

Douglas County Search and Rescue

Official Policies

Revised April 28, 2011

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Authority

The following policies are established under the authority of Article XI of the By-Laws. Policies may be established or amended at any regular Search and Rescue (SAR) meeting by a two-thirds vote of the membership.

1. Administration

- 1.1 Administration of the business affairs of SAR will be conducted by the President, Vice-President, and the Board of Directors of SAR.
- 1.2 Operations Leaders will conduct the administration of the duties of SAR during operational situations. This will be done with the assistance of the Board of Directors of SAR. (See Attachment 5)
- 1.3 A chain of command has been established within the Sheriff's Department and SAR (Attachment 1). This chain of command has been established to provide effective communications between members of SAR and the Sheriff. This chain of command will be followed by all persons involved in SAR. Only in rare instances will this chain of command be broken.

2. Conduct

- 2.1 Rescue members and trainees shall conduct themselves in a manner that would be expected of a professional rescue unit.
- 2.2 There will be no illegal activity at any time. Illegal drugs are specifically prohibited, both their use and possession.
- 2.3 There shall be no consumption of alcoholic beverages during a SAR operation, or while in a SAR uniform. No member will participate in a SAR operation, training, or meeting while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- 2.4 Each member shall be dedicated to the protection of public and private lands, and the conservation of natural resources. There should be no unauthorized trespass of lands, or destruction of abuse of public or private land or facilities.

2.5 SAR Conduct Policy

You are a representative of the Sheriff's Department. Always act in a professional manner.

A. Treat all people in a courteous manner, even if you disagree with their viewpoint.

1. This applies to:
 - a) SAR personnel
 - b) Sheriff's Department personnel

- c) the general public
 - 2. Use voice tones that are positive, rather than derogatory. (Many times a comment made as a question will be less threatening than a statement.)
 - 3. Offer (not force) suggestions to another member who may be less experienced than you on a particular subject if they are having difficulty.
 - 4. Listen to the comments and suggestions others have to make.
- B. Conduct all operations in a safe manner: **Safety is first!**
- C. Operate vehicles in a safe manner for the conditions, on or off the roadway.
- 1. Operate at a speed whereby you can avoid other vehicles or people.
 - 2. Operate at a safe distance.
 - 3. Obey all traffic laws: we do not have the authority to break the laws.
 - 4. If while operating a Search and Rescue vehicle (or personal vehicle during a mission or assignment), there happens to be an accident, however minor, it needs to be reported immediately to the Operations Leader (OL) or Team Leader (TL). The president and liaison need to be informed by the OL and an accident report filled out.
- D. Operation and Team Leaders
- 1. Treat all members with courtesy and respect.
 - 2. In addition to gathering information, pass information down to the members.
 - 3. Advise incoming resources of the status when the situation changes.
 - 4. Remember: you are not above the others, just in charge at this time.
- E. Members
- 1. Do as instructed unless it is unsafe, then advise the OL immediately.
 - 2. Offer suggestions to the OL if the situation warrants.
 - 3. In an operation, the final word rests with the Operation Leader.
 - 4. While on missions or SAR-related activities, conduct yourself in a professional manner. You represent the entire Search and Rescue Team; your actions (and perceived actions) reflect on all of the Team.
- F. Debriefings and Critiques
- 1. Debriefings and critiques will be conducted separately, unless unanimously agreed upon.
 - 2. Debriefings should relay information pertaining to the mission only, i.e., what happened in the command post, in the field, where the subject was found, their condition, etc.
 - 3. Critiques should relay what went good, bad, or OK. Along with that, suggestions on how to make it go better in the future. Each member that

participated should have their uninterrupted turn during the critique to expand on their view of the mission.

4. Both of these sessions should be conducted in a depersonalized way so as not to embarrass or shame anyone on the team. Debrief and critique actions, not people.

2.6 Disciplinary Actions

- A. Complaints against members regarding violation of SAR policies will result in a disciplinary hearing before the SAR Board of Directors. The Board may take such actions as it deems necessary or appropriate.
- B. Violation of SAR policy is grounds for membership probation, suspension, or termination of the offending party. When on probation, a member of DCSAR is not permitted to perform any leadership duties that they would normally be entitled to perform per their current position in DCSAR (e.g., Operations or Team Leader).
- C. Terminations procedures must be in accordance with SAR By-Laws, Article VII, Section 7.

3. Dues

- 3.1 Dues are not required from SAR members.

