

NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES  
MANUAL



Attachment A

Revised 2018



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Application for and Maintenance of State Recognized  
SAR Organizations

**SAR: SOP-01**

**PURPOSE:** This SOP provides guidance and policy for organizations desiring to become a state recognized resource for SAR operations.

**OBJECTIVES:** To establish standards for organizations to achieve when applying for and receiving State Recognition for SAR operations and maintaining of Recognized status.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6  
SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan

**GENERAL:**

- A. Agencies or private organizations may apply for State Recognition as a SAR Resource by completion of an application supplied by the SAR Resource Officer.
- B. The SAR Resource Officer will review the application for compliance of standards as established by the SAR Review Board. Once the review is completed and standards compliance is validated, the SAR Resource Officer shall forward the application and supporting documentation to the SAR Review Board for review, whom in turn, shall make a recommendation to the Chief of the New Mexico State Police.
- C. Should the SAR Review Board be unable to achieve a quorum, the Chief of State Police may grant the recognition without a recommendation from the SAR Review Board.
- D. An organization must comply with defined standards that include, but may not be limited to, the following:
  1. Adherence to the SAR Act, SAR Plan, and applicable DPS policies and procedures.
  2. Establishment of a training program for SAR operations.
  3. Establishment of call-out procedures for notification for activation.
  4. Acquisition of equipment for SAR operations depending on organizations specialty (ies).
  5. Acquisition and identification of communication methods for communications between the organization and the SAR Incident Management Team.
  6. Obtaining and maintaining DPS SAR organizational standards as outlined in **Attachment 1** of this procedure.
- E. Once recognition is applied, the SAR Resource Officer shall publish the organization's information for call-out and specialties in the SAR Resource Book for distribution.
- F. The organization's recognition does not imply a mandatory utilization on SAR operations. Utilization on SAR operations is determined by the SAR Incident Management team.

- G. Annually, the SAR Resource Officer will validate with the organization to insure that DPS established organizational requirements and criteria are maintained. The organization shall be required to provide proof of adherence to the SAR Resource Officer via a signed letter. The signed letter shall be maintained with the organization's records located in the SAR office.
- H. Failure to meet or maintain the criteria as established in **Attachment 1** may result in re-evaluation of the organization by the SRB and possible removal of the State Recognition status.
- I. The organization's recognition may be revoked by/at the discretion of the Chief of the State Police or upon the recommendation of the SAR Review Board, SAR Resource Officer, SAR Director, or the Director of Special Operations for failure to comply with SAR standards, operational procedures, or the SAR Act and SAR Plan.



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guidance for SAR Incidents

**SAR: SOP-02**

**PURPOSE:** This SOP provides guidance and policy for the operations of SAR incidents.

**OBJECTIVES:** To establish guidelines for SAR Incident personnel during SAR incidents.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6

SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan

SAR Policy 02, Search And Rescue Field Coordinators

SAR SOP-09 Search and Rescue Incident Reports

SAR SOP-07 SAR Mission and Task Force Typing

**GENERAL:**

- A. SAR incidents in the State of New Mexico shall be managed under the NIMS Incident Command System (ICS).
- B. SAR incidents, by their nature, are dynamic events and this SOP cannot capture all activities that may occur.
- C. The SAR Incident Commander is tasked with the overall management of the SAR Incident he/she is assigned to. Duties include but are not limited to:
  1. Establish communications with superiors. The SAR Incident Commander shall establish contact with the on-call Area Commander after being notified by the State Police District Headquarters as soon as possible to accomplish.
    - a. Typing of the incident.
    - b. Determination of other SAR incidents that may affect operations or resource allocations.
    - c. The SAR Area Commander shall then notify the SAR Resource Officer of the SAR incident.
  2. Establish objectives for the SAR Incident. Objectives do not necessarily need to be in writing but should be captured on documentation at the earliest opportunity.
  3. Activate the proper resources for achieving the established objectives. Activation can include deployment of resources or notification for future deployment of resources. If activation of critical resources, i.e. aircraft, specialized resources, is needed, the SAR IC shall request those resources via the on-call Area Commander.
  4. Establish an Incident Command Post. Incident Command Post location should be based on ease of communication to outside entities and deployed SAR personnel, accessibility to responders and other personnel, capabilities to secure the Incident

Command Post and protection of clues that may affect deployment of resources and other factors as necessary.

5. Ensure management of the SAR incident.
  6. Ensure the incident is documented and upon closure of the incident the Incident Commander who is on duty when the mission is closed, shall file the incident documentation with the SAR Resource Officer within 15 days of the date of closure.
- D. There are satellite phones located in each State Police district that are available for SAR operations. The SAR IMT should make arrangements for delivery or pick-up for the phones to be utilized by the SAR Incident Commander. The SAR Incident Commander of record when a mission is closed is responsible for insuring the phone is returned to the State Police office from where it was obtained.
- E. The issuances of a SAR mission number must be accomplished prior to the activation of any SAR personnel. The only exception to this policy is when a certified SAR Incident Commander has to perform the duties of the Mission Initiator when a State Police Officer is not available to perform the duties of the Mission Initiator. The SAR Incident Commander is performing duties on the behalf of the New Mexico State Police and shall be covered by the SAR insurance policy.
- F. When activated, SAR personnel are covered by the SAR insurance policy when in route to a SAR incident, while performing duties for a SAR incident, and when departing the SAR incident in route to their home location by the most direct route.
- G. Upon activation, SAR personnel must work within the guidelines of ICS and follow the orders of those appointed above them. But all SAR personnel have the right to refusal without prejudice if the SAR person feels that an assignment is unsafe for them, if they cannot complete the assignment they are tasked to or if the order given is unlawful.
- H. Any disputes, complaints or violations that develop during SAR missions shall be reported to the SAR Resource Officer immediately. The SAR Resource officer shall document the issue, conduct an investigation, resolve the issue and may administer corrective actions as needed to include notifying the Chief of the State Police for resolution. The SAR Resource officer may also defer to an on-scene State Police Officer for the resolution of any disputes.
- I. Upon discovery of a deceased subject(s) the following protocol shall be applied:
1. After observing the scene for potential hazards, only one team member shall enter the area to determine that the subject(s) is/are immobile and not breathing. The team member shall after confirmation that the subject(s) is/are not breathing shall exit the area by backtracking over the same incoming route. At that time the subject(s) and area immediately surrounding the subject(s) shall be deemed a crime scene and shall be under the control of the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction.
  2. Prevent contamination of the scene by limiting the number of searchers/rescuers from entering the area. If possible, cordon off the area with flagging/trail tape. SAR searchers/rescuers shall not enter the area unless permission is granted by the investigating law enforcement agency.
  3. Notify the Incident Management Team of the location via any communication means available. Attempt to use a secure means of communication.

4. The team leader shall log all activities that have occurred and continue logging events until relieved of duty or law enforcement personnel arrive on scene and the log is turned over to them.
  5. The law enforcement agency with jurisdiction or the Office of Medical Investigator shall take control of the deceased subject(s) and the scene. SAR personnel may assist with the removal if requested, but any SAR responder can decline assisting with the removal.
  6. Under no circumstance shall SAR responders attempt to process the crime scene, collect evidence or take any photographs unless approved by the SAR Incident Commander and at the request of the investigating agency.
  7. Under no circumstance shall family members, friends or acquaintances of the subject(s) be permitted to enter the area unless permission is granted by the agency conducting the criminal investigation. SAR responders securing the scene shall not physically restrain individuals attempting to gain access to the area, but shall log the intrusion and if possible observe and document the actions of the individuals who enter the area.
- J. New Mexico SAR is not required to “rescue” property; such operations are always discretionary and secondary to lifesaving operations and any other higher priority operation.
- K. New Mexico SAR is not required to perform a body recovery for a subject known to be deceased, although such operations are permitted, and if permitted, the incident must be managed and recorded following the same rules as normal SAR missions.



