

SEARCH AND RESCUE MODEL PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Search and Rescue Model Plan, is designed to assist the local agencies and organizations in planning for search and rescue (SAR) incidents which may occur in their jurisdiction.

It is not intended to be used just a checklist, or as a document to be tossed on the shelf and consulted only when a SAR emergency actually occurs, but it is primarily intended to be a guide for those persons and agencies within a jurisdiction who have some degree of SAR responsibility.

Once Basic Search and Rescue and Search Operations Management training has been accomplished, the plan may then be used to develop a SAR incident checklist and resource list or it may be condensed into an jurisdictional operational SAR plan.

This plan addresses lost or missing person searches and its subsections are arranged in the order the information will likely be needed during an actual incident.

Not every jurisdiction has a need for an organized SAR team since there are excellent SAR resources available on short notice and since search and/or rescue situations are rare occurrences in some areas. But every jurisdiction does need to be prepared, as much as possible, for the unexpected emergency. Plans have been written and adopted for a wide variety of emergency situations but the SAR emergency has largely been ignored, at least from a planning standpoint. It is hoped that this document may help correct that deficiency.

**SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN
FOR
_____ COUNTY, KENTUCKY**

To establish responsibility, authority, and operational and administrative procedures for Search and Rescue (SAR) activities within the boundaries of _____ County, Kentucky.

OBJECTIVES

To describe the guidelines for search and rescue incidents that will:

- Give the appropriate high priority to the protection of life.
- Locate, provide necessary care, including emergency medical care, and evacuate persons in distress:
 1. Using the most effective methods, and
 2. Within the least lapsed time, and
 3. In the safest and most economical way, and
 4. With the least impact on the resources and on the normal day-to-day operations of the County.

RESPONSIBILITIES

KRS Chapter 39 identifies the state Division of Emergency Management with responsibilities for planning and response to a wide variety of emergencies and disasters including search and rescue incidents. Rescue squads may assist in this mission and provide manpower or other resources.

The local Emergency Management Director or the local Search and Rescue Coordinator has the authority and the responsibility for SAR operations within their respective jurisdiction.

The National Park Service has the authority and the responsibility for SAR operations within _____, and their associated boundaries.

The Kentucky Department of Parks, Ranger, has the authority and the responsibility for SAR operations within _____ and their associated boundaries.

The U.S. Forest Service has the authority and the responsibility for SAR operations within _____ and their associated boundaries.

Pursuant to KRS Chapter 39.700, local rescue squads have certain responsibilities in emergency and disaster situations. It is the responsibility of the local DES organization to determine the degree to which local emergency management director will be involved in search and rescue activities within _____ County. SAR missions have the potential to become law enforcement incidents and therefore require that immediate local law enforcement agencies be notified of the incident.

EMERGENT AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There may be specific incidents where agencies and organizations outside the county have a responsibility to prosecute SAR events that may cross jurisdictional lines and include _____ County. Examples are:

- Multi-agency response
- Two or more state and/or federal agencies are on scene
- Civil Air Patrol missions for missing or lost aircraft
- Search incidents along the borders of the County, including waterways.

When it involves a threat to human life, a search and rescue mission will have priority over other activities, except other, more serious life threatening emergencies. Upon request, every agency within the County will provide all equipment, supplies, human resources, and facilities necessary to meet the above stated objectives.

The _____ County Emergency Management Agency and the local Search and Rescue Coordinator assumes full responsibility for the identification, evaluation, and utilization of SAR resources in the County. The local rescue squad will be actively involved in the training and proficiency maintenance of these resources and will develop and maintain alerting and communication procedures that will ensure timely notification of and reliable communications with all resources that may be involved in a SAR event.

PLAN FOR LOST OR MISSING PERSON SEARCH

1.0 FIRST NOTICE

1.1 Upon notification of a missing, lost, or overdue, the responding agency will assume direction and control responsibilities of searching for the person. If the person(s) have not been located within two (2) hours from the time the call was received, the dispatcher shall notify the local emergency management director or local search and rescue coordinator and attempt to provide the following information:

- (a) Name(s) of the missing person; and
- (b) Age of the missing person(s); and
- (c) General state of physical and mental health; and
- (d) Clothing worn by the person; and
- (e) Time and place last seen or last known position; and
- (f) Search activities currently underway; and
- (g) Command post location; and
- (h) Name of the Incident Commander; and
- (i) Phone number of the Incident Commander or command post.

