

OPERATION NEWSTART WESTERN

Organisational Manual

VOL

2

Operations

OPERATION NEWSTART WESTERN

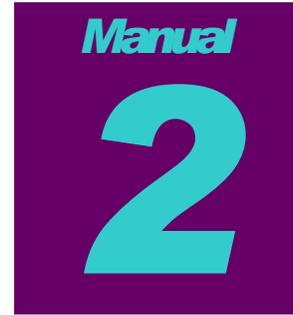
Operations Manual

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Safety and Emergency Procedures

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Safety and Emergency Procedures

Chain of Command

At the time of printing this Manual the structure of Operation Newstart Western consists of two Coordinators with equal status in the program planning and in-field management. These two Coordinators are the persons to whom all in-field decisions should be referred. Should these two Coordinators be in the field at the same time a consultative process should occur before a decision is made. Staff seeking clarification of roles should refer any decision to one or both of the Coordinators. Since these Coordinators are also responsible for the program design and operation they are the sole arbiters for decisions regarding safety, program implementation, risk management and decisions regarding emergency procedures. Any communication from the field to Travancore School Principal Jo Moore should be done via one of the Coordinators or with the approval of one of the coordinators.

Communication Systems

Operation Newstart Western maintains two different communication systems in the field. The first is a mobile phone system and the second, a satellite phone. These systems should at all times be used in a way that supports the philosophy of the program. This means that neither system is to be used for personal calls either by the staff or the clients if that compromises the outcomes hoped for from the program intervention. The satellite phone will only be turned on in emergency situations in the field due to the limited battery life of the phone.

It should also be born in mind, that in no way are communication systems in outdoor experiential programs a replacement for appropriate outdoor and first aid skills. Operation Newstart Western must have staff trained to an adequate level to deal with all contingencies should they arise and should the technology fail.

All communication to and from the field should first be made through the Travancore School Principal Jo Moore, who is All Hours Contact (AHC) person. Due to Operation Newstart Western philosophy, contact to students in the field should only be made in emergency situations. The Principal must be kept informed of in-field developments to be able to advise parents, media and other committee members of developments without fear of confusion or contradiction from another source. Phone numbers as well as emergency procedures should be placed on a laminated sheet and carried by all staff in the field at all times. See All Hours Contact information (p15) and Program Emergency Responses (specific to each activity) in Field Manual.

Information that staff must carry in remote area operations includes:

- Communication and All Hours Contact information as well as contact details for all participants.
- Route and escape route information in case of fire or other emergency.
- Medical forms of all participants including staff, trainees and clients.
- Transport Details.

Accident/Incident Reporting

1 Notification

Contact AHC and inform her of the situation (Travancore Principal). See Field Manual Venue Specific Emergency Contact Information.

2 Site Management

2.1 After an accident has occurred, one of the Operation Newstart Coordinators should take charge immediately. If the Coordinator is the patient and there is no other Coordinator present then the next responsible staff member should take control of the situation. Check all members for injuries and check numbers in the group. Thoroughly check the rest of the area for other patients.

2.2 The Coordinator must ensure that the rest of the group is secure before attending to the patient. Delegate a person to supervise the ongoing safety and well being of the group.

3 First Aid

Normal protocols should be followed.

4 Group Management

- 4.1 Instructions must be given calmly and precisely.
- 4.2 The rest of the group should be checked for injury and illness and treated accordingly.
- 4.3 Remove the rest of the group from the incident site and appoint a member of staff to care for the needs of the remainder of the group.

5 Assessment and Planning

- 5.1 When the patient and situation has been stabilised, it is necessary to make a number of decisions.
- 5.2 Know the details of the emergency contacts; refer to the **Venue specific Emergency Contact Sheet** from the Field Manual. This is carried in the accompanying vehicle or with one of the Coordinators at all times.
- 5.3 Once the patient is stabilised it is necessary to decide:
 - Is the patient able to walk?
 - Does the patient need evacuation?
 - Can the patient continue with the activity?
 - If evacuation is required, should the patient be evacuated by the group?
 - How quickly does the patient need help?
 - How far away is help relative to the need?
 - What are the external factors? (Weather, terrain, group condition, food supply, etc.)
 - Is outside help required, even for minor injuries? If there is uncertainty as to the patient's condition, party strength etc, outside help should be requested. In the case of an anaphylactic attack the patient must be evacuated **in all instances**, even if the immediate danger has passed.

