



Ms Joan Hall
request-705473-e47bce60@whatdotheyknow.com

Mr Andy Cooper
Maritime & Coastguard Agency
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Website: www.dft.gov.uk/mca/
Our Reference: ID3589
17/12/2020

Freedom of Information Act Request – ID3589

Dear Ms Hall,

Thank you for your email of 12/11/2020 requesting the following information about the MCA's relationship with Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB):

What role Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB) is to play in the new arrangements with them and the HM Coastguard where they will provide services to you in the following areas:

Beach safety:

SLSGB will provide the following capabilities as an additional facility to HM Coastguard, this will be in accordance with the SLSGB patrol framework which can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.slsqb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SLSGB-Patrol-Framework.pdf>

- Provide a competent and effective beach lifeguarding service capability where appropriate, that is managed, supported and developed by trained personnel;
- Provide an inshore coastal Patrol Boat service that is competent, managed and supported to defined standards as agreed by the Participants;
- Advise, when operational, HMCG of the location in decimal degrees, capabilities and availability of each team;
- Immediately report any incident where persons may be in distress or potential distress to HM Coastguard;
- Immediately report any incident that may develop into a search and rescue incident where persons may be in distress or potential distress;
- Ensure that statistical information on activities carried out is provided to HMCG;
- Work in cooperation with other SAR partners such as the Coastguard Rescue Service, the RNLI and other independent units which may also be active;
- Provide wider support to public safety through beach patrols as defined outside of SAR in accordance with any agreements with other authorities;
- Advise HMCG of patrol activity, capability and areas of operation.

Any volunteer declared by SLSGB for search and rescue activity will have undertaken advanced training, will be led by an SLSGB Patrol Captain and will be part of a club team that has a formal Patrol agreement with SLSGB. This is a group of volunteers that fully understand the incident command structure and will have been trained to follow the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

Beach Safety - Is this lifeguards?

Support may be provided by members of SLSGB in accordance with the beach patrol framework details of which can be found in the link above.

Search and Rescue:

What roles will SLSGB members play in the search and rescue?

SLSGB organises voluntary patrolling of beaches within the UK to support public safety through the utilisation of beach safety patrols, where such units are available. SLSGB also provides Lifeguard services in some areas. The SLSGB teams provide a voluntary beach patrol capability within six team type levels, each level providing a capability to support beach safety and three levels providing a beach-based Search and Rescue capability. SLSGB currently has over 2,800 volunteers who are qualified to fulfil roles within its Lifeguard Framework at 70 locations. Further information about performance standards and services provided by SLSGB in support of SAR can be found at: <https://www.slsqb.org.uk/beach-lifeguard-patrols/>

Will they be part of the SAR Network?

SLSGB are recognised as an additional facility by HM Coastguard which enables communications between both parties to provide a range of services to improve public safety.

Will the SLSGB members be tasked to undertake Search & Rescue on behalf of the MCA?

HM Coastguard may request and coordinate SLSGB facilities in line with the SLSGB Beach Patrol Framework details of which can be found in the above link.

Who will have more "control" at an incident, HMCG members or SLSGB members?

Her Majesty's Coastguard (HMCG) is responsible for the initiation and coordination of civil maritime and aeronautical search and rescue within the United Kingdom Search and Rescue Region (UKSRR). This includes the mobilisation, organisation and tasking of adequate resources to respond to persons either in distress at sea, or to persons at risk of injury or death on the cliffs or shoreline of the UK. HM Coastguard may request SLSGB facilities to provide assistance when notified of persons in distress or potential distress.

SLSGB will retain the control of their Patrol Teams through their defined incident command structure which is outlined in the Beach Patrol Framework which can be found in the above link.

The new agreement recognises that neither participant is responsible for beach safety which rests outside of both HM Coastguard and SLSGB. Nothing in the new agreement may be used to imply that either HMCG or SLSGB is assuming responsibility for safety on the beaches of the UK. The only extends to the provision of assistance to persons in distress or potential distress in the coastal zone/ littoral area.

This concludes our response to your request. If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you may contact us within two calendar months to request an internal review by an officer who was not involved in the original response. Please write to the FOIA Unit at:

Maritime & Coastguard Agency,
Bay 3/08, Spring Place,
105, Commercial Rd,
SOUTHAMPTON,
Hampshire,
SO15 1EG.

For the duration of the COVID-19 lockdown, please use E-mail: InformationAssurance@mcga.gov.uk. Please remember to explain the reasons for your dissatisfaction and quote the reference number above in any future communications.

In the event that you are not satisfied with the decision resulting from our internal review you can apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision notice. The Information Commissioner's offices are currently closed due to the COVID-19 situation, and the following link contains information on how you should proceed [Link to ICO information](#).

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,
Mr Andy Cooper BACS Hons.