4. Equipment

- 4.1 All members should own, if the unit does not issue, the equipment recommended on the Personal Equipment List (attachment 2). This equipment should be carried on all trainings as well as SAR operations.
- 4.2 Rescue members may be issued the safety equipment listed on Attachment 3. This equipment is to be maintained by the member to whom it is issued. This same member is accountable for the loss and/or destruction of the issued equipment.
- 4.3 Rescue packs, containing the necessary personal equipment, shall accompany a member any time he/she uses a SAR vehicle.
- 4.4 Upon notification by an officer of a member's removal from the Operations Roster, the member shall return the Unit's equipment issued to him/her within one (1) week. Upon reinstatement to the Operations Roster, the member may be issued Unit equipment.

5. Finances (revised 4/21/05)

- 5.1 The SAR Board of Directors shall approve, by majority vote, all expenditures of funds from accounts in the name of SAR, prior to obligation.

Exception 1: In an emergency, the President (or, in his absence, the Vice President or an Operations Leader while in charge of an ongoing operation), may obligate to expend funds without the prior approval of the Board of Directors. However, the President, Vice President, or Operations Leader shall report the circumstances and the expense to the Board of Directors at the next Board Meeting.

Exception 2: Fund for the Training, Administration, Logistics, and Operations Committees.

- (a) Each of the (4) fund shall be managed by an appointed member of the Board of Directors.
- (b) No fund expenditures shall exceed \$150.00 in a period between monthly Board Meetings.
- (c) Receipts are required for all expenditures.
- (d) The Treasurer at the Board Meetings shall, by check reimburse (per receipts) the Directors of the four funds for monies expended since the last Board Meeting.
- (e) Funds will only be replenished at each Board of Directors meeting, by majority vote, in amounts the Directors feel will not jeopardize or compromise the fiscal responsibilities of the Directors and SAR finances.

5.2 (Deleted 4/24/05)

5.3 An annual budget shall be prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the Board of Directors.

5.4 (Deleted 4/24/05)

5.5 Approved budgets may be amended at any Board meeting by a majority vote of the Directors present.

5.6 All contracts must be approved by the Board of Directors and the Sheriff's Department.

6. Firearms

6.1 Firearms will not be carried on your person or in a SAR vehicle.

7. Law Enforcement

7.1 If it becomes necessary to exercise police authority to aid in the success of a mission, it shall be done by sworn personnel.

8. Operations

- 8.1 Operations of SAR during operational situations will be coordinated through the designated Operations Leader (OL). Operations Leaders will act as the Incident Commander of assigned overhead teams in any given situation. Operations Leaders should be specifically trained members of SAR that have been successfully accepted and trained in the operations of SAR emergencies.
- 8.2 Field operations of SAR during emergency operations will be supervised by Team Leaders. Team Leaders will receive direction from the Operations Leader or his/her overhead team. Team Leaders will have the authority and responsibility of directions and control of hi/her assigned SAR team or teams. Team Leaders should be specially trained in the supervision of SAR personnel in emergency situations.
- 8.3 SAR personnel should work no more than 12 hours continuously in any given 24-hour period. This is for the safety of the personnel as well as those persons around them. In all situations the Operations Leader will consider shift coverage during the course of the mission. At no time should an operations Leader require personnel to continue past the shift assigned to them.
- 8.4 The Board of Directors of SAR will provide any assistance needed to the Operations Leader during an emergency situation.
- 8.5 An Operation Leader should conduct a critique of an operation or training as soon as possible/practical after the operation or training. The critique should include all pertinent personnel, SAR and others. the critique should be held at the operation site or the Sheriff's Training Room, if possible.
- 8.6 A trainee must be accompanied by a rescue member or be acting at the direction of a Team or Operations Leader during all SAR operations.
- 8.7 A trainee may only operate a SAR vehicle when accompanied by a rescue member, or when approved by a Team or Operations Leader.
- 8.8 The minimum team size for any SAR operation shall be two (2) members.
- 8.9 The first responding qualified Operation Leader who responds to a call-out/mission and is willing to assume the responsibility of Operation Leader is thereby appointed and continues to function as the Operation Leader until he/she is relieved at the end of a shift or he/she appoints a replacement.
- 8.10 Until a qualified Operation Leader responds to a call-out/mission (is present or available by radio), the senior rescue member willing to assume the responsibility of Operations Leader is thereby appointed and continues to function as the Operation Leader until relieved.

9. Public Information/Publicity

- 9.1 All public information/publicity shall be cleared through the Sheriff's Department Community Affairs Officer (see department policy).
- 9.2 All publicity must be approved by the Board of Directors.
- 9.3 Relatives and friends of victims will be treated with patience and sympathy.

