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VERSION OF THIS REPORT**

## **Nunavut Emergency Management**

**Department of Community  
and Government Services**



# **Annual Report: 2023- 2024**

**Nunavut Emergency Management**







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## Message from the Honorable Minister David Joanasie

As the Minister responsible for the Department of Community and Government Services, I am pleased to present the Nunavut Emergency Management Annual Report for 2023-2024. This report documents our commitment to ensuring the safety and security of the lives and livelihoods of our fellow Nunavummiut in times of extreme challenge and adversity.

The Nunavut Emergency Management (NEM) Division serves and supports territorial emergency measures, Search and Rescue operations and government business continuity throughout Nunavut. NEM plays an important role in ensuring that our communities are resilient from all forms of disaster through prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery measures.



I extend my gratitude to the dedicated volunteers and civil servants of our territory who prepare and are ready to answer the call in times of crisis. Their dedication and efforts serve as a testament to the strength and resilience of our territory.

**David Joanasie**  
**Minister, Community and Government Services**



## Introduction

The Nunavut Emergency Management (NEM) division is resolute in its commitment to advancing safety and emergency preparedness initiatives across the vast expanse of Nunavut. With a dedicated team, NEM strives to ensure staff maintain an understanding of the local landscape and cultural nuances integral to effective emergency management.

Part of NEM's mandate is the oversight of search and rescue (SAR) operations and the development of comprehensive emergency preparedness plans tailored to the needs of Nunavut's diverse communities. Through collaborative efforts, NEM assists communities in developing their own emergency plan while also enhancing ground search and rescue (GSAR) capabilities through training, education and the provision of essential equipment and communication systems. By fostering collaboration with government divisions and departments, NEM works to ensure the development of emergency plans and business continuity strategies that are both robust and culturally relevant, ensuring the seamless coordination of response efforts in times of crisis.

To that end, NEM remains dedicated to improving programs and services for community stakeholders by delivering relevant northern-based training that aligns with mandatory territorial and federal legislation regarding emergency management. Through ongoing engagement and consultation, NEM continues to refine its organizational structure to better meet the operational needs of communities across Nunavut. Some of the ongoing initiatives and priorities for NEM include:

- Ongoing collaboration with GN divisions and departments to develop emergency plans/business continuity plans and map out their emergency preparedness;
- Enhancing community-based searches by improving the SAR program through training and assistance with equipment and communication systems;
- Improving programs and services for community stakeholders by developing and implementing relevant northern-based training that meets or exceeds national search and rescue standards, and delivering ongoing training to meet the unique needs of each community; and
- Ensuring NEM's organizational structure aligns with operational needs.

This report provides an overview of the key operations undertaken by NEM throughout the 2023-2024 fiscal year.



# Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Training

NEM, in collaboration with Nunavut Municipal Training Organization, was able to deliver five Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) training courses in 2023-2024 costing \$224,000. These trainings were a success, with forty-five participants across the five training sessions delivered.

Ground Search and Rescue Training is a key function of NEM to ensure communities are provided with the necessary training and resources to respond to emergency situations. The training provided is Nunavut specific SAR training that focuses on issues faced by Nunavut communities. This program was developed in collaboration with the MTO and Arctic Response. Key training in the program included:

- Training on the Garmin In-Reach units. These units are distributed to SAR groups to assist with real-time two-way communication via text with their search coordinator and NEM
- Utilization of the “Go Bags” that were and continue to be distributed to communities to ensure SAR volunteers have safety equipment available to them when deployed on a search
- Search techniques used in Arctic operations
- Lost person behaviour

These training sessions increased the proficiency and safety of SAR operations and volunteer skills and the continued integration of new technology to improve communication speed.

Community	Participants
Cambridge Bay	3
Kugluktuk	8
Kinngait	18
Pangnirtung	4
Clyde River	12

**Table 1:** 2023-2024 number of participants in each community where GSAR training occurred.





# Search and Rescue Response

Search and rescue operations in Nunavut represent a critical lifeline for residents navigating the rugged terrain and extreme weather conditions of Canada’s northernmost territory. Ground and in-land water search and rescue is the responsibility of the territorial government. In other jurisdictions it is covered under the Community Police Service Agreement. Nunavut presents unique challenges and demands a highly coordinated and adaptive approach to search and rescue efforts. This can include active engagement with other GN divisions and departments, territorial partners, federal partners, industry, and private enterprise. From assisting individuals stranded in harsh winter conditions to responding to emergencies in remote areas, search and rescue teams in Nunavut demonstrate dedication and courage in their mission to save lives. NEM coordinates with local search and rescue volunteer groups in the municipalities to ensure that guidance, training and support are available. On-land medivacs are the responsibility of the Department of Health. NEM’s role is to assist in locating air and ground support as needed. This is covered under the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of Community and Government Services (CGS) and Department of Health.