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guidance for Implementing a Feeding Program

**SAR: SOP-03**

**PURPOSE:** This SOP provides guidance, procedures, and a voucher system, for implementing a feeding program for search and rescue personnel during a State Police authorized SAR Incident.

**OBJECTIVES:** To provide a method of ordering and reimbursing resources that are willing to supply food and snacks during a SAR Incident within the state of New Mexico.

**REFERENCES:** Search and Rescue Office Budget (line item 79)

**GENERAL:**

- A. If the Incident Commander (the IC must be a Type-III or higher) on the scene of a SAR incident wishes to provide meals, hot or cold drinks or snacks, to "checked-in" participants of an official SAR incident. The following actions must be taken.
1. The IC, or his/her staff acting in ICs behalf, will contact any resource willing to supply food e.g., the American Red Cross, Church groups, restaurants, SAR teams, or individuals.
  2. The IC, or his/her staff, will coordinate where the food will be delivered. The delivery point may be the Incident Base or other location(s) that the IC determines.
  3. The recommended minimum response time to deliver food will be four (4) hours from the time the resource supplying the food is notified.
  4. The menu(s) will be determined by the IC AND the parties supplying the food, at the time meals are ordered.
  5. The "on-scene" IC can authorize up to \$100.00 for meals on a single incident (NOT PER DAY). The Area Commander may authorize another \$150.00 (total of \$250.00 per incident). If additional meals are needed, authorization for reimbursement must be coordinated by the SAR Resource Officer.
  6. All cost reimbursement must be invoiced on the SAR Office "Food Invoice" form attached (NOTE: The time it will take to reimburse the organization or individual supplying the food is about the same as the SAR Gas Invoice Procedure).



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guidance for SAR Personnel Under the Age of Eighteen

**SAR: SOP-04**

**PURPOSE:** This SOP provides guidance and procedures for the participation of SAR personnel under the age of eighteen on search and rescue missions.

**OBJECTIVES:** Establishment of a youth program related to Search and Rescue

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6  
SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan

**GENERAL:**

- A. Young adults between the ages of 16 and 18 are encouraged to participate on SAR missions. Participation can only be granted upon the completion of the following:
  1. The participant must be a member of a state recognized SAR resource team. Team membership shall be within the rules and regulations of the said organization. The state recognized organization must agree to become the sponsor of the participant. Agreement shall be inferred by membership in the organization.
  2. The participant must have a notarized waiver signed by a legal guardian and the participant which has been filed with NMSAR office.
  3. The participant must complete the online NMIS ICS-100 training and submit a copy of the completion certificate to the NMSAR office.
- B. Upon receipt of the waiver and ICS-100 completion certificate and approval by the Agency Head, the NMSAR office shall equip the participant with a SAR Identification Card
- C. The state recognized teams shall be responsible for the behavior of the participants of this program on SAR missions. Any unwarranted behavior or attitude towards the ICS staff, on-scene agency personnel or other SAR responders shall not be tolerated and the state recognized teams will be notified and permission to participate may be revoked. Likewise, the participant shall immediately inform the incident commander or agency head of any unwarranted behavior or attitude directed at the participant from any person during a SAR mission.
- D. The state recognized team shall maintain emergency contact information on the participant to include name, address, and phone number of the minor's parents/legal guardian. The above information shall be available to the ICS staff at any SAR mission that the young adult is participating in.
- E. The Incident Commander shall be the final authority of the utilization of minors on the SAR mission and may limit the type and duration of an assignment for a minor.



Additionally, the incident commander shall avoid searchers/rescuers under the age of 18 of handling or viewing a deceased subject.

- F. In the event of an injury to the minor the incident management team shall follow the established medical plan and include notification of the minor's parents/legal guardian. The participant's sponsoring organization shall have the needed information available at the incident base.
- G. This SOP does not prevent a minor from participating in SAR operations as an emergent volunteer, but participation must be approved by the SAR Incident Commander.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Participation Waiver

**PARENTAL CONSENT**

Under age 18 Participation During

New Mexico Search and Rescue Missions and Trainings

**PARENT/GUARDIAN**

The undersigned party is the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, participant, a minor, who wishes to participate and perform duties during Search and Rescue operations and trainings. I understand that the Agency Head of the New Mexico Search and Rescue Department must approve my child's participation.

As the Parent/Guardian, by signing this form, I acknowledge that:

- Participant is at least 16 years old.
- The Agency Head has the authority to govern my child's participation in this process.
- Participant shall comply with all directives, procedures, standards and policies that govern the operation of Search and Rescue missions.
- The Search and Rescue Incident Command Staff may limit the type and duration of duties assigned to the participant
- Search and Rescue incidents are emergency operations and inherently have greater risks associated with the incident.

The undersigned understands and accepts the requirements for participation of a minor on Search and Rescue operations.

Printed name of Parent or Guardian	Signature of Parent or Guardian	Date

NOTARY  
STATE OF NEW  
MEXICO COUNTY  
OF \_\_\_\_\_

The Foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me on this \_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ of, 20\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

## **PARTICIPANT**

By signing this form, you acknowledge that participation on Search and Rescue operations and trainings is conditional on:

1. Following the reasonable commands or orders of those appointed above you.
2. Search and Rescue operations have increased risks associated with the incident than you normally encounter thus;
  - a. You have the right of refusal of any task assigned.
  - b. The Incident Command Staff may remove you from any Search and Rescue operation at any time, or limit your assignment.
  - c. Your parent or guardian may remove you from any Search and Rescue operation at any time.
3. You will strive to complete your tasks in a professional matter and be prepared to be self-sufficient for a maximum of 24 hours.

The undersigned understands and accepts the conditions for participation of a minor on Search and Rescue operations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Applicant

## **APPROVAL**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Agency Head

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guideline to Injury to SAR Personnel

**SAR: SOP-05**

**PURPOSE:** This SOP provides guidance and policy for the event of an injury to a SAR responder.

**OBJECTIVES:** Establish procedures to insure medical treatment is available to any SAR responder.

**GENERAL:**

- A. A medical plan shall be created at the beginning of any SAR mission should SAR responders be deployed in the field.
- B. The medical plan shall be completed on the NMSAR ICS 206 form and shall consist of the following:
  1. SAR Mission number;
  2. SAR Operational Period for medical plan;
  3. Date form is completed;
  4. Time form is completed;
  5. Summary of actions to occur when an injury is reported;
  6. Identification of medically trained personnel and their locations while on scene;
  7. Identification of medical transportation resources; and/or
  8. Identification of medical facilities, ordered by proximity to the Incident Base.
- C. The Medical Plan shall be prepared by the Logistics chief or Medical Unit Leader if assigned. If a Logistics Chief and a Medical Unit Leader is not assigned at the incident, the form shall be prepared by the Incident Commander.
- D. The Medical Plan shall be reviewed by the Incident Commander.
- E. Task Force Leaders, Strike Team Leaders, and Unit Leaders shall be briefed to report any injury to a SAR responder(s) to the Operations Section Chief. Upon notification of an injury to a SAR responder, the Incident Management Team (IMT) shall activate the Medical Plan.
- F. If the degree of injury warrants a medical response, the Incident Management Team (IMT) shall ensure Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel are dispatched to the SAR responder(s) location. This can include re-tasking of resources currently on an assignment.

