

Exercise Evaluation Report

Operation Stoney

Location: Taranaki Coastline.
Date: Friday 17th March 2023
Saturday 18th March 2023
Report version: Draft 1

Evaluator(s): *Allan Mundy Surf Lifesaving New Zealand*

Contents

Executive Summary 2

1. Recommendations 3

1. Introduction 4

2. Background 7

3. Evaluation Methodology 10

4. Findings 12

5. Conclusions 15

DRAFT

Executive Summary

Marine SAR Agencies participate in exercises that consider or simulate real-life situations. These exercises aim to improve Operational readiness and identify gaps or weaknesses in the SOP's of all participating Agencies. They also clarify roles, demonstrate agency capabilities and provide a sound training platform

This exercise occurred from Friday, 17th March to Saturday, 18th March 2023, and it comprised two phases. Both run simultaneously around the coastal waters off New Plymouth and other towns along the Taranaki Coastline, with the IMT being based at the TEMO Taranaki Emergency Management Office (Civil Defence Centre, (Robe Street, New Plymouth).

The two phases tested the IMT's ability to effectively manage the incident within the CIMS process in phase one. At the same time, the on-water scenario will test the participant's ability to work together to achieve the outcomes required by the Incident Action Plan in phase two.

This report reflects only the observations during the two phases of the exercise and focuses on the five objectives set by the Exercise Directors.

It makes recommendations for improving the planning process for the MSAREX at the Director Level, the improvement of IMT situational awareness and the improvement of Health and Safety application in the IMT from the field.

DRAFT

1. Recommendations

1. For future reference, the SAREX Planning Team may wish to consider the inclusion of some open-ended or incomplete tasks for the new IMT to work on with the SME in writing tasks.
2. Given the complexity and difficulty of scripting exercise scenarios that pre-empt all human responses. The SAREX Director may consider the implant of a member of the SAREX Planning Team to act solely as a inject for the purposes of a passive guide aimed at keeping the exercise scenario on track when injects are.
3. Once the initial Search Sernario is handed over from the planning team to Operations, the Planning team includes more than one search scenario allowing for the consideration of any other possible scenarios for the IMT to consider.
4. Ensure all SAR Agencies identified in the District Response plans have the additional SAR liaison Channels loaded into their radios, along with any additional Channels the response plan identifies as significant, such as the Maritime Channels i.e. CH 61.
5. Investigate the inclusion of PO Staff into the South Taranaki Comms Truck team,
6. The IMT Health and Safety team must add to their list of H&S checks that all Vessel Skippers must declare any malfunctioning issues in their vessels that could compromise their crew or others' safety or the objectives of the operation.

2. Introduction

Marine and Land SAR Agencies periodically participate in exercises that consider or simulate real-life situations. These exercises aim to improve Operational readiness and identify gaps or weaknesses in the SOP's of all participating Agencies. They also clarify roles, demonstrate agency capabilities and provide a sound training platform.

The New Zealand Police, Taranaki Police SAR District, has requested that selected Coastguard Units, Land SAR units and Surf Life Saving Taranaki SAR Squad take part in a combined SAREX to provide training for and to test the capabilities of on-water Marine SAR resources to work together, in a multi-agency SAR response, whilst under the direction of an Incident Management team, working within the CIMS process.

Needs Assessment:

There appear to be an increasing number of small vessels, personal watercraft and self-powered craft using the coastline easily accessible from New Plymouth and other towns along the Taranaki Coastline.

Police are asked to coordinate several searches each year for overdue vessels or where members of the public report a concern about a small craft that appears to be in trouble along the coast.

Very few extended searches require a formal IMT and bringing in SLSNZ, LandSAR and CG members to participate in an IMT. This creates a risk that staff are not current or readily familiar with CIMS roles and planning for extended searches.

Individual Marine Units (South Taranaki CG, Taranaki CG, Cape Egmont Sea Rescue Trust and SLSNZ) are doing regular training, but combined SAREXs are important opportunities for them to work together on the water and in the IMT. There is also a need to train and use other local resources in a SAR environment, including DoC, MPI and Port Taranaki.

Likewise, the specific SAREX objectives and key performance indicators that the SAREX Directors have set have also been documented on the NZSAR SAREX planning sheet.

