



**SEMC**  
STATE EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

# Search and Rescue Emergency

## Persons lost or in distress requiring a Search and Rescue response

### STATE HAZARD PLAN

#### RESPONSIBLE AGENCY

Western Australia Police Force

#### APPROVED BY

State Emergency Management  
Committee

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79/2023

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## Amendments Table

Date	Details	Amended by
August 2018	Amalgamation of Westplan – Land Search and Westplan – Marine Search and Rescue, new State Hazard Plan format, statement of fact changes, removal of duplication with the State Emergency Management Plan, inclusion of capability baseline and assurance activities, machinery of Government changes, clarification of arrangements for volunteers, incident management structures and medical evacuation.	PD87406/WA Police Force
December 2018	Version 01.01 – Statement of fact amendments to reflect Metropolitan Police Districts. Refer also to the generic amendments to the suite of State emergency management documents as per <a href="#">amendments table v02.00</a> approved by SEMC (Resolution Number 90/2018).	SEMC Business Unit
May 2019	Version 01.02 – Minor amendments approved by SEMC (Resolution Number 41/2019) as per <a href="#">amendments table v02.01</a> .	SEMC Business Unit
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Date	Details	Amended by
June 2020	Version 01.04 – Amendments reflect amendments to the Emergency Management Act 2005 and Emergency Management Regulations 2006, including updated hazard definition, state waters and vessel and statement of fact amendments approved by SEMC (Resolution Number 39/2020) as per <a href="#">State emergency management documents amendments table v02.03</a> .	SEMC Business Unit
December 2020	Version 01.05 – Amendments approved by SEMC (Resolution Number 84/2020) as per <a href="#">State emergency management documents amendments table v02.06</a> .	SEMC Business Unit
December 2022	Version 1.06 - Amendments approved by SEMC Executive Officer (Resolution Number 17/2021). Statement of fact changes and updated hyperlinks to new SEMC website as per <a href="#">amendments table December 2022</a> .	SEMC Business Unit
August 2023	Version 2.00 - Comprehensive review approved by SEMC (Resolution Number 57/2023).	WA Police Force
October 2023	Version 2.01 - Consequential amendments approved by SEMC to reflect change in terminology from 'welfare' to 'emergency relief and support' and related terms (resolution number 79/2023) outlined in State EM documents <a href="#">amendments table October 2023</a> .	SEMC Business Unit

The SEMC acknowledges the Aboriginal peoples throughout the state of Western Australia as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, work and volunteer. We recognise Aboriginal peoples' continued connection to land, waters and community, and pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

This document was designed to be viewed electronically and aims to meet the West Australian Government's accessibility and inclusivity standard, including meeting the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 (WCAG 2.1) at level AA. If anything in this document is inaccessible to you, or you are experiencing problems accessing content for any reason, please contact the State Emergency Management Committee Business Unit at [semc.policylegislation@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:semc.policylegislation@dfes.wa.gov.au).

All of the State emergency management legislation and documents can be accessed via the [State Emergency Management Framework page](#) of the [State Emergency Management Committee website](#).

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# Part One:

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# Introduction



The *Emergency Management Act 2005* (EM Act), in conjunction with the *Emergency Management Regulations 2006* (EM Regulations), establishes the Commissioner of Police as the Hazard Management Agency (HMA) within Western Australia (WA) for persons lost or in distress on land or in a marine environment within the context of the prescribed hazard definitions (see section 1.2). The HMA is responsible for the preparation of plans to ensure a controlled and coordinated response and exercises this responsibility through the Western Australia Police Force (WA Police Force).

Appointment of the WA Police Force as the Search and Rescue (SAR) Authority is consistent with the NatSAR Manual and the Inter-Governmental Agreement on National SAR Response Arrangements (the IGA). Under these arrangements, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is the Australian SAR Authority. Australian states and territories and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) are the SAR authority for their respective jurisdictions.

Parts 3A and 3B of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998* establishes certain functions of the Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Commissioner, State Emergency Service Units (SES) and Volunteer Marine Rescue Service (herein referred to as Marine Rescue WA). The FES Commissioner is required to provide for the SES and Marine Rescue WA, so they may carry out SAR and other assistance operations.

Terminology and definitions specific to this plan are contained in the glossary at Appendix B.

## 1.1 Scope

This plan applies to all SAR emergencies within the State of WA and in State waters, in accordance with the hazard definitions in section 1.2.

These arrangements will also be used when a person becomes lost or in distress as a consequence of another emergency. In such circumstances,

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The decision to recover a vessel will depend on various factors including requirements by virtue of the *Coroners Act 1996* or *Criminal Investigation Act 2006*. Other considerations include prevailing conditions: (e.g. weather conditions, distance from a safe haven, risks involved, skills and suitability of the rescue crew and vessel, whether it is safe to undertake the recovery, and possible pollution and hazards). Decisions regarding the recovery conditions will be made by the master of the rescue vessel in consultation with the Police Commander with Incident Control. In any case, the WA Police Force (Water Police) should be advised as soon as possible that such action is being undertaken.

the WA Police Force will support the Controlling Agency for that hazard by managing the SAR component of the response.

In considering SAR as a consequence of other hazards, particularly on land, it needs to be remembered persons unaccounted for are not necessarily persons lost or in distress requiring a SAR response. Other State arrangements may be more applicable depending on the circumstances. For example, registration and reunification services after a natural disaster, it may be more prudent to first check the '[Register.Find.Reunite.](#)' system when trying to locate someone. This system is activated under the State Support Plan - Emergency Relief and Support and coordinated by Department of Communities in partnership with the Australian Red Cross.

This plan sets out arrangements for SAR assistance in response to distress messages, including:

- Distress beacons – for example: emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRB) and personal locator beacons (PLB)
- Other distress alerting devices (DAD) – for example SPOT satellite communication devices and Thuraya SatSleeve.

Note: the State arrangements for missing registered aircraft are set out in the State Hazard Plan - Crash Emergency. The State arrangements for LandSAR or MarSAR are used for missing unregistered aircraft.

SAR does not include salvage or the saving of property, including vehicles or vessels<sup>1</sup>, except where that action is indivisible from that of safeguarding life.

This plan is not intended to include searches being undertaken as part of a criminal investigation, although they may use similar response arrangements, by agreement. Public authorities or other persons other than the police will not be used in situations involving a threat or are crime related - unless agreement has been previously reached with the WA Police Force.

## 1.2 Hazard Definition

Events, situations and conditions prescribed as hazards under section 15 of the EM Regulations applicable to this plan are:

- “persons lost or in distress on land, requiring significant coordination of search operations” (regulation 15a)
- “persons who are lost or in distress in waters or on a vessel in waters” (regulation 15b).

Waters in regulation 15b are defined as:

- State waters
- the area of a port as defined in the *Shipping and Pilotage Act 1967* section 3
- the area described in relation to a port by order of the Governor under the *Port Authorities Act 1999* section 24.

Further expansion of SAR responsibilities for the WA Police Force are set out in the NatSAR Manual to which this plan can be applied, for example coordinating land searches for identified and unidentified distress beacon alerts in a land environment and other inland waterways.

## 1.3 Organisational Roles and Responsibilities

The Commissioner of Police is the HMA for SAR emergencies.

The WA Police Force is the nominated SAR authority under the IGA with primary responsibility for coordinating SAR response within the State and State waters. It is responsible for the development, implementation and revision of this State Hazard Plan.

Cooperative arrangements under the IGA oblige the first SAR authority<sup>2</sup> that becomes aware of a SAR emergency to respond, until overall coordination can be transferred to the SAR authority best placed. The SAR authority with overall coordination may in turn call upon other SAR authorities for resources to affect a response.

The IGA designates the following as SAR authorities:

- state and territory police - for incidents within their respective jurisdictions
- AMSA - for incident in federal jurisdiction.

The ADF is responsible for the SAR response for all ADF and visiting military ships, personnel and aircraft.

Key agencies with responsibilities under this plan, in addition to the WA Police Force/HMA, include:

- AMSA's Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC)
- Department of Health
- Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS)
- St John Ambulance (Western Australia) (SJA)
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)
- Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attraction (DBCA)
- Department of Transport (DoT) Maritime
- Volunteer organisations, including SES units, Marine Rescue WA groups (gazetted under DFES Marine Services) and others, such as Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA).

### Notes

<sup>2</sup> State = SAR authorities are the police force for each jurisdiction, under the IGA. The Commonwealth SAR authority is = AMSA, or in the case of incidents involving military (or ADF).

It is recommended that each agency with a role or responsibility under this Plan has appropriate operational procedures detailing their response arrangements. These arrangements should:

- complement an agency's existing operational procedures; and
- detail the roles and responsibilities of the agency under the State Emergency Management Plan.

Information regarding the roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies, including those providing additional support, are detailed in Appendix C.

## 1.4 Related Documents and Legislation

This plan is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- [IGA on National SAR Response Arrangements](#)
- Local Hazard Plans for SAR
- [National SAR Manual \(NatSAR Manual\)](#)
- State Hazard Plan - Crash Emergency
- State Hazard Plan - Maritime Environment Emergencies.

Legislation and codes relevant to this plan include but are not limited to:

- EM Act
- EM Regulations
- *Fire Brigades Act 1954*
- *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*
- *International Convention of Maritime SAR 1979*
- *Navigable Waters Regulations 1958*

- *Port Authorities Act 1999*
- *Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention 1974*
- *Shipping and Pilotage Act 1967*
- *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982*
- *Western Australian Marine Act 1982.*

## 1.5 Activities Informing the Assurance Process

Advisory roles within the WA Police Force specialist business areas (Emergency Operations Unit (EOU), Water Police and other units falling within the Counter Terrorism & Emergency Response Command support SAR response planning based on established triggers within the agency for their engagement.

Aspects of emergency planning (Local Hazard plans) are incorporated in the WA Police Force's annual 'Good Governance' audit. Internally published policy statements on the HMA's SAR responsibilities are subject to regular internal review.