- Should the patient remain in the present position and location until outside help arrives or should the patient be moved to a more sheltered location?

5.4 After the leader had made the decision the entire group should be informed as to the decision taken.

5.5 If the decision has been taken to evacuate the patient using the group the following points should be considered:

- Is the construction of a stretcher using the available materials and the level of training previously given to the group appropriate for an evacuation? If it is needed, practice should be undertaken before the actual evacuation. This should be considered a last resort after vehicle or helicopter evacuation has been deemed impossible.

5.6 If outside help is going to be summoned:

- The Emergency Communication Details form should be filled out in duplicate. It is extremely important that this form be filled out completely and accurately.
- If a team is to be sent for help (this would be considered unlikely on most occasions for ONW since they carry a satellite phone) the leader should select at least three strong participants, if they are skilled enough, to be led by a staff member.

5.7 The messenger team should consider these points:

- The route to and from the site of the accident should be planned and then accurately marked on a map, which is taken with the team.
- If the route out deviates from the plan, the changes should be noted on the map.
- The group going for help should consider marking the route out with marker tape if this is going to help searches locate the group.
- The team should carry the following equipment and information:

Venue Specific Emergency Contact Sheet
Emergency Communication Details Form
Appropriate Clothing
Money
Maps and Compass

Torch
Marker tape
First Aid Kit
Sufficient food and shelter for the planned itinerary

6 Communication and Media

The AHC is responsible for either acting as the spokesperson or appointing someone to be the spokesperson. This person will have the responsibility of accumulating the facts concerning the incident. The spokesperson should act as the sole liaison between the media and the program. The AHC is responsible for coordinating and controlling all the communications and for record keeping of communications incoming to base for any incident.

Fatality

1. Site Management

The police will need to make a careful investigation of the site. The area must not be disturbed. This includes equipment and vehicles. In remote areas it may be necessary to leave the scene of the accident and evacuate. In this case you must take careful note of the circumstances surrounding the death and protect the body. Leave a waterproof note indicating that you have gone for assistance and asking that the body not be disturbed. As soon as possible, report the matter to the police. If possible photograph the scene of the accident from as many angles as possible. Make note of the incident and write as much as is known by the group as to the circumstances surrounding the incident. Contact AHC as soon as possible to communicate the details of the incident and ensure there is no misunderstanding. Media should be handled by the AHC except where the AHC has passed on this task to another.

2. First Aid

Do not disturb the body. Only the Coroner or medical officer can authorise the removal of the body. The victim's name should not be released prior to the notification of the next-of-kin.

3. Group Management

Explain to the group what is going on, and what will happen. Be honest and genuine. Be aware that the Police will interview all those people who were at the scene of the accident. Operation Newstart Western is in a unique position in this

regard since in almost every situation one of the staff members present is a police officer.

Support the group members through the investigation process. Operation Newstart Western and support staff will provide crisis counselling for staff and students as soon as practically possible after the incident.

4. Documentation

It is crucial that full and complete documentation be kept as it may be counted as evidence. Information required includes:

- Photographs of the body, terrain, hazards and conditions.
- Accurate recorded measurements of incident and careful description of environmental conditions including weather.

5. Notification

First Notice goes to the **All Hours Contact** in all situations. During this contact only the facts should be given and speculation completely avoided.

The **AHC** is responsible for coordinating and controlling all communications and record keeping for any incident. Cooperate fully with the police. Deal with the facts only and avoid speculation.

Helicopter Protocol

1. Contact AHC and inform them of the situation.
2. Contact Emergency Services.
3. Provide Emergency Services with accurate information on the situation including:
 - Location including Map grid references if appropriate.
 - Details of patient Medical Form.
 - Patient and accident details.
 - What expertise is at the site?
 - What rescue expertise is at the site?

- What may be required?
4. Inform them of the communications system you have and the phone number of the mobile phone or satellite phone you may be using.
 5. Inform them of the conditions and terrain including visibility and weather.
 6. Identify potential hazards: including trees, rock outcrops, powerlines, etc.
 7. Ask the ETA of the helicopter.
 8. Ask if they require any further information.
 9. Wait until they have hung up. This means they require no further information. Always be the last to hang up.

Helicopter Procedure

If a helicopter evacuation is required it is best to ascertain what the ETA of the helicopter may be to manage the group appropriately. The length of time required for the helicopter to arrive may be up to two hours but in many cases the waiting time is shorter.