- G. Upon arrival, the EMS personnel shall assume command of patient care to include patient transportation. The IMT shall attempt to provide the requested resources to assist in patient transportation. The EMS personnel shall follow their protocols for treatment and documentation of the incident.
- H. If assigned, the Safety Officer shall document the incident on the NMSAR ICS 213 form in the Safety Record area of the form. The ICS 213 shall be reviewed by the Incident Commander.
- I. The Incident Commander shall also document the incident on the NMSAR 300 form in the Additional Comments area of the form.
- J. The Incident Commander is not required to obtain the medical documentation created by the EMS personnel for filing unless the EMS providers do not have a home agency that they are working for. If medical documentation is collected, the documentation shall be submitted with the SAR mission documentation. If medical documentation is submitted with the SAR mission documentation, the Incident Commander shall annotate on the NMSAR 300 in the Additional Comments portion of the form that "Medical documentation has been included".
- K. The injured SAR responder(s) is (are) not required to file any claim of coverage by the DPS provided insurance, but if the SAR responder(s) wish to file a claim, must do so within the time period established by the policy.



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guideline for Release of Information during SAR Incidents

**SAR: SOP-06**

**PURPOSE:** This SOP provides guidance and procedures for the control of information before, during and after a SAR incident.

**OBJECTIVES:** To establish a procedure for the authorization for the release of information gathered during SAR missions.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6  
SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan  
DPS Policy: OPR: 37 - Release of Public Information

**GENERAL:**

- A. The SAR Incident Commander is the releasing authority of factual information regarding a SAR incident. The SAR Incident Commander may authorize other SAR responders, such as the SAR Field Public Information Officer, to release information, but does not give up any responsibility of said action.
- B. The SAR Incident Commander must receive verbal approval from the DPS PIO or SAR Resource Officer prior to releasing any information. If contact with the DPS PIO or SAR Resource Officer cannot be made, the SAR Incident Commander shall not release any information.
- C. Information that may be release can include:
  1. Name(s) and age(s) of subject(s);
  2. Physical description of the subject(s);
  3. Names of agencies and volunteer organizations that have provided or is providing services to the SAR incident;
  4. Actions taken so far relating to the SAR incident;
  5. Actions to be taken relating to the SAR incident; and/or
  6. Medical condition of the subject(s) which lead to actions to be taken.
- D. Information that should not be released includes:
  1. Any criminal investigation information relating to the SAR incident; and/or
  2. Any criminal history of the subject(s).
    - a. Criminal history information can only be released in accordance to established laws.
  3. Medical history information of the subject(s) obtained that is not related to the SAR

incident.

4. Photographs, film or digital, taken during SAR Incidents by SAR responders are the property of the photographer and as such the photographer shall be held responsible for any use of said photographs, unless the SAR responders is tasked by the SAR Incident Commander to photo document the SAR incident, where upon, the photographs become the property of the Department of Public Safety and shall be surrendered to the Department of Public Safety with the incident documentation.
- E. The releasing authority for release of information regarding terminated or suspended SAR incidents shall be the DPS PIO or SAR Resource Officer. SAR Field Coordinators or any other SAR person who participated in the SAR incident shall direct all requests for information regarding SAR incidents to the SAR Resource Officer.
- F. SAR responders are cautioned against the taking of photographs during SAR incidents.
1. Photographs taken during SAR incidents may be seized for possible criminal investigation.
  2. Even though the subject(s) may not have an expectation of privacy on SAR incidents, all care should be exercised to respect the privacy of the subject(s).
  3. Photographs of subjects who's movement has been restrained, such as being placed in a litter, is strictly prohibited unless the subject themselves gives verbal permission. Such permission should be witnessed by at least two SAR responders.
- G. The SAR Incident Commander is instructed to contact the DPS PIO or the SAR Resource Officer for any questions regarding the release of information from SAR incidents.



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Incident and Resource Typing

**SAR: SOP-07**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines concerning the assessment and assignment of a Type to Search and Rescue (SAR) Missions and to responding task forces or strike teams.

**OBJECTIVES:** Establish a procedure to direct the State Police Search and Rescue Incident Commander and on-call Area Commander who are assigned to a SAR incident to assess and assign SAR Missions a Type based on the complexity of the incident and to match SAR Resources to the SAR Mission Type.

**REFERENCES:** FEMA 508-8, Typed Resource Definitions  
NMSAR 420-1, Field Operations Guide

**DEFINITIONS:**

- A. Field Coordinator and Area Commander – Holding Certification from the Department of Public Safety, New Mexico State Police
- B. Field Coordinator Trainee – An individual who has not completed the SAR Field Coordinator School who has entered a period of probation before achieving full Field Coordinator rank.
- C. Incident Commander (IC) - Title given to a Field Coordinator after taking command of a SAR mission.
- D. Incident Command System (ICS) Personnel or Command Staff – Incident Commander, Area Commander, current Public Information, Safety and Liaison Officers, Operations, Planning and Logistics Section Chiefs, and Communication Unit Leaders.
- E. Field Teams – A strike force or strike team sent into the field, consisting of not less than two (2) people and not more than seven (7) people, preferably with a Field Team Leader in charge.
- F. Type - A graded management system that is based on the complexity of an incident.

**GENERAL:** SAR Missions in New Mexico are to be assessed and assigned a Type based on the complexity of the mission. The mission Types will range from the least complex, Type IV, to the most complex, Type I. Resources to be used on SAR missions will match the SAR mission type assigned.

**A. SAR MISSION TYPING**

1. Some of the factors that determine the complexity of a SAR mission vary and may include some of the following;



- a. The subject's profile
  - b. The subject's location
  - c. The impact on life and property
  - d. The safety of community and SAR responders
  - e. The potential for hazardous terrain and/or the condition of materials
  - f. The weather and/or other environmental factors
  - g. The likelihood of cascading events
  - h. The potential of a crime scene (including terrorism)
  - i. The aspect of political sensitivity, external influences, and/or media relations
  - j. The area involved to include proper jurisdictions
  - k. The availability of resources
  - l. The urgency of the response
  - m. The anticipated use of certain critical resources
2. The on-scene or assigned Incident Commander and the on-call Area Commander are responsible for determining the SAR mission Type. The New Mexico State Police Mission Initiator at the scene may assist in assigning a Type to the mission.
  3. Once the mission Type is determined, the Incident Commander shall request resources to fulfill the mission objectives to include;
    - a. A higher Type Field Coordinator and command staff if needed.
    - b. A mission should be managed by the same Incident Commander type (i.e. a Type II mission should be managed by a Type II Incident Commander). Refer to SAR policy SAR-002 for Field Coordinator Typing requirements.
    - c. If a properly Typed Field Coordinator is not available to managed a SAR mission, then a lower Typed Field Coordinator may be permitted to managed the SAR mission with the approval of the Area Commander and SAR Resource Officer.
    - d. A Field Coordinator Trainee has not achieved any Typing rank and is only permitted to operate on Type IV or less SAR incidents within their home district.
  4. A SAR mission shall be classified as Type III if one (1) air asset or critical resource is utilized. SAR missions that utilize more than one critical resource shall be typed as a Type II mission.
  5. A Type II or higher mission shall require the positioning of ALL incident command staff and Section Chiefs with appropriate personnel.

