

	Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)	
	23-001	
	Original Date	Revision Date
	22 June, 2023	

SOP

Rendering Police Assistance

Reasons for SOP

To clarify the role of RCMSAR crew when assisting police on a tasking.

Definitions

MHA: Mental Health Act

Guidelines

On occasion, we will be asked by Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) to assist law enforcement services such as the RCMP. As a search and rescue organization, we will not, nor should we become involved in supporting in any law enforcement events involving criminal activity such as:

- Theft
- Assault
- Vandalism
- Arson
- Suspicious persons
- Wanted felons / violent offenders.
- Any crime or offence as described in the criminal code.

This includes providing transport for police to a destination for the transport of anyone arrested or detained in conjunction with a criminal act. It is important for the coxswain to determine the nature of any task involving the police before accepting it and if in doubt you are to decline the task.

However, there are instances where the police are involved in calls to assist a person who is in distress such as an acute mental health episode or a person suffering from a chronic mental health disorder. In these circumstances we can assist in the transport of police officers to the

location and return both the police and person in distress to an agreed to location. **These tasks must be initiated from the EMCR Provincial Duty manager.**

The RCMP frequently respond to persons suffering from mental illness and disorders and are called often to perform wellness checks. When warranted, the police can take the person into custody. In this case the person is apprehended as per section 28 of the BC Mental Health Act.

“Section 28 of the MHA authorizes police to apprehend an individual if satisfied that an individual is behaving in a way that will endanger their own safety or the safety of others and they apparently have a disorder of the mind that requires treatment and that seriously impairs the individual’s ability to react appropriately to their environment or to associate with others.” In this instance, the crew, at the discretion of the coxswain, can assist the police in the transfer of the patient to a place where they can be safely transferred ashore to police services or BCEHS. The patient transfer by an RCMSAR vessel can only be done with police officers or emergency health responders onboard to assist the patient during the OTW transport. RCMSR crews are not to interact directly with a patient being transported unless it is medically necessary to do so.

Assistance to police can be rendered for normal SAR events as follows:

- Searching for a missing person in/on the water or on a shoreline.
- Transport of police officers to a remote location to perform wellness checks.
- Transport of persons on the DRV apprehended under section 28 MHA with officers on board - Coxswain’s discretion.
- Searching for a vessel with a POB in distress.
- Administer CPR and naloxone in an overdose/cardiorespiratory arrest event if safe to do so.
- Water based recovery of human remains.

As always, the coxswain is responsible to confer with the crew and re-GAR accordingly if the situation changes where crew, boat and mission are at risk. If such a situation arises where it is no longer deemed safe to continue, the coxswain must communicate with the police onboard, declaring that the situation is no longer safe for RCMSAR crew. The police and the patient must disembark as soon as practical.


Bill Riggs (Oct 2, 2023 11:51 PDT)