

NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE (NZSAR) AWARDS

About the NZSAR Awards

Searching for and rescuing people is a complex, often difficult task that occurs in all kinds of weather and usually in demanding locations. The people who work or volunteer their time and skills in this area, and those that support them, often receive little public recognition for the feats they achieve, and the sustained effort they put in to accomplish these tasks. The New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council has established the NZSAR Awards as an annual national award programme to recognise worthy achievements in the field of search and rescue (SAR) in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

While some specific acts of SAR heroism or conspicuous service have drawn honours from the Royal New Zealand Honours system, and others have received awards from their own organisations, such recognition often does not reach the public or others involved in the wider SAR community. The NZSAR Awards give formal and public recognition to those involved in SAR in New Zealand. They are primarily intended for those people, groups, or organisations that have made important contributions to SAR in New Zealand and deserve recognition at a national level.

They also raise community awareness about the efforts of volunteers and paid personnel in the SAR sector and celebrate their success. The NZSAR Awards are judged and presented annually by the NZSAR Council.

Categories of Activity

There are two categories of SAR related activity covered by the NZSAR Awards:

1. **Operational Activity.** This category is for nominations relating to a specific SAR operation(s) that have occurred during the year.
2. **Support Activity.** This category is for nominations that do not relate to specific SAR operation(s) but to the wider range of SAR related activities (for example training, prevention, and long-service).

Levels of Recognition

There are two levels of recognition for each category in the NZSAR Awards programme:

- **New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Awards.** Commencing in 1999, this annual award honours the person, group or organisation that has made a an exceptional and distinguished contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year or over a sustained period. It was renamed the NZSAR Gold Award in 2008.

- **New Zealand Search and Rescue Certificates of Achievement.**
Commencing in 2008, the certificate is awarded to people, groups or organisations that have made a significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year or over a sustained period.

Number of Awards

- NZSAR Gold Award: no more than one Gold Award for Operational Activity, and no more than one Gold Award for Support Activity, can be presented each year.
- NZSAR Certificate of Achievement: no more than four Certificates of Achievement for Operational Activity and no more than four Certificates of Achievement for Support Activity, can be presented in each year.

Participation in a SAR operation does not in itself guarantee recognition. Awards and certificates will be granted only where the contribution is deemed to meet the criteria outlined in this policy.

If, in the opinion of the NZSAR Council, there is no nomination of sufficiently high standard to qualify, a decision may be made not to present a Gold Award or Certificate for any given year.

Criteria & Eligibility

The key criterion for the NZSAR Awards is that the nominations are for 'those that have made a significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year or over a sustained period'.

In addition, the following criteria and eligibility apply to the NZSAR Awards:

1. Any type of contribution to SAR in the NZ Search and Rescue Region shall be considered for nominating an individual, group, or organisation for the NZSAR awards.
2. The nominee(s) must have performed outstanding work in the field of SAR above and beyond routine work and service.
3. Individuals, groups, and entire organisations are eligible for the NZSAR Awards.
4. The contribution may be for a particular incident(s) during the previous year, or for a sustained effort over a period of time.
5. Awards are not automatically granted to all individuals or agencies involved in a SAR operation. Nominations must demonstrate a level of contribution that is clearly above and beyond standard expectations.
6. NZSAR Awards may be granted posthumously.
7. If an individual, group, or organisation has been nominated for an NZSAR Award in the past, whether or not they received an award or certificate, substantial new information must be presented for the NZSAR Council to consider this nomination. A list of past recipients is available on the NZSAR

website.

8. An individual who has previously received an NZ Royal Honour for a particular incident or service cannot be considered for recognition by the NZSAR Council award programme for that same contribution.
9. The information contained in the nomination is the basis for the evaluation, so it must be complete and fully justify the nomination. The NZSAR Council will not routinely contact the nominator or seek any supplementary information.
10. Nominations for the Operational Activity category need to fulfil the following three criteria:
 1. The operation(s) must be coordinated, or overseen, by one of the two recognised coordinating authorities.
 2. The operation(s) must have occurred during the year for which the awards are being presented.
 3. The operation(s) must demonstrate best practice within the sector.

