

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In light of the evidence that current maritime coordination could be made more effective if the Search and Rescue model was more broadly employed.

XVI The Committee recommends that the government establish emergency operations centres for all three coasts and the Great Lakes on the model of the Rescue Coordination Centres. The emergency centres should include representatives from all departments operating ships and aircraft on Canada's coasts and the Great Lakes. They should have the authority to direct departmental resources to respond as necessary to emergency situations or requests for assistance.

The Committee also believes that a much larger realignment of government maritime activity may be beneficial given the maritime challenges Canada is likely to face in the future. However, an extensive audit and canvas of alternatives to identify the best solutions is necessary. Therefore, notwithstanding the results of previous studies:

XVII The Committee recommends that the government appoint an independent panel of experts to study federal government activities in Canada's maritime jurisdictions. The panel must be given access to all relevant departments and departmental information, as well as to previous evaluations and program effectiveness studies of governmental maritime activities. The mandate of the study must be clearly and publicly defined, and should include, at least, evaluations of:

- governmental divisions of responsibility with a view to rationalization;
- coordination among government departments and, where relevant, between government and the private sector with a view to clarifying and rationalizing linkages;
- government air and vessel fleet equipment and operations with a view to reducing inefficiencies;
- possible integrated command and control structures with a view to exercising optimum use of resources and ensuring a more rapid response;
- the costs and benefits of reorganizing governmental maritime activities; and
- mechanisms to implement the conclusions and recommendations of the study.