

Introduction

The National Search and Rescue Manual is the standard reference document for use by all Australian Search and Rescue (SAR) authorities. It is promulgated by the National SAR Council operating under direction from relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers. The Manual promulgates SAR coordination procedures for SAR operations conducted within Australia and the Australian SAR region.

The manual is consistent with the relevant International Conventions to which Australia is a party and is supplemented by various legal, informative and instructional documents used within, and between, organisations concerned with search and rescue. It has been developed with due regard to the International Aviation and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR). For more detailed information on the conduct of land SAR operations, readers should refer to the [Land Search Operations Manual](#).

The National SAR Manual meets the requirements of international conventions for an Australian Search and Rescue Plan, and includes material covering:

- Abbreviations, terminology and definitions relevant to SAR practitioners
- The elements and functions of the Australian SAR system
- Details of communications, assets and procedures for coordination
- SAR planning and techniques including worksheets

In providing a search and rescue response, nothing in the content of the manual precludes properly qualified officers from using their initiative in providing a SAR response in circumstances not covered by these procedures. In short, the Manual is a body of guidance rather than an operational straitjacket. In so doing, however, officers' actions should conform as closely as possible to the instructions contained in the manual that are most closely pertinent to the circumstances, and keep all other involved parties informed. Officers should be prepared to justify their actions if necessary.

When developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) at the organisational level, care should be taken to ensure that procedures are written consistent with the National SAR Manual. Should an SOP be identified that may be of benefit to the wider SAR community, it is recommended that the issue be raised with the National SAR Council so that inclusion of the procedure into the National SAR Manual can be considered.

This manual is under continual review and will be updated as necessary. In addition, suggestions and questions regarding the Manual should be forwarded to:

The Secretary of the National SAR Council

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

GPO Box 2181

Canberra ACT 2601

The National SAR Manual is promulgated online for the use of all search and rescue practitioners. The Internet version is the controlled document and is the latest version of this manual. The online version should always be referred to as it contains the most up to date information.