Functions to be exercised:

- Incident Controller
- Operations Team
- Intelligence Team
- Health and Safety Team
- Communications Team
- Logistics Team
- Planning Team

Operation Stoney:

Operation Stoney is a Marine SAREX that incorporates the activation of several Coastguard Units/Surf Life Saving and LandSAR to respond to an on-water Marine SAR Scenario. The SAR response will be coordinated by a Police Incident Controller utilising a Multi-Agency IMT. It will test the IMT's ability to effectively manage the incident within the CIMS process. The on-water scenario will test the participant's ability to work together to achieve the outcomes required by the Incident Action Plan. It will also present the opportunity to identify any communication problems between the on-water resources and the IMT.

Coordinating Authority:

New Zealand Police.

Exercise Writing Agency:

Surf Lifesaving New Zealand.

Participating Agencies:

New Zealand Police, Taranaki Land Search and Rescue, Coastguard Units from Rescue South Taranaki, Taranaki and Cape Egmont Sea Rescue Trust. Surf Life-Saving NZ Taranaki SAR Squad, Port Taranaki, and the Department of Conservation.

DRAFT

EXERCISE COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS

Ground:

This exercise's Incident Control Point (ICP) will be based at the Taranaki Emergency Management office. TEMO (45 Robe St, New Plymouth)

The on-water scenario will be conducted in the Coastal waters between Port Taranaki and Cape Egmont. Using Taranaki Land Search and Coastguard Units from Rescue South Taranaki, Taranaki and Cape Egmont Sea Rescue Trust. Surf Life Saving NZ Taranaki SAR Squad.

Situation:

A Police led Marine SAREX will be conducted on the coast between Port Taranaki and Cape Egmont on 17 – 18 March 2023.

The exercise will be conducted in two phases,

Phase one: IMT Planning 17th March.

Phase two: On water SAR scenario 18th March.

The on-water crews will be coordinated by a Police coordinated IMT working from the designated ICP at the Taranaki Emergency Management office.

Mission:

To test the response and execution of a multi-vessel SAR response

To test how the on-water resources of Multi-agencies can effectively work together to complete the tasking's assigned to them by the IMT. How they communicate with the IMT. How their SOPs mesh, and to identify any changes needed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their response.

3. Background

3.1 Background to the Exercise

Operation Stoney is a Marine SAREX that incorporates the activation of several Coastguard Units/Surf Life Saving Clubs to respond to an on-water Marine SAR Scenario. The SAR response will be coordinated by a Police Incident Controller utilising a Multi-Agency IMT. It will test the IMT's ability to effectively manage the incident within the CIMS process. The on-water scenario will test the participant's ability to work together to achieve the outcomes required by the Incident Action Plan. It will also present the opportunity to identify any communication problems between the on-water resources and the IMT

Taranaki Police SAR took this opportunity to promote some recent additions to their team and the chance to hold key positions within the IMT. Each position held by new SAR Team members was overshadowed by Senior SAR Team members for mentoring and support.

3.2 Dates, location, organising agency(s), key people

Friday 17 March 2023		
1630 - 1800	Training	AT TEMO (<i>45 Robe St, New Plymouth</i>) Police Staff only
1800 - 2030	Multiagency IMT formed, planned, notified and prepare assets	At TEMO All IMT personnel & Police
Saturday 18 March 2023		
0600	IMT assemble	At TEMO
0700	Briefing	
0800	Assets on the water	
1330	Assets off the water	
1530	BBQ & hot debrief	Red Shed (Sea Rescue Centre – Port Taranaki)
1630 - 1800	Travel	Monitor fatigue and ensure personnel are equipped for return travel

3.3 Participating organisations

New Zealand Police, Taranaki Land Search and Rescue, Coastguard Units from Rescue South Taranaki, Taranaki and Cape Egmont Sea Rescue Trust. Surf Life Saving NZ Taranaki SAR Squad, Port Taranaki, and the Department of Conservation.

3.4 Exercise aim

To ascertain how effectively a Police lead Multi-Agency IMT working from a centralised ICP can manage an on-water scenario/operation.