The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) oversees sector-wide compliance of plans within the State emergency management arrangements (including this plan), via State Hazard Plan reviews and exercises.

The WA Police Force coordinates the WA SAR Advisory Group, a consultative forum for key SAR stakeholders in local, state and federal government to share SAR-relevant developments and champion initiatives supporting continuous improvement to SAR response (for example legislative reviews).

The WA SAR advisory Group may also refer matters of concern to the National SAR Council and/or the SEMC Response Policy Subcommittee through common members.



The WA Police Force's EOU and Water Police are involved in delivering SAR training for search operations and provide support to the operational response during a SAR emergency. The training and support provided by these units assists with maintaining response consistency is in accordance with national SAR arrangements (including the national manuals and the IGA) and is in compliance with State emergency management arrangements.

At the completion of a SAR response, each participating agency/group, may be requested to provide a written report to the Police Commander in accordance with state arrangements.

SAR emergencies involving a significant coordination of resources (for example: a level SAR two emergency), may require a formal debrief, held as soon as practicable after the emergency, including representation from all agencies/groups involved.

The provision and retention of written reports and formal debrief materials is in accordance with legislation relevant to the circumstances of the incident. Such legislation includes the *Coroners Act 1996*, the *Evidence Act 1906* and the *State Records Act 2000*.





**Part Two:**

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**Prevention and  
Mitigation**



## 2.1 Responsibility for Prevention and/or Mitigation

There is a shared responsibility for minimising the risk of persons becoming lost or in distress. Individuals need to consider their own safety and capability when undertaking activities in areas where there is a potential to become lost or encounter difficulties.

Individuals undertaking activities should be well prepared for the type of activities being undertaken. This includes:

- being aware of risks that may be encountered
- planning for a possible emergency situation and
- carrying an emergency beacon, DAD or other communication device appropriate for the activity being undertaken.

Further information on trip planning, trip preparation and emergency communications can be found on the [AMSA](#) website.

Entities with a responsibility for the prevention and/or mitigation of SAR emergencies include the WA Police Force (on behalf of the Commissioner of Police as the HMA), local governments and other agencies/organisations involved in Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs). Additionally, organisations with management responsibilities for areas posing a heightened potential for people to become lost/or encounter difficulties, are to consider mitigating those risks as far as practicable – as does anyone involved in the organising of activities in such locations.

The DBCA, DFES, DoT Maritime and the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) also have a key role in preventing and/or mitigating SAR emergencies. Community-based organisations such as the RFDS and SLSWA also provide additional safety advice to the community.

### Notes

<sup>3</sup> As determined by the responsible authority for that area (for example DBCA, local government) in accordance with their risk assessment process and available mitigation measures.

## 2.2 Prevention and/or Mitigation Strategies

### 2.2.1 Areas and persons of heightened risk

Agencies with management responsibilities for areas of heightened risk, whether by deed of ownership or by their location falling within a locality for which they have jurisdiction (and hence a duty of care) will consider risk management, visitor safety and education as far as reasonably practicable. Examples of areas of heightened risk include national parks, marine parks, reserves, state forests, ports and canals.

Local governments and the LEMCs play a vital role in the risk mitigation and prevention process by:

- identifying areas of heightened risk
- promoting the adoption of appropriate mitigation strategies (which may include public awareness/education); and
- facilitating a collaborative and cooperative approach to local emergency planning and response for higher risk areas within their geographical boundaries.
- in areas of high incident occurrence, warning signs and emergency communications devices should be installed for risk mitigation purposes<sup>3</sup>.

At-risk persons with a heightened likelihood of getting lost due to a cognitive impairment, can be registered with the [‘Safe and Found’ WA](#) program for a nominal fee. Safe and Found WA is a joint WA Police Force and Medic Alert Foundation initiative developed to expedite the location and identification of lost persons living with dementia, autism and/or cognitive decline.

### 2.2.2 Event and Trip Planning

Organisers of events in areas of heightened risk are expected to liaise with local governments/LEMCs and need to show a structured risk assessment process providing due attention to the health, safety and welfare of participants in these events.

Tourism WA's, [An Introduction to Risk Management for Event Holders in Western Australia](#) publication is a useful guide to assist event organisers with the initial risk assessment process – prior to receiving more specific advice from the relevant local government/LEMC.

The Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) provide extensive weather advice and warnings which may prevent people undertaking land-based activities in conditions where there would be a heightened risk of them becoming lost or in distress. Information is available through multiple channels, including the [Bureau's website](#). These warnings may be found on the [Emergency WA website](#).

In the marine environment, the WA Police Force provide and operate Coast Radio Perth and Coast Radio Hedland. These stations provide broadcasts of safety information such as regular weather forecasts, weather warnings and navigation hazard warnings. [The Bureau](#) provides information on weather warnings and forecasts which is broadcasted by the WPCC. The DoT operates 'Coast Cam' - a network of camera feeds provide near real-time visual images of coastal conditions at selected areas of the state's coastline.

Marine Rescue WA groups provide limited coast radio stations broadcasting safety information including weather forecasts, weather warnings and navigation hazard warnings. Marine Rescue WA groups offer a voyage recording service, which allows recreational mariners to call in to a volunteer limited coast radio station to record their call sign or vessel name, departure point and time, intended destination, number of people on board and expected time of return. These services are at the discretion of each group.

The WA Police Force and the DoT undertake compliance and enforcement

activities in the maritime environment. The WA Police Force undertake compliance and enforcement activities in the maritime environment. The WA Police Force undertake vessel safety checks on the water and at boat ramps and distribute safety information to vessel owners.

### 2.2.3 Compliance, education and enforcement

The WA Police Force and the DoT both undertake compliance and enforcement activities relating to recreational skippers tickers.

The DoT Maritime is responsible for the administration of the *Western Australian Marine Act 1982* and the *Navigable Waters Regulations 1958*. This includes processing and administration of vessel registration and the oversight and administration of Recreational Skippers Tickets throughout WA.

The DoT Maritime provide school and community-based education with a focus on boating safety through multiple channels. Reportable marine incidents and complaints are investigated by DoT. Marine Safety.

In addition, the WA Police Force, on behalf of the Commissioner of Police as HMA, has established the WA SAR Advisory Group. This provides a consultative forum for key stakeholders to ensure an effective, efficient and integrated SAR system in WA. Responsibilities include reporting on best practice and the development/review of strategies (in an advisory capacity) to support compatibility of procedures for joint SAR response across local, State and Commonwealth authorities.





# **Part Three:**

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# **Preparedness**



## 3.1 Responsibility for Preparedness

As HMA, the Commissioner of Police has overall responsibility for the development of plans and the management of SAR response.

All parties to the IGA (including the WA Police Force) are required to:

- plan and resource for SAR responsibilities as set out in the NatSAR Manual; and
- recognise and accept the first SAR authority to become aware of a SAR incident is obliged to respond until overall responsibility can be handed to the best placed SAR authority.

To meet these obligations, planning and resourcing activities consider a range of factors that impact a response to a SAR emergency. These factors include:

- land environments (for example: arid, beach, bush, cave, dune, mine, mountain)
- marine environments (for example: canal, lake, port, riverine, sea)
- environmental conditions (for example: inclement weather, high/low light levels, high/low temperature levels)

An array of individual capabilities can be used to respond to, or mitigate these factors. Capabilities are geographically spread across and/or are rapidly deployable for SAR response purposes. These include aerial, water-borne, land-based, human, canine, equine, vessel, vehicular and medical.

The Officer in Charge of each Police Sub-District is responsible for the preparation of local hazard plans for LandSAR and MarSAR as appropriate.

## 3.2 Capability Baseline

Each SAR typically involves one or a small number of persons lost or in distress, with challenges primarily presented by the conditions/location of the SAR, individual characteristics of the person(s) concerned or by the occurrence of multiple concurrent SAR emergencies.

To assist with planning and preparedness for SAR emergencies, agencies are to consider a capability baseline of providing support to incidents of the following magnitude, either as independent SAR incidents or arising as a consequence of another hazard:

### 3.2.1 Marine

- Recreational fishing fleet (20 vessels) in distress after a sudden squall (based on incident in 2012 requiring rescue of over 60 people)
- Charter vessel carrying 100 people between Perth and Rottnest island sinks en-route
- 17 yachts involved in the Fremantle to Bali Yacht Race (average 4 people per boat) hit by a storm off the Carnarvon coast and requiring assistance/rescue
- 90 concurrent marine incidents in one day requiring some level of HMA involvement (monitoring, coordination and/or response).

### 3.2.2 Land

- 15 concurrent LandSAR incidents (i.e. one per Police District) in any one day, requiring some level of HMA and combat agency response (i.e. command, control and/or coordination)
- 100 persons lost or in distress from a single incident requiring a SAR response occurring in either metropolitan or regional area of WA.



## 3.3 Planning and Arrangements

The State Hazard Plan – SAR Emergency is designed to facilitate the coordination and safe use of government, private industry and volunteer group resources for SAR responses.

This State Hazard Plan is based on the national SAR system<sup>4</sup>, which includes:

- The designation of a single agency responsible for the management of SAR response (i.e. the WA Police Force).
- The availability of a 24-hour State contact facility for receiving initial SAR incident reports. In WA the Police Assistance Centre (PAC) at Midland (131444/000) and the Water Police Coordination Centre (WPCC) provide this services.
- The process for the notification and investigation of missing person/s that may initiate a SAR response.
- The establishment of incident control centres (ICCs) from which management of SAR response takes place.
- Management of a SAR response by persons trained as SAR Mission Controllers and supported by others with appropriate SAR training/experience.
- The deployment of search and/or rescue units (SAR units) and/or specialist rescue resources by the WA Police Force, including police units and/or personnel from other emergency management agencies and volunteer groups, as appropriate and available.

