



# WEST VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Operational Policy

### OG5100: MOUNTAIN SEARCH & RESCUE

#### 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Members responding to calls for assistance for lost or missing hikers/skiers requiring activation of NSR to conduct a Mountain Search and Rescue Operation.

#### 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

“BCAS” means emergency health services and ambulance services provided throughout the Province of British Columbia.

“CPIC” means the Canadian Police Information Center.

“Department” means the West Vancouver Police Department.

“Director of Services” means the Director of the Corporate Services and Finance Division of the Department.

“Duty Officer” means the on-call Executive Officer (Inspector rank or above and includes Acting Inspector), outside normal business hours.

“Member” means a sworn peace officer employed at the Department.

“NSR” means the North Shore Rescue Mountain Search and Rescue Team.

“OIC Operations” means the Inspector in charge of the Operations Division, including an Acting Inspector.

“Patrol Duty NCO” means the Patrol Duty Sergeant or Acting Sergeant.

“S/Sgt OSS” means the Staff Sergeant, Operations Support Section of the Department.

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## 3.0 POLICY

### General

3.1 Mountain Search and Rescue Operations present complexities concerning jurisdictional and financial responsibility. Any or all of the following may have a role in a Mountain Search and Rescue Operation dependent upon the response activity and location of the activity:

- a) the Department;
- b) RCMP, Squamish Detachment;
- c) Emergency Management BC;
- d) North Shore Rescue;
- e) BCAS: and
- f) BC Coroners Service.

3.2 The search responsibility in a Mountain Search and Rescue Operation belongs to the police of jurisdiction, either the Squamish Detachment of the RCMP or the Department dependent upon the jurisdiction in which the activity takes place.

3.3 Hikers and skiers lost in the Cypress Park recreation area may be in the Squamish or West Vancouver policing jurisdiction. When skiers or hikers are reported missing on Black Mountain, Hollyburn Mountain, Strachan Mountain or the Cypress Bowl recreation area and jurisdiction has not been determined, the Department will accept responsibility for the commencement of Mountain Search and Rescue Operations.

## 4.0 PROCEDURES

### Jurisdictional Responsibility

4.1 Jurisdictional responsibility must be considered by the Patrol Duty NCO upon receiving a call for assistance relating to a lost skier or hiker and prior to initiating a Mountain Search and Rescue Operation.

4.2 The jurisdictional boundary is an imaginary straight line drawn west to east from the shore of Howe Sound at a point immediately south of the mouth of Montizambert Creek on the west, eastward, crossing the Strachan Mountain ski

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lift at a point 100 meters south of the peak of Strachan Mountain, and continuing in a straight line eastward to Capilano Lake.

- 4.3 Activities north of the boundary line are in the Squamish jurisdiction and activities south of the boundary line fall within the West Vancouver jurisdiction. The Patrol Duty NCO will clarify jurisdictional responsibility with the Watch Commander of the Squamish RCMP where any ambiguity exists.
- 4.4 Determining jurisdictional responsibility in cases of lost skiers or hikers is complicated by the fact that the last known location of the missing subject may not be known. Disputes over jurisdiction will not delay the decision of a Patrol Duty NCO to initiate a Mountain Search and Rescue Operation if required.

### Search

- 4.5 Mountain Search and Rescue Operations typically are initiated at the following locations:
  - a) the Black Mountain access road on Highway 99, immediately north of Horseshoe Bay,
  - b) the parking lot at the Cypress Bowl ski area, or
  - c) the Baden-Powell trail access at Millstream Road in the British Properties.
- 4.6 The Patrol Duty NCO will notify the Watch Commander of the Squamish RCMP via CPIC upon receiving a report of a lost skier or hiker and initiating a Mountain Search and Rescue Operation. The CPIC transcript will be included in the case file.
- 4.7 Operational aspects required in a Mountain Search and Rescue Operation may include:
  - a) search;
  - b) rescue;
  - c) emergency medical services;
  - d) body recovery;
  - e) aircraft search;
  - f) aircraft ferrying of injured; and
  - g) aircraft ferrying of search personnel.

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- 4.8 NSR will provide the personnel for the search task under the direction of the Patrol Duty NCO. NSR personnel will be under the direct supervision of the NSR Search Manager.
- 4.9 The search and related expenses will be the responsibility of the Department until it is determined on the advice of the NSR Search Manager that the subject(s) of the search is north of the West Vancouver jurisdiction, in which case the Watch Commander of the Squamish RCMP will be notified immediately. A CPIC message confirming such will be sent and will form part of the case file.
- 4.10 Search, rescue, and recovery activities will continue under the direction of the Patrol Duty NCO until the RCMP assumes direct control over operations.
- 4.11 Deployment of aircraft services will be at the discretion of the NSR Search Manager. An Aircraft Search Emergency number will be obtained from the Provincial Emergency Program by the NSR Search Manager prior to deployment and NSR will coordinate provincial reimbursement for costs associated. Department approval of aircraft services is not required.

### Debrief

- 4.12 The S/Sgt OSS will conduct a debrief meeting at the conclusion of all Mountain Search and Rescue Operations conducted. Planning, organization, communication, cooperation and operational factors will be debriefed. The following will be invited to the meeting:
- a) the OIC Operations;
  - b) the Director of Services;
  - c) the Patrol Duty NCO of the incident;
  - d) the Squamish RCMP Watch Commander if included;
  - e) the NSR Search Manager; and
  - f) the NSR Coordinator.

### Reporting

- 4.13 The S/Sgt OSS will provide a report on the results of the debriefing to the OIC Operations, including the operational critique and assignment of costs.

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