



PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025



**ROYAL CANADIAN MARINE
SEARCH & RESCUE**
Saving Lives on the Water

WE'RE THE CHARITY THAT SAVES LIVES ON THE WATER.

Every rescue is a human story, of someone in trouble, and someone willing to help. Our volunteers leave their families, their work, and their routines to answer the call, knowing that every mission could save a life. This report reflects the heart of RCMSAR: people helping people, on the water and in the communities we serve.

THAT'S WHY WE EXIST.

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Over the past year, Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue pursued exciting opportunities to address the evolving challenges of search and rescue. The course ahead has been charted through a dynamic three-year strategic plan focused on our people, ensuring financial and environmental sustainability, and anticipating future needs. We developed a robust risk mitigation process to minimize risks to our volunteers. We continued to prioritize relationships with crucial partners, such as the Canadian Coast Guard, the Province of BC, and our fellow Coast Guard Auxiliaries.

Last year, RCMSAR volunteers responded to over 450 missions, rescuing hundreds of boaters, often in extreme conditions. We continued to expand our impact through marine-related environmental reporting for the Canadian Coast Guard, supporting the Province of BC and emergency response agencies, and participating in community events. RCMSAR volunteers have dedicated over 70,000 hours to support these activities.

Significant progress has been achieved on many initiatives. The introduction of technology and hybrid training has led to a more volunteer-centric program, allowing for a better balance of our members' life priorities. Our critical incident stress management program has matured and is now providing crucial support to our volunteers. We continued to move forward on improving the organization's efficiency in areas such as finance and human resource management.



Michael Ervin
Board Chair



Bill Riggs
Chief Executive Officer

RCMSAR's objectives for the coming year will build on the progress made so far. We will finalize our project on volunteer recruitment, engagement and retention, which is crucial for meeting future crewing needs. Our training support for our volunteers will continue to evolve. RCMSAR will remain focused on improving our financial sustainability to ensure required resources are available moving forward. New initiatives will be pursued to prepare for the impacts of climate change. Finally, we will work aggressively to increase the public's awareness of the exceptional contributions our volunteers make.

RCMSAR would not be able to execute its mission of "Saving Lives on the Water" without the tremendous support of our partners, including our corporate supporters. Equally crucial to our success is the fantastic support our stations and societies receive from their communities.

Our volunteers take immense pride in their role in keeping our waters safe. Their dedication and professionalism are evident in their willingness to immediately respond to calls for help and in their acceptance of the risks associated with challenging circumstances.

Together, we are "saving lives on the water."

Michael Ervin
Board Chair

Bill Riggs
Chief Executive Officer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As of Sep 2025

Michael Ervin, Board Chair
Chris Badger, Vice Chair
Rona Tepper, Secretary
Cyrus Ameli
Tim Ayres
Linda Blake
Cindy Dopson

Bruce Hayne
Dr. Nelson Jatel, DSoSc, Pag
Peter Kvarnstrom
Catherine Lau
Jane London
Hans Verbeek

RCMSAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2026

Excellence in community-based marine safety
SAVING LIVES ON THE WATER

Strategic Focus Areas

Awareness

Branding & Marketing
Relationships

Sustainability

Financial
Environmental

One Crew Culture

Training
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Recruitment & Retention

Our Values

Safety

Trust

Teamwork

RCMSAR VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

Behind Every Number is a Story

Last year, more than 950 volunteers gave their time and energy to make sure people came home safely after spending time on the water. They responded to distress calls, invested their time in on-water and classroom training, shared boating safety tips at community events, and even helped with local fundraisers. Each hour they gave was driven by the same goal: saving lives on the water.

31

Stations

From large cities like **Victoria** and **West Vancouver**, to small communities like **Masset** and **Deep Bay**, all are supported by volunteers willing to set aside family, work, or sleep the moment the pager sounds.

950 +

Volunteers

Like **Ceara**, a mother of two and high school teacher by day. In her nine years as a volunteer, she's been on 56 missions, participated in 214 training exercises, logging over 560 hours of sea time.