- The provision of expert advice relating to SAR response, e.g. visitor risks, aviation support, etc, by appropriate agencies and organisations, on request of the WA Police Force.
- The deployment of additional resources, as required, from State and Commonwealth agencies to support the WA Police Force.
- The tasking of all resources, including other agencies in support of the WA Police Force, with such activities is to be carried out according to agency procedures, reporting through the incident management structure to the Police Commander with incident control.

Any resources engaged through emergency management agencies other than the WA Police Force or provided on a volunteer basis shall ensure all matters of deployment are recorded with the WA Police Force through the incident management structure (or the WPCC for Marine Search and Rescue [MarSAR]).

### 3.3.1 At Risk Groups

The scientific study of lost person behaviour also accommodates different at risk groups, such as children, the elderly, persons with cognitive impairment (for example dementia), people with disabilities such as autism, and forms an integral part of search planning.

Information and other support resources for members of the public most likely to require a SAR response are discussed in greater detail in section 2.2 – Prevention and/or mitigation strategies.

#### Notes

- <sup>4</sup> The National SAR system is comprised of the IGA and the AMSA National Search and Rescue Manual. For MarSAR emergencies the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out a customary international law duty on the master of a ship flying a State flag to:
- i. render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost (in so far as can be done without serious danger to the ship, crew or passengers), and
  - ii. proceed with all possible speed to the rescue of persons in distress if informed of their need of assistance (in so far as such action may reasonably be expected).

### 3.3.2 Resources

Local Hazard Plans for SAR (prepared by the police sub- district) and the wider Local Emergency Management Arrangements (prepared by the LEMC) should contain a comprehensive list of resources available in the local area.

In locations where volunteer groups (e.g. Marine Rescue WA, SES, SLSWA) have a presence there will be an interdependent relationship between these groups and police; however it is important volunteers report their operational intentions to the WA Police Force, so volunteer safety can be assured.

The WPCC will be used as the ICC for all MarSAR incidents, unless otherwise directed by the Police Commander.

For LandSAR, an appropriately located and equipped facility will be identified for use for incident control. In some cases, this will be a mobile facility deployed to the scene.

#### Physical Resources

Physical resources available, including different types of vehicles, vessels and aircraft, dogs and horses, should be deployed under the direction of the Police Commander.

Under direction of the Police Commander, all requests for aircraft for a search should be forwarded to the Officer in Charge, Police Air Wing in the first instance, who will, after evaluation of the request, either allocate Police resources or make alternate arrangements for the task.

The Police Commander may request the JRCC coordinates air search operations, where multiple aircraft are required, or other circumstances beyond the capability of the WA Police Force.

#### Notes

- <sup>5</sup> Those who have successfully completed the appropriate SAR management training.
- <sup>6</sup> DFES deliver an extensive program of SAR specific training, including courses for SES Search Commanders, search team leaders and members (to meet SAR capability requirements for WA, on advice from the WA Police Force) as well as broader incident management training.
- <sup>7</sup> E.g. a trained SAR unit team leader.
- <sup>8</sup> These volunteers must be registered and approved by the WA Police Force and provided with a safety briefing before being tasked. The WA Police Force can provide a template for registration and further guidance. Volunteers not registered and approved will not be tasked and may be prevented from entering a search area, through an emergency situation declaration if required, to preserve the scene for approved searchers.

Marine Rescue WA groups provide dedicated marine rescue vessels for deployment to a MarSAR incident. If any further resources are required, the request should be directed to the Police Commander for evaluation and authorisation.

#### Human Resources

SAR response will always include police personnel. Other appropriate authorities and/or recognised volunteer groups may be used as appropriate and if available.

Qualified<sup>5</sup> personnel should be used for key incident management roles as far as practicable.

Training for personnel/volunteers undertaken in other agencies, in particular DFES<sup>6</sup>, may also be recognised for appropriate SAR roles under the incident management structure, e.g. Divisional Commanders, Team Leaders.

It is preferable all searchers have received training; however, if unqualified personnel are to be used they must be under the direction of a qualified and experienced SAR officer<sup>7</sup>. This includes aircraft tasked during a SAR response, which should use trained Air Observers where available.

The use of spontaneous volunteers (i.e. volunteers who are not attached to any recognised unit or agency<sup>8</sup>), may be considered by the Police Commander on a case by case basis. If a decision is made that it is appropriate to utilise spontaneous volunteers (e.g. in remote areas where there is little alternative or other searches where the availability of recognised groups is insufficient), consideration must be given to their physical and mental capabilities, appropriate clothing/personal protective equipment (PPE) and welfare during and post response.



These volunteers, should be registered<sup>9</sup> with the WA Police Force and work with and be supervised by trained personnel. Volunteering WA may be able to assist with the registration process, subject to location and availability of personnel.

The Police Commander, SMC, Operations Officer, Divisional Commander or SAR Unit Team Leader have the right of refusal if they are allocated an unqualified member of the public and they are considered unsuitable.

### Information Management

The initial report and tasking of resources is likely to occur through the WA Police Force Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Where the SAR incident requires significant resources and coordination, the conduct of the incident will be recorded on the approved crisis information management system.

### Agency Specific Resources

#### WA Police Force

The WA Police Force has responsibility for maintaining a capability to respond to any SAR emergency in WA. This will include appropriately trained personnel for the establishment of an incident management structure, including a Police Commander in all instances as required and available (For example Water Police, EOU, Police Air Wing, Canine and Mounted, Tactical Response Group).

#### DFES

DFES will provide for qualified officers to support an incident and the Incident Management Team. This is achieved through the provision of suitably qualified SES Search Commanders, SAR Unit team leaders and trained team members (Marine Rescue WA/or SES). Additional resources such as communications, operations centre support, air observers, canine units, vessels, vertical rescue teams will also be provided, if possible, when requested by the Police Commander. DFES coordinate the Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service, (ERHS) incorporating specialist land and marine SAR

### Notes

<sup>9</sup> Applicable when persons are tasked as part of a SAR response, to reflect the HMA's duty of care and to assist with insurance obligations.

<sup>10</sup> ERHS critical care paramedics may be mobilised to fly on the WA Police Force or other agency aircraft to provide aeronautical critical care.

aircraft with winch recovery and aeromedical intensive care capabilities.<sup>10</sup>

#### DBCA

DBCA will provide the following resources, when requested by the Police Commander (subject to availability):

- qualified officers who can advise on risk management and visitor safety
- qualified officers to support the operations function in an incident management structure for a field-based search operation
- aircraft and observers, special communications, river and estuarine search capabilities and heavy earthmoving equipment.

#### DoT Maritime

DoT Maritime will provide resources including vessels and qualified personnel if possible, when requested by the Police Commander.

### 3.3.3 Training

Each agency is responsible for training their own staff in their roles. The WA Police Force's EOU provides land search training within the organisation to suitably identified personnel.

Water Police conduct MarSAR initial response training for police officers at coastal locations as required. During these courses personnel from Marine Rescue WA groups, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, DoT Maritime, Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA), Customs and Port Authorities and other appropriate agencies/groups (e.g. DBCA in marine conservation areas) are invited to attend.

DFES provide emergency management and SAR training, as appropriate, to relevant staff and volunteers involved in SAR activities.

## 3.4 Assistance Arrangements with other Jurisdictions

The NatSAR Manual includes arrangements for the provision of assistance to/from another jurisdiction. AMSA, through the JRCC, can provide a range of assistance to jurisdictions.

For a SAR response involving more than one SAR authority (i.e. multiple jurisdictions), the Police Commander with overall coordination is to initiate consultation with SAR authorities from all participating jurisdictions at the commencement of the incident and review/provide situation reports to these authorities as required. This should allow for the exchange of information advice regarding the response and early consultation about assistance available.

International assistance is coordinated by the JRCC, other than for SAR involving military assets, and will involve liaison according to relevant international SAR agreements.

## 3.5 Coordination/Control Arrangements with other Jurisdictions

Normally the SAR authority best placed to respond is determined by the subject of the required response and their location, as set out in the NatSAR Manual. However, if, during consultation, it is determined another SAR authority is better placed for a specific SAR, overall responsibility may be transferred between SAR authorities by mutual agreement.

If a SAR operation exceeds the capabilities of the WA Police Force, or crosses into another jurisdiction, overall coordination may, by mutual consent, be transferred to the JRCC or another SAR authority, in accordance with the procedures established by the NatSAR Manual.

As police always retain responsibility for LandSAR, transfer will only be

possible between police agencies for SAR that crosses a state border. LandSAR involving military personnel may be transferred to the ADF depending on the specific circumstances. The JRCC may assist the response, by agreement, e.g. taking on coordination of air assets for a land SAR involving a wide area.

For MarSAR, transfer of responsibilities from to the JRCC will be coordinated through the WPCC.

For most operations, the WA Police Force and other support agencies will continue to operate in support of JRCC or other SAR authority undertaking control of the response.





# Part Four:

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# Response



# 4.1 Responsibility for Response

Control and coordination of a SAR response rests with the WA Police Force through the designated Police Commander.

Responding SAR units are responsible for ensuring the WA Police Force is aware of their location at all times during the response for safety reasons.

# 4.2 Response Arrangements

## 4.2.1 Activation of Response Arrangements

Initial reports indicating a possible SAR emergency must be forwarded without delay to the WA Police Force for evaluation and determination of the nature of distress, appropriate emergency phase classification and action (including appropriate tasking).<sup>11</sup>

Initial reports can be generated by:

- 000 call or radio distress message
- Phone call or radio message requesting assistance
- Advice of the activation of a DAD or other distress beacon, e.g. EPIRB, PLB, Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) or other locator
- Distress flare or smoke marker
- Report of a vehicle or vessel overdue
- Sighting report of a vehicle or vessel in distress
- Report of a person in distress or missing<sup>12</sup>

### Notes

<sup>11</sup> Initial reports indicating a possible MarSAR emergency received by Marine Rescue WA (or other volunteer group), a government marine agency or local government rangers and must be forwarded without delay to the WA Police Force, regardless of the level of incident response required.  
<sup>12</sup> Not all persons reported 'missing' are lost persons, this will be assessed at the time of the report.