1.2 If the search for the missing, lost, or overdue person(s) has lasted for more than four (4) hours, the local emergency management director or the local search and rescue coordinator, or the dispatcher shall notify the state division of emergency management duty officer at (502) 564-7815 or 1-800-255-2587

1.3 The County EM Director/SAR Coordinator will determine the relative urgency of the incident to include weather considerations, per Section A.2.0, and make the following notifications as deemed necessary:

- Local law enforcement
- Local rescue squad
- Other agencies with SAR responsibility

1.3 For the purposes of this plan, the following activities are not considered a "search" under the division of emergency management administrative regulations:

- (a) Attempting to locate a fugitive from justice; or**
- (b) Attempting to locate an escaped prisoner; or**
- (c) Attempting to locate and absconder from probation and parole; or**
- (d) Attempting to locate an adult who has run away from home or other**

- location; or
 (e) Attempting to locate a child over the age of eight (8) who has run away from home or other location.

These incidents listed (a) through (e) are deemed law enforcement matters and are not within the jurisdiction of a rescue squad or local disaster and emergency services organization. The search for a child under the age of eight (8) who has run away from home may be determined to be a law enforcement matter by the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the incident.

2.0 RELATIVE URGENCY

2.1 The following guide will help determine the relative urgency of the situation. ***The lower the priority factor, the more urgent the situation.***

<u>Subject Profile</u>	<u>Priority Factor</u>
Age	
- Very Young.....	1
- Very Old.....	1
- Other.....	2-3
Medical Condition	
- Known or suspected illness or injury.....	1-2
- Healthy.....	3
- Know fatality.....	3
Number of Subjects	
- One.....	1
- More than one.....	2-3
Weather Profile	
- Existing hazardous weather.....	1
- Predicted hazardous weather (within 8 hrs.).....	1-2
- Predicted hazardous weather (more than 8 hrs.).....	2
- No hazardous weather predicted.....	3
Equipment Profile	
- Inadequate for the environment.....	1
- Questionable for the environment.....	1-2
- Adequate for the environment.....	3
Subject Experience Profile	

- Not experienced, does not know area..... 1
- Not experienced, knows area..... 1-2
- Experienced, does not know area..... 2
- Experienced, knows area..... 3

NOTE: *Elapsed time from when the subject was missing, along with the political sensitivity of the circumstances, will have the effect of increasing the relative urgency.*

3.0 INITIAL RESPONSE

3.1 If the SAR Incident Commander determines that an actual search will be necessary, the following resources should be alerted:

- Second shift overhead team

3.2 Immediate response resources:

- First shift overhead team and their equipment
- SAR Dog teams
- Local trained SAR Hasty Team

3.3 Initial actions at scene:

- Identify place last seen or last known position
- Initiate Lost Person Questionnaire and lost person profile forms
- Establish command post (CP) location

3.4 Escalation procedures should be determined.

- Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- Identify SAR resources to be needed
- Implement plans to expand CP activities
- Identify and advise necessary support services

4.0 STRATEGY

4.1 If the incident is a known rescue, determine what resources will be needed to carry out the mission.

4.2 Establish the probable boundaries of the search area. Factors to take into consideration include:

- Statistical data
- History of the area
- Clues
- Subject profile
- Intuition
- Natural routes of travel
- Analysis of time/distance traveled
- Terrain hazards and natural barriers to travel

5.0 TACTICS

5.1 Initial actions should have three objectives:

- Confine the subject(s) travel, prevent the enlargement of the search area
- Effectively use the resources that are immediately available
- Find the subject or any possible clues

5.2 Confinement and attraction methods

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| - Road or trail blocks | - Smoke |
| - Camp-ins | - Lights |
| - Lookouts | - Track traps |
| - Road and trail patrols | - String lines |
| - Noise | |