## **B. TASK FORCE TYPING**

1. All task forces utilized in New Mexico for SAR operations shall be typed.
2. The minimum qualifications for all task forces are defined as:
  - a. TYPE IV -
    - i. Field teams - 2 to 7 personnel with one assigned as the leader,

- ii. All personnel must have the necessary equipment to stay in the field or Incident Base for up to 12 hours.
  - iii. Field teams must have one (1) hand held radio per team that is capable of communicating with Incident Base.
  - iv. One member per field team must be experienced with land navigational skills utilizing maps, compasses and Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
- b. TYPE III –
- i. Field teams - 2 to 7 personnel with one assigned as the leader
  - ii. All personnel must have the necessary equipment to stay in the field or Incident Base up to 24 hours.
  - iii. Field teams must have one (1) hand held radio that is capable of communicating with Incident Base on at least two SAR frequencies
  - iv. One member per field team must be experienced with land navigational skills utilizing maps, compasses and Global Positioning Systems (GPS).
- c. TYPE II –
- i. Field teams - 2 to 7 personnel, one assigned as the leader who has completed the Field Team Leader training.
  - ii. All personnel must have the necessary equipment to stay in the field or Incident Base up to 48 hours.
  - iii. Field teams must have two (2) hand held radios that are capable of communicating with Incident Base on at least two (2) SAR frequencies.
  - iv. Field teams must have one (1) HAM licensed operator with one (1) hand held radio capable of operating on the HAM frequencies.
  - v. At least two (2) members per field team must be experienced with land navigational skills utilizing maps, compasses and Global Positioning Systems (GPS).
  - vi. At least one (1) member per field team should have basic medical training and be authorized to provide medical treatment in the field.
- d. TYPE I –
- i. Field teams - 2 to 7 personnel, one assigned as the leader who has completed the Field Team Leader training,
  - ii. All personnel must be able to carry the necessary equipment to stay in the field up to 72 hours
  - iii. Field teams must have at least two (2) hand held radios that are capable of communicating with Incident Base on three or more SAR frequencies
  - iv. Field teams must have at least one (1) HAM licensed operator with one (1) hand held radio capable of utilizing the HAM frequencies.
  - v. All field team members must be experienced with land navigational skills utilizing maps, compasses and Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

- vi. At least one (1) member per field team should have advance medical training and be authorized to provide medical treatment in the field.
3. Additional qualifications may be determined by the Incident Commander (i.e. for a Type III Search Task Force, the Incident Commander may add at least two members who have fair to good knowledge of search theory and search methods).



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guideline for Section Chiefs

**SAR: SOP-08**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this SOP is to define a set of guidelines for qualifications and promotions of Search and Rescue (SAR) Section Chiefs (SC).

**OBJECTIVES:** The Department of Public Safety (DPS) will maintain a cadre of personnel that have been certified as SAR Section Chief. Certified SAR SC will be utilized on SAR missions when the SAR incident has reached a level of complexity where additional Incident Command System (ICS) staff is necessary. Should a SAR mission extend into a second Operational Period, the Incident Commander must fill all three SC positions.

SAR SC shall be Typed according to a measure of their level of experience and responsibilities and shall be promoted based on criteria established by DPS.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6

SAR Plan dated 1/1/1996

**DEFINITIONS**

Section Chief (SC) – A member of the ICS Staff responsible for a particular section of the Incident which may include Operations, Planning and Logistics:

- A. The Operations SC conducts tactical operations, develops tactical objectives, organizes and directs resources.
- B. The Planning SC collects and evaluates information, maintains the status of all resources and the overall status of the incident and develops the Action Plan to accomplish the mission's objective.
- C. The Logistics SC provides resources, services, and any other support required to meet the incident needs.

**GENERAL:**

- A. To apply to become an SC an applicant must fill out a Section Chief application and send it to the New Mexico State Police Search and Rescue office.
  - 1. The SAR Resource Officer will review the application
  - 2. Applicants shall be evaluated for length of SAR service, participation in SAR missions, completion of prerequisites and willingness to travel throughout their home districts
  - 3. If accepted, the SAR Resource Officer will schedule the applicant for the next Section Chief course
- B. Applicants that complete a Section Chief course in a particular Section for the first time

shall be typed as a Type III SC for that section.

- C. Promotion shall be based on the duration of service, performance evaluations, and number of missions the Section Chief has participated in as part of the ICS Staff, the ability to respond to a mission in a greater area, as well as the amount of continuing education pursued in the pertinent section.
1. Section Chiefs promotion are not automatic. Promotion candidates must request promotion via the NMSP SAR Resource Officer
  2. Section Chiefs shall be promoted within their particular Section Chief such as Operations Type III to Operations Type II. Candidates that hold multiple Section Chief Positions shall not have all of their various Sections promoted concurrently, unless they meet the promotion criteria for all of their current position.
  3. For a Type III to be promoted to Type II, the SC must have completed at least three (3) years of service as a Type III SC and participated in at least five (5) missions within that time frame while acting in their specific Section. Promotion candidates should not have received a negative performance evaluation from Incident Commanders that the SC has worked for, must be prepared to stay in the field more than twelve (12) hours and be willing to travel state wide.
  4. For a Type II to be promoted to Type I, the SC must have completed at least three (3) years of service as a Type II SC and participated in at least five (5) missions within that time frame while acting in their specific Section. Promotion candidates should not have received a negative performance evaluation from Incident Commanders that the SC has worked for, must be prepared to stay in the field for 24 hours and be willing to travel state wide.
  5. The above SAR mission participation requirement may be substituted with;
    - a. DPS approved SAR Training missions.
    - b. ICS Section Chief or Incident Management Training, i.e. National SAR School
    - c. Substitutions are on a one to one ratio. One school or training mission can be substituted for one SAR mission provided no less than three (3) of these are actual SAR missions with deployed resources while participating as an SC.
  6. All promotions are subject to approval by the Resource Officer and the New Mexico State Police Chief.
- D. Certified SC are encouraged to wear a uniform while performing duties as SC on SAR missions. If the SC wishes to wear a uniform, the uniform must be personally purchased by the user. The State SAR Office may, if the budget permits, furnish any of the identification items.
1. Gray long or short sleeve dress shirts, of the "law enforcement" type may be worn while on SAR Incidents.
  2. Only the standard issued SC patches may be worn. Patches must be displayed on both sleeves directly under the shoulder seam. *Under no conditions, may the issued patch, or a direct copy, be displayed other than on the shirt described in paragraph "1" above.*

3. An official State Police name tag (black with brass border) may be worn above the right front pocket (directly above the pocket seam). Only the first and last name of the SC may be used.
4. Jackets/Coats will be solid black in color, any style, with standard issued SC patches affixed on both sleeves directly under the shoulder



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guideline for NMSAR Incident Reports

**SAR: SOP-09**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines regarding Department of Public Safety (DPS), New Mexico State Police (NMSP), Search and Rescue (SAR) Incident Report submission dates.

**OBJECTIVES:** It is the policy of the New Mexico Department of Public Safety that the Field Coordinator on all Search and Rescue (SAR) Incidents who closes out a mission or training mission that has been assigned a state mission number must create and submit a Search and Rescue Incident Report in a timely manner.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6  
SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan

**GENERAL:**

**Definitions**

- A. **Search and Rescue Incident Reports** - The official report of any SAR incident wherein an official incident number has been issued to the incident. A SAR Incident includes missions and training missions.

**Procedure**

- A. All Incidents that are issued an official incident number are required to have an Incident Report created and submitted to reflect the incident.
- B. A completed Incident Report will be forwarded to the SAR Resource Officer within 15 days of the closing date of the SAR incident by the Field Coordinator who closed out the incident.
- C. If the report is not received within 20 days, the responsible Field Coordinator will be contacted by the SAR Resource Officer to request the identity of the person(s) responsible for filing the report. That person(s) will be contacted and reminded of the deadlines for submittal of the Incident Reports as reflected in this policy.
- D. If the report is not received within 45 days, correspondence will be sent to the responsible party by the New Mexico State Police Chief advising them that if the report is not received within an additional 45 days, they will be suspended from participation in the SAR program.
- E. If the report remains overdue after 90 days, the New Mexico State Police Chief will authorize the suspension or termination of the Search and Rescue command duties of the responsible party for a period of time as determined by the Chief. A signed and certified letter reflecting this will be forwarded to the person responsible for submittal of

the report.