457

Missions conducted

More than one every day. Like the call just after midnight about a person in the water who could not get back on their sailboat, or the call about two kayakers who hadn't arrived home.

People who are alive because RCMSAR volunteers were there

74

Like **Greg** and his 12-year-old son **Gordon**, whose boat capsized near Crescent Beach. They endured an hour in the cold November water before volunteers found them.

People brought home to safety

291

Like the two young men who took refuge on a small island one evening after their engine failed. The Oak Bay crew guided the men back into their boat, and towed them home to safety.

Hours invested in training

9,250

Hours that prepare volunteers like **Rob**, whose recent **navigation training** enabled his crew to quickly reach a vessel in distress during **heavy fog**.

Number of calls in distress or danger

80 %

Emergencies where volunteers rely on their training to **stay calm**, **make quick decisions**, and bring people safely home.

Minutes

17.5

That's the average time it takes for volunteers to drop what they're doing, assemble at the station, put on their gear, inspect the boat, complete their safety briefing and risk assessment, all **before leaving the dock**.

RESCUE STATIONS

Northern Region

- Lax Kw'alaams – Station 65
- Prince Rupert – Station 64
- Masset – Station 45
- Kitimat – Station 63
- Hartley Bay – Station 70

Southern Region

- Shuswap – Station 106
- Squamish – Station 4
- Pender Harbour – Station 61
- Halfmoon Bay – Station 12
- Gibsons – Station 14
- North Vancouver – Station 2
- West Vancouver – Station 1
- Vancouver SAR Prevention – Station 103
- Richmond – Station 10
- Crescent Beach – Station 5
- Delta – Station 8

Central Region

- Port Alice – Station 43
- Comox – Station 60
- Deep Bay – Station 59
- Nanaimo – Station 27
- Port Alberni – Station 39
- Ladysmith – Station 29
- Ucluelet – Station 38
- Salt Spring Island – Station 25
- Cowichan Bay – Station 34
- Pender Island – Station 20
- Sidney – Station 36
- Brentwood Bay – Station 31
- Oak Bay – Station 33
- Victoria – Station 35
- Sooke – Station 37



CENTRAL REGION

Notable Mission: Cowichan Bay Crew Rescues Man Clinging to Piling

When the pager went off one day last November, volunteer crew members from Cowichan Bay Station 34 responded immediately. A skiff had capsized in Cowichan Bay, and someone was in the water.

As they headed west toward Hecate Park, they received new information from the Cowichan Bay Fire Department that a vessel had been spotted near a tanker anchored across the bay.

They adjusted course and found the overturned skiff almost immediately. But there was no sign of its occupant.

Scanning the area, they spotted something near the shoreline. There was a man, still in the water, clinging to a steel piling. He had a lifejacket on one arm and was struggling to hang on.

The crew deployed their boarding ladder and brought him aboard. He was conscious, but exhausted and cold, and desperately needed medical help.

They took him straight to Hatch Point, where an ambulance crew was waiting. Once he was safely transferred to paramedics, the crew returned to retrieve the skiff.

If he had been in the water much longer, or if our crew hadn't located him as quickly as they did, the outcome could have been very different.

This mission was one of three recognized by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre for an outstanding operation during the 2024-25 fiscal year.



CENTRAL REGION CONT'D

Notable Mission: Comox Crew Tows Disabled Dive Vessel in Rough Seas

It was a sunny August afternoon, but the wind was up and the sea was rough when Station 60 Comox was paged just after 4:30 p.m.

A 26-foot commercial diving vessel had experienced a mechanical failure and was taking on water near Denman Island in the Strait of Georgia. The coxswain briefed the crew, outlining the safest route through the conditions ahead. With buddy checks complete, they left the dock.

About 500 meters from the last known location, they picked up the vessel on radar. It was anchored and still taking on water over the stern. Fortunately, the two-person crew, geoduck divers, were experienced and had been using onboard pumps to keep the vessel stable.

