

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

A Deed made on the
15th Day of February 2001
Reviewed July 2011

Between

The Department of Conservation (DOC)
New Zealand Police
Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Limited (RAL)
Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre (OPC)

A management Framework for the

Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation Inc
RARO

Recitals

Under the approval of the NZ Police, this Deed records the matters agreed on by the Department of Conservation, New Zealand Police, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Limited and the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits of NZ (hereafter referred to as the co-operative organisations) in respect to the management, operations and training of the Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation.

Background

The 1990 Army Tragedy (Now known as the Ruapehu Tragedy) when six NZ Army personnel died in a severe storm on the summit plateau of Mt Ruapehu acted as the catalyst for the formation of RARO.

Prior to the formation of RARO, alpine search and rescue operations within the Tongariro National Park were controlled by DOC with Police approval, utilising local expertise from various organisations to the effect the rescues. Without the structure of a formal organisation there was no real knowledge of the capacity and skills of the rescuers involved and there were no training or skill standards. This unspoken reliance did lead to incidents of role confusion and operational risk that was unacceptable.

The Army Tragedy and rescue operations, including co-ordination of control and response, were reviewed post event. The DOC alpine rescue managers identified the need for a more professional standard of alpine rescue team and mooted the idea of a co-ordination group using appropriately skilled people from various local organisations. A meeting of managers from local organisations resulted in agreement and mutual support for a new ACR response team trained to recognised national rescue standards. The team was named the Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation (RARO).

An integrated training programme and the introduction of a common training standards and operational competencies are seen as key features of RARO.

Introduction

The parties to this deed currently work together and offer advice to each other. They wish to formalise this relationship and specify the terms and conditions under which this will occur.

Purpose

The purpose of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is to establish, maintain and promote a collaborative and co-operative working relationship between the parties.

This is for the provision of alpine SAR services within the alpine areas of Tongariro National Park, in alpine conditions, mainly Mt Ruapehu.

The MOA will be achieved by the following:

1. The maintenance of a trained pool of competent rescue personnel and team leaders in a state of readiness for alpine emergency operations.
2. The maintenance of a trained pool of competent personnel for the control and co-ordination of alpine SAR operations.
3. The provision of national technical standards for all levels within the organisation
4. The provision and maintenance of equipment "caches" in designated locations.
5. The provision of internal review and audit procedures to maintain standards within the organisation.

Status

RARO has been gazetted by the New Zealand Police as an official Alpine Cliff Rescue Team.

The committee will have a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer who will be nominated by the RARO members at the yearly AGM.

The Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation committee shall consist of five persons appointed by each of the four agencies afore mentioned in the Memorandum of Agreement.

The Department of Conservation, The Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre and New Zealand Police will each have one representative with Ruapehu Alpine Lifts having two representative from both Turoa and Whakapapa.

There shall be also two representatives voted, being the Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation volunteers, representing said volunteers.

Effect of this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

This MOA confirms the relationship between the parties based on a spirit of goodwill and co-operation.

The parties will work together to achieve the outcomes agreed upon in this deed.

Nothing in this MOA shall make either party liable for the actions or inactions of the other or constitutes any legal relationship between the parties.

Mission Statement

To collectively train to SARINZ standards, skilled people in the Ruapehu district, to enable the rescue of any lost, injured or deceased person in alpine areas of Tongariro National Park.

Objectives

1. Maintain a realistic operational capacity to meet all emergency events in the backcountry alpine areas of Tongariro National Park. This may include technical alpine rescues.
2. Maintain a pool of currently trained team leaders and team members.
3. Maintain an equipment cache
4. Maintain an annual training schedule.

Benefits for Member Organisations

The commercial operations undertaken by the member organisations all attract a degree of risk due to the nature of the alpine environment they work in. From time to time this has resulted in incidents where assistance or rescue has been required.

1. The benefit to the member organisations of RARO is the assistance able to be given to each other in emergency situations.
2. Member organisations benefit with the upskilling of their own alpine capable personnel by rescue training meeting LandSAR standards.
3. Member organisations will benefit by their own staff being RARO members enabling a degree of self rescue for lesser incidents involving their own operations.
4. Users of the TNP receive a professional, reliable service that each member organisation can be apart of achieving.

Management of Finance

The management committee maintain a bank account in the name of RARO. All donations and grants are deposited into this account for use by the organisation to achieve its mission and objectives.

The bank account has two signatories, the chairperson and the treasurer.

The treasurer will present the financial position of the organisation at the AGM.

Annual Reporting

The management committee will formally report annually to all the member organisations and cover all aspects of the organisation and the effectiveness of RARO and the MOA.

Protocols: The parties agree that:

1. Each party shall bear the costs of meeting its commitments and obligations under the MOA.
2. Any party may terminate their involvement in the MOA and RARO by the giving of three months notice in writing to the management committee and all the other parties.
3. The provisions of the MOA shall not be varied except by written agreement duly signed by all parties.
4. Notices under this MOA shall be delivered either by hand, mail, fax, email or phone to the specified addresses of each organisation.

Responsibilities

1. In event of a SAR incident parties will use Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS)
2. Contributing organisations will make available where possible outside work commitments, team leaders and members for training and rescues.
3. DOC will maintain a training register.

Health and Safety

- Follow the respective response plan relevant to the operation, this should be in conjunction with the operational standards laid down by the collective agreement.

Accountabilities

- The NZ Police hold the statutory responsibilities for Search and Rescues.