- F. Incident reports shall include at a minimum the NMSAR 300, Incident Report form, the NMSAR 301, Mission Initiator Questionnaire form, the NMSAR ICS 214, Unit Log form completed by the Incident Commander and the NMSAR ICS 211, Check-in List form. As incidents expand, other documentation shall be completed in submitted as part of the incident report. The documentation shall include all forms, checklists, worksheets, field notes, maps, photos and other forms of documentation as appropriate.
- G. Incident reports may be submitted to the Search and Rescue office via US Postal service or electronically.





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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guideline for Vehicle Usage

**SAR: SOP-10**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the operation of motorized vehicles during Search and Rescue (SAR) missions.

**OBJECTIVES:** It is the policy of the New Mexico Department of Public Safety to allow the use of privately owned vehicles (POV) by SAR responders in route to, during and returning from SAR missions.

**REFERENCES:** None

**GENERAL:** This procedure applies to all New Mexico Search and Rescue (NMSAR) responders. A NMSAR Responder is defined as any volunteer or non-volunteer that is activated to perform duties under the New Mexico Search and Rescue Plan.

- A. The use of POVs on SAR missions may be voluntarily utilized by SAR responders.
- B. All SAR responders shall adhere to the New Mexico Motor Vehicle Code while utilizing their POV during SAR missions.
- C. SAR Responders are **not** authorized by DPS to utilize emergency lights or flashers when responding to SAR missions.
  1. This policy does not preclude the use of emergency lights or flashers to be utilized as an attraction technique while on SAR missions if the vehicle is equipped with the appropriate emergency lights and/or flashers.
  2. Law enforcement personnel, fire department personnel, ambulance personnel or any other agency or non-agency personnel that are authorized by state statute to operate emergency lights or flashers may do so under their home agency protocols.
- D. While utilizing non-enclosed vehicles (i.e. ATV's, snowmobiles, motorbikes, etc.) the drivers and passengers shall utilize the proper personal protective equipment to include the following when appropriate:
  1. Helmets
  2. Gloves
  3. Reflective vests
  4. Eye protection
  5. Protective clothing
  6. Other items as deemed necessary by the Incident Commander or Safety Officer.

- E. Vehicle operators shall operate the vehicles within the established manufacturer's recommendations and within the capabilities of the vehicle operator.
  - 1. The Department of Public Safety shall not be responsible or liable for any vehicle breakage or failure, even if the vehicle is operated within the established manufacturer's recommendations.
  - 2. DPS encourages POV owners to perform preventive maintenance on their vehicles and maintain their vehicles as specified by the manufacturer for the safe operation while on or off SAR missions.
- F. DPS shall only reimburse vehicle operators for the use of POVs within the established DPS reimbursement policy.



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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guideline for Volunteer Reimbursement- Repealed

**SAR: SOP-11**



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
Guideline for Field Coordinator Trainees

**SAR: SOP-12**

**PURPOSE:** This SOP provides guidance about the SAR Field Coordinator Trainee program

**OBJECTIVES:** To identify the procedure for the management of applicants seeking to become Field Coordinators in the New Mexico Search and Rescue Program.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6

SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan

SAR Policy SAR:02 Search And Rescue Field Coordinators

SAR SOP-09 Search and Rescue Incident Reports

SAR SOP-07 SAR Mission and Task Force Typing

**GENERAL:**

- A. After the completion, acceptance and review of a Field Coordinator application, the applicant shall be entered into the Field Coordinator Trainee program.
- B. The Field Coordinator Trainee program includes a period of probation where performance is evaluated. During this period, the applicant shall be enrolled in and expected to attend the next Field Coordinator School and other NMSAR trainings as required, attend SAR missions and conduct themselves professionally at all times.
- C. Field Coordinator Trainees shall not be placed on the home district on-call Field Coordinator rotation until they have met all the required criteria to become a Type IV Field Coordinator.
- D. Field Coordinator Trainees will be required to meet the criteria established below before being granted the Type IV designator:
  1. Comply with the prerequisites for becoming a Field Coordinator as per SAR Policy SAR:02; B; 4; a, b, c, d, e, f and g.
  2. Complete five SAR missions as a Field Coordinator Trainee, for at least one operational period lasting more than four hours each, under the supervision of a Type III or higher Field Coordinator/Incident Commander. The SAR Resource Office may require the Field Coordinator trainee to attend additional training prior to participation as a trainee on SAR missions.
  3. Show completion of additional training courses per direction of the SAR Resource Officer. Topics may include but are not limited to:

- a. Search Management
  - b. Managerial courses
  - c. Search Theory
  - d. SAR Section Chief Training
  - e. SAR resources utilization
  - f. Amateur Radio Licensure
  - g. NIMS IS-700, 701, 702, 703 and 704
  - h. NIMS IS-230, 240, 241 and 242
  - i. Attend the annual SAR Field Coordinator Rendezvous during the duration of probation
4. Receive evaluations from each supervising Field Coordinator/Incident Commander
  5. Receive a positive recommendation from the SAR Resource Officer
  6. Receive a positive recommendation from the SAR Review Board
  7. Receive certification from the Chief of the New Mexico State Police
- E. Field Coordinator Trainees will normally not be permitted to fulfill their Trainee roles on SAR missions outside of their home districts during the probation period. Due to the limited number and duration of SAR missions, lack of supervising Field Coordinators in some districts, and other circumstances, the SAR Field Coordinator Trainee may be instructed by the SAR Resource Officer to attend SAR missions outside out of their home district to perform Field Coordinator Trainee duties. Field Coordinator Trainees may also make a request to the SAR Resource officer to be permitted to perform Field Coordinator Trainee duties outside of their home district. The SAR Resource Officer shall evaluate the request and if the request is approved, shall notify SAR Field Coordinators in the requested district about the Trainee's availability.
- F. Field Coordinators Trainees are required to perform at SAR missions in other Incident Management positions they are qualified for, such as Section Chief. The SAR Resource Officer will consider the performance of the Field Coordinator Trainees during the missions participated as Trainee, as well as Section Chief or other upper Incident Management position for limited-incident districts, for the recommendation of Type IV Field Coordinator status.
- G. The SAR Field Coordinator Trainee should make themselves available for as many SAR mission as possible. The SAR Field Coordinator Trainee is on-call for the duration of their probation period but can elect not to participate on SAR incidents if unavailable.
- H. Field Coordinators Trainees shall only be permitted to fulfill their role as a trainee on Type IV SAR incidents. During these types of incidents, the supervising IC may elect to contact a trainee to participate on the SAR incident. The supervising IC remains the IC of record during the operational period for the SAR incident and does not relinquish any responsibilities to the trainee. The supervising IC shall manage the SAR incident, through the trainee, allowing the trainee to experience the management of a SAR mission. If the Field Coordinator Trainee actions become a hindrance or disruptions, in the opinion of the supervising IC, to the SAR mission, the trainee shall be removed from the trainee position and the actions that led up to removal shall be documented. The supervising IC shall also document actions of the trainee that are beneficial to the SAR incident as well.



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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Search and Rescue Personnel Actions and Appeal Process

**SAR: SOP-13**

**PURPOSE:** There are times that a responsible agency may have to conduct disciplinary action on one of its members. Paid employees are disciplined under the established procedures and policies of the agency and a measurable due process is defined. But with non-paid or volunteer employees, the capabilities of the agency have been undefined. This SOP provides the procedure for SAR Volunteers to appeal pending disciplinary actions as a result from any DPS personnel action and provides a measurable due process for the SAR volunteer.

**OBJECTIVES:** To establish guidelines for personnel actions and define an appeal process for SAR Volunteers. This procedure affects all volunteer SAR persons.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6

SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan

**DEFINITIONS:** SAR Volunteer – Any person who volunteers time and/or equipment to the agency having jurisdiction for SAR operations.