- Request for a Medevac on medical advice beyond the capability of the health agencies to respond.

A flowchart indicating the general arrangements for responding agencies for different types of SAR, plus non-SAR incidents which may also draw on SAR resources, is presented in Appendix D, along with the phases of an operational response for a SAR.

## 4.2.2 Levels of Response

In most circumstances, initial SAR response will be managed at the local police level or the WPCC for marine incidents. Where further resources are required exceeding the local police capabilities, the response will be escalated to the District level (or the WPCC for MarSAR, as appropriate).

This graduated approach is also related to incident levels in accordance with State Emergency Management Plan section 5.1. As a general guide, a Level 1 SAR is one which can be addressed swiftly using local resources, potentially from within the WA Police Force alone, however may include a single volunteer group or other limited multi agency response.

Level 2 incidents should be declared in accordance with the State Emergency Management Plan section 5.1.6 and State Emergency Management Response Procedure 4.2, e.g. where further resources are required, particularly from a number of other agencies and/or areas, or where there is a need for both a land based and marine based search component.

Level 3 incidents are rare for a SAR, but may be declared where the level of resourcing required requires interstate or Commonwealth assistance or where there is a significant level of political or media interest.

Regardless of incident level, any situation determined to be a person lost or in distress must be communicated to the WA Police Force.



### 4.2.3 Site Organisation

Incident Control Centres (ICCs) may be police stations or any other suitable facilities identified in local plans and arrangements. The ICC should be large enough and have the facilities to support the following IMT functions:

- intelligence gathering and evaluation
- search plan preparation, implementation and evaluation
- overall control of the search response.

For MarSAR, the WPCC is a 24 hour operational ICC which is responsible for managing and/or supporting MarSAR response across the State. The WPCC is the liaison to the JRCC, other relevant agencies and organisations locally and interstate SAR ICCs/Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCs) for all MarSAR matters affecting WA. Should initial response fail to locate the person(s) lost or in distress, the responsibility for the control of the SAR may be transferred to the WPCC.

A Forward Command Post (FCP) may be selected and established at the time of the incident and will be dependent on the location of the incident. A FCP may be located at a police station or any other suitable facility identified by the WA Police Force, such as the operations room of the local Marine Rescue WA group for a MarSAR.

### 4.2.4 Incident Management Systems

The WA Police Force uses ICCS Plus<sup>13</sup>, consistent with other police jurisdictions. All agencies with a responsibility under this plan are encouraged to ensure their personnel are familiar with and able to work within this system.

Incident management terminology for specific operational roles and functions are related to the equivalent terms used in the NatSAR Manual – as specified below:

- In Level 1 incidents, in many cases the Police Commander will be synonymous with the SMC.
- For Level 2 and Level 3 incidents, a commissioner officer shall be appointed as Police Commander. A SMC shall be retained within the police command structure to manage the search component of the response.
- Where the response involves both land and marine SAR components, the SMC may establish separate divisions for land and marine components of the SAR either advisory to the Police Commander, as Deputy Police Commanders or as divisions under their Operations function.<sup>14</sup>
- On scene Coordinator (or Search Commander) may be synonymous with the lead officer for the Operations function for a specific search location, at the discretion of the Police Commander.

#### Notes

<sup>13</sup> ICCS Plus is seen as compatible with AIIMS, which is used by DFES and others, in that both systems have functions for Operations, Planning, Logistics, Safety and Public Information. ICCS Plus is seen as more flexible for police operations, including emergency response, and has additional functions if required.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., if a MarSAR response for a person missing from a vessel also requires a land search on adjoining coastal areas of land, a Land SMC may be appointed to coordinate the land based SAR units.

### 4.2.5 Incident Management Structure

In order to control search operations, the WA Police Force will put in place an incident management structure to meet the needs of the situation. This structure must consider all ICCS Plus functions. These functions are:

- Command and Control – a police commander, plus a SMC - if this is not the same person as a Police Commander
- Recovery
- Investigations
- Operations
- Intelligence
- Logistics
- Planning
- Public Information
- Safety
- Communications.

In a large operation, the Police Commander (and/or lead officers for the above functions) may appoint additional staff to support each of these functions.

Particularly in small operations, more than one ICCS Plus function may be performed by the same person.

#### Family Liaison

Information may significantly affect the conduct of a search may be obtained from relatives and friends of missing persons. Information relating to the personal history and possible courses of action taken by the missing persons should be collected.

A family liaison officer is typically appointed by the WA Police Force to support the family of the person or persons for whom the search is being carried out and assist with arrangements for post incident counselling should this be required.

#### SAR Units

These are units under the control of a single team leader, reporting to an agency or sector commander or direct to the Operations function leader. The team leader of each unit should be trained to the agency standard in the activity required and the team should be adequate for the task. A team leader is responsible for effectively executing its assigned task and for keeping the Operations function informed.

Appendix E provides examples of incident management structures for level 1 and 2 SAR incidents and further details of key incident management roles.

### 4.2.6 Rescue Arrangements

Where a SAR response has been conducted in accordance with this plan, the rescue of the lost or distressed person will be undertaken by the appropriate emergency management agency with the control of the rescue being the responsibility of the Police Commander.

The circumstances of the situation will normally determine the appropriate agency (or volunteer group); however, where this is less easily identified, the Police Commander will provide direction.

In some circumstances, by agreement, the WA Police Force may hand over control of a rescue to another agency better placed for this aspect of response.

### 4.2.7 Medical Support

#### Medical Services

The provision of medical resources and personnel, if required, will be coordinated at the local or district level where possible. Medical requirements over and above what is available locally (and through standing



medical retrieval arrangements) may be obtained through the Department of Health via the On Call Duty Officer. In the event of actual or potential multiple casualties, the Department of Health's On Call Duty Officer will be advised.

Medical support at incidents for responders should include psychological support to any personnel and/or volunteers exposed to significant trauma, and arrangements made to facilitate support if not already in place by the agency responsible for those personnel.

### Medical Evacuation (Medevac)

A Medevac required as part of a SAR response will be coordinated by the WA Police Force, with requests for Medevac considered after the appropriate medical advice from either SJA or the RFDS and supported as far as practicable.

SJA and RFDS will work collaboratively to ensure the most appropriate agency provides clinical support based on the nature and location of the incident in accordance with the Remote and Off Shore Medical Retrievals Position Statement for Health Agencies and Organisations.

RFDS will be the lead clinical agency in many remote land based incidents, e.g. where those requiring rescue are beyond the reach of the Emergency Response Helicopter Service or other area where SJA does not have the capacity and/or capability to adequately respond for example: Karijini National Park.

## 4.2.8 Hazard Management Officers

In the case of an emergency situation declaration for a SAR emergency, there is a standing appointment in place by the Commissioner of Police for responding police officers and police staff to act as Hazard Management Officers (HMOs).

### Notes

<sup>15</sup> Examples relevant to SAR might include circumstances where there is an imminent threat to life in areas of rural/semi-rural WA with limited access to other public information systems, defined geographical areas such as national parks or beaches, proximity to high risk areas such as areas of water and mitigating individual characteristics such as a child or person with dementia. It should also be noted that under the Telecommunications Act, these alerts can only be issued with the authority of an authorised person and must relate to a hazard defined in the emergency management legislation.

Other HMO appointments will be considered and carried out by the Commissioner of Police or his delegate in accordance with State Emergency Management Policy section 5.3.11 and State Emergency Management Plan section 5.2.

## 4.2.9 Investigation

The investigation elements of a SAR are the responsibility of the WA Police Force, with assistance from other agencies as required. This can include, where a missing person is found deceased, the appointment of a separate investigator as agent for the State Coroner (*Coroners Act 1996*).

## 4.3 Notifications

In addition to the initial notifications of a person lost or in distress outlined in section 4.2.1, a SAR response may involve a number of inter-agency notifications. Appendix F provides further details of these arrangements.

## 4.4 Public Warnings/Information

Public information during a SAR emergency is managed by the WA Police Force. While a variety of media formats are used, social media, in particular, can be beneficial for:

- enlisting the support of the public in keeping a lookout for a lost person
- helping to deter, focus and/or manage offers of assistance, (for example spontaneous volunteers).

Emergency alert (SMS messaging to mobiles and voice messaging to land lines in a defined area) may be used for SAR provided the circumstances meet the criteria set out in the National Guidelines for Emergency Alert<sup>15</sup>.

The WA Police Force Emergency Alerts are effected by the WA Police Force's State Operations Command Centre.

Should a SAR emergency elicit high volumes of public calls, the State Public Information Line can be activated via the State Public Information Coordinator in accordance with State arrangements.

## 4.5 Restricting Access to the Search Area

There may be circumstances where it is preferable to prevent public access to a search area, for example to prevent scene contamination for tracking (footprints, scent, etc.). In most circumstances, this is managed by consent; however, if there is a need to utilise formal powers, these can be provided by the declaration of an emergency situation by the Commissioner of Police in circumstances where a SAR emergency exists and there is a requirement for Part 6 powers.

## 4.6 Stand Down and Debriefs

When the decision to suspend or terminate a search has been made by the Police Commander, the Operations function, in consultation with the Police Commander, will commence a stand down of personnel.

The Conclusion Stage applies when:

- The target is located and the survivors are rescued
- The emergency beacon has been located and the survivors rescued, or if there was no distress, the beacon has been turned off
- Information is received that the target is no longer in distress
- All known persons on board are accounted for
- It has been determined that there is no longer a chance of survival (time frame for survival has been exceeded based on medical opinion)

- The SAR Authority determines that further searching has no significant chance of succeeding and either suspend or terminate the search.

An operational debrief and subsequent post operation reports will be conducted in accordance with section 5.7 of the State Emergency Management Plan.