Process

To be considered for the Gold Award or the Certificate for the year ended 31 December, a nomination must be prepared and forwarded to the NZSAR Secretariat no later than 31 January the following year. This nomination is to be submitted by an individual or organisation in the belief that the nominee has fulfilled the criteria and eligibility requirements outlined in this policy.

A non-conflicted sub-committee of the NZSAR Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and Operational Leadership Group (OLG) will review all the nominations for the year and make recommendations to the NZSAR Council about who should be considered for recognition. The NZSAR Council will then consider the recommendations and decide who will be the recipients. The NZSAR Secretariat will manage this process.

Judging of the nominations will be on the basis of information contained in the nomination form and supporting documentation. The decision of the NZSAR Council will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

1. The NZSAR Council is the selection panel.
2. References may be checked upon receipt of nomination.
3. The NZSAR Secretariat will manage the nomination and awards process.
4. A non-conflicted sub-committee (described above) will assess eligible nominations against the criteria, rank them accordingly, and provide advice to the NZSAR Council.
5. The advice will then be considered by the NZSAR Council who will make the final and incontestable decision regarding recipients.
6. The NZSAR Secretariat will notify the Gold Award and Certificate recipients and all nominators once the NZSAR Council has made its decision.
7. NZSAR Gold Award and Certificate recipients' identification will be officially announced at an awards ceremony arranged by the NZSAR Secretariat.

8. The NZSAR Secretariat will provide news releases on the Gold Award and Certificate recipients to the appropriate media.

Selection Considerations

The nominations will be considered using the following guidelines and any others considered relevant by the NZSAR Council.

For ranking nominations relating to Operational Activity, the sub-committee should assess nominations with a focus on identifying truly exceptional contributions. Routine participation or expected duties may not meet the threshold for recognition. The sub-committee should give consideration to the following factors:

- Result
- Extraordinary rescue effort
- Use of SAR techniques

- Scale of effort
- Persistence of effort
- Scale of coordination and teamwork to effect a rescue
- Environmental conditions
- Location
- Evidence of best practice within the sector.

For ranking nominations relating to Support Activity, the sub-committee should give consideration to the following factors:

SAR services

- Changes or improvements to SAR
- Positive impact of changes
- Range/scope of impact
- Fundraising
- Years of service to SAR
- Scale of effort

Leadership

- Leadership activities
- Number of years as SAR group/team leader

Development of a new technique or technology

- Introduction of SAR technique or technology
- Success of the new technique or technology
- Scale of effort

Education and prevention

- Identification of a need for a programme
- Introduction of a successful SAR educational or prevention programme
- Application of the programme

- Success of the programme
- Scale of effort

Scale of effort.

Preparation and Submission of Nominations

1. All nominations shall use the NZSAR Council Awards programme nomination form and follow the attached guidelines for preparing the nominations.
2. Nominations for Operational Activity for the year ending 31 December shall be submitted no later than the 31 January the following year.
3. A nomination can be submitted by any person over the age of 18 who is familiar with the contribution of the individual or organisation being submitted.
4. An individual cannot nominate himself/herself or the part of an organisation with which he or she is directly associated.
5. A good nomination will use plain language to tell the NZSAR Council what the nominee has done and how the contribution has helped SAR. The outcome and the process of the contribution must be described and substantiated.
6. A current biographical sketch, including dates of active participation in organisations, and any awards or honours earned by the nominee, is useful to the NZSAR Council.
7. Dates and details about the nominee's work and how it has affected their community and SAR in general provide the NZSAR Council with a valuable decision-making tool.
8. All nominations must be signed and seconded.
Nominations are to be submitted to:
NZSAR Secretariat
PO Box 3175
Wellington
New Zealand

info@nzsar.govt.nz

Frequently Asked Questions

When was the NZSAR Council Awards programme established?

The NZSAR Council Awards programme was introduced in 1999 to acknowledge outstanding search and rescue work by individuals, groups and organisations in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region. The programme also serves to raise awareness of SAR efforts across the country. The structure of the awards programme was updated in 2007 to include the NZSAR Gold Award and Certificates of Achievement. The awards were updated again in 2013 to establish the categories operational and support activity.

Are there separate awards for paid and volunteer SAR personnel?

No. Both the New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Award and the Certificate can be awarded to either paid or volunteer SAR personnel.

Are the awards only for lifetime achievement in SAR?