After assessing the situation and switching to a shared working channel, the crews agreed on a plan. The pumps were holding, and the divers were confident they could remain afloat, so a long tow was set up to bring the vessel safely back to Comox.

In five-foot swells, the crew had to approach carefully, securing the tow line while avoiding the anchor. With nearly the full length of tow rope deployed, both vessels handled the conditions well. Speed was kept to 3–4 knots, with crew rotating through each position to stay fresh and gain experience.

As they neared Goose Spit, the plan was to shift to a side tow, but the dive vessel’s crew was able to restart their engines on their own. The rough water had likely stirred up sediment, clogging the fuel filters. In calmer conditions, they removed and cleaned the filters, and though the engines didn’t run smoothly, they held long enough to complete the last stretch under their own power.

Our crew arrived back at home base at 7:45 p.m., and prepared the vessel for the next tasking.

This mission was one of three recognized by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre for an outstanding operation during the 2024-25 fiscal year.



NORTHERN REGION

Notable Mission: Hartley Bay Crew Responds to Grounding

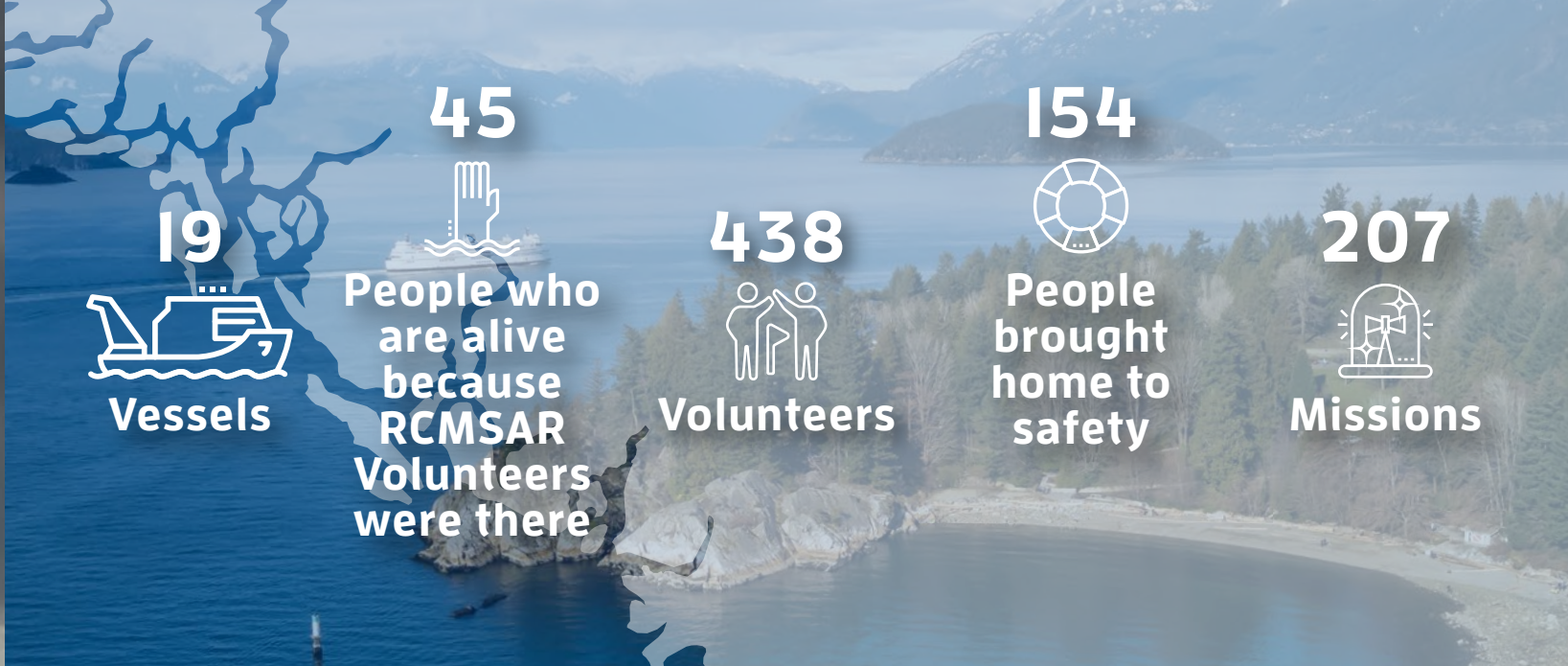
When the Hartley Bay Station 70 crew was dispatched to a possible boating accident near Hinton Island, they quickly located a fishing charter listing to one side with a large hole in the portside bow. On board were three men, shaken from the impact of running aground at cruising speed.