5.3 Generally, available, trained personnel will be dispatched immediately, as hasty teams, to the areas of highest probability of area (POA) to attempt to locate the subject or any clues. Efforts of this type should include:

- Following known or suspected routes
- Trail running
- Sign cutting
- High attraction area search
- Hazardous area search
- Search along the sides of roads
- Search along drainages, streams, river banks, and other high probability areas
- Search from ridge tops
- Easily forgotten obvious; restrooms, tents, vehicles,

5.4 Clue finding and/or clue subject finding resources should be used as early in the search effort as they can be requested and moved to the search area. These resources include:

- Mantrackers
- SAR Dogs
- Trained, clue-conscious Hasty Teams
- Aircraft, preferably helicopters

5.5 Although clues such as footprints, discarded items, scent articles, etc., may not lead directly to the subject, their most profound effect can be eliminate portions of the search area. Every person involved in the search, especially in the early phases, must be constantly reminded to be "clue conscious".

6.0 INVESTIGATION/INTERVIEWING

6.1 Consideration must be given to designating a trained person to conduct a thorough investigation. The effectiveness of a search operation can be diminished because of a lack of adequate and/or accurate information.

6.2 As the missions continues, the remaining, pertinent information on the Lost Person Questionnaire form should be obtained. The form can serve as a checklist to avoid missing any possibility significant information. (One form should be completed for each subject lost or missing).

6.3 An effort to locate the subject somewhere other than the search area must be made in the event the subject isn't lost but just isn't where they're supposed to be. The following places/persons should be contacted as they are identified and then re-contacted periodically:

- Subjects destination: Did they arrive after the search began?
- Friends, co-workers, relatives, companions
- Local hospital, emergency medical centers, doctor's office
- Adjacent law enforcement jurisdictions
- Subjects bank
- Local travel agencies, bus train depots, taxi services
- Residents in and around the search area (Did anyone see the subject come or go?)

6.4 Other considerations:

- Possibility of criminal act
- Check vehicle, home, etc., for clues
- Preserve clues and physical evidence

7.0 RESOURCES

7.1 The order of preference for tactics and resources used in a search is suggested as follows:

A. Trained hasty search resources

- Confinement and attraction
- SAR Dogs
- Mantrackers
- Trained, clue-conscious hasty teams
- Air search
- Direction finding (DF) teams, if an ELT is involved

B. Untrained hasty teams

C. Grid searchers

7.2 Every reasonable effort should be made to locate the subject using those methods listed in section A above even though large numbers of searchers might be readily available. The use of grid or line search techniques must be regarded as a last resort. Efficiency, economy, and control of the mission can be expected to substantially diminish when these techniques are utilized. Large numbers of searchers, even when reasonably trained, virtually obliterates clues. As a result, the effectiveness of those resources that have the highest and quickest probability of detection (POD) is considerably reduced or even eliminated.

7.3 Personnel from organizations other than those known to be specifically SAR trained, should be determined to be reasonably fit and equipped before they are permitted in other than support roles.

8.0 CALLOUT PROCEDURES

8.1 Written callout procedures for local, state, federal and other jurisdictional personnel should be established, reviewed annually, and posted in the communications center.

8.2 A protocol for authorization of overtime pay for local county personnel who are subject to callout should be made a part of the standard operating procedures.

9.0 ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

9.1 A functional management approach, such as the Incident Command System (ICS), shall be used on all SAR missions. The following functions must be considered on any SAR mission, regardless of the terminology used or the size of the mission. In the very early stages, some functions may be unnecessary and several, or even all, may be carried out by one or few persons. As the mission becomes more complex, the need to designate specific functions increases. The more complex the mission, the greater the need for individuals with specialized training to carry out each function.

- *SAR INCIDENT COMMANDER*: Responsible for the coordination and control of all incident activities and the associated minute-by minute decisions. Accountable for the overall success or failure of the mission.