To test how the on-water resources of Multi-agencies can effectively work together to complete the tasking's assigned to them by the IMT.

3.5 Exercise objectives

Objective 1

The IMT activates and manages appropriate resources to meet the demands of the exercise.

Objective 2

Taskings of resources by the IMT are in accordance with search management principles.

Objective 3

Test Communication infrastructure in the SAR environment

Objective 4

Risk Management systems and processes are defined and communicated by the IMT.

Objective 5

SAR personnel recover the missing party, with a focus on patient care.

3.6 Exercise Scenario

Scenario:

The vessel "Charter One" departed Port Taranaki at 0445hrs on a fishing charter with an ETR of 1600hrs.

The intention was to bottom fish in the "Puniho" area and then moved out to the Puniho reef area.

The vessel carried a crew of 2 and 5 passengers (7 POB in total).

At approximately 0530hrs, Police received a phone call from Raewyn TUNA stating her husband, who is on the Charter boat Charter One, had just called. She could hear the panic and the sound of water, and then then the phone cut out. She has been unable to contact him.

Coastguard have put out an All-Stations call to any vessels in the area.

There have been no reported EPIRB activations.

At about 0529hrs, Police also received a No Speech Emergency Call from a cell phone 028222444. This cell phone comes back to Adam Albacore through NIA. Police are unable to contact this cell phone.

Exercise time is now 0600am, and response assets are assembling for an 0700am task briefing.

Further information (if requested)

The Vessels name is "Charter One", Callsign ZMX1234

Description: 7.5m White Pointer, Aluminium, twin 150hp outboard motors.

A trip report was lodged with Coastguard on VHF61 (Departing Port Taranaki 0445hrs, 7 POB, heading to the Puniho area for a bottom fish and then Puniho reef, ETR 1600hrs.

Puniho area coordinates (approx.)

.....

Puniho Reef: coordinates (approx.)

.....

DRAFT

4. Evaluation Methodology

4.1 The agreed outcomes of the evaluation activity

The KPIs for each Objective except Objective 5 were observed as achieved or not achieved, and where there was some conjecture, clarification was sort from the evaluator.

Evaluations were focused on the following functions within the IMT. Incident Controller, Operations, Intelligence Team Health and Safety. Communications, Logistics and Planning Teams.

Objective 1	KPI
The IMT activates and manages appropriate resources to meet the demands of the exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMT implements a readiness plan. • IMT executes step-up SOPs (pagers, apps, phones). • IMT briefing follows GSMEAC format. • IMT confirms the availability and response of resources. • IMT sources equipment for the response. • IMT ensures suitable communications for the incident are established. • Tasked resources are controlled and coordinated in line with the IAP. • Succession planning for IMT/Field team is established.
Objective 2	KPI
Taskings of resources by the IMT is in accordance with search management principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasking is supported by evidence-based scenario analysis. • Tasking is consistent with search urgency. • Tasking is supported by search area determination, drift pattern and drift modelling
Objective 3	KPI
Test Communication infrastructure in SAR environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication lines between IMT and field teams operate effectively. • Communication systems are operational in a timely manner. • Communication systems remain operational throughout the response period.
Objective 4	KPI
Risk Management systems and processes are defined and communicated by the IMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management systems and processes appropriate to the nature and complexity of the situation are defined. • Briefing information appropriately addresses identified risks. • All participants understand their personal responsibilities regarding risk. • Risk Management systems and processes appropriate to the nature and complexity of the situation are defined. • Briefing information appropriately addresses identified risks.
Objective 5	KPI
SAR personnel recover the missing party, with a focus on patient care. <i>(Not Observed by an evaluator)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing person is fully assessed on discovery. • The safety of the missing party is maintained during recovery. • The safety of search team members is maintained during recovery.

4.2 Evaluation scope

The evaluation was focused mostly on the CIMS functions and processes within the IMT and the Field at the Red Shed and Boat ramp. The scope did not include the competencies of the individuals in the SAR Agencies or their SOPs.

Objective 5 (not observed or evaluated)

4.3 Aspects of the exercise observed, what was not observed

Objective 5

SAR personnel recover the missing party, with a focus on patient care.