**GENERAL:** All volunteer Search and Rescue Personnel Actions initiated by the Office of the Chief will be done as follows.

- A. Personnel Actions will be recommended by the Search and Rescue Resource Officer to the Office of the Chief via the New Mexico State Police Special Operations Commander.
- B. The Office of the Chief will initiate the action with a letter of contemplated action to the affected Search and Rescue volunteer.
- C. The affected volunteer will have a period of 30 days of receipt to respond to the Office of the Chief to appeal the decision.
- D. If an appeal is initiated, the Special Operations Commander will convene a panel to include himself and 2 other board members, one of which must be either the SAR Council member or the SAR Certified member.
- E. The appeal panel will listen to arguments/suggestions made by the Search and Rescue Resource Officer and affected party and make a determination.
- F. The Special Operations Commander will report that determination to the Office of the Chief for a final decision within 10 working days.
- G. The Office of the Chief will notify the affected party of the final decision concerning the matter within 5 working days.
- H. All decisions from the Office of the Chief will be final.



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**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
SAR EMS Providers, Medical Direction, and First Aid

**SAR: SOP-14**

**PURPOSE:** Volunteer SAR responders become temporary public employees employed by the Department of Public Safety while the volunteers is participating on a State approved SAR incident. This includes those volunteer responders that may hold licensure for emergency medical positions under NMAC 7.27. Since the Department of Public Safety is not deemed a medical response agency, yet emergency medical treatment conducted by SAR responders may be needed during a SAR incident; an identification and medical guideline procedure should be developed.

**OBJECTIVES:** To establish guidelines for EMS licensed and non-licensed personnel for providing emergency medical treatment during a SAR incident.

**REFERENCES:** SAR Act, NMSA 1978, 24-15A-1 to 24-15A-6

SAR Policy 08, Search and Rescue Plan

NMAC 7.27.1-11

**DEFINITIONS:** SAR Volunteer – Any person who volunteers time and/or equipment to the agency having jurisdiction for SAR operations.

**GENERAL:**

- A. Per the Emergency Medical Services Scope of Practice, found in the Supplemental Provisions for EMS Licensure Rule (7.27.11 [NMAC]), EMS providers must have medical direction to perform most of the skills associated with their licensure. At this time, the Department of Public Safety does not offer a “blanket” medical direction for EMS caregivers on SAR incidents. For an EMS caregiver to legally perform skills that require medical direction, the team must provide proof of medical direction for that team or individual(s) on the team to the Department of Public Safety. This may be in the form of a letter from a physician, or a copy of the agreement between the team or individual(s) and the physician. Additionally, the team or individual must provide a copy of their physician approved protocols, commensurate with the level of care approved by the physician.
- B. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) shall validate all EMS caregivers against the Department of Health License Verification List. Furthermore, DPS shall provide a list of the validated EMS caregivers to the SAR Field Coordinators and SAR Logistic Section Chiefs which can be used during SAR incidents.
- C. For EMS caregivers on teams without medical direction, the following skills may be utilized by licensed EMS caregivers:

1. Basic airway management
2. Use of basic adjunctive airway equipment
3. Suctioning
4. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, according to current Emergency Cardiac Care guidelines
5. Obstructed airway management
6. Bleeding control
7. Spine immobilization
8. Splinting
9. Scene assessment, triage, scene safety
10. Use of statewide EMS communications system
11. Childbirth (imminent delivery)
12. Glucometry
13. Oxygen
14. Wound management.

Any skill or medication that is not on this list may not be performed or administered by any level (First Responder, EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate, or Paramedic) without the proof of team or individual medical direction as described above.

- D. There may be SAR teams without licensed EMS caregivers who would like to provide rudimentary care in the form of First Aid. While this level of care does not require medical direction, proof of course completion from an approved First Aid, Wilderness First Aid, or Advanced First Aid course by the members of the team shall be provided to the Department of Public Safety.

E. General First Aid Treatment Guidelines

1. General Principles

a. Standard Precautions and Body Substance Isolation

- i. All blood and body fluids should be considered potentially infectious, and precautions should be taken to protect you against them.
  1. Always place a barrier between you and someone else's body fluids (gloves, eyewear, etc).
  2. Cover all your cuts, scrapes, hangnails, rashes, etc.
  3. Minimize the splashing of body fluids
  4. Handle any sharp object with caution
  5. Do NOT handle food, cigarettes, make-up, etc. when around body fluids
  6. Ensure that body fluid spills are cleaned and the area is properly disinfected
  7. Wash hands or any exposed area immediately and thoroughly after you provide care, or clean a spill.

2. Calling 911 for Emergency Medical Services

a. EMS should be called if the victim:

- i. Is or becomes unconscious
- ii. Has chest pain or pressure



- iii. Has difficulty breathing, is breathing irregularly, wheezing, gurgling or making high pitched noises when breathing, short of breath, dizzy or lightheaded, flushed, bluish in appearance, or pale.
- iv. Is bleeding severely
- v. Has pain or pressure in the abdomen
- vi. Is passing or vomiting blood
- vii. Has slurred speech, severe headache, or seizures
- viii. Has a head, neck, or back injury
- ix. Has possible broken bones
- x. Has been poisoned, or has overdosed on any medication or drug
- xi. Has complications involving any phase of pregnancy

### 3. Making Contact with a Patient

- a. Make sure you are safe, then introduce yourself and ask for permission to provide care, even if the patient came to you apparently seeking out care. If the patient is extremely confused or unconscious, it is assumed that permission has been granted.
- b. It is preferable to find out as much information as possible when caring for a patient. The following victim assessment steps known as “SAMPLE” are helpful:
  - i. Signs & Symptoms
    - 1. Check the level of consciousness – alert, unresponsive, confused, etc.
    - 2. What is the primary complaint? Is there pain? Where?
    - 3. Check vital signs: Respiration (is breathing rapid, slow, noisy?), Pulse rate (is it rapid or slow), Skin Condition (is it cool, moist, clammy, or hot and flushed, etc.), and Pupils (are they dilated, constricted, or unequal?).
  - ii. Allergies
    - 1. Ask the victim about allergies to foods, medications, insects, or other things.
    - 2. Look for medical alert bracelets, necklaces, etc.
    - 3. Ask if they have been exposed to an allergen.
  - iii. Medications
    - 1. Is the victim on any medications or under the influence of any drugs?
  - iv. Past Medical History
    - 1. Ask victim about any medical conditions that may relate to their current problems
    - 2. Look for medical alert bracelets, necklaces, etc
  - v. Last Meal
    - 1. When and what did they eat and when?