**Figure 2:** Search and Rescue Regions (SRR) of Canada



Canada's SAR Response Authorities	
Type of SAR Incident	Lead Authority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Aircraft Incidents</b>            Anywhere in Canada         </li> </ul>	Canadian Armed Forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Maritime incidents</b>            On the oceans, coastal waters, and Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River system         </li> </ul>	Canadian Coast Guard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Ground and Inland Water (GSAR)</b>            On land (e.g., hikers, hunters, lost persons);            On inland waterways (e.g., pleasure boaters, anglers, paddlers)         </li> </ul>	Provincial/territorial governments; usually delegated to the jurisdictional police force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Marine Conservation Areas</b>            On land (e.g., hikers, mountain bikers);            On inland waterways (e.g., anglers, paddlers)         </li> </ul>	Parks Canada Agency

*Source: Quadrennial Search and Rescue Review, Government of Canada, 2013*

**Figure 2:** Canada's SAR Response Authorities



## Search and Rescue by Community Statistics

April 1 – March 31 2023-2024

Community	# of Taskings
Arctic Bay	3
Arviat	6
Baker Lake	10
Cambridge Bay	2
Kinngait (Cape Dorset)	2
Chesterfield Inlet	2
Clyde River	5
Coral Harbour	4
Gjoa Haven	9
Grise Fiord	0
Sanirajak (Hall Beach)	12
Igloolik	10
Iqaluit	5
Kimmirut	1
Kugaaruk	6
Kugluktuk	0
Pangnirtung	1
Pond Inlet	9
Qikiqtarjuaq	0
Rankin Inlet	7
Naujaat (Repulse Bay)	2
Resolute Bay	1
Sanikiluaq	6
Taloyoak	5
Whale Cove	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>

**Table 2:** 2023-2024 Community Numbers of SAR Undertaken

# Community Emergency Preparedness

## Training

Through the Nunavut Municipal Training Organization, NEM continues to deliver Community Emergency Response training to communities across Nunavut that supplements and supports the development and upkeep of the Community Emergency Response Plans (CERP) which are required under the Emergency Measures Act (EMA). The training is a three-day course that provides municipalities with an all-hazards approach framework to assist in planning and organization during an emergency. The training provides communities with the tools and knowledge necessary to respond to any potential emergency. Communities learn how to identify risks and the probability of occurrence using a Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA).

The program helps to identify the community control groups made up of key players during an emergency, including:

- Mayors and Senior/Chief Administrative Officer (S/CAO)
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Community health centre staff
- Department of Education
- Qulliq Energy Corporation
- Nunavut Airports
- Other hamlet staff and local leadership as required (community specific)





## CERP Training Statistics

The Municipal Training Organization (MTO) received a contribution of \$285,000 through a contribution agreement from NEM to facilitate the provision of ten CERP courses to various communities across the territory. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the delivery of Community Emergency Response Plan (CERP) training to nine of the ten planned communities was completed at a total cost of \$247,975.

This training was delivered in Arviat, Baker Lake, Cambridge Bay, Grise Fiord, Igloolik, Kinngait, Pond Inlet, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Taloyoak. Training that had been scheduled for Resolute Bay was rescheduled to be hosted in Arctic Bay, however, was subsequently cancelled due to logistics.