Key Performance Indicators were:

- Missing person is fully assessed on discovery.
- The safety of the missing party is maintained during recovery.
- The safety of search team members is maintained during recovery.

4.4 The process followed in preparing and submitting the report

The SAREX Directors set the SAREX KPIs on February 17th, 2023.

This was a continuation following two other MSAREXs, held consecutively over the last three years, and the objectives either continued to work, improving objectives established in previous MSAREXs or new objectives that collectively complemented the teams' development.

The MSAREX planner was subsequently circulated online and eventually confirmed and circulated on March 3rd 2023.

Due to the possibility of severe weather over the exercise weekend, two meetings were held immediately leading up to the exercise date on Thursday and Friday before the on-water component of the MSAREX. The purpose of the meetings was to rework the scenario to best exercise the Objectives within the confinements of the weather and water conditions.

4.5 Other information

The observations for this report were taken from two sites.

1. Within the IMT at the Taranaki Emergency Management Office in New Plymouth.
2. Taranaki Coast Guard building and SLSNZ Red Shed (gear shed)at the Taranaki Port. For the Safety Briefing of all crews in the morning and following the conclusion of the MSEARX for the Hot Debrief.

5. Findings

Taranaki Police SAR took this opportunity to promote some recent additions to their team and the chance to hold key positions within the IMT. Each position held by new SAR Team members was overshadowed by Senior SAR Team members for mentoring and support,

Objective 1

The IMT activates and manages appropriate resources to meet the demands of the exercise.

The IMT got things underway quickly due to the use of an innovative ITM forms spreadsheet used by the Taranaki Police. The form clearly identified Key SAR Forms required to be filled in during an operation. The form simply listed all the five key functions within CIMS in columns alongside all the SAR Forms in a sixth. (H&S +W was added during the use) IC, Planning, Intelligence, Operations and Logistics.

Each PO assigned to lead the particular CIMS function was listed by name at the top of each Column, and the relevant form their function was responsible for was marked.

The Form was circulated within the IMT, informing each PO of their administrative responsibilities and, just as importantly, alerting them who was looking after the other areas.

The IC quickly pulled in Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from the contributing agencies; they took on a key role in designing the tasking for each respective agency's assets.

Early on, the IC gave a full briefing following the GSMEAC format. The PO team referring to the District Readiness plan, identified all the supporting agencies who could assist in the "operation."

The IMT worked well in their respective areas and were pulled together at regular intervals by the IC for well-managed briefings. As a result, the situational awareness within the IMT was high and very evident. This would have been better captured with a shorter time period within the IAP. Breaking the time intervals down to reflect the Hasty Deployment & Response IAP, Search modes and Recsue plan IAP, then Recovery and Reconciliation of people and assets, another time interval. This may help achieve SMART objectives within the Response Planning by applying timing into the plan as a significant factor; open-ended IAPs struggle to achieve this.

There was a quiet calm within the EOC at all times.

The Scenario set up by the SAREX Planning Team was in-depth and included three pre-written tasks injected both as examples for the new SAR PO and set a good pace in the exercise. To augment this approach, the SAREX Planning Team could have left some of the tasking notes open to allow the new SAR POs the opportunity to work with the SME in writing tasks.

Upon the injection of the tasks, the SAREX Director is best to step back and allow the IMT to process the information and generate a response. Conceding its difficult-to-script exercise scenarios that pre-empt all human responses, the implant of a member of the SAREX Planning Team to act solely as a inject for the purposes of a passive guide aimed at keeping the exercise scenario on track can be a future option.

Objective 2

Taskings of resources by the IMT are in accordance with search management principles.

Once the Search Scenario was handed over from the planning team to Operations, the inclusion of the SMEs into the Operations assisted in the production of tasks that were achievable, And had an added level of situational awareness to them, such as the consideration of actual sea state when writing the search plan and subsequent tasking.

Such an approach ensured that the ground crews accepted all tasks.

The Planning team, including only one primary scenario, didn't allow the consideration of any other possible scenarios for the IMT to consider. An ideal time for this is once the IIAP is executed while search teams are heading to the scene.