- vi. Events
  - 1. What events led up to this illness or injury?
- 4. Specific Emergencies & Conditions
  - a. Bleeding Emergencies
    - i. Minor Wound with Minimal Bleeding
      - 1. Clean wound with warm water & soap.
      - 2. Dress wound with bandage to prevent infection
  - b. Significant Bleeding – CALL EMS
    - i. Utilize Direct Pressure with a bandage and gloved hand
    - ii. If an extremity, elevate the area of bleeding
    - iii. If unsuccessful in stopping the bleeding, utilize pressure points unless caregiver has specific training in tourniquet use; if so, use tourniquet.
    - iv. Once bleeding successfully controlled, dress and bandage the wound
    - v. Call EMS if necessary
- 5. Related Emergencies
  - a. Penetrating Object – CALL EMS
    - i. Do not remove, stabilize with bandaging, and Call EMS
  - b. Severed Body Part – CALL EMS
    - i. Follow the bleeding control sequence
    - ii. Wrap part in sterile or clean cloth, and seal in plastic bag.
    - iii. Place on bed of ice, but do not allow direct contact with the ice, and do not bury the part in the ice
  - c. Bites (Animal/Human)
    - i. Control bleeding
    - ii. Wash with soap and water x 5 minutes
    - iii. Dress and bandage
    - iv. Advise patient they should be evaluated for infection (rabies, Hepatitis B, etc.) and possibly receive a tetanus shot. To not seek out further medical care may end in serious infection and possibly death.
  - d. Internal Bleeding – CALL EMS
    - i. If patient has blood loss from mouth, rectum, unexpected blood loss from vagina, or blood in the urine, Signs and Symptoms of shock (see next section), or a painful, tender, or hard spot on the abdomen, they may have internal bleeding
  - e. Shock
    - i. Signs of Shock

1. Anxiety, restlessness, or irritability
  2. Altered consciousness
  3. Rapid pulse rate, with weak pulses
  4. Rapid Breathing
  5. Pale, cool, moist & sweaty skin
  6. Lackluster eyes; dazed look
  7. Weak, helpless feeling
  8. Thirst
  9. Nausea
- ii. Care for Shock – CALL EMS
1. Keep the victim lying down, if possible
  2. Try to make the victim comfortable
  3. Comfort and reassure realistically
  4. Control any bleeding
  5. Elevate the legs 10 – 12 inches, unless there is reason to suspect spinal injury or broken bones.
  6. Cover the victim, maintaining body temperature.
  7. Do not give anything by mouth
  8. If victim is nauseous or begins to vomit, roll them onto their side
- f. Burns
- i. 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Burn Treatment
1. If small area is involved, cool the burned area, immersing in cold water or apply cold cloths
  2. Cover with clean dry dressing
  3. Elevate burned limbs above the heart
  4. Treat for shock – CALL EMS IF NECESSARY
- ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Burn Treatment – CALL EMS
1. Do not apply water to cool area
  2. Cover with clean dry dressing
  3. Elevate if possible
  4. Treat for Shock
- iii. Electrical Burn – CALL EMS
1. Turn power source off
  2. Check breathing and circulation, and provide CPR if necessary
  3. Do not move unless necessary

4. Cover burn with dry sterile dressing
- iv. Chemical Burn – CALL EMS
  1. Wash away chemical with flowing water for at least 20 minutes
  2. Remove contaminated clothing
  3. If dry chemical (lime, etc), brush away chemical
  4. Chemical in one eye – rinse contaminated eye downward so fluid flows away from other eye.
- v. Smoke Inhalation – CALL EMS
  1. Move to safe area
  2. Check breathing and circulation, providing CPR if necessary
  3. Place victim in a semi-seated or reclined position
- g. Strains & Sprains
  - i. Utilize the “RICE” method of treatment.
    1. Rest the limb, discontinuing activity
    2. Ice the limb, applying a cold pack, but not directly on the skin
    3. Compress, using an elastic or conforming wrap to hold the ice in place on the injury. Do NOT make the wrap too tight.
    4. Elevate the limb above the heart to reduce swelling
- h. Dislocations & Fractures – CALL EMS
  - i. Immobilize the area, using pillows, jackets, blankets, or accepted methods of splinting
  - ii. Care for shock
  - iii. Treat any additional or secondary injuries
- i. Head, Neck, or Spinal Injury – CALL EMS
  - i. Signs of a Significant Head or Spinal Injury
    1. A change in consciousness
    2. Difficulty breathing
    3. Impaired vision
    4. Inability to move an extremity
    5. Headache
    6. Vomiting
    7. Loss of Balance
    8. Tingling, or numbness in hands, fingers, feet, and/or toes
  - ii. Treatment
    1. Stabilize the head and neck, preventing movement

2. Maintain an open airway
3. Activate EMS
4. Care for Shock

j. Environmental Emergencies

i. Heat Cramps

1. If patient presents with painful muscle cramps, moist cool skin, and sweating:
  - a. Move to a cool place
  - b. Give water or electrolyte solution
  - c. Massage the muscles involved

ii. Heat Exhaustion – CALL EMS

1. If patient presents with Cold and clammy skin, Sweating, Weak pulse, Shallow breathing, Nausea, Stomach cramps, Weakness, Fatigue, and Headache
  - a. Move to a cool place
  - b. Elevate legs
  - c. Remove sweat soaked clothing
  - d. Apply cool packs
  - e. Give water, if they are conscious
  - f. Monitor their status closely

iii. Heat Stroke – CALL EMS

1. There is a myth that permeates First Aid and EMS Care that the Heat Stroke patient will always have hot, dry skin. This is ABSOLUTELY NOT TRUE. The Heat Stroke patient may indeed present with sweaty skin. The differential should be the patient's level of consciousness. If a patient has hot, flushed skin, is confused or unconscious, and sweaty or dry skin:
  - a. Move to a cool place
  - b. Immediately cool victim by fanning and applying cool water
  - c. Remove excess clothing
  - d. CALL EMS

iv. Hypothermia – CALL EMS

1. Mild: Patient is shivering, with slurred speech, stumbling, staggering, but is usually conscious and able to speak.
  - a. Remove from the cold environment
  - b. Have a source of heat
  - c. Replace wet clothing with dry clothing
  - d. Provide a hat, blankets, a coat, etc to insulate the victim

- e. Seek Medical attention
- 2. Severe Hypothermia: Patient's shivering has stopped, with muscles becoming stiff and rigid. Skin may have a bluish, waxy appearance, and the skin does not react to pain. The pulse and respirations may slow down, with dilated pupils. At the most severe levels, the patient may appear dead.
  - a. Call EMS
  - b. Keep victim from getting colder
  - c. Do NOT rewarm this patient
  - d. GENTLY move the patient out of the cold environment. Rough handling can cause the patient's heart to stop
  - e. If absolutely sure there is not pulse or breathing (check pulse for one minute), then initiate CPR
- v. Bites and Stings
  - 1. Bees, Wasps, & Hornets
    - a. Wash the site
    - b. Apply a cold pack
    - c. If a bee sting, it is medical tradition to NOT remove the stinger with fingers or tweezers if possible – but rather use a flat edge (credit card) to scrape the stinger out
    - d. If allergic reaction suspected, ascertain if patient has medications for treating their own condition and CALL EMS
  - 2. Spiders – Black Widow (common in NM) & Brown Recluse (rare in NM)
    - a. Signs of a Black Widow envenomation include a possibly painful initial bite, followed in 1 – 3 hours by abdominal pain, dizziness, headache, sweating, severe cramps, weakness, and occasionally difficulty breathing, especially in the very old or very young.
    - b. Brown Recluse bites do not show signs for several hours or days, and present with a small bite that enlarges to a big area of ulceration. Many other small wounds that develop infections are misdiagnosed as Recluse spider bites. The key is to get the infection treated, regardless of the source.
      - i. In either case:
      - ii. Wash site
      - iii. Apply cold pack
      - iv. CALL EMS
  - 3. Snake Bite
    - a. CALL EMS
    - b. Do NOT attempt to suck out venom

