

OTMC Search and Rescue (SAR) Procedure

Multi-Day Trips (Weekend and longer trips)

Overview: All OTMC trips will have a pre-arranged person nominated as the Search and Rescue Contact Person. The SAR Contact Person will be provided with such details as trip location, participants and SAR contact number, dates, and panic time etc. In the event that the Contact Person does not hear from the Trip Leader or other trip member when expected they will respond as outlined in this procedure

Trip Participant Responsibilities:

Intending participants for all OTMC Multi-Day trips sign up in advance. In addition to other information, the OTMC require all participants to supply a contact number in the event of an overdue trip or an emergency on the trip.

Two types of contact person can be provided. The first is someone who could contact your family and/or work etc. in the event the trip will be late home. The second type of contact person is **'Next of Kin'** only – by ticking the 'Emergency Only' column on the trip list will mean that this person would only be contacted in the case of a serious accident or other emergency (and normally only used by the Police). The OTMC will **not** ring the contact number for trips that will be late home, or for other non-emergency situations.

Trip Cost – Member: \$	Please provide an alternative phone number where we can contact someone at your home if, for example we will be late home. Tick the 'Emergency Only' column if this number is a 'Next of Kin' number only.	Emergency Only Number (tick if yes)
Trip Cost Non-member: \$		
Preferred Trip/Route (Note 2 below)	Your Grade	SAR or Emergency Contact Ph Number
		✓

Trip Leader Responsibilities:

As part of the planning for a weekend or longer trip, the trip leader will appoint a SAR Contact Person. This person does not need to be an OTMC member but should be within phone coverage for the duration of the trip. The SAR Contact Person will be provided a complete SAR trip list containing the following information (the OTMC website has a blank SAR list that can be used).

- Trip Destination (*overall location*), Trip Leader and Dates
- Tramping party details (party leaders and party members)
- Phone number for all participants
- SAR Contact Name and Phone Number (also indicate 'Emergency Only' numbers)
- Any medical conditions (where known)
- All tramping party's intentions (tracks, huts etc.) and any possible alternatives
- Vehicle information, including make / model / colour / registration number. Indicate van hire company if vans are being used.
- Personal Locator Beacon details (both OTMC and private ones)
- Expected date and time of return.

Copies of the completed SAR Trip List will be given to the SAR contact, as well as the OTMC's PLB Contact People (see details at the end of this procedure). If an OTMC PLB is activated, the Police and / or Rescue Co-ordination Centre will simultaneously attempt to contact an OTMC person along with responding to the PLB activation.

The trip leader will also discuss with the SAR contact what their role involves and agree on a 'panic date/time'. The official time for an OTMC trip to depart an area is generally 4.00pm on the final day, so it is normal to be back in cell-phone coverage by around 6.00pm. This is when the Trip Leader (or delegate) should inform the SAR contact that the trip is out safely, and everyone is on the way home.

In most cases all parties are back at the vehicles by 4.00pm, so the above can be followed. However, there may be times when one of more parties are not out by the agreed time. Of course, there are many reason why this may occur (high rivers, trip taking longer than planned, minor injury not worthy of activating a PLB etc.). Decisions made if this occurs depends on the situation – actions could include the following:

- If there are multiple vehicles available consider sending one vehicle home leaving stronger trampers in the area – they will phone the SAR contact and inform them of the situation.

- It may be that the delayed party come out another exit point – remaining people should check these.
- The leader (or senior OTMC member in the leader's absence) will need to use their judgment on how long to wait – use factors such as time of year and the current weather conditions when deciding what to do. A reasonable guide would be to wait until dark before departing the area (leave a note/s in logical places before departing).
- When back in cell phone coverage phone your SAR contact and inform them of the situation. If you have any doubt at all about the lost parties' safety, get your contact to phone the Police via 111 (the Police are responsible for Search and Rescue, and will decide what to based on the information provided). The SAR contact can also contact an OTMC Office Bearer for advice if needed.

Party Leader Responsibilities:

The standard OTMC multi-day trip is typically organised by an overall trip leader, who allocates self-sufficient tramping parties of ideally 4 trampers. Each party leader consults with their party and decides on a route (in the overall trip area), as well as organising a tent or fly, cooker and fuel, food etc. (*these actual tasks are best shared amongst the party*). As well as checking your party members clothing and gear, the party leader will explain the role of the SAR Contact and pass on the SAR Contact's phone number. Once the party have decided on their tramping intentions, provide this information to the trip leader so the SAR trip list can be completed.

SAR Contact Responsibilities:

The SAR Contact shall be appointed by the Trip Leader as part of the trip planning. Once the SAR Trip List has been completed a copy will be given to the SAR Contact.

In most cases, the trip leader will phone / text the SAR Contact that the trip is safely out, and the SAR Contact role is then complete.

There are two other scenarios that may occur:

1. The SAR Contact does not hear from the trip leader (or anyone else) as arranged. In this case, try contacting the leader on the number provided on the SAR Trip List (you can also contact other trip participants if they have a cell phone number listed as their phone number on the SAR Trip List). If you cannot make contact with them, then either contact an OTMC Office Bearer (listed on the OTMC website: <http://otmc.co.nz/committee.html>) or the NZ Police (dial 111). The Police will ask for the information on the SAR Trip List and will make any decisions required based on the information we provide.
2. If the Trip Leader or other trip member phones and reports that one of more parties have not returned, then judgment will be required – it may be best to wait until any remaining trip members have left the area (often at nightfall) be contacting the Police as it is possible a party is just late out due to a longer than expected trip. If there are any concerns at all, then contact the Police immediately. An OTMC Office Bearer can help in this situation.

In the event a trip is safely out, but will be later home than expected, the SAR Contact person may be asked to contact trip participants contact people. With the prevalence of cell phones now this will be uncommon. In this scenario, anyone who has ticked the 'Emergency Only' box on the trip list (*this information is copied to the SAR Trip List*) **won't** have their person contacted.

OTMC PLB Contact People (*Trip leader to provide SAR Trip List before departure*):

- Wayne Hodgkinson
- Antony Pettinger
- Richard Forbes