Two had escaped injury, but their captain wasn't as fortunate. He had struck his head on the GPS, leaving a deep cut, possible glass embedded in his forehead, and was showing signs of disorientation. One of our volunteers climbed aboard to check him over, then helped him aboard the rescue boat.

Within 20 minutes they were back in Hartley Bay, where a nurse took over. Less than an hour after the grounding, the captain was receiving the medical care he needed, all because trained volunteers were there to respond.

After treatment, our crew helped him back to his vessel, as he was too weak to walk on his own. With the boat's bow damaged, the crew made the decision to continue to Kitimat using their kicker motor, all seated on the stern starboard side to keep the hole above the waterline.

This mission is a reminder of the difference our volunteers make every day, bringing skill, care, and calm when people need them most.



SOUTHERN REGION

Notable Mission: West Vancouver Crew Rescues Zodiac Adrift in Storm

It was just after 9:00 p.m. on a stormy November night—wind, rain, and rough seas—when the pagers went off. A person in a small Zodiac was reported adrift between Gambier and Anvil Islands.

Four on-call volunteer crew members from Station 1 West Vancouver headed straight to the boathouse at Horseshoe Bay.

They got underway quickly, confirmed the coordinates, and managed to reach the person by phone. He could see their vessel, but they couldn’t spot him on radar.

They slowed down and scanned the area with searchlights. Still nothing. Then, in the distance, they could see a faint light: the glow of a cellphone, held up in the dark.

When they reached him, he was cold, wet, and not wearing a lifejacket. He had been out in poor conditions for more than three hours. The crew brought him aboard, wrapped him in wool blankets and a warming burrito, and helped him lie down on the bench.

He was shaking uncontrollably, and was starting to lose consciousness.

They secured the Zodiac to the swim grid and made their way to Long Bay. As they travelled, the man gradually began to warm up and regain awareness.

When they arrived, his father was waiting on the dock. Cold, tired, and deeply relieved, he was helped ashore.

His boat had no safety gear. No light, no paddle, no bailer, and his phone died shortly after he was found. If he had stayed out any longer, the outcome would likely have been vastly different.

After returning to base at 12:45 a.m., the crew debriefed, reset the vessel, and finally headed for home at 1:30 in the morning.

This mission was one of three recognized by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre for an outstanding operation during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

IN APPRECIATION OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

Every name on this list belongs to someone who showed up again and again for their crew, their community, and for people they may never meet again. While these volunteers are being recognized this year, the spirit they bring lives in every volunteer. They remind us of the deep commitment shared by all RCMSAR volunteers. We're proud to honour this year's recipients of RCMSAR and Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Awards.

CCGA Administrative Excellence Medal

Marek Zhanel, Station 2 North Vancouver

CCGA Exemplary Service Medal

John Johnston, RCMSAR Headquarters
Rob Sutherland, Station 106 Shuswap

CCGA Humanitarian Services Medal

Jack Magnus, Station 10 Richmond

CCGA Leadership Medal

Ford Smith, Station 2 North Vancouver
Aaron Harnden, Station 10 Richmond
Ken Squirrel, Station 25 Salt Spring Island
John Harper, Station 31 Brentwood Bay
Doug Pearce, Station 106 Shuswap