10. Safety

- 10.1 The safety of the rescuer (SAR member) comes first in all SAR operations.
- 10.2 Helmets shall be worn during all technical and helicopter training and operations.
- 10.3 Personal floatation devices (PFDs) shall be worn during all water related training and operations.

11. Training

- 11.1 All training must be submitted to, and approved by, the Training Committee before credit may be given towards completing requirements for Rescue Member status.
- 11.2 The training trip leader/instructor has the authority to refuse anyone's participation on the training due to poor physical condition or lack of equipment, and to permit participation of non-unit personnel (for good reasons).
- 11.3 Trainees are responsible for completing the required trainee classes.
- 11.4 Personnel will remain with the Unit during all training and operations unless excused and checked out by the trip leader/instructor. Personnel leaving without permission will be deleted from the exercise and are subject to further discipline, including dismissal from the Unit.
- 11.5 Tuition Reimbursement Guidelines
 - A. The class must be approved by the Vice President/Training Officer.
 - B. The attendee must be approved to attend a class by the Board of Directors. The member should begin the approval process by notifying the Vice President/Training Officer of their interest in a particular class.
 - C. The attendee must complete the class's requirements and receive a certificate of completion.
 - D. The attendee is eligible for reimbursement after remaining in the Unit as an active member for a minimum of one year after the class is completed AND teaching (or assisting to teach) a minimum of one class for the Unit on the subject of the class.

- E. "Active", as noted in section 11.5, subsection D, is defined as attending a minimum of 30% of all tone-outs and 50% of all required trainings.
 - F. Maximum reimbursement per course is \$300.
- 11.6 All trainees must comply with the Trainees proficiency requirements as outlined in the DCSAR Proficiency Standards before being promoted to a Rescue Member.
- 11.7 New rescue members have one year to fully comply with the Rescue Member requirements set forth in the DCSAR Proficiency Standards. Failure to comply with these requirements in this time period is grounds for termination.
- 11.8 Members that joined the unit prior to December 31, 1998 may, at the board's discretion, be declared exempt from some or all of the DCSAR Proficiency Standards if they have demonstrated a high level of operational competence in the unit for at least 10 years.
- 11.9 Starting January 1, 2010, except when section 11.6 or 11.7 is applicable, all Rescue Members must be in compliance with the DCSAR Proficiency Standards as it relates to Rescue Members.
- 11.10 Failure of Rescue Members to comply with DCSAR Proficiency Standards for 60 days shall result in their removal from the operations roster. Failure of rescue members to be in compliance with these standards for 90 days and who have been provided written notice of their deficiencies for 30 days is grounds for termination.
- 11.11 Anyone wishing to return to Rescue Member status can do so providing they are compliant with all Trainee proficiency requirements outlined in the DCSAR Proficiency Standards document. Upon their reinstatement, they have 90 days to comply with all Rescue Member proficiency requirements set forth in the DCSAR Proficiency Standards document.
- 11.12 Except where sections of this document would allow a greater amount of time, members will have 90 days to comply with requirements added to the DCSAR Proficiency Standards.

12. Uniforms

- 12.1 Uniforms should be worn to all Unit operations.
- 12.2 Uniforms may be worn to a non-unit function if the member is acting as a representative of the Unit.
- 12.3 SAR uniforms, and/or patches and insignias shall not be worn by non-unit personnel or ex-members.
- 12.4 The uniform of SAR will consist of the following items:

A. Shirt

An orange shirt will be the dress and operational shirt of SAR. This shirt may be substituted during cold weather operations with an orange, long-sleeved shirt approved by the Board of Directors. Additional shirts may be approved by the Board of Directors when requested. All shirts will be clearly marked with the appropriate patches of SAR.

B. Pants

Appropriate type pants/trousers shall be worn during SAR operations.

C. Footwear

Boots are preferred. The star on the heel of "Vibram" soles will be cut to identify SAR personnel for tracking operations.

D. Patches

The patch of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office will be worn on the right shoulder of each garment, centered 1" below the shoulder seam. The patch of Douglas County Search and Rescue will be worn on each garment, centered 1/2" above the left pocket. An American flag will be worn on the left shoulder of each garment, centered 1" below the shoulder seam. An EMT patch may be worn by qualified persons, centered above the breast pocket. Other patches may be worn only if approved by the Board of Directors.

E. Name Plates

Cloth-type name plates, 3/4" in width, having a black background with white letters, centered 1/2" above the right breast pocket, may be worn (optional).

