



LANDSAR - LAND SEARCH & RESCUE NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand Land Search and Rescue (LandSAR), with approximately 3,500 trained volunteers, is the national volunteer organization assisting the Police and public in suburban/urban and wilderness/rural search and rescue operations.

LandSAR has over 61 groups covering New Zealand. In addition there are also 18 specialist teams including LandSAR Search Dog and LandSAR Caving, plus Alpine Cliff Rescue and River SAR operating in areas where there is a requirement for these specialist skills.

Operating in remote mountainous terrain, search teams and their coordinators rely on mobile communications to stay safe and connected.

SITUATION

LandSAR search and rescue volunteers never know when their services will be required. They need critical communications that are ready to 'grab and go'. Rugged portables that can handle the harsh environments that LandSAR operates in are imperative, as was the ability to charge the portables on-site during incidents.

LandSAR often operate in terrain well beyond any permanent radio network coverage, so they need a solution for a lightweight, transportable communications network.


To coordinate with other rescue agencies, including Police and aircraft, LandSAR rely on specialist search and rescue and emergency management software, so any communications tools they use need to integrate seamlessly into that platform

RESPONSE

Tait provided the LandSAR teams with tough portable radios and transportable chargers in a rugged Pelican case for a rapidly deployable solution they could rely on, knowing their radios were charged and ready to go. The transportable solution allows LandSAR to continue charging batches of radio batteries throughout events. This charger includes a customer specific solution to better indicate the charge level of radios.


Tait portable radios include geo-positioning functionality, and custom software integration to share location data over the radio network with SAR Track, LandSAR's choice of management software. This platform provides a visual of the operational area, so LandSAR can more safely and effectively manage the operation. This solution assured functionality with the third party equipment on LandSAR's network.





NEW ZEALAND

LOCATION



EMERGENCY SERVICES

EXPERTISE

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- ▶ Tait Portable Radios
- ▶ Rugged, Transportable Chargers
- ▶ Rugged, Transportable Repeaters
- ▶ Custom Software Integrations



Tait also supplied a customized rugged portable repeater, to create radio coverage wherever it was needed. Because search and rescue workers often traverse terrain on foot, this repeater was designed to be light enough to be carried comfortably by hand, while still being powerful enough to provide the required radio coverage.

OUTCOMES

Thanks to the custom solutions designed by Tait engineers, LandSAR is able to communicate with a wide group of cooperating organizations during search operations. The challenges created by remote terrain, long shifts, and inter-agency cooperation are mitigated by transportable chargers, repeaters, and integration with SAR Track.

Tait and LandSAR New Zealand have an ongoing strong partnership which provides many benefits, including ready access to highly experienced engineers. Tait products are designed to be highly flexible, to meet the needs of individual clients. This relationship helps ensure the safety of volunteers while they search for the lost, missing and injured.

The suitability of the Tait rapidly deployable solution was proven yet again through the LandSAR response to the Christchurch Earthquake known as 'Operation West'. LandSAR provided a crucial reconnaissance and reassurance service to the public as well as situational awareness to the Emergency Management team.

LandSAR CEO, Harry Maher, says (2014), "Our volunteers are highly skilled and often tackle some of the country's toughest terrain in extreme conditions. Our Tait radios result in more efficient and effective communication between the search teams and the Incident Control Point. Messages can be relayed more quickly and there's less chance of messages not getting through and this can improve the chances of finding the lost, injured or missing. Good radio communications are the backbone of any search operation and we need the radio equipment to be of the best quality.

"Additionally the safety of our volunteers when they're out in the field is a top priority for LandSAR. Having good radio communications is an integral part of our safety management system and the support of Tait Communications greatly assists us to keep our volunteers safe," Mr Maher concludes.

Mr Maher says Tait radios are recognized around the world by emergency services as being among the best and having them as standard issue for LandSAR is a major step up for the organization.

"Ultimately, this partnership will benefit all New Zealanders because our ability to communicate across difficult terrain will be better, we'll be able to narrow our search area and locate the lost, missing and injured more swiftly," Mr Maher says.

LandSAR has increased safe operations, enabled by effective communication solutions, customized by Tait to suit LandSAR's remote area operations.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- ▶ Increased safety with more volunteers armed with portable communications
- ▶ Rugged portable communications for use in harsh environments
- ▶ Greater reliability with on-site battery-charging solutions
- ▶ Increased area of operations with transportable repeater
- ▶ More effective response with inter-agency cooperation

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Field communications is critical to safe operations in this type of environment... It really is a complex and critical function of a search. If we don't have communications, we're not going to be successful." -

Matt Ellingham,
*Equipment and Technology
Support Officer, LandSAR*