CCGA Long Service Medal

20 Years of Service

Brian Crompt, Station 29 Ladysmith
William Parsons, Station 14 Gibsons

30 Years of Service

Darwin Brooks, Station 65 Lax Kw'alaams

RCMSAR CEO Commendation

Noah Argao, Station 10 Richmond
Michael Desjarlais, Station 31 Brentwood Bay
Rob Frost, Station 1 West Vancouver
Pat Gau, Station 106 Shuswap
Kristen Gribble, Station 5 Crescent Beach
Kevin Jamieson, Station 29 Ladysmith
Victoria Kalyniuk, Station 31 Brentwood Bay
Dan Messenger, Station 60 Comox

Board of Directors Life Member Award

Per Svendsen, Station 25 Salt Spring Island
Ian Arklie, posthumously, Station 39 Port Alberni

CCGA Operational Merit Award

Station 10 Richmond

Reported Bridge Jumper
March 5, 2024

**Joint Rescue Coordination Centre
Outstanding Operations**

Station 60 Comox

Polaris taking on water
August 27, 2024

Station 1 West Vancouver

Zodiac adrift in cold, wet, heavy conditions
November 12, 2024

Station 34 Cowichan Bay

Capsized vessel; man in the water
November 23, 2024

**Lieutenant Governor's Award for Maritime
Achievement**

RCMSAR is honoured to receive the 2025 Lieutenant Governor's Award for Maritime Achievement, recognizing our accomplishments and contributions to BC's maritime industries, culture, and heritage.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS



**Sue Wisely, Volunteer
of the Year**

As station leader at Station 29 Ladysmith, Sue brings strong leadership, compassion, and commitment to everything she does. A member for seven years, she has played a vital role in shaping the station's success in recruitment, training, emergency response, and community outreach.

She's often the one to get things moving, whether it's joint training with other agencies, a community safety event, or encouraging young women to step into roles in marine search and rescue. Her willingness to mentor every new member, track their progress and guide them along the way, ensures no one is left to figure things out alone.

Sue's influence isn't just seen in what the team does, but in who they've become.

John Davis, Supporting Member of the Year

After joining Station 29 Ladysmith in 2014, John quickly became a valued part of the crew. In 2019, he transitioned into a supporting role, continuing to contribute behind the scenes. His dedication was recognized in 2020 with a CCGA Administrative Excellence Medal.

John continues to support the station through administration, fundraising and communications. He maintains the station's online calendar, helps coordinate physical assessments, and supports training by developing classroom materials and mentoring members at every level. John's leadership, reliability, and generosity strengthen every part of the station's operations.

Sieneke Toering, New Member of the Year

In just two years with Station 2 North Vancouver, Sieneke has quickly become a standout volunteer, dedicated, positive, and deeply engaged. Her enthusiasm and commitment to both training and station life have made a lasting impression.

As Liaison Officer with North Shore Rescue, she has built stronger ties with this important partner, coordinating joint sessions and improving interagency training and collaboration.

Whether it's training, meetings, or public events, Sieneke shows up, pitches in, and champions the mission with enthusiasm. Her presence has already made the station stronger, proving that the impact of a volunteer isn't measured by years served, but by the difference they make.





SAVING LIVES STARTS HERE – WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Building a stronger, more inclusive volunteer program, so we're ready when we're needed most.

When someone needs help on the water, our volunteers are the ones who respond. But before any rescue can happen, there's another kind of work taking place behind the scenes—making sure our volunteers have the support, tools, and community they need to thrive.

That's why, with support from Public Safety Canada, we launched a project last year focused on one of the most vital parts of our organization: the people who make marine search and rescue possible. More than 950 volunteers serve our 31 stations. They're neighbours,

co-workers, and friends who are prepared to step away from their daily lives to answer the call for help. Our job is to make sure they have every reason to join us—and every reason to stay.

Six of our stations are now piloting new resources created through this initiative. These include a recruitment guide, updated application forms, and outreach materials designed to make it easier for new people to get involved. But the heart of this work goes deeper than new tools. It's about listening closely to what works in each community, addressing the things that might keep someone from volunteering, and ensuring that those who already serve feel valued and supported.