F. Parka

There is no official parka at this time. However, orange, red or blue parkas are preferred.

G. Hat

There is no official hat at this time. However, orange or blue hats with the Department insignia are preferred. Appropriate hats should be worn for the weather conditions.

H. Jumpsuit

An orange jump suit with the Unit's insignia may be worn. Others may be approved by the Operations Leader during SAR operations.

12.5 Uniforms should be clean and in good condition at all times.

13. Attendance Requirements

13.1 The Unit's field training will be held on the weekend following the second Thursday of the month. The training may be held on Saturday, Sunday, or both days.
(Revised and clarified 8/24/2005 as follows)

Training shall be on Sunday except when the instructor teaching the class changes the schedule to include Saturday and/or Saturday night. DCSAR membership shall be notified at least 45 days in advance of the inclusion of Saturday and/or Saturday night in the training schedule.

- 13.2 Rescue and Trainee personnel are expected to attend a minimum of 50% of all missions and 50% of all scheduled monthly trainings.
- 13.3 In order to maintain operations roster status, 50% participation in tone-outs and trainings is required quarterly. Failure to do so would result in removal from the Operations Roster. In order to regain operation roster status, a member must attend two consecutive months of training within the following quarter. Any member failing to regain operation roster status within the following quarter would be asked to change their membership status.

13.3(a) Subsection added 7/21/2005:

Each newly elected Board of Directors shall be responsible for preparing and publishing an Annual Training Calendar upon which "required" training and "required" meetings are designated. The newly appointed Training Committee shall prepare the Calendar (with support from the previous training committee). The Committee shall present their recommendations at the first meeting of the newly elected Board. The Calendar, with the "required" designations, shall be published and distributed at or before the first General Meeting after the elections.

- 13.4 Reserve members must attend at least one (1) FIELD training per year to maintain their status on the operations and membership rosters.

13.4(a) Subsection added 4/28/20:

Support members will remain on the Operations Roster and Membership Roster at the pleasure of the Board of Directors and Operation Leaders."

- 13.5 Those members who will not be able to attend SAR functions for a period of time, up to six months, may take a leave of absence. This must be communicated to the Secretary. Those members on a leave of absence will continue to be listed on the membership roster, but will be dropped from the operations roster. A confirmation letter will be sent by the Secretary to the member taking the leave of absence.
- 13.6 The Unit Secretary will notify any rescue, trainee, support, or reserve member, in writing, when their status with the Unit has changed.
- 13.7 If a member must miss a training due to attendance of a SAR-related class or function, the member must notify the Secretary to be excused.
- 13.8 The Board will review member's participation quarterly.
- 13.9 During the Board's review of a member's attendance for the previous quarter, the Board will determine the requirements that the member must fulfill to be restored to the Operations Roster, the minimum requirement being that which is stated in 13.3

- 13.10 The Board will consider in its review the member's overall contribution to the Team (attendance of meetings, fundraising events, committee participation, etc.) as well as attendance of missions and trainings.
- 13.11 The Board will make a recommendation and the member will be contacted (either by phone or letter) in a timely manner.
- 13.12 Members are encouraged to address the Board at any time to discuss their attendance and ways to improve their contribution to the Team.