- *OPERATIONS OFFICER*: Oversees the activities of the total search operations. All field deployed resources, regardless of type, come under the Operations Section. Duties include:
 - Prepare ground operations portion of the IAP
 - Prepare task assignments
 - Report significant events to the SAR IC
 - Coordinate ground resources

- *PLANNING OFFICER*: Is responsible for collection, evaluation, and dissemination of incident information and for the preparation of the Incident Action Plan (IAP). Duties include:
 - Register, track, brief and debrief incident resources
 - Preparation of tactical operational plans
 - Prepare incident status summary
 - Provide maps and photographic services
 - Collect and disseminate weather information
 - Intelligence and investigation

- *LOGISTICS OFFICER*: Is responsible for providing personnel, supplies, equipment, and services necessary to support the mission. Duties include:
 - Equipment procurement and maintenance
 - Transportation
 - Food service
 - Base camp operations

- Security and fire protection
Ambulance and first aid operations
- Communications
- *FINANCE OFFICER*: Is responsible for tracking costs associated with the search effort. Duties include:
 - Total number of man-hours expended
 - Expendable equipment cost
 - Recording damaged equipment
 - Maintaining and filing Worker's Compensation records for all personnel
 - Assuring payment of all expenses incurred
- *PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER*: Responsible for media coordination and news releases. Establishes the Mission Information Center. Briefs the family and local political personnel of all actions to be undertaken.
- *SAFETY OFFICER*: Is responsible for the identification of potentially hazardous areas and situations, investigates accidents within the incident area and has the authority to stop and prevent unsafe actions.
- *LIAISON OFFICER*: Provides and point of contact for assisting and cooperating agency and organizational representatives.
- *COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER*: The communications section operates under the direction of the Logistics Officer. The Communications Officer is responsible for installing, maintaining, and operating the mission's communications system per the IAP. Duties include:
 - Operate the mission's communications
 - Provides messengers
 - Installs and repairs communications
 - Provides radio operators
 - Maintains communications logs

9.2 A qualified person should be appointed to see to the needs of the relatives or close friends and for keeping them informed of the progress of the mission. Preferably, a minister or rescue squad Chaplain might be a good choice.

10.0 BASE CAMPS/COMMAND POSTS

10.1 As soon as practical, the following items should be considered for establishing a formal base camp:

- Registration/sign in area
- Vehicle/equipment staging area
- Operational area for mission staff
- External power source for mobile equipment
- Sanitary facilities
- Food services
- Traffic control and parking
- Heliports for air operations
- Fuel for generators and/or vehicles
- Sleeping area for searchers
- Base security and access control
- Media and family areas
- Media briefing area
- Lighting
- Trash collection area

10.2 A base camp plan/survey should be contacted for any area that has significant history of search activity. These plans and suggested base camp layouts should be included as an appendix.

11.0 RESCUE AND EVACUATION

11.1 A rescue and evacuation plan should be established for each incident detailing the response once the subject has been located.

11.2 Immediately after locating the subject(s), necessary emergency medical care will be provided and all information necessary to plan the evacuation will be given to the Incident Commander.

11.3 If the subject's location is not on a trail or other easily accessible area, the best route into the location should be marked with flagging tape. This will provide for a quicker response by medical teams and/or other personnel and will assist to determine evacuation requirements.

11.4 The rescue and evacuation will be carried out by the fastest and most effective method, but consideration will be given to the following:

- The physical condition of the subject
- Safety of the subject and rescuers
- Equipment and human resources available

- Terrain
- Weather

- 11.5 Obviously, the safety of all personnel is of the highest importance.
- 11.5 If there is major or multi-system trauma involved, a helicopter evacuation to the nearest trauma center should be considered. A contingency plan for ground evacuation must be prepared in case the helicopter evacuation can be implemented due to weather or mechanical problems.
- 11.7 For safety reasons, helicopter operations must be managed by experienced personnel using accepted techniques and proper equipment.