By learning from our volunteers and sharing knowledge across stations, we're building a program that is not only strong and inclusive, but also adaptable for the future. This is how we ensure the next generation of search and rescue volunteers is ready—so that when someone on the water needs help, we'll always be there.

RAISING THE BAR ON RESCUE TRAINING

We've made big strides in the Training Department this year, with changes that are already shaping the way our volunteers learn and prepare for missions. Our shift to blended learning, combining online self-study with in-person training, has been met with enthusiastic feedback from students. Testing new Learning Management Systems has shown that interactive online modules can sharpen skills, increase flexibility, and give volunteers more control over their learning. It also frees up station leadership from some administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on mentorship and operational readiness.

The most exciting leap forward has been upgrading to our new Kongsberg Fast Craft Simulator. This is the same advanced technology used by the Royal Canadian Navy, BC Ferries, and the Pacific Coast Pilotage Authority. Stepping inside, volunteers find themselves immersed in a high-fidelity environment that mirrors the challenges of real-world rescues. With integrated Axiom Pro displays, they're not only honing their navigation and boat-handling skills, but also building the "buttonology" and muscle memory that can make all the difference in a high-pressure situation.

"Our new simulator lets volunteers safely practice tough rescue scenarios and build the confidence to handle whatever comes their way."

Simulators are game-changing tools for training, offering two huge advantages. First, they let us deliver exactly the training each volunteer needs, right when they need it. With full control over weather, sea state, and surrounding traffic, instructors can create everything from routine navigation exercises to intense collision-avoidance scenarios, all within minutes.

Second, simulators allow us to put students into situations we'd never attempt in real life because the risks would be too high. In the safety of the simulator, vessels can face sudden squalls, mechanical failures, or congested channels, sometimes all in the same session. We can run multiple complex scenarios in a single day, giving volunteers more exposure to challenging situations than they might encounter in years on the water.

By tailoring each experience and pushing crews to handle high-risk situations, we're building the confidence, decision-making skills, and muscle memory that will prepare our volunteers for whatever comes their way during a real rescue.

CANADIAN COAST GUARD AUXILIARY OPERATIONAL MERIT AWARD

When Every Second Matters

It was just after 8 p.m. when our Richmond crew got the call: a person had been seen climbing the Pattullo Bridge, which spans the Fraser River between New Westminster and Surrey. No one knew exactly what had happened, but there was a chance someone was in the water. The crew responded almost immediately.

Thirty-five minutes later, they arrived in the area and connected with a New Westminster Police boat already on scene. Then came confirmation: someone was in the river. The police had spotted the person and needed help getting them out of the water.

Our volunteers pulled the person from the water and immediately began CPR. While the coxswain coordinated with emergency services to arrange a meeting point on shore, four volunteers took turns performing chest compressions. It was a coordinated effort, carried out in a confined space, in motion, under pressure.

When they reached the dock at New Westminster Quay, paramedics were still en route. The crew continued CPR for nearly half an hour until emergency responders arrived and took over. Soon after, the person was declared deceased.

The crew stayed at the scene to support the hand-off and talk with the RCMP. It was late when they finally returned to base, cleaned the vessel, and sat together for a debrief. The work they had just done—the effort, the care, the urgency—was still fresh. They had done everything they could.

Most missions end with a rescue. Others remind us that showing up, doing the hard work, and holding space for someone's final moments is a different kind of service. One that requires skill, yes, but also deep humanity.

The crew members on this mission were awarded Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Medals of Operational Merit for their outstanding professionalism, superior skill, and compassion in the recovery of a person in crisis, carried out in a manner that reflects the highest standards of RCMSAR.



CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (CISM)

Supporting the People Behind the Rescues

RCMSAR volunteers respond to all kinds of emergencies. Most end well. Others are far more difficult. Over the past year, more than a few of our crews have responded to tragic outcomes. These situations can weigh heavily on even the most experienced volunteers.