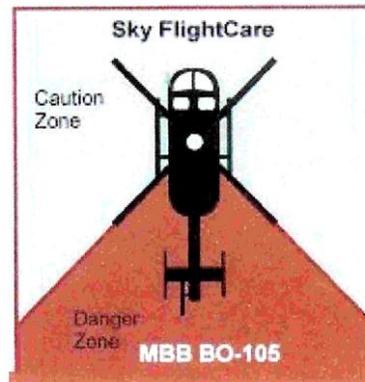
Things to do in preparation for helicopter evacuation include:

1. Clear the area if you know where it may land. Approximately two tennis courts in size (40m x 40m) are required for a helicopter to land. Clear rocks, loose stones, dead limbs and branches etc and level the ground as much as possible.
2. Only one person should be in charge of the situation. Ensure that everyone is aware of who is in charge and that no attempt is made to direct the helicopter upon its arrival. The pilot is a skilled professional who will know much more about the capabilities of the craft than anyone on the ground.
3. Organise the entire group to be close together at least 50 metres from the landing site. The further away from the landing site the better and it should be located in as safe a position as possible. Ensure there is a person in charge of the group in addition to the person in overall charge of the landing. If it is not possible to move the group a long distance from the landing site the group should sit with their backs to the site. Beware of any loose clothing or debris.
4. Keep the patient out of the way and protected. If anyone in the group has glasses (sun or other) put them on the patient.

5. Wear glasses yourself to protect your eyes from flying debris etc.
6. Have one person responsible for directing the pilot if that is necessary. Stand with your back to the wind pointing to the landing site.
7. Once the helicopter has landed do not move towards the aircraft until the pilot has given his thumbs up signal. This is vitally important as the pilot may not be happy with the position of the aircraft and decide to move it. Also the engine will not be turned off until the thumbs up signal is given and this potentially becomes the most dangerous period as the rotors swing long.
8. When the all clear is given approach the aircraft from the front or side. **Never approach from the tail.**
9. If blinded by swirling dust or grit – STOP, sit down and await assistance.
10. Continue evacuation based on the rescue crew's directions.
11. If a night landing is required light a cross on the ground, if possible, or keep a lantern or candle burning in the area.

SAFETY AROUND HELICOPTERS

Approach only from the caution zone in the pilot's vision.



Approach only from the lower side of the aircraft.

For your safety remember....

- Carry stretchers and/or equipment below waist level. Keep a firm hold.
- Do not wear hats. Never reach up or chase articles that blow away.
- If blinded by grit, stop, sit down and wait for assistance.
- Do not run.

Landing Area Requirements

Landing area should be 40mtrs square and clear of loose articles.
Warn pilots where possible via sat phone of obstacles in flight path, eg; power lines, antennas.

Natural Hazards

Flooded Rivers

When heavy rain occurs and floods are imminent or occurring, it is important to consider the following things:

Drinking water needs to be treated when it is from the ground source at flood stage since floodwater may be contaminated from the surrounding area. Floodwaters are often higher in bacterial counts than when the river is flowing normally. Boiling water for three minutes or using Puri tabs is an adequate treatment in this situation.

If the journey requires a river crossing and the river or creek is high it is very important to take time to assess if the river is safe to cross. Factors such as the inability to see the bottom and the gauge depth, the swiftness of the flow, the presence of eddies in the case of a swim and the debris in the river are all factors that can make the crossing of a river dangerous. Often on similar creeks the water level will drop rapidly thus making the crossing safer. If the river is large, looking for an alternative route, or even waiting days if time permits, for the river to fall is the wiser option.

When crossing a river:

- Always undo waist belts on packs.
- Do not cross with water over thigh deep in swift water.
- Cross with support such as linked arms or poles.
- Double check that you have selected the safest place to cross.

Bushfires

Often it is possible in very dry conditions for a group to start a fire accidentally. Prevention is by far the best option in the case of fire. When lighting a campfire ensure:

- It is located in a properly contained area, preferably dug into the ground about 30cms.
- A clearing is made around the fire and all flammable material is removed. The fire is to be the minimum size necessary for it's purpose and should not exceed one square metre.

- Wind velocity should not be excessive and should be no more than 10km/hr.
- An adult must be in attendance at all times.
- Thoroughly douse any campfire with water to the extent that a hand may be inserted into the coals without fear of getting burnt.

