



South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association (SEMRA).

Press Statement re Coast Guard Helicopter PQQ 21/01/22

The Statement

South Eastern Mountain Rescue Association has received a number of calls from journalists seeking comment regarding an ongoing procurement process for Irish Coast Guard search and rescue helicopter service and subsequent speculation that the search and helicopter service could be cut or relocated from the southeast region. SEMRA do not wish to comment on the specifics of an ongoing tender process. We are proud to work alongside our emergency service partners in the Irish Coast Guard and Helicopter Crews. There is no doubt that the exceptional levels of cooperation and collaboration that exist has saved lives. A key factor in the success of many of our operations in the mountains has been the availability and quick response time of the search and rescue helicopter. A loss of this service to the south east region would be detrimental to search and rescue operations in the region which includes the Galtee, Knockmealdown, Comeragh, Slieve Bloom and Blackstairs Mountains.

Who are we?

SEMRA is a volunteer search and rescue team comprising of approximately 57 members. The team is based in the major population centres of the South East of Ireland, including Carlow, Clonmel, Dungarvan, Kilkenny, Tipperary and Waterford. The team has a base in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary which is central to the geographical response area which covers the Galtee, Comeragh, Knockmealdown, Ballyhoura, Slievenamon, Slieve Bloom, Nagle and Blackstairs Mountains.

What we do?

SEMRA respond to requests for emergency assistance in the mountains and hills of the southeast region of Ireland 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We work with our emergency partners from national agencies including An Garda Síochána, the National Ambulance Service, Search & Rescue Dogs Association (SARDA), the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG), Civil Defence and the Air Corps to provide expertise in the area of remote search and rescue to locate and rescue those that have been lost and injured on our hills and mountains

The team typically responds to 30 to 40 call outs per year. In 2021 the team responded to 51 call outs, our highest annual number since SEMRA established in 1979. Call outs usually last several hours from the time the call is received from An Garda Síochána to the team members reaching home afterwards. Searches for missing persons can often carry on through the night and into the next day and in some cases

into several days. SEMRA team member skills include first aid, stretcher evacuation, steep ground traverse, heights rescue, off road driving, search planning, communications, logistics, and working with the Coast Guard helicopters.

For further information contact semrapro@gmail.com