- c. Do NOT attempt to cut over the bite
  - d. Do NOT use an ice pack over the bite site
  - e. Do NOT use a tourniquet
  - f. There is some evidence suggesting a restricting band that slows only lymphatic flow is possibly helpful, but knowing how tight to apply this band in a stressful situation is difficult.
  - g. Keep the affected limb below heart level
  - h. If an extremity, splint/immobilize
  - i. Reassure the victim
4. Lightning Strike – CALL EMS
- a. Lightning strikes can injure in several ways: Direct strike, contact (i.e. leaning against a tree when the tree is hit), side flash or splash (i.e. being near a tree and the electricity “splashes”), ground current or step voltage, and blunt trauma from being thrown by the pressure wave. Recently there is a theory that the pressure wave alone can cause cardiac arrhythmias, even in the absence of the patient being hit by any form of the actual electricity.
  - b. The prevention of lightning injuries should be the goal of any person engaging in outdoor activity. Be aware of the potential for severe weather. Seek appropriate shelter when a storm is approaching. Be aware of the latest lightning safety recommendations from reputable sources, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association ([www.NOAA.gov](http://www.NOAA.gov)).
  - c. The major concern in any lightning injury is respiratory and/or cardiac arrest. As in any situation requiring CPR, the caregiver should be aware of the latest emergency cardiac care guidelines for automatic external defibrillation, chest compressions, and ventilations. In the setting of a respiratory/cardiac arrest, appropriately applied CPR/AED is the only hope for survival the patient has.
  - d. Many lightning injury situations involve multiple patients. Identify the most severely injured, and direct personnel to initiate CPR when necessary. While a person in cardiac arrest might be “triaged out” in situations such as motor vehicle crashes, patients needing CPR from a lightning strike should be the priority patients.
  - e. If there are indeed multiple patients, all patients should be monitored and evacuated as soon as possible. A patient that is breathing and has a pulse after a strike will almost assuredly maintain their pulse and respirations, unless there has been another injury (internal bleeding, brain injury, etc.).
  - f. In summary, for a victim of lightning strike:
    - i. Call EMS

- ii. Remove the patient and caregivers from the environment if at all possible
- iii. Check for respiratory effort and pulses – initiate CPR if necessary
- iv. Apply an AED as soon as available
- v. For patients with pulse and respirations but who have other injuries, treat their injuries as appropriate.

k. Medical Emergencies

i. Diabetic Emergencies

1. The most commonly encountered diabetic emergency in the pre-hospital setting is when the diabetic's sugar gets too low. Even if one is not sure if the problem is low blood sugar or high blood sugar, the prudent thing is to give sugar if possible.
2. Signs of Low Blood Sugar
  - a. Confusion
  - b. Weakness, dizziness
  - c. Hunger
  - d. Cool, clammy skin
  - e. Possibly elevated pulse and breathing rate
3. Treatment – CALL EMS
  - a. Interview the victim and check for responsiveness
  - b. If able to swallow, give sugar in some form
  - c. If unable to swallow or unconscious – CALL EMS
  - d. If patient improves in response to sugar, monitor them closely. They will likely know what to do next.

ii. General Medical Emergencies – CALL EMS

1. These may include Heart Attack, Stroke, Asthma Attack, Seizures, Overdose/Poisoning, and Severe Allergic Reaction. Signs of a significant medical emergency may include any of the following:
2. Heart Attack: Pale, sweaty skin, shortness of breath, chest pain with or without radiation to either arm, the back, the jaw, and the shoulders; Nausea, vomiting, and weakness.
3. Stroke: Pale, sweaty skin, dizziness, lightheadedness, confusion; Severe headache, paralysis of limbs, slurred speech, breathing and swallowing difficulty, and a facial droop. Sometimes, a stroke may be heralded by sudden unconsciousness and seizures.
4. Asthma Attack: Wheezing, difficulty breathing, increased pulse rate, anxiety, coughing, and “accessory muscle use” of their chest and abdomen to help them breathe.
5. Seizures: Fairly self explanatory – stiffening and contraction/relaxation of



the extremities and body in response to an illness or injury affecting the brain

6. Overdose/Poisoning: Signs of intoxication, confusion, stumbling, falling, vomiting, difficulty breathing, signs of shock, seizures, and death
7. Severe Allergic Reaction: Flushed skin, signs of shock, difficulty breathing, sometimes appearing similar to an asthma attack, hives, itching, diarrhea, swelling of the face, lips, tongue, with a sense of a lump in the throat, fainting, and confusion.
8. Treatment:
  - a. Interview the victim, obtaining as much history as possible
  - b. Help them obtain medications possibly necessary for their treatment, but do NOT administer them...the patient must administer them to themselves if at all possible. Assisting the patient with the medication is acceptable.
  - c. Keep the patient at rest, and do not allow them to eat or drink anything (diabetes is the exception, and in rare cases where they have medications for their known condition)
  - d. Keep them from getting chilled or overheated
  - e. If actively seizing, protect them from harm during the seizure (but do NOT restrain them, or try to put ANYTHING in their mouth)
  - f. CALL EMS



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
NEW MEXICO SEARCH AND RESCUE**



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**  
SAR Unmanned Aircraft Systems

**SAR: SOP-15**

**PURPOSE:**

This procedure establishes the authorized use and operational guidelines for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) utilized by SAR Volunteers on authorized SAR incidents.

**OBJECTIVES:**

To establish a volunteer UAS program for Search and Rescue incidents managed by the New Mexico Department of Public Safety (NMDPS)

**REFERENCES:**

- A. FAA Order 8900.1 Volume 16 Unmanned Aircraft Systems
- B. Federal Aviation Regulations, 14 CFR Part 61
- C. Federal Aviation Regulations, 14 CFR Part 91
- D. Federal Aviation Regulations, 14 CFR Part 107
- E. SAR Policy 08 – Search and Rescue Plan

**DEFINITIONS:**

- A. Defined Incident Perimeter – A defined perimeter to be determined based on the scope of the operation and a defined operational ceiling at or below four hundred
- B. (400) feet Above Ground Level (AGL).
- C. Night Flight – Flight of a UAS that occurs between one half (1/2) hour after sunset and one half (1/2) hour before sunrise. The time of sunset and sunrise are determined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- D. Pilot – The volunteer individual responsible for the overall flight operations for a specific mission. The Pilot has the final responsibility for all aspects of the UAS mission to include safety.
- E. Program Coordinator (PC) – the PC is the Special Operations Bureau Commander. The PC is responsible for the administrative functions related to the UAS program, including authorization of volunteer UAS equipment and pilots.
- F. Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) – An aircraft without a human pilot on board. Its flight is controlled either autonomously by computers on board the vehicle or under the remote control of a pilot.
- G. Visual Observer – A person who is designated by the PIC to assist the remote PIC and the person manipulating the flight controls of the UAS to supplement situational

awareness and Visual Line of Sight (VLOS), assisting with seeing and avoiding other air traffic or objects aloft or on the ground.

## **GENERAL:**

### **A. Organization**

1. The Special Operations Bureau Commander (PC) will oversee all DPS UAS operations. The SAR Resource Office will be the chief administrator of the volunteer UAS program.
2. All volunteer UAS pilots, when deployed on a SAR incident, will work under the direct supervision of the SAR Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD) or the SAR Operations Section Chief. If the SAR Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD) or SAR Operations Section Chief positions are not filled, the UAS pilots will work under the supervision of the SAR Incident Commander.

### **B. Procedures and Restrictions for Volunteer UAS Deployment and Use**

1. The UAS pilot must obtain applicable authorizations, permits, or certificates required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prior to deploying or operating the UAS, and these authorizations, permits, and certificates shall be maintained and current. The PC requires all volunteer pilots shall:
  - a. Obtained certification as remote pilot airman with a small UAS rating in accordance with Part 107 of the Federal Aviation Regulations.
  - b. All UAS to be utilized on SAR incidents have completed registration with the FAA.
  - c. All volunteer UAS pilots operating under this SOP will be required to show proof of completion of requirements to the SAR AOBD, SAR Operations Chief or SAR Incident Commander prior to launching aircraft on a SAR incident.
2. The UAS will be operated only by personnel (pilots) who have been trained in the operation of the system.
3. The pilot shall inspect and test UAS equipment prior to each deployment to verify the proper functioning of all equipment and the airworthiness of the device.
4. The UAS equipment is the responsibility