No. Any significant contribution to SAR in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region should be considered in nominating an individual or organization for the NZSAR Councils awards programme. The nominee must have performed outstanding work in the field of SAR above and beyond routine work and service. The contribution may be in the form of sustained effort over a period of time or for a particular incident or group of incidents.

Can organisations, groups and individuals be nominated?

Yes.

How many awards are given each year?

No more than one Gold Award for Operational Activity, and no more than one Gold Award for Support Activity, can be presented each year.

There is a limit on the number of Certificates of Achievement that can be awarded – a maximum of four in each category each year.

If, in the opinion of the NZSAR Council, there is no nomination of sufficiently high standard to qualify, a decision may be made not to present a Gold Award or Certificate for any given year.

Will the Gold Award and Certificates be presented each year?

The NZSAR Council may decide on occasion not to present the Gold Award or Certificate if, in their opinion, the nominations do not warrant their presentation.

Where can I find the names of previous recipients?

Information about past NZSAR Award recipients can be found on the NZSAR website.

Can a previous winner be nominated again?

Yes. The organisation/group/person will be judged only on achievements since the previous award was received. For those who have been nominated in the past (and have not won), previous nomination information can be updated and will be considered for the present nomination.

Can people from the same organisation be nominated?

Yes. You may nominate as many people as you like, but please fill out separate forms for each nominee, unless you are nominating the group or organisation as a whole.

Do I have to fill out separate forms for the Gold Award and Certificate of Achievement?

No. All nominees are considered for both the NZSAR Gold Award and Certificates.

Are there guidelines for preparing nominations?

1. Fill out the candidate information on the application form.
2. Write the reasons for the nomination in the area provided and use a separate sheet if necessary. Describe in a qualitative manner:
 - the nature of the candidate's contribution to SAR (achievements applying to this nomination)
 - the significance of the candidate's contribution to SAR (including the importance of the contributions and the benefits resulting from them)
 - the context of the contribution (including background against which the contributions were made and problems overcome).
3. For individuals, provide an up-to-date biographical sketch of the nominee on a separate sheet.
4. Fill out the nominator and seconder information on the application form. Ensure these are signed. You may include other references (with their names and contact information) to corroborate the information provided in the nomination if you wish.
5. Attach all relevant supporting documentation, including endorsements.
6. Submit the nomination to the NZSAR Secretariat by 31 January.
7. Details of the nomination and any supporting evidence (such as photographs, reports, letters, witness contact details etc) should be attached to the nomination form.

Are the nominations confidential?

Yes. We do not contact nominees unless asked to do so by the nominator. We contact the winners prior to the awards ceremony to confirm their attendance and other details.

When do nominations close?

Nominations close on 31 January.

NZSAR AWARD PROGRAMME NOMINATION FORM

The NZSAR Awards recognise exceptional contributions to search and rescue.
Note: Awards are not automatically given to all participants in a rescue.

Please provide all information for the nomination; you may attach further documentation as appropriate.

NB: Only ONE nomination form is required for an operation.

Please refer to the NZSAR Awards Policy for criteria & eligibility requirements for these Awards.

Who are you nominating for an Award? (circle one)	Person(s)	Name(s):
	Group(s)	
	Organisation(s)	
Contact details (of nominees)	Address	
	Home phone	
	Work phone	
	Email	

Occupation of the person(s) nominated <i>(if applicable/relevant)</i>	
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Which category is this nomination for? (tick one option)	Operational Activity		Coordinated by (circle one) Police / RCCNZ
	Support Activity		

Supply supporting information on the next page.

NOMINATED BY:

SECONDED BY:

Name Address Phone () Email Signature	Name Address Phone () Email Signature
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I certify that the information contained in this nomination is true and correct

I certify that the information contained in this nomination is true and correct

Date

Date

Information to support the nomination.

Give a brief description of how the person, group or organisation has made an outstanding or significant contribution to Search and Rescue in the NZ Search and Rescue Region, clearly demonstrating actions that go above and beyond standard expectations.

Describe the activity that has prompted this nomination, and include information about:

- what was done, and how this goes beyond 'business as usual'?

Where possible, describe the special or outstanding action/s and any related facts or data (for example, temperature).

Supporting documents/photos can be attached.