## 4.7 Post Incident Analysis/Review

At the completion of search operations, each participating public authority, or other person involved in an incident shall provide a written report (and any related documentation) to the Police Commander if requested, where it will be filed.

For a MarSAR, this may be covered by the submission of a WA Marine SAR (WAMSAR) database sheet, either directly (if they have access to the system) or via the WA Police Force; however, a further report may be requested by the Police Commander depending on the circumstances.

All agencies involved in the SAR response will also be required to provide all related documentation of operations on request.

This will be forwarded to the Police Commander to be filed for future reference.

The provision of this documentation and its retention will be in accordance with appropriate legislation for the circumstances of the incident (*Coroners Act 1996, Evidence Act 1906, State Records Act 2000*).

## 4.8 Emergency Relief and Support Services

Depending on the circumstances, the State Support Plan – Emergency Relief and Support may be activated to enable Department of Communities to coordinate the provision of emergency relief and support services to impacted people and communities in an emergency.



Emergency relief and support services include immediate and ongoing social services to alleviate, as far as practicable, the effects on individuals impacted by an emergency. These services may include:

- emergency accommodation – the provision of temporary shelter for people evacuating or rendered homeless by an emergency
- emergency food – coordination of basic and essential food support for people impacted by an emergency without the capacity to self-manage
- emergency clothing and personal requisites - including provision of basic necessities to people impacted by an emergency
- personal support services – to assist affected individuals to cope with the effects of an emergency
- registration and reunification – to enable people to be traced and reunited with family and friends
- financial assistance – to eligible individuals affected by the emergency.

Additionally, in the event of a major emergency where many people are experiencing significant personal loss or grief, Department of Communities may be activated to coordinate emergency relief and support services to bereaved families/next of kin, and/or set up a Disaster Information Support Care Centre to coordinate provision of a wide range of multi-agency, multi-disciplinary services to bereaved families and friends.





# Part Five:

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# Recovery



Recovery is not normally associated with a SAR emergency, however in the event of a level 2 or level 3 incident, the WA Police Force will coordinate the completion of an Impact Statement and handover to a State or Local Recovery Coordinator, as required.



A dark, blue-toned photograph of a rocky cave interior. A small waterfall flows from a rock overhang into a pool of water. The rock walls are textured and layered. The word "Appendices" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and partially overlaid by a white horizontal line.

# Appendices

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## Appendix A: Distribution List

This State Hazard Plan for Search and Rescue is available on the [SEMC website](#). The agencies below will be notified by the HMA (unless otherwise specified) when an updated version is published on this website:

- All agencies and organisations with responsibilities under this plan,
- Minister for Emergency Services (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- Minister for Police
- National Emergency Management Agency (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC), SEMC subcommittee and SEMC reference group members (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- State Library of Western Australia (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- Western Australian Local Government Association (SEMC Business Unit to notify)
- Western Australia Port Authorities.

# Appendix B: Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

Terminology used throughout this document has the meaning prescribed in section 3 of the *Emergency Management Act 2005* or as defined in the State Emergency Management Glossary. In addition, the following hazard-specific definitions apply.

## B1 Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Aircraft (Registered)	<p>The following are considered to be registered aircraft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. International civil aircraft</li> <li>b. Manned Space Vehicles</li> <li>c. Aircraft on the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) register</li> <li>d. Aircraft on the Recreational Aviation Australia (RA-Aus) register.</li> </ul>
Aircraft (Unregistered)	Aircraft not included in the CASA and RA-Aus registers, including ultralights, paragliders, hang-gliders, and gyrocopters.
Air Search Coordinator	The person appointed by the Hazard Management Agency to coordinate the operations of aircraft involved in a search (used in NatSAR Manual and synonymous with a Divisional Commander under an incident management structure).
Clinical Support	Determining medical urgency and priority, appropriate level of medical skill required to assist (and sourcing/negotiating where this will come from), providing advice to people on scene prior to medical arrival and determination of patient destination and liaising with that destination for their reception.

Term	Definition
<b>Coordination (In the context of the NatSAR Manual)</b>	The coordination of SAR response activities where multiple authorities/agencies tend to be involved. The intent is to ensure a cooperative approach that produces the best response possible. This coordination of operational response relates more to interagency control in Western Australian emergency management legislation and emergency management arrangements. It is separate to and does not replace the 'whole-of-emergency', 'whole-of- government' function of the Emergency Coordinators.
<b>Distress</b>	There is reasonable certainty that a vessel, vehicle or a person, is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance.
<b>Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Australia</b>	Operating 24/7 in Canberra for the national coordination of maritime and aviation SAR and for the management and operation of the Australian ground segment of the Cospas- Sarsat (satellite) distress beacon detection system.
<b>Land SAR Incident (From NatSAR Manual)<sup>16</sup></b>	Is considered imminent or actual when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a request for assistance is received</li> <li>b. a vehicle or person is reported overdue</li> <li>c. it is apparent that a person or vehicle is in distress</li> <li>d. a distress beacon has been activated and/or</li> <li>e. a Medevac is required.</li> </ul>
<b>Marine Rescue WA</b>	Marine Rescue WA groups are located throughout the state and are primarily involved in operating limited coast radio stations, promoting safety and carrying out local rescues. These are gazetted under and administered by the DFES Marine Services.

## Notes

<sup>16</sup> Definition is from the NatSAR Manual. A LandSAR incident also needs to meet the hazard definition for WA, as set out in section 1.2 of this plan.



Term	Definition
<b>MarSAR Incident (From NatSAR Manual)<sup>17</sup></b>	<p>Is considered imminent or actual when any of the following conditions exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a vessel or craft has requested assistance</li> <li>b. a vessel or craft has transmitted a distress signal</li> <li>c. it is apparent that a vessel or craft is in distress</li> <li>d. a vessel or craft is reported to be sinking or to have sunk</li> <li>e. the crew is reported to have abandoned ship or is about to do so</li> <li>f. reports indicate that the operating efficiency of the craft is so impaired that the craft may sink or the crew may be forced to abandon</li> <li>g. the vessel or craft is overdue or unreported (and initial evaluation has failed to resolve the incident),</li> <li>h. persons are in the water and require assistance</li> <li>i. a distress beacon has been activated</li> <li>j. a Medevac is required on medical advice.</li> </ul>
<b>Medical Evacuation (Medevac)</b>	<p>Evacuation of a person for medical reasons, e.g. the movement of injured patients and provision of en route care by medical personnel from the scene of an accident receiving medical facilities. It may involve a variety of transport options, (ideally medically equipped), including land based ambulances, air ambulances (fixed or rotary wing) and off shore Medevac may involve vessels with onboard medical support.</p>
<b>On Scene Coordinator (MarSAR)</b>	<p>A person appointed to control the SAR operations within a specified area. This term may be synonymous with the Forward Commander and/or lead officer for the Operations function (depending on their location) within the context of ICCS Plus.</p>

**Notes**

<sup>17</sup> Definition is from the NatSAR Manual. A MarSAR incident also needs to meet the hazard definition for WA, as set out in section 1.2 for the arrangements of this plan to apply.

Term	Definition
<b>Police Commander with Incident Control</b>	The Police Commander responsible for managing the response to a SAR emergency (equivalent to the Incident Controller under AIMS). They may also be the SAR Mission Controller if the magnitude of the emergency does not require this to be a separate role.
<b>Port Limits</b>	Area under the control of a Port Authority (includes the berthing, significant maneuvering and anchorage areas outside the harbour). <sup>18</sup>
<b>Rescue (from NatSAR Manual)</b>	An operation to retrieve persons in distress, provide for their initial medical or other needs, and deliver them to a place of safety. <sup>19</sup>
<b>SAR System</b>	Australia's national SAR system is a collective term for SAR authorities, and other government and non-government entities that have defined responsibilities; or have a identified skill set that may be drawn on for a given SAR incident as set out in the IGA and the NatSAR Manual.
<b>Search</b>	An operation using available personnel and facilities to locate persons in distress.
<b>SAR Mission Controller (SMC)</b>	The police officer appointed by the Hazard Management Agency to control a SAR response. The SMC can be the Police Commander with Incident Control or the SMC can be established as a separate role under the incident management structure.
<b>Search and/or Rescue Unit (SAR Unit)</b>	A resource, human or physical (e.g. boat, aircraft, vehicle, rescue units/groups etc), which performs the search, rescue or associated action during any stage of a search operation.

## Notes

<sup>18</sup> Port limits are depicted on Admiralty Approach Charts applicable to the port and can be found in the *Shipping and Pilotage (Port and Harbours) Regulations 1966*.

<sup>19</sup> The State Emergency Management Glossary additionally defines rescue as the safe removal of persons or animals from actual or threatened danger of physical harm.



Term	Definition
<b>Spontaneous Volunteer</b>	A volunteer offering to help with a SAR who is not attached to any recognised unit or agency. If a decision is made by the Police Commander to accept these offers of help, these volunteers must be registered and approved by the WA Police Force and provided with a safety briefing before being tasked. <sup>20</sup>
<b>State Emergency Service Units (SES Units)</b>	These are located throughout the State and are primarily involved in land based SAR activities, utilising vehicles, animals and personnel. These are administered by DFES.
<b>State SAR Authority</b>	The State Authority for SAR incidents is the WA Police Force (with the Commissioner of Police as the HMA).
<b>State Waters (for the purposes of SAR)</b>	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. all waters within the limits of the State</li> <li>b. all coastal waters of the State (within the meaning given in the <i>Coastal Waters (State Powers) Act</i> 1980 (Commonwealth) section 3(1). Coastal waters extend 3nm from the territorial sea baseline.</li> </ul>
<b>Surf Life Saving WA</b>	A volunteer based, not-for-profit community service association and is the key agency for beach safety in WA. Surf Lifesaving WA comprises a state centre, 31 surf lifesaving clubs located around the coastline and over 24,800 members.
<b>Vessel</b>	A craft for use, or that is capable of being used, in navigation by water, however propelled or moved, and includes an air cushion vehicle, a barge, a lighter, a submersible, a ferry in chains and a wing-in-ground effect craft.
<b>WA Marine SAR (WAMSAR)</b>	Incident reporting database managed by DFES.