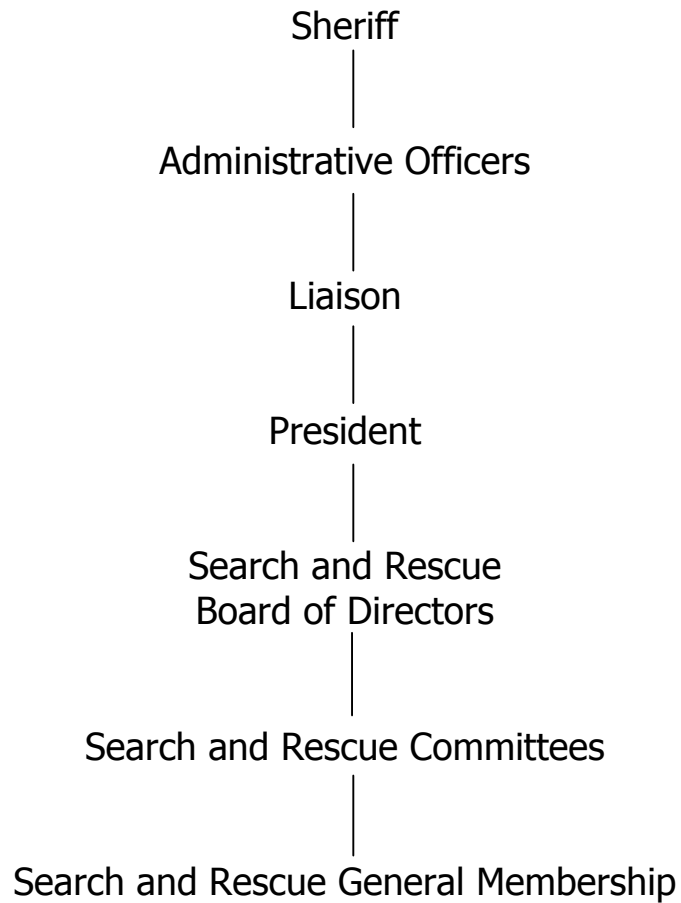
14. Advanced Training Coordinators

- 14.1 Advanced training coordinators (ATCs) may be appointed by the Board of Directors for specialty areas. These areas include, but are not limited to, swiftwater, medical, technical rope systems, diving, overhead, mantracking, canine search, incident command and search theory, air resources, and nordic.
- 14.2 ATCs are responsible for coordinating advanced training and continuing education for the Unit in their specialty area. In addition, they will identify equipment needs or advise of maintenance needed on existing equipment. They will coordinate their activities with existing committees (e.g., Training, Logistics, Overhead, Operations, Finance) regarding proper equipment deployment and training issues.
- 14.3 Any rescue member in good standing may apply for an ATC position.
- 14.4 Application for an ATC position must be made in writing to the Board and include a proposal for a one-year plan.
- 14.5 The Board's selection criteria will include:
- A. Applicant's current level of expertise within the specialty;
 - B. Applicant's ability to conduct in-house certification training;
 - C. Past history of commitment to the Unit;
 - D. Quality of the written one-year plan.
- 14.6 Appointments to the ATC position are continuous until revoked by the Board.

Attachment 1

Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Douglas County Search and Rescue

Business and Affairs Chain of Command



Attachment 2

Suggested Personal Equipment List

This is suggested equipment only. Each person will have his/her own preference of equipment and supplies to be carried. Each rescue pack should be ready for immediate use during all SAR operations.

1. Rescue pack
2. ground sheet
3. bivouac shelter
4. sleeping bag
5. sleeping pad
6. signal mirror
7. whistle
8. flashlight
9. extra batteries
10. trail tape
11. compass
12. note pad/pencil
13. sunglasses
14. goggles
15. first aid kit
16. fire starter
17. 50' nylon cord
18. knife
19. mess kit
20. food for 2 days
21. water - 1 quart
22. carabiners (2)
23. nylon slings (2)
24. helmet
25. unit shirt
26. trousers
27. parka
28. rain parka
29. wool socks, hat & sweater
30. mountain boots
31. toilet paper
32. trekking stick
33. extra clothing
34. extra food
- 35.** sunscreen, lip protection
- 36.** gloves

Attachment 3

Unit Issued Equipment

All equipment is considered the responsibility of the person to whom it is issued. The equipment will be replaced at the cost of the Unit/Department only if it is found to have been damaged, destroyed, or used up due to SAR operations. It will not be replaced if it is found that the equipment was misused or neglected by the SAR member to whom it was issued.

1. Unit pager
2. Unit shirt
3. Safety protective helmet
4. Safety protective gloves
5. Hand-held radio chest pack

The following items are issued, but are considered to be perishable or disposable, and are replenished by the Unit/Department.

1. Trail tape
2. Batteries
3. Attraction smoke
4. Ground flares

Attachment 4

Douglas County Search and Rescue Training

Trainee

1. Unit Familiarization
2. Heart Saver Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
3. First Aid / Critical Incident Stress Management / Infectious Disease
4. Basic Map Reading and use of Compass - Map & Compass I
5. Intermediate Map Reading and GPS – Map & Compass II
6. Radio and Communication Skills
7. Personal Survival
8. Equipment Familiarization and Care
9. Four Wheel Drive Skills
10. Emergency Locating Transmitter (ELT) Operation
11. Introduction to Helicopter Operations
12. Introduction to Rope Systems I
13. Search Techniques
14. Incident Command System
15. Intro to Swiftwater

Team Leader

1. Introduction to Rope Systems II
2. Rescue member
3. Field Supervision
4. Introduction to Search Management

Operations Leader

1. Rescue member
2. Field Supervision
3. Introduction to Search Management
4. Managing the Search Function
5. Advanced Incident Command System Operations

Attachment 5

Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Douglas County Search and Rescue

Incident Command System