Anticipated Outcomes

The desired outcomes of the Memorandum of Agreement are:

1. Provision and maintenance of an effective SAR response service.
2. To train and operate together effectively.

3. To be available for SAR operations within one hour of call out.

Performance measures

1. To annually develop a training plan and check member's competencies.
2. Maintain training register.
3. Have a skilled pool of people available to respond.
4. RARO liaises with other ACR teams around NZ, training and operation matters.
5. Police to acknowledge through media opportunities the involvement of RARO and identify the individual organisations involved.

Qualifications

RARO Team Leader Criteria

- Team leaders nominated by organisations and signed off by the RARO committee.
- Team leaders where possible will receive training to national standards via alpine rescue training seminars, SAR/Avalanche conferences.
- Must have own (or supplied by employer) suitable alpine gear and clothing for travel on and surviving in any conditions on Mt Ruapehu.
- Must have a suitable alpine background with proven ability to travel on snow and ice, survive in snow and storm conditions, handle ropes, set up anchors and belays, work in steep and exposed situations.
- Must be trained and proficient in the rescue skill required for the operation being led.
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Care (PHEC) or equivalent first aid and current.
- Likely to be in the area over the next 12 months or be seasonal staff and likely to return next winter.
- Level 2 avalanche qualification for avalanche rescue site controller.
- Level 1 avalanche course for avalanche team leader role.
- Must live within 30 minutes of the mountain.

RARO Team Member Criteria

- Must have own (or supplied by employer) suitable alpine gear and clothing for travel on and surviving in any conditions on Mt Ruapehu.
- Must have a suitable alpine background with proven ability to travel on snow and ice, survive in snow and storm conditions, handle ropes, set up anchors and belays, and work in steep and exposed situations.
- Must be trained in the rescue skill required for the operation undertaken.
- 16 hour or equivalent first aid and current.
- Avalanche awareness course.
- Likely to be in the area over the next 12 months or be seasonal staff and likely to return next winter.

Training Standards

Search and Rescue Institute of New Zealand, (SARINZ) techniques are taken and accepted as the best practice guide. These techniques are reviewed on a regular basis by recognised technical experts and the amendments are distributed.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) will be developed and maintained for all high risk techniques i.e. Human sling loads for strop rescues.

Member Organisations responsibilities

Each organisation is to supply to the secretary each year on or before the 30 June.

1. Number of people available for RARO and who meet the team leader or team member criteria.
2. Up to date contacts.
3. Provide a SAR cache inventory/available equipment.

Issue or Dispute Resolution

1. All issues, disputes and differences between the parties in relation to the interpretation or performance of the MOA shall in the first instance be attempted to be resolved at the earliest opportunity, at the organisational level.
Organisational representatives should attempt resolution within 14 days.
2. If matters remain unresolved or require further adjudication, the problem should be referred to the management committee and they should meet and seek to resolve the matter within 14 days of referral.
3. If agreement cannot be reached at the management committee level then the matter is to be referred to the Area Commander NZ Police or their delegate for resolution within 28 days of referral.

Formal Undertaking

We the undersigned, having agreed the terms and scope of this Deed with our respective organisations hereby commit to the cooperative herein described and will provide for our input into this agreement in our annual organisational budgets to the appropriate level.

Area Commander
Ruapehu Area

Signed on behalf of the
New Zealand Police

Centre Manager Tongariro
OPC

Signed of behalf of the
Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre of NZ

General Manager
Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Limited.

Signed of behalf of the
Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Limited

Area Manager
Ruapehu Area

Signed on behalf of the
Department of Conservation.

Appendix

Locations of Response teams

1. OPC
2. Whakapapa Ski Area
3. Whakapapa Village
4. Turoa Ski Area and Ohakune
5. Turangi/Taupo

Locations of RARO Equipment caches

1. Whakapapa Visitors Centre (main)
2. Turangi Police SAR store (Turangi SAR ACR equipment)
3. Ohakune Field Centre (Stretcher, first aid and Alpine equipment)

List of Standard Operating Procedures.

1. Human under slung loads – Helicopter Services

Definitions

Search and Rescue Operation

“A Search and Rescue operation (SAROP) is an operation undertaken by a Coordinating Authority to locate and retrieve persons missing or in distress. The intention of the operation is to save lives, prevent or minimise injuries and remove persons from situations of peril by locating the person, providing for initial medical care or other needs and then delivering them to a place of safety.”

CIMS-The New Zealand Coordinated Incident Management System.

CIMS provides the model for command, control and coordination of an emergency response. It provides a means of coordinating the efforts of agencies as they work towards a common goal for stabilising an incident and protecting life.

Incident Controller- Police responsible.

The IC is responsible for the overall direction of response activities in an emergency situation and is the person in charge at an incident.

Operations

The operations manager coordinates activities and has primary responsibility for receiving and implementing the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Planning/Intelligence

Their functions include gathering, evaluating and disseminating information about the incident and the status of resources. Responsibilities include creation of the Incident Action Plan, which defines the response activities and the use of resources for a specified time period.

Logistics

The logistics Section is responsible for providing facilities, materials, services and resources, including personnel in support of the incident.

Team Leader

A member who meets the skills, experience and training requirements and is current in all competencies and has been peer reviewed by the management committee.

Team Member

A member who meets the skills, experience and training requirements and is current in all competences and has been peer reviewed by the management committee.