## Notes

<sup>20</sup>Volunteers not registered and approved will not be tasked and may be prevented from entering a search area to preserve the scene for approved searchers.

Term	Definition
<b>Waters</b>	<div>a. State waters</div> <div>b. The area of a port as defined in the Shipping and Pilotage Act 1967 section 3</div> <div>c. The area described in relation to a port by order made by the Governor under the Port Authorities Act 1999 section 24.</div>



### B2 Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
<b>ADF</b>	Australian Defence Force
<b>AMSA</b>	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
<b>Bureau</b>	Bureau of Meteorology
<b>CAD</b>	Computer Aided Dispatch
<b>DBCA</b>	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction
<b>DFES</b>	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
<b>DMIRS</b>	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
<b>DoT</b>	Department of Transport
<b>EHRS</b>	Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service
<b>ELT</b>	Emergency Locator Transmitter
<b>EOU</b>	WA Police Force's Emergency Operations Unit

Acronym	Meaning
<b>EPIRB</b>	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
<b>FCP</b>	Forward Command Post
<b>FES</b>	Fire and Emergency Services
<b>HMA</b>	Hazard Management Agency
<b>HMO</b>	Hazard Management Officer
<b>ICC</b>	Incident Control Centre
<b>IGA</b>	Inter-Governmental Agreement on National SAR Response Arrangements
<b>IMT</b>	Incident Management Team
<b>JRCC</b>	Joint (aeronautical and maritime) Rescue Coordination Centre
<b>LandSAR</b>	Land Search and Rescue
<b>LEMC</b>	Local Emergency Management Committee

Acronym	Meaning
<b>MarSAR</b>	Marine Search and Rescue
<b>Medevac</b>	Medical Evacuation
<b>NatSAR</b>	National Search and Rescue
<b>PAC</b>	Police Assistance Centre
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>PLB</b>	Personal Locator Beacon
<b>RCC</b>	Rescue Coordination Centre
<b>RFDS</b>	Royal Flying Doctor Service
<b>SAR</b>	Search and Rescue
<b>SEMC</b>	State Emergency Management Committee
<b>SEND</b>	Satellite Emergency Notification Devices
<b>SES</b>	DFES' State Emergency Service

Acronym	Meaning
<b>SMC</b>	Search and Rescue Mission Controller
<b>SJA</b>	St John Ambulance (Western Australia)
<b>SLSWA</b>	Surf Life Saving WA
<b>SMC</b>	Search and Rescue Mission Controller
<b>WAMSAR</b>	Western Australia Marine Search and Rescue
<b>WPCC</b>	Water Police Coordination Centre



## Appendix C: Response Roles and Responsibilities

The WA Police Force has the primary role of coordinating the response to SAR incidents. The assistance and cooperation of other agencies and organisations operating within their functional areas are necessary for an effective and timely response.

Organisation	Response Responsibilities
<b>Border Protection Command</b>	a. Provide assistance in the locating of missing vessels during normal surveillance operations on request.
<b>Bureau of Meteorology</b>	a. Provide specific meteorological advice to the HMA. b. Maintain an overview of weather conditions in a designated search area and provide advice of weather changes during the course of a search.
<b>Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions</b>	a. Provide advice and resources support, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– SAR units for deployment by the designated Police Commander, where possible</li> <li>– Advice based on local knowledge, detailed maps and plans of areas under their control, where available, on request</li> <li>– Trained personnel to support the Operations function, if possible, on request</li> <li>– Specialist resources, such as aircraft and observers, special communications, marine, river and estuarine search capability and heavy earthmoving equipment, if possible, on request.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Communities</b>	a. The State Support Plan – Emergency Relief and Support needs to be activated to enable Department of Communities to provide support provide emergency relief and support services to impacted people and communities in an emergency. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Activating trauma informed practitioners to provide personal support services to families/next of kin</li> <li>– Coordinating referral to ongoing personal support services for impacted people</li> </ul>

Organisation	Response Responsibilities
<b>Department of Communities (contd)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing the Disaster Response Hotline, if required</li> <li>- Activating and implementing registration and reunification services, which may include Register.Find.Reunite.</li> <li>- Establishing and managing a Disaster Information Support Care Centre (DISCC) to provide information and support to impacted families/next of kin</li> <li>- Other duties as directed by the HMA in line with the State Support Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Fire and Emergency Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide advice, resources and training support, including specialist rescue services (e.g. vertical rescue), communications, local knowledge and marine resource support.</li> <li>b. This includes, through DFES' Marine Services, Rescue Services and State Emergency Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing and maintaining standards for personnel and volunteer groups and conducting training (in conjunction with the HMA as appropriate) in on-scene SAR techniques.</li> <li>- Providing advice, based on local knowledge and specialist skills, as appropriate to the incident.</li> <li>- Providing trained personnel and resources to support a SAR response, including SAR units and team leaders, for deployment by the Police Commander/SMC.</li> <li>- Providing trained personnel to support the Operations function with field search expertise (i.e. SES Search Commander), if possible, when requested by the Police Commander.</li> <li>- Providing, where required and available, additional specialist resources to the WA Police Force (e.g. all terrain units, air observers, boats, canine units, vertical rescue teams, etc.).</li> <li>- Providing, where possible, communications and operations support.</li> <li>- Coordinating the Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service, if required.</li> <li>- For the marine environment, completion and submission of WAMSAR incident report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Department of Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide acute medical care and relief to injured persons via the hospital stream.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Response Responsibilities
<b>Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide marine advice and resources on request, during MarSAR operations.</li> <li>b. Provide other advice, based on local knowledge, on request.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Transport, Maritime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide marine advice and resources on request during MarSAR operations.</li> <li>b. Provide other advice based on local knowledge, on request.</li> </ul>
<b>Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (AMSA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide detection and location advice of distress beacons.</li> <li>b. On request of the WA Police Force, provide SAR assistance, including coordination of air operations and resources support, as appropriate and available, in accordance with agreements in the NatSAR Manual. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coordination of an air search</li> <li>– Arrangements for the provision of aircraft</li> <li>– Coordination/provision of air supply drops</li> <li>– Search planning advice.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Exercise overall coordination for SAR incidents which are beyond the capability of the HMA in accordance with the NatSAR Manual.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Governments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide advice based on local knowledge and other support on request.</li> </ul>
<b>St John Ambulance Western Ambulance Ltd</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with the RFDS to ensure provision of preliminary clinical support for a SAR emergency.</li> <li>b. Provide pre-hospital medical support for LandSAR and/or Medevac emergencies when either a road ambulance or the ERHS is best placed to respond.</li> </ul>