**Table 5:** 2023-2024 Number of Participants in Each Community Where CERP Training Occurred

2023-2024 CERP Training		
Community	Registered Participants	Successful Participants
Arviat	20	20
Baker Lake	9	6
Cambridge Bay	8	8
Grise Fiord	13	7
Igloolik	18	14
Kinngait	14	11
Pond Inlet	6	4
Qikiqtarjuaq	13	11
Taloyoak	10	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>84</b>





## Local State of Emergency – Arviat and Pangnirtung

In November 2023, the Government of Nunavut received notification from the Hamlet of Arviat that Mayor and Council declared a Local State of Emergency (LSOE) due to a municipal power failure caused by a severe snowstorm and winds in excess of 115km/h. Running power from emergency backup generator, the municipal office was able to run with limited services. Significant challenges included the inability to medivac anyone out of the community, access to fuel and the community being without power for an extended period. While the airport was able to clear the runway of snow, aircraft were not able to land with technical personnel and equipment from QEC due to no power. Alternative measures to light the runway were employed. The Department of Education provided a critical assist in this event by opening the school gymnasium where food, water, coffee and shelter were provided for warming. Advice, guidance and logistical support was provided by the Government of Nunavut during this local event.

In December 2023, Pangnirtung declared a LSOE due to an ongoing municipal power failure. Regular engagement and consultation between the Government of Nunavut and the Hamlet of Pangnirtung saw a successful outcome to this municipal emergency. Both the water treatment plant and wastewater plant were running off of back-up generators. However, there was minimal disruption to water delivery to homes with the addition of two water pick up locations. The Department of Education was engaged to open up a school gymnasium as a warming shelter which was used by multiple residents. Quick engagement of people, tools and resources saw this event come to a safe close.



## Rescue Kits

### Go Bags

NEM remains committed to enhancing the capabilities of Search and Rescue operations across Nunavut. In line with this commitment, NEM continues to provide support to Municipal Ground Search and Rescue teams by supplying “Go Bags”. These bags are equipped with an array of essential survival items, carefully selected to ensure the safety and well-being of responders in even the most challenging circumstances. From tarps and snow knives, to mittens, toques, sleeping bags and signal mirrors, each item is chosen to empower responders to face the unpredictable realities of the land with confidence and resilience. NEM ensures that GSAR teams are prepared and safe so they can focus on the search at hand when called to do so.

Figure 10: NEM “Go Bag”



### GPS and InReach

Over the years, NEM has continued to enhance responder safety by providing all GSAR teams across Nunavut with the Garmin 276cx GPS units and InReach devices. These cutting-edge tools represent a significant advancement in navigation and communication capabilities for our responders. The Garmin 276cx GOS units are renowned for their user-friendly interface and durability, specifically tailored to excel in the challenging Arctic environment. Paired with the InReach device, which offers reliable two-way communication and emergency SOS functionality, these tools empower GSAR responders to navigate treacherous terrain with precision and maintain vital contact with command centers. By equipping GSAR teams with these technologies, NEM is not only enhancing the safety of responders but also bolstering the efficiency of search and rescue operations across Nunavut. With these resources at their disposal, GSAR teams are better equipped than ever to save lives and ensure the well-being of those in need across the territory.



Figure 11: Garmin GPS 276cx and InReach Communication

### Community SPOT program

NEM continues its commitment to providing vital support to communities across Nunavut through the ongoing delivery of the Community SPOT program. With over 500 SPOT devices strategically distributed throughout the territory, the program has proven instrumental in significantly reducing search times and expediting rescue efforts for individuals facing distress or becoming lost out on the land. Accessible through a sign-out process that is free of charge in all municipalities, these life-saving devices offer peace-of-mind to residents. To ensure ease of use for all users, NEM has undertaken the translation of instructional cards into all official languages, facilitating quick reference to the device’s functions in times of need.

Moreover, to maintain the program’s effectiveness, municipalities adhere to a structured schedule for replenishing batteries and operation cards, ensuring that each device remains fully functional and ready



for deployment at a moment's notice. It is the collective responsibility of municipalities to oversee the maintenance of the equipment, promptly reporting any instances of loss or damage to NEMA for replacement.



## Closing

The Nunavut Emergency Management Division remains committed to supporting and developing the safety, security and resilience of Nunavut’s communities through training and education in addition to providing advice and guidance. The 2023-2024 fiscal year saw both achievements and challenges, in which lessons were learned as we continue to improve how we do business on a daily basis. Moving forward, NEM remains dedicated to ensuring active support to communities, strengthening capabilities, and fostering a culture of preparedness. By ensuring NEM staff have the tools, resources and supports needed to provide the same to our communities, we look forward to every future opportunity to ensure Nunavummiut have a safe community to live, work and play.