That's why we've made it a priority to support the people behind the rescue. Our Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program, launched just over a year ago, gives volunteers the opportunity to talk through challenging missions with trained peer supporters who understand because they've been there themselves.

Since its launch, the program has supported RCMSAR members through numerous support sessions, and has extended that same care to BC's ground search and rescue community with an equal number of requests for help.

These sessions aren't dramatic or formal. Sometimes it's a quiet conversation. Other times, it's a team debrief or a peer-led response after a particularly difficult mission. But each one plays a part in building a stronger, more connected organization where volunteers know they're not alone.

As the CISM program continues to grow, it's also creating opportunities for more volunteers to be trained as peer supporters, further embedding care and connection into RCMSAR's culture.

Because taking care of others is what we do, and that includes taking care of our own.





FINANCIAL INFORMATION

These highlights are from RCMSAR's audited financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2025. They reflect the funding we receive and how it's allocated to support our volunteers, programs, and operations at headquarters.

However, the full picture is bigger than this. These numbers represent only the financial activity of headquarters. They don't include the funding needs of our 31 rescue stations, where hundreds of volunteers train, maintain vessels, and respond to emergencies in their communities.

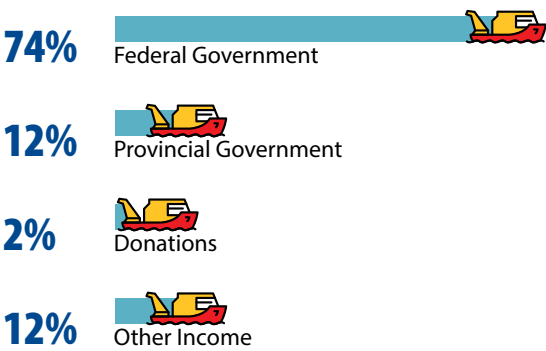
Lives saved: our greatest return on investment

The numbers that truly measure our success are not found in financial statements. They are the lives saved, the people given a helping hand, and the committed volunteers who dedicate themselves to marine search and rescue.

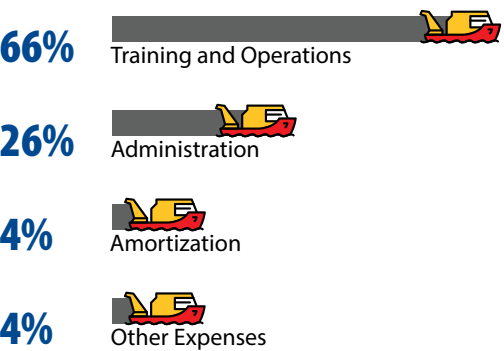
Thanks to federal and provincial support, we're able to cover the costs of missions, and some of the training costs. But that funding doesn't stretch far enough. To keep RCMSAR mission-ready, we must also fundraise, both at the station level and here at headquarters, for essential equipment, advanced training, and capital needs.

It's a shared responsibility, and a shared commitment, that keeps RCMSAR operational and ready to respond. Every dollar helps ensure our volunteers are ready when the call for help comes. The full audited financial statements are on our [website](#).

Revenue \$2,539,992



Expenses \$2,585,113



JOIN OUR CREW OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering with RCMSAR means learning skills you never thought you'd need, meeting people you'll never forget, and having stories worth telling.

Whether you're on the water or helping from shore, you'll play an important role in keeping people safe on the water. It's a rewarding way to give back to your community and be part of a team that makes a real difference.

[Contact your local RCMSAR Rescue Station](#) for information.

YOUR SUPPORT SAVES LIVES

Behind every call for help are trained volunteers who give their time and skills to help others. They are your friends, your family, your neighbours, and your colleagues. Ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Your donation gives them the boats, equipment, and extensive training they need to respond to distress calls, and to bring people safely home.

[Click here to make your donation today.](#)



**ROYAL CANADIAN MARINE
SEARCH & RESCUE**
Saving Lives on the Water

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