In the event of a bushfire

1. Do not panic. Accept that fear is natural and make decisions coolly and rationally even though afraid.
2. Do not run needlessly or blindly.
3. If there is no watercourse or dam to shelter in (not a raised tank) the fire should be entered. This means attempting to find a low fuel area such as lower grasses and light scrub to proceed through the fire. This may be at the edge of the fire where the heat could be less intense. If you are faced with a wildfire this may not be an option.
4. When entering the fire stay as low as possible to breath the cleanest air.
5. If time permits it may be possible to burn out an area to allow the fire to burn around the group. Whilst burning off ensure that clothing protects bare skin. There is one case where natural fibres such as cotton and wool are preferable to synthetic fibres that may be extremely flammable.
6. If you must enter the fire a dry handkerchief to breath through is helpful. Do not moisten the handkerchief or rag since in severe heat the lungs react more favourably to dry air than moist air.
7. If possible protect against heat radiation. Lie in a shallow trench, rock crevice, behind a large rock etc. Caves should be avoided due to the possibility of oxygen depletion in confined areas. However as a last resort shelter could be sought in a cave.
8. Lie prone. In a critical emergency lie face down in an area that will not burn. Cover the body with any non-flammable material available such as dirt or as a last resort, even packs.

(Adapted from “Management of Wilderness and Environmental Emergencies” Paul S. Auerbach & Edward C Geehr, Editors, 2nd Edition 1989)

Trip Descriptors

Trip Descriptors are intended to assist staff in easily identifying the level of difficulty of the trip and or activity and knowing the level of response that can be expected in the event of an incident. Trip or activity levels are graded from 1-4 for Operation Newstart Western.

Level 1

Locally based activity with mobile phone access and no overnight stay. Either Operation Newstart Western Staff and/or other providers supervise activity closely. Emergency response vehicles are in the local area and the Operation Newstart bus is readily available in an emergency, as well as other vehicles. Constant Communication is available to the All Hours Contact number via mobile phone. First aid equipment must be carried.

Level 2

Travel of up to two hours from Operation Newstart Western Base and a more remote location outside the Metropolitan area is utilised. Communication is still possible in most circumstances via mobile phone although one may need to anticipate some 'blind spots' in their use. The trip may include an overnight component. All Hours Contact will be available. Emergency Response Vehicles, including helicopter, may be some distance away but readily accessible. Operation Newstart Western Staff may be supervising the activity with additional outside assistance. Operation Newstart Western vehicle will be readily available on site. Day activities in the category include Rock Climbing, Abseiling, Surfing, Skiing, Mud Run, Horse-riding, Canoeing, Overnight Camp in residential setting, High and Low ropes, and Caving. First aid equipment must be carried during these activities.

Level 3

This level requires overnight stay in remote area with Mobile Phone or Satellite Phone access. Operation Newstart Western vehicle remains available for transport within the locality of the stay. Emergency Response vehicles will take some time to arrive by road and some time to organise by air. Location in map grid references or place name and roads must be stipulated when calling for assistance. The activity will by its very nature contain a higher perceived risk than previous than previous levels and actual risk must not be allowed to exceed perceived levels. AHC will be available via Satellite Phone or Mobile Phone. First Aid equipment to satisfy remote area requirements must be carried.

Level 4

This is the highest level of difficulty of challenge and risk undertaken in the Operation Newstart Western Program. The activity is undertaken in a remote area. Vehicle access is limited perhaps only to the start and finish points. Communication is available via Satellite Phone or Mobile Phone. Patchy to no coverage should be expected for mobile phones. AHC will be available for the duration of the trip. Emergency Response vehicles by road will be some hours away and in some circumstances helicopter will be the only emergency response vehicle available. Management of any emergency incident should be planned in terms of hours or even overnight if an incident were to occur at a particular time of day. First Aid equipment to satisfy remote area requirements must be carried.

Operation Newstart Western

Emergency All Hours Contact

The **Emergency All Hours Contact Person** for any in-field incident from any location is:

Joanne Moore

Principal

Travancore School

Business Phone: 9345 6050

Mobile Phone: 0408 310 061

Operation Newstart Western Sat Phone No.

0011 8816 2145 7161

Phil Woods' Mobile Phone Number

0409 185 582

Matt Mudie's Mobile Phone

0428 116 317

Mobile to Satellite Emergency Services

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