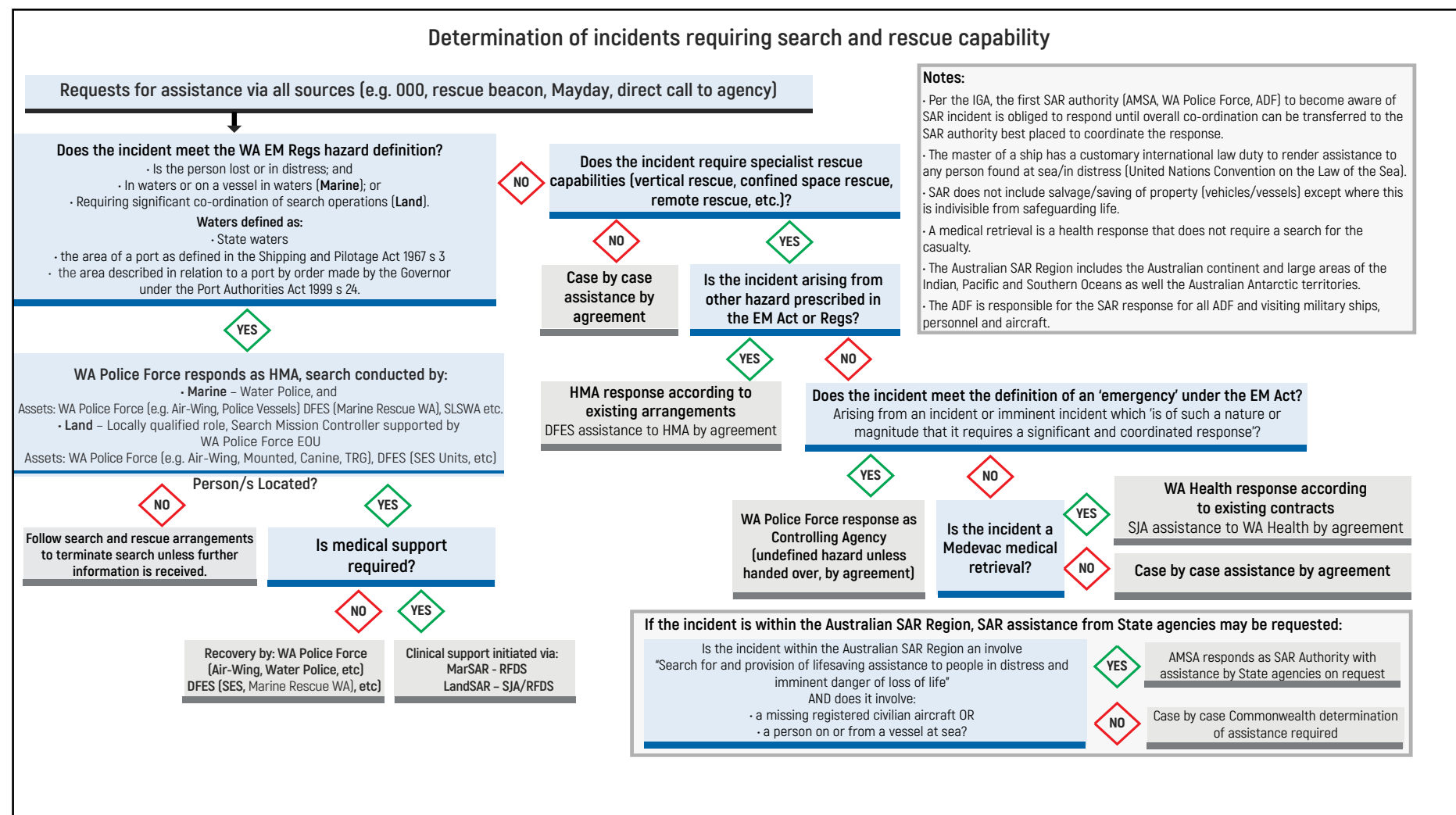


Organisation	Response Responsibilities
<b>Royal Flying Doctor Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with the SJA to ensure provision of preliminary clinical support for a SAR emergency.</li> <li>b. Provide pre-hospital clinical support for MarSAR and/or marine-based Medevac emergencies.</li> <li>c. Provide pre-hospital clinical support for LandSAR and/or land-based Medevac emergencies when the person/s requiring rescue and/or Medevac are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– beyond the reach of the ERHS, and</li> <li>– in remote locations where SJA does not have the capacity or capability to adequately respond (eg: Karijini National Park).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Surf Life Saving WA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Communications, local knowledge and marine resource support.</li> <li>b. Provide appropriately trained personnel and resources to execute MARSAR operations on behalf of the HMA (including Emergency Response Teams).</li> <li>c. Provide SAR units for deployment by the HMA.</li> <li>d. Provide advice based on local knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>WA Fishing Industry Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Under local agreement/plan the commercial fishing industry may provide marine advice and resources on request during MARSAR operations.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Response Responsibilities
<b>WA Police Force (on behalf of the Commissioner of Police as HMA)</b>	<p>a. Responsible for the emergency management arrangements for SAR (across Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery) and overall command and control of SAR in WA, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing and maintaining the State Hazard Specific Plan for SAR Emergencies and Local Hazard Plans for land search and MARSAR, as applicable.</li> <li>- Identifying training requirements and conducting training for police personnel and, where appropriate, in conjunction with other relevant agencies and volunteer groups.</li> <li>- Providing operational procedures and plans for SAR, including an initial point of contact in all areas of the State for receipt of incident reports.</li> <li>- Developing new and improved techniques and procedures, including through liaison with national and international search authorities with respect to new developments, as required.</li> <li>- Designating a Police Commander and/or SMC for a specific SAR incident and, through them an appropriate incident management structure at an ICC appropriate to the SAR response required.</li> <li>- Establishing and maintaining close liaison with other agencies and organisations relevant to supporting a SAR response.</li> <li>- Coordinating rescue and/or recovery of the subject(s) of the search once they have been located.</li> <li>- Maintaining liaison with SAR authorities of adjacent states and the Commonwealth to ensure mutual cooperation and coordination, as required.</li> </ul>
<b>WA Port Authorities</b>	<p>a. Provide MarSAR units.</p> <p>b. Provide advice based on local knowledge.</p>

## Appendix D Search and Rescue Determination and Phases

### D1 Determination of a Western Australian Search and Rescue Incident



**Figure 1: SAR Determination Flowchart**

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## D2 Phases of a Search and Rescue Response

The response to a SAR incident usually proceeds through five stages. Each group comprises activities typically performed from the time the SAR system becomes aware of the incident until response to the incident is concluded. The response to a particular SAR incident may not require the performance of every stage and/or activities of one stage may overlap activities of another so that activities of more than one stage are performed simultaneously. The five SAR stages are:

**Awareness:** Knowledge by any person/agency in the SAR system that an emergency exists or may exist and subsequent notification of the WA Police Force.

**Initial Action:** Action taken to alert SAR assets and obtain more information. This may include:

- evaluation and classification of the information
- alerting SAR assets (including appointment of a Police Commander/SMC and warning other relevant agencies/organisations of a possible SAR)
- communication checks
- in urgent situations, immediate performance of appropriate activities from other stages.

**Planning:** The development of operational plans including plans for search, rescue and final delivery of survivors to medical facilities or other places of safety, as appropriate. This may include:

- a decision by the Police Commander to commence search operations
- appointment of an Incident Management Team (IMT) and/or Forward Commander
- identification of the search area and desired area coverage

- obtaining past, present and forecast weather (including drift information and sea state for MarSAR)
- development of a practical search plan based on available/calculated datum (i.e. most probable location of the subject of the search)
- defining the search area and optimal/attainable search activity based on SAR units available
- coordination/callout of participating personnel/agencies
- alerting the relevant clinical coordination agency
- rescue consideration/planning
- logging of all activities and decisions made.

**Operations:** Dispatching SAR assets to the scene, conducting searches, rescuing survivors, assisting distressed persons, providing necessary emergency care for survivors and delivering casualties to medical facilities. This may include:

- selection of search type/pattern
- tasking of SAR units
- reviewing plans following reports from the scene
- monitoring progress/ongoing planning for subsequent searches
- providing situation reports to relevant agencies
- media liaison and/briefing activities
- liaison with clinical support agency
- establishing a base for debriefing incoming SAR units and their rest prior to re-tasking
- ongoing information gathering

- locating and rescuing/retrieving persons or clues located, logging all activities/decisions and appointment of an investigative team, if appropriate.

Where available, volunteer groups need to activate tracking devices and facilitate their monitoring (e.g. TracPlus on Marine Rescue WA vessels) or regular downloading (e.g. GPS carried by SES) during the operation. SAR units will be tasked and report back, via their agency commander, to the Operations function of the incident management structure.

**Conclusion:** Return of SAR units to a location where they are debriefed, stood down (and agencies notified of search suspension/termination), replenished/refuelled as necessary. SAR units finalise any required documentation and return to their normal activities.

All agencies involved in the search should be involved in a hot debrief on scene and/or be provided with a final situation report. They must provide a copy of all documentation and records relating to the incident to the Police Commander, to be filed for future reference (e.g. to review for continuous improvement and in the event of any inquiry).

# Appendix E: ICCS Plus Incident Management for SAR

## E1 Examples of Incident Management Structures

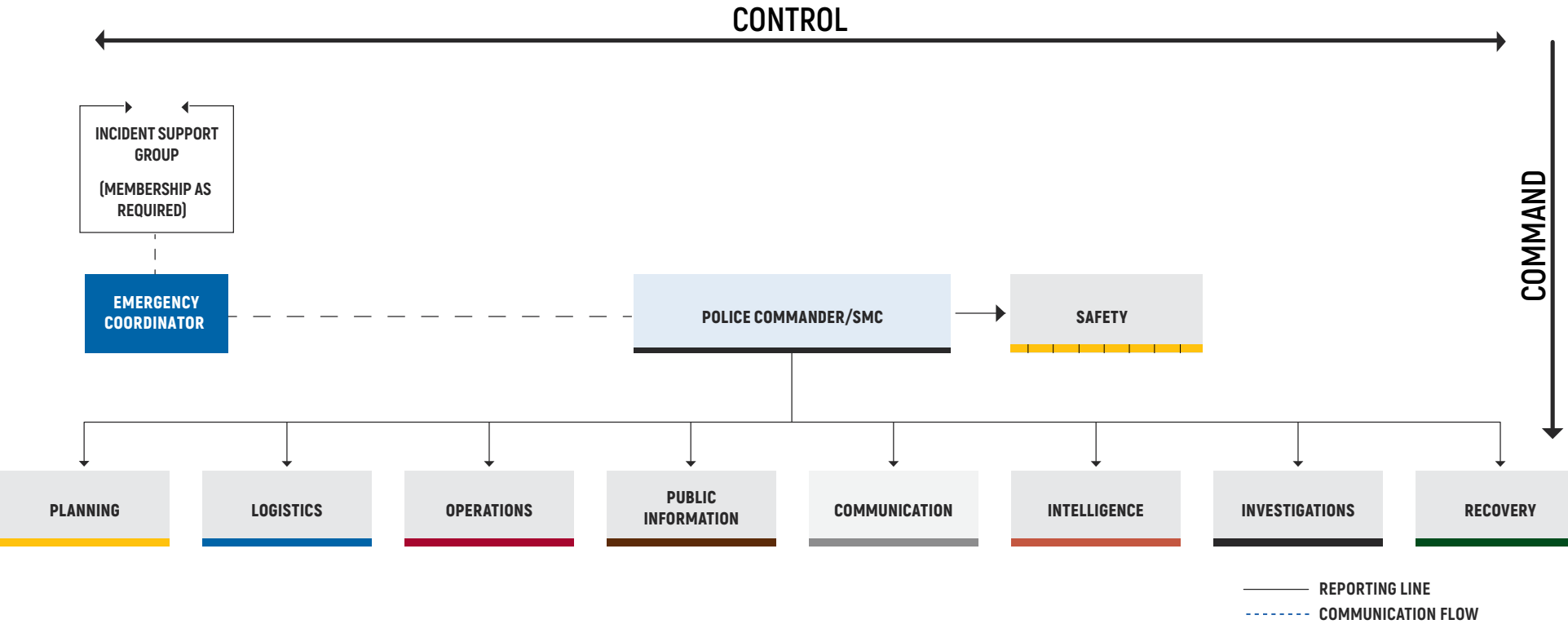
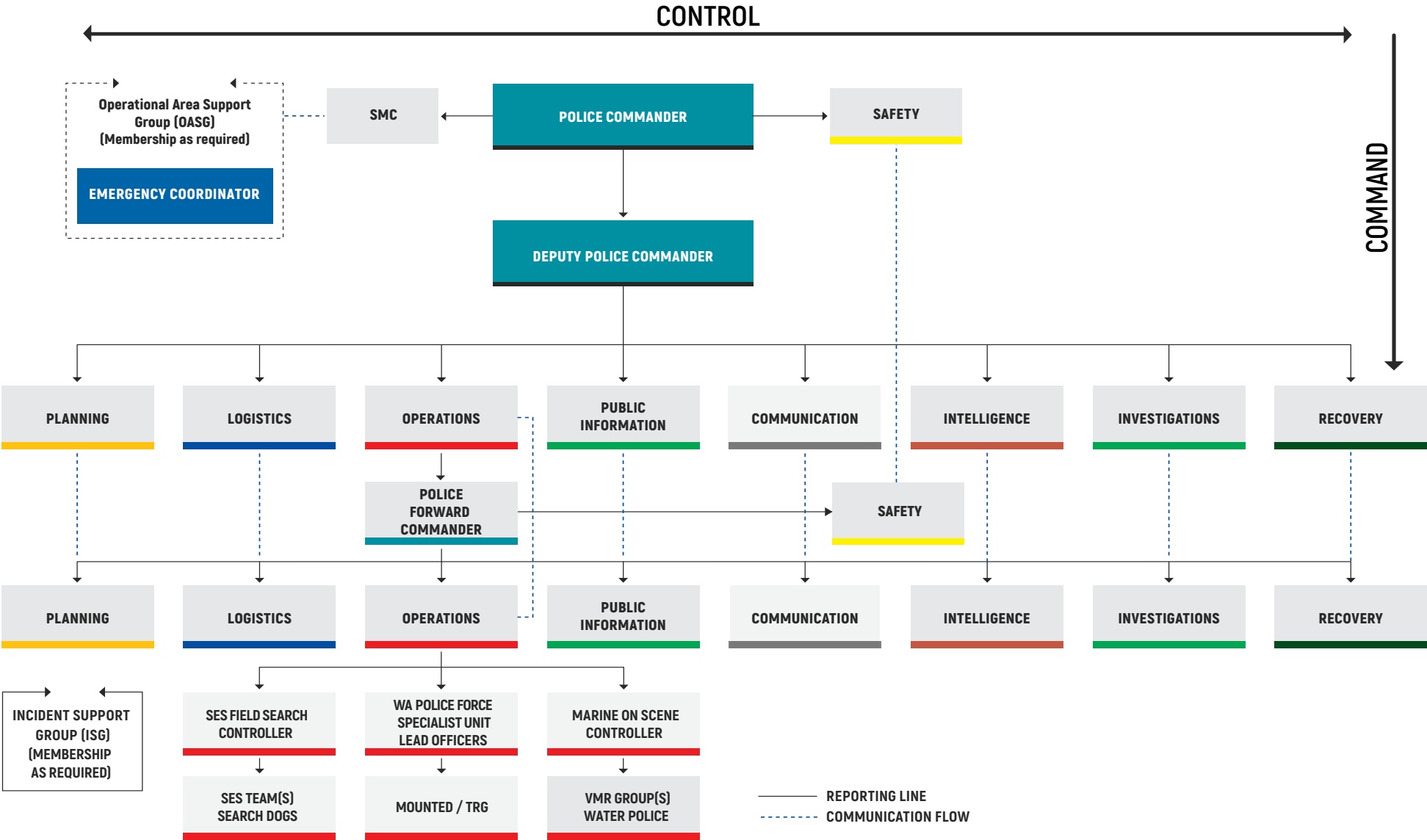