12.0 INCIDENT SITE PROCEDURES

- 12.1 The possibility of foul play must be kept in mind and an appropriate investigation conducted before the scene is disturbed. In cases where foul play or suspicious circumstances, such as suicide, are suspected, the local law enforcement agency having authority shall be notified. In these instances, the incident scene shall not be disturbed.
- 12.2 The scene shall be secured per local law enforcement policies and guidelines and entry denied to all search and other unauthorized personnel.
- 12.3 Bodies will not be moved until permission is given by the County Coroner.
- 12.4 Every reasonable attempt to photograph the scene should be made and the film given to the local law enforcement personnel.
- 12.5 If fatalities are the result of an aircraft crash, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will investigate along with the Kentucky State Police.
- 12.6 The urgency for evacuating fatalities is extremely low. Resource protection and the safety of searchers and rescuers will not be compromised to remove bodies. If the removal of a body must be delayed, at least two persons will stay at the scene until the evacuation is completed.
- 12.7 Whenever possible, sensitive information shall not be passed by radio. The use of discreet codes is encouraged.

13.0 SUSPENDING THE MISSION/DEMOBILIZATION

- 13.1 A mission that is terminated unsuccessfully will be referred as "*SUSPENDED*". Searches that still have limited on-going activities shall be listed as "*SCALED-BACK* or "*LIMITED SEARCH*". Only searches where the subject has been located will be "*CLOSED*".
- 13.2 If the SAR Incident Commander feels the Probability of Detection (POD) for the designated search area is adequate, or there are no further leads, or after consultation with his staff, that continuing the search is not possible due to the lack of resources or safety constraints, the mission may be suspended pending receipt of further information or a change in the suspension criteria.
- 13.3 The SAR IC will inform the relatives of the decision and must be ready to justify their action. Relatives should be told that the search will be resumed if and when justifying criteria is received, and that a limited search effort will continue. This may include:
- Occasional overflights
 - Posting of signs in the area
 - Requesting media and public to report any sightings
 - Using the area for subsequent training exercises
- 13.4 All resources should be cleared through each operational section as needed, before the final clearance to depart the mission base is given.
- 13.5 The IC will insure that all departing resources are capable for traveling safely. Distance and fatigue should be carefully considered.
- 13.6 Arrangements should be made to feed, and if needed, house search resources overnight before releasing them from duty.
- 13.7 The IC will insure that each resource dispatch point is notified of the team's intentions and/or the expected time of their arrival.
- 13.8 A medical unit should remain at the incident command post until all resources have departed.
- 13.9 The IC will notify the local emergency management office and the state emergency management duty officer of the decision to suspend and will provide a closing briefing for the local and state emergency management area manager if necessary.
- 13.10 The SAR mission overhead team will inventory, clean, and restock all mission equipment and supplies.

14.0 DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

- 14.1 The IC will assemble the case file and include all forms, notes, maps, reports and other pertinent paperwork. A copy of the closing report and the state DEM SAR Mission Report Form 58 will be mailed to the State SAR Coordinator within 20 days of the mission closing.
- 14.2 The SAR Incident file will become a primary source of information in the event of questions should arise about the conduct of a mission and should therefore be retained as any other documenting evidence.

15.0 CRITIQUE

- 15.1 The IC will set the time and place for a critique of the mission and will notify all the leaders of the participating agencies.
- 15.2 The critique should be held within two weeks after the incident.
- 15.3 A detailed review of the incident should include:
 - How the incident occurred
 - How it could have been prevented
 - What was done
 - What worked well- what went wrong
 - Review of the county plan, procedures and policies
- 15.4 Keep the emphasis on solving problems rather than finding fault!

16.0 APPENDICES

1. Resource Listing
2. Call Out Procedures and Phone List
3. Predefined Base Camps and Reference Data for Known Mission Sites.
4. Mission Kit and Equipment List
5. Written Mutual Aid Agreements
6. ICS Organizational Chart
7. Communications Plan
8. Medical Plan

SEARCH MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Always leave the search area as you found it. Pick up all trash around the command post and other high traffic areas.
2. Never permit search teams to smoke in woodland areas, especially in dry weather or during forest fire season.
3. Always seek permission from land owners before you enter into their property.

Revised July 98