or if night time flights is required.

The private operators engaged by Government Air Services will determine whether conditions are favourable for flight.

JRCC officials are responsible for determining whether it is safe for federal aircraft to fly.

Our standard operating procedure indicates that Search and Rescue services provided by the federal government can be requested when our contract helicopters cannot fly. That can be in the event of adverse weather or for the purposes of night flying.

Further Information on Private Helicopter Contract (if required)

During the contract the company guarantees that the 206 helicopters will be available for 8427 hours of flight time and the 407 will be available for 247.5 hours.

The Provincial Government's contract stipulates that all pilots for these helicopters must have a minimum of 2000 hours of pilot-in-command flying time logged, and if the pilot flies out of Happy Valley – Goose Bay, the pilot must also

have a minimum of 1000 hours of flying time logged in Labrador. This ensures pilots operating in Labrador are familiar with the area.

Marine Sub-Centre (only if pushed farther on this subject)

Some have linked resources at the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre being cut and the circumstances of this boy's death. There is no linkage. The rescue centre is currently in operation with no loss of service to this point. To try and make such a link is irresponsible. It's important we deal with the facts here.

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Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador
February 09, 2012**

General

The death of the boy from Makkovik is tragic and I offer my condolences to his family, friends and the entire community of Makkovik.

As Minister Responsible for Fire and Emergency Services I have written today to the Minister of National Defence on this topic to seek some further clarity of the events which occurred and particularly, the availability of aircraft to respond.

In this letter I have asked for assurances that Search and Rescue helicopters stationed in this province by the Department of National Defence will be in a state of readiness when requested to participate in air search operations.

Also, we heard from Rear Admiral Gardam yesterday that DND will not deploy aircraft if private aircraft are involved in a search. I believe there needs to be a reexamination of this protocol and we would certainly welcome some further discussion on this matter.

Further, we believe there were Cormorant helicopters available from the Search and Rescue squadron in Gander and St. John's however, they were not tasked to participate in this search. We would like some further information as to the availability of these aircraft and why they were not engaged in the search efforts.

It is so important for us to have a clear picture of the time lines, process and the decisions made with respect to this incident. At this point I am not sure if we have such a clear picture and, again, it is so important that we do.

This is not about blame but about correcting wrongs, if there were any, and positively affecting the process to ensure safety.

In essence, we need clarity on the incident and at this time I do not think we have that clarity.

Increasing Search and Rescue (SAR) capacity in Newfoundland and Labrador is critically important to our government.

We continue to press the federal government to work with us to improve SAR capacity for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Action 30

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