



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Operations	Section: 409.6
Subject: Specialized Units	Topic: Underwater Search and Evidence Recovery
Accreditation: OPR.01.08	Revised:
Enacted: 07/30/2015	Reaffirmed:
Last Review: 07/24/2015	Review: 07/30/2016

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the policies and guidelines for the Underwater Search and Recovery Team's (USERT).

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office to maintain a select unit of trained and equipped personnel to aid in the search and rescue of victims of water-related accidents and to assist in the search and recovery of evidentiary items secreted in bodies of water.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Staffing

1. The USERT shall be comprised of a minimum of two members, with a maximum number of members to be determined by the Sheriff or his/her designee.
2. USERT positions are Deputy Sheriffs who have a permanent duty assignment, but volunteer for this part-time call-out duty. The following criteria will be used when selecting personnel to the USERT positions:
 - a. Deputy Sheriffs with a minimum of one year of law enforcement experience
 - b. Physically fit
 - c. Ability to cope with responsibilities and display confidence
 - d. Possess the ability to respond well under pressure and in a mature, professional manner
 - e. Possess, at a minimum, an "open water" certification from a recognized instructional institution (i.e., PADI, NASDS, NAUI, YMCA, etc.)
3. The Sheriff shall select the USERT Commander. The Sheriff's selection decision shall encompass the individual's level of experience, leadership and supervisory abilities, and other areas as the Sheriff deems appropriate.

4. When the USERT is called into service, the team will serve as a unit of the Operational Support Division and will be under the supervision of their respective supervisors and the Sheriff.

B. Responsibilities of the USERT Commander

1. In order to ensure that the team is adequately trained and equipped, the USERT Commander will:
 - a. Ensure that all equipment is maintained in good working order and in a state of readiness
 - b. Maintain a current list of all available equipment that will be inventoried each quarter
 - c. Ensure that all required inspections, such as the Department of Transportation hydrostatic testing and visual interior inspections, shall be maintained as required and documented
 - d. Ensure that a current emergency call-out list is maintained and distributed to the Emergency Communications Center and to all members of the team
 - e. Coordinate and schedule training for all team members in order to maintain a level of continual preparedness to accomplish objectives
 - f. Ensure that all team members receive that amount of training necessary to accomplish the objectives of the unit
 - g. Inform all team members of any specialized schools and appropriate training seminars that become available
 - h. Schedule and coordinate periodic team meetings to provide informal training and to take care of administrative matters
 - i. Schedule and coordinate simulated exercises so that all team members are proficient at the various tasks to be performed by the team
 - j. Maintain records of all instruction received by the unit to include the name of the instructor who provides the training and nature of the training. The Training Section will maintain copies of all USERT training records.

- C. Response Procedures when Notified of a Water-Related Accident or Request for Divers
1. The Emergency Communications Center shall notify the Team Commander and the Sheriff.
 2. The Team Commander will advise the Emergency Communications Center to implement the notification of all or part of the USERT members.
 3. All USERT members who are contacted shall respond to call-backs.
 4. Upon USERT activation, the team commander or his designee shall determine a meeting location and notify the Emergency Communications Center of such.
 5. The final decision to commit divers to the water shall be based upon scene conditions and other available information. This decision shall be made by the Sheriff, or in his absence, the Team Commander.