



# Royal Newfoundland Constabulary

Policy and Procedure Manual  
General Order 361  
Date Issued: September 2, 2016

## Ground Search and Rescue

### 1.0 General

- 1.1 Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide procedural instruction to police officers in response to a situation where a ground search and rescue operation is required.
- 1.2 Scope: The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary is responsible for the coordination of all ground search and rescue (GSAR) operations within RNC regional jurisdictions. When necessary, GSAR operations will be carried out with the assistance of the Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association.

### 2.0 Ground Search and Rescue Coordinator

- 2.1 The Chief of Police will designate a police officer as the GSAR Coordinator. The Commanding Officer for Corner Brook and Labrador will assign a police officer in Corner Brook and Labrador to be responsible for GSAR Teams and report to the GSAR Coordinator.
- 2.2 The GSAR Coordinator is responsible to:
- a. Organize any required Search and Rescue Teams (Volunteer and RNC Teams).
  - b. Ensure that all volunteer team leaders and police officers are briefed on their expected duties, their responsibilities and expected remuneration;
  - c. Assist volunteer teams in the formation of an executive in accordance with approved organization chart.
- 2.3 The GSAR Coordinator, or designate, will be responsible for the on scene coordination of all GSAR Operations.



## Ground Search and Rescue

### 3.0 Ground Search and Rescue Operation (Initial Response)

3.1 When a complaint of a missing person is received, the responding police officer (first Officer at scene), shall commence an investigation immediately to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the missing person(s). The following information should be obtained on the initial response.

- a. full name, primary and secondary addresses, date of birth;
- b. name and addresses of the parents and close relatives;
- c. complete physical description, i.e., height, weight, clothing worn, photo if applicable, etc.
- d. when, where and by whom the subject was last seen;
- e. mental and physical condition;
- f. names and details of associates/friends;
- g. place of employment; and
- h. medical condition of the subject including prescribed medications.

3.2 The responding police officer must brief the Platoon Commander/Supervisor of the complaint.

3.3 When Ground Search and Rescue is deployed for an investigation, i.e. evidence search, the following will apply:

- a. The investigating officer will coordinate the required search through the Ground Search and Rescue Coordinator.
- b. The investigating officer will ensure the Deputy Chief of Patrol Operations is notified.



## Ground Search and Rescue

### 4.0 Platoon Commander/Supervisor Responsibilities

4.1 The Platoon Commander is responsible to:

- a. assess the information and notify the GSAR Coordinator;
- b. assign an NCO to coordinate the preliminary investigation; or
- c. refer the case to the NCO I/C of Missing Persons, RNC, who will then assume responsibility for coordination of the investigation; and
- d. advise the Superintendent of Patrol.

### 5.0 Investigating Police officer

5.1 The investigating police officer shall coordinate the Investigation by:

- a. advising the GSAR Coordinator, or designate, of all information available;
- b. setting up Command Post with Communications to the GSAR Coordinator, or designate;
- c. maintaining an accurate log of all details of the investigation; and
- d. forwarding a complete report on the result of the investigation.

### 6.0 Use of Aircraft

6.1 In some instances the assistance of aircraft may be necessary. The Ground Search and Rescue Coordinator or the Assistant Ground Search and Rescue Coordinator have the authority to request aircraft assistance. The Deputy Chief must be notified of the request for aircraft assistance. All other requests for aircraft support for other operations must be authorized by the Deputy Chief responsible for the division making the request.

6.2 At the conclusion of the aircraft services, the GSAR Coordinator shall advise the Director of Fire and Emergency Services of the outcome aircraft services.



**Royal  
Newfoundland  
Constabulary**

**Policy and Procedure Manual**  
General Order 361  
Date Issued: September 2, 2016

## Ground Search and Rescue

Fire and Emergency Services  
Department of Municipal Affairs  
5 Hallett Crescent  
St. John's, NL  
A1B 4J6  
Tel: 729-3703

### **7.0 Media Relations**

- 7.1 The RNC Media Relations Officer will respond to media inquiries in relation to GSAR. When communicating with the media on searches in which NLSARA search and rescue are participating, the media relations officer will state the nature and extent of their assistance.
- 7.2 Any references to the use of aircraft in the GSAR should identify the aircraft service provider as the Provincial Fire and Emergency Services.

### **8.0 Reimbursement of Expenses Incurred by Volunteers**

- 8.1 In instances where the RNC requests the assistance of the NLSARA, reasonable expenses of the volunteers may be reimbursed by Government in accordance with the reimbursement schedule agreed upon between the NLSARA and the Department of Justice and on file with the RNC Finance Division.
- 8.2 The GSAR Coordinator, or designate, will have the right to limit the number of searches, location of searches where, in his/her opinion, there are more volunteers than required for a particular search and/or rescue operation.
- 8.3 The Ground Search and Rescue Coordinator, or designate, will have the right to limit the number of snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, boats, or other vehicles used in a particular search and/or rescue operation, and will prohibit the use of any vehicle which, in his/her opinion, is unserviceable, or unsuited to the terrain to be searched.
- 8.4 Claims for expenses shall be forwarded to and certified by the GSAR Coordinator, or designate.