Figure 2: ICCS Plus Example of Level 1 SAR

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**Figure 3: ICCS Plus Example Level 2 SAR**  
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## E2 Key Roles for SAR

### Control

Incident control includes overall responsibility for the management of all activities and personnel deployed in the response, managing interactions with all agencies, organisations and people working beyond the incident management structure and those communities/people affected by the incident.

A Police Commander is appointed by the WA Police Force for each search operation and will operate from a designated ICC. The Police Commander will be a police officer suitably trained for the appointment and will assume overall control of the operation.

The SMC<sup>21</sup> is responsible for efficiently managing the search component of the response using the assets available across all stages of the search. Their responsibilities include the prompt dispatch of appropriate and adequate assets and the coordination of operations until rescue has been completed or chance of success is no longer a reasonable possibility.

### Operations

The Operations function will be led by a suitably trained police officer or, if no trained police officers are available, a police officer will be supported by a trained member of another public authority, or other person. The Operations function is responsible for the field search operations of dedicated resources to the search, through SAR units' team leaders, as appropriate.

If a search area is extremely large, the Police Commander may appoint a number of Sector Commanders under the Operations function to manage different geographic segments of the search area through the team leaders for SAR units within that sector. In many cases, where another agency is providing resources for a search, this will be achieved through their agency commander.

### Notes

<sup>21</sup> The Police Commander with incident control and SMC may be the same person, depending on the level of incident and/or expertise of the individual. Where the roles are split, the SMC will be responsible for determining sectors, allocation of search tasks, etc. with the Police Commander providing broader incident management oversight.

Where one or more sectors of a search area are assigned to another agency, appropriately trained persons from that agency may assist with the development of plans relevant to that sector; however, this must be conducted in consultation with the WA Police Force.

### Logistics

Supporting control of the incident through obtaining, maintaining and eventual release of SAR units and other human and physical resources, facilities, services and materials. This may involve interagency liaison to fit the demands of the situation and available SAR personnel and equipment.

### Planning

Responsible for developing the overall incident action plan to support the response objectives and SAR strategies. This requires an understanding of the different types of SAR units and other specialist personnel and equipment that may be requested and their best application in the field.

### Public Information

Providing timely and accurate public information, as approved by the Police Commander. For SAR this is mostly associated with the media liaison role, and requesting the public to look out for a lost person and/or engaging other public assistance with the SAR response, through methods such as media alerts, social media requests, the telephony based alert system for emergency response (Emergency Alert) and/or other methods. Where relevant, affected communities may be assisted by community liaison officers provided by the WA Police Force's Community Engagement business area, activated via the Media Liaison Officer.

### Safety

The Safety function oversees health, safety and welfare at all locations, across all functions, for all personnel (i.e. across all units/agencies) involved in the response. The aim is to eliminate 'at source' risks where possible or minimise risks through appropriate controls and advice relevant to the SAR

for all personnel (including volunteers). It is likely that individual agencies supporting the response will have agency safety officers and welfare arrangements that can be drawn upon but this does not negate the need for an overarching (WA Police Force) safety function that actions the intent of the Police Commander.

**Communication**

Communications includes interagency communications (e.g. the mechanisms, equipment, briefing schedules and information management systems), reporting between on scene, incident management structures and, when required, strategic management.



## Appendix F: Notification and Response

### F1 Marine Rescue WA

#### Actions by Marine Rescue WA on receipt of an initial report of a MarSAR incident

Marine Rescue WA provides valuable resources which may assist the WA Police Force in a response to a MarSAR incident. One of these resources is the operation of a Limited Coast Radio service. Consequently Marine Rescue WA frequently receive the initial advice of a MarSAR incident or other incident with the potential to become a MarSAR incident.

Upon receiving information of an actual or potential MarSAR incident, Marine Rescue WA shall obtain all details of the incident, using the WAMSAR Incident Reporting Form, and must:

1. Advise the WA Police Force (preferably via the WPCC) immediately.
2. Respond to the incident as appropriate, as requested by the WA Police Force; and
3. If there is doubt as to whether an incident is a MarSAR/potential MarSAR incident, contact should be made with the WA Police Force for advice.

#### Recovery incident

Generally the most common MarSAR incident report received by Marine Rescue WA is the request for assistance from vessels to return to safe harbour (i.e. a tow-recovery). This type of notification can develop into different MarSAR incidents.

In order to allow Marine Rescue WA sufficient flexibility to provide an effective response, Marine Rescue WA's action involves the following steps:

1. Obtaining all relevant details upon deployment.
2. Advise the WA Police Force (preferably Water Police)
3. Assisting the vessel.

4. Providing timely status reports to the WA Police Force if experiencing any difficulties with the recovery.

5. Advising the WA Police Force upon completion.

#### Escalation of recovery incident

Should the circumstances change, that is, **the vessel cannot be located and/or lives are at risk**, the WA Police Force must be advised immediately and all further actions will be under the control of a Police Commander and/or SMC appointed by the WA Police Force.

#### Receipt of distress incident

If the incident is of an urgent nature and an immediate response is required to protect life, Marine Rescue WA will take appropriate initial action and must advise the WA Police Force forthwith.

#### Guidelines for reporting of incidents

The following categories for reporting of incidents by volunteer groups provide further clarity of reporting obligations to the HMA:

- When Marine Rescue WA attends to a vessel that requires assistance then the volunteer group shall contact the WA Police Force (preferably Water Police) and they will be allocated a job number (i.e. CAD authorisation).
- If the incident is for a search or overdue vessel, then the WA Police Force must be advised forthwith.
- If the incident warrants an inquiry by the WA Police Force or other agency, then a WA Police Force incident report shall be obtained and Water Police advised (i.e. report of a boat crash/accident).
- If the incident has a potential to escalate into a major MarSAR, then Marine Rescue WA must alert the WA Police Force forthwith.

### Tracking devices

TracPlus is the approved tracking device as agreed by the State SAR Advisory Group and approved by the WA Police Force as the Controlling Agency.

The tracking device is required to be installed on all Marine Rescue WA vessels and activated during all operational deployment and training events.

For any MarSAR operation, Water Police must be provided with the ability to monitor the device for operational and safety reasons.

## F2 SES Units

Whenever the WA Police Force determines that there is a need to seek to use SES volunteers for a SAR response, activation of SES units needs to be carried out according to the following process:

1. Consideration of resources preferred for the nature and location of the SAR response by the Police Commander with incident control and/or the SMC.
2. Request SES resources via the WA Police Force EOU who will facilitate SES deployment through the DFES District Officer State Situation (DOSS).
3. The DOSS will contact the relevant DFES Regional Duty Coordinator for mobilisation of required resources.
4. SES units are not to be tasked locally.



