

Guyana's First Search & Rescue Rear Crew for Omni Helicopters Guyana Inc. Are Selected and Begin Training

GEORGETOWN, GUYANA, 16th OF JANUARY 2024: Omni Helicopters officially selected six Guyanese nationals to become Search & Rescue (SAR) Rear Crew with additional aviation security roles. The team have commenced training with the primary role as Rear Crew to work as part of the team supporting the SAR Helicopter responding to emergency situations that may result in saving lives and delivering critical support to unplanned events to persons in distress or imminent danger.

The recruitment and selection process took place over several months with advertisements in the local media outlining the role and skills required. **Curt Mendonca, Somant Heeralall, Daniel Yorris, Ishwar Parbhu, Kevin Sawh, and Johnelle Ogle** (first female) were successful and selected to be members of Guyana's first ever civilian helicopter Search & Rescue team.



From Left to Right: Left Ishwar Parbhu, Daniel Yorris, Johnelle Ogle, Kevin Sawh, Somant Heeralall, Curt Mendonca

The crew will be trained to operate as Rescue Swimmers initially and in the future, as Winch Operators, becoming an integral part of the SAR Helicopter team. Their training will teach them to act as an observer during SAR missions and when needed, support missions to safely rescue persons or casualties from vessels, offshore installations, water, or challenging jungle terrain.

Duncan Moore, CEO of Offshore and Onshore International at Omni Helicopters International, responsible for the group's operation in Guyana said "We are proud to be able to support national talent and to help develop the aviation sector in Guyana. Supporting our communities is

something we take seriously and is part of the Omni Way. We are very confident of these new members' ability to develop into a world-class SAR Rear Crew team."

The recruitment process had multiple stages. The first assessed character and physical capabilities alongside technical proficiency to operate helicopter equipment. The shortlisted candidates were then invited to attend a presentation for a detailed explanation of the role, including video footage of training and missions, along with a tour of the SAR aircraft. The third stage involved water skills and capability tests at the 3t EnerMech Offshore Training Centre in Georgetown which included the Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) all whilst being observed for adequate communication skills. Candidates then observed actual SAR crew training during an offshore flight as a final assessment to ensure comfort in the helicopter with open doors and ongoing tasks.

Initial training has already begun with the secondary role of supporting Aviation Security and gaining familiarity around Omni Helicopters International's operation based at Ogle Airport. Candidates participate daily in swim training to build confidence and stamina at the Guyana National Aquatic Centre in preparation for SAR training.

The SAR Rear Crew training program commences in earnest this month with a trip to a dedicated Offshore Training Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada before returning to Guyana and continuing on-the-job training.

It is expected that Guyana's first SAR Rear Crew will be fully operational by mid-2024. We look forward to this great milestone in Guyana's aviation heritage.

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