Objective 3

Test Communication infrastructure in the SAR environment

During the planning phase on Friday night and following the district readiness plan, it was discovered that the VHF Repeater on the Mask in New Plymouth was down, removing one of two VHF Channels planned for use in the SAREX.

The initial Comms Plan relied upon The South Taranaki Radio truck. A brilliant portable Comms platform. Due to sickness within the South Taranaki Team, the asset was potentially unavailable. However, the team managed to get together a crew ready on Saturday.

The Communication plan was readjusted and well established, and comms checks ensured all units understood and could apply it. A two-tiered plan was adopted. CH 61 for the IMT Operations, and the agencies worked within their own Simplex channels for field interagency comms. Although this placed additional pressure on having all the comms for the IMT and Marine traffic coming through CH61, it was managed well.

Objective 4

Risk Management systems and processes are defined and communicated by the IMT.

The risk management plan was comprehensive.

A Full briefing with all teams (except Cape Rescue due to its remote location) was briefed at common launch points, allowing a full brief to be held at the "Taranaki Red Shed." Briefing and Safety instructions were emailed to Cape Rescue, and they were dialled into the room during the H&S discussions.

Constant on-water checking of crews was evident. These checks led to changes in the search plan as crews fed back alterations due to the water state. The On-water checking unearthed a potential issue with Cape Rescue, whose transponder was not working. The Crew, upon a routine check, requested they return to port due to a significant number of their crew succumbing to sea sickness.

It was only upon the integration of the request that the IMT became aware of the malfunctioning Transponder. The Skipper relayed that the Task received requested Cape Egmont to drop a datum bouy. Following the task execution, they failed to call in a request for further tasks. The Vessel did not execute its task to search an area it had been allotted in the search plan.

The incident raised several points to work on

The Vessels Skipper needed to declare the malfunctioning Transponder; this should have led to an adjusted set of tasks in keeping with the ability to manage the risk of the off-shore search.

It highlighted the advantages of SMEs in the IMT. The Police or Coastguard had not considered that Cape Egmont did not recognise the Coastguard SOP post dropping a datum, which was not to stay alongside the datum but request further tasking.

Objective 5

SAR personnel recover the missing party, with a focus on patient care.

(not observed)

DRAFT

6. Conclusions

Objective 1

The IMT activates and manages appropriate resources to meet the demands of the exercise

Objective 1, for the most part, was achieved. KPI of:

- IMT implements a readiness plan. ACHIEVED
- IMT executes step-up SOPs (pagers, apps, phones). ACHIEVED
- IMT briefing follows GSMEAC format. ACHIEVED
- IMT confirms the availability and response of resources. ACHIEVED
- IMT sources equipment for the response. NOT ACHIEVED but with (issue with Cape Egmont)
- IMT ensures suitable communications for the incident are established. ACHIEVED
- Tasked resources are controlled and coordinated in line with the IAP. ACHIEVED

Conclusion:

Overall the IMT was highly functioning and well led by the Incident Controller. For future reference, the SAREX Planning Team may wish to consider the inclusion of some open-ended or incomplete tasks for the new IMT to work on with the SME in writing tasks.

Given the complexity and difficulty of scripting exercise scenarios that pre-empt all human responses. The SAREX Director may consider the implant of a member of the SAREX Planning Team to act solely as a inject for the purposes of a passive guide aimed at keeping the exercise scenario on track when injects are used.

Objective 2

Taskings of resources by the IMT is in accordance with search management principles.

- Tasking is supported by evidence-based scenario analysis. NOT ACHIEVED, bar the addition and consideration of alternative Search Scenarios
- Tasking is consistent with search urgency. ACHIEVED
- Tasking is supported by search area determination, drift pattern and drift modelling. ACHIEVED

Conclusion:

Once the initial Search Sernario is handed over from the planning team to Operations, the Planning team includes more than one search scenario allowing for the consideration of any other possible scenarios for the IMT to consider.

Objective 3

Test Communication infrastructure in SAR environment

- Communication lines between IMT and field teams operate effectively. ACHIEVED
- Communication systems are operational in a timely manner. ACHIEVED

Conclusion:

There were two key readjustments to the comms plan from the district plan. The team were capable of designing a workaround in response to the challengers presented. This highlighted the reliance on two critical comms components. The limited number of alternative repeater networks available and the reliance on a volunteer base to run a key communications asset the South Taranaki Comms Truck.

Objective 4

Risk Management systems and processes are defined and communicated by the IMT

- Risk Management systems and processes appropriate to the nature and complexity of the situation are defined. ACHIEVED
- Briefing information appropriately addresses identified risks. ACHIEVED

- All participants understand their personal responsibilities regarding risk. NOT ACHIEVED Cape Egmont's failure to inform the IMT of the transponder malfunctioning.
- Risk Management systems and processes appropriate to the nature and complexity of the situation are defined. ACHIEVED
- Briefing information appropriately addresses identified risks. ACHIEVED

Conclusion:

The Vessel Skippers must declare any malfunctioning issues in their vessels that could compromise their crew or others' safety or the objectives of the operation.

The advantages of SMEs in the IMT. In this case, the Police or Coastguard had no awareness that Cape Egmont did not recognise the Coastguard SOP, which could have compromised the crew or others' safety or the objectives of the operation.

Appendix
MSAREX Assessment Grids

DRAFT

SAREX objectives	Key Performance Indicators	A/NA
The IMT activates and manages appropriate resources to meet the demands of the exercise	readiness plan in a timely manner	A
	IMT executes step-up SOPs	A
	IMT briefing follows the GSMEAC format	A
	IMT confirms the availability of South Taranaki CG	A
	Taranaki CG	A
	Cape Egmont	A
	Sea Rescue Trust	A
	SLSNZ SAR TEAM	A
	DoC	A
	LANDsar	A
	MPI	A
	Port Taranaki	A
	Appropriate resources are used.	
	IMT sources equipment for the response	A
	Tasked resources are controlled and coordinated in line with the IAP	A
Succession planning for IMT/Field team is established.	-	
Taskings of resources by the IMT is in accordance with search management principals	Tasking is supported by evidence-based scenario analysis.	NA
	Tasking is consistent with search urgency.	A
	Tasking is supported by a search area issued	A
	determination, drift pattern and drift modelling.	A
Test Communication infrastructure in SAR environment	Was a Communication Plan established and tested before deployments?	A
	All Comms are passed between groups in Clear detail.	A
	The info is correct at the recipient's end.	A
	Was the interface with and communications between the team and IMT appropriate?	A
	systems remain operational throughout the response period	A
Risk Management systems and processes are defined and communicated by the IMT	Was the health and safety of team members maintained?	A
	Briefing information appropriately addresses identified risks	NA
	ORA collected	A
	Lists of all field operations in IMT /or reported as collected by Agency Comms	A
	All participants understand their personal responsibilities in regard to the Risk.	NA
	The missing person is fully assessed on discovery.	-

SAR personnel recover the missing party, with a focus on patient care.	The safety of the missing party is maintained during recovery.	-
	The safety of search team members is maintained during recovery.	A
SAREX objectives Intelligence	Performance Indicator Questions Key participants carry out an allotted role within CIMS	A/NA
To identify if the IMT teams are competent.	Was the task achieved? Collection of DATA accurate	A
	Was the interface with and communications between the team and IMT appropriate?	A
	Development of the IAP on time with Intell embedded in to inform the accuracy of the operation	A
SAREX objectives Planning	Performance Indicator Questions What is the long-term plan looking like (IAP NOT UPDATED)	NA
To identify if the IMT teams are competent.	Was the task achieved? Long-term plan completed from instigation	A
	When did rollover appear in the (IAP time interval was 8am to 3pm too long to allow for rollover)	NA
SAREX objectives Operations	Performance Indicator Questions What is the long-term plan looking like	
To identify if the IMT teams are competent.	Was the task achieved? Long-term plan completed from instigation.	A
	When did rollover appear in the IAP	NA
Health and Safety	Was the health and safety of team members maintained?	
	Briefing information appropriately addresses identified risks	A
	ORA collected	A
	Lists of all field opps in IMT /or reported as collected by Agency Comms	A
	All participants understand their personal responsibilities in regard Risk (except Cape Egmont Skipper??)	A
Logistics	Did Additional Resourse get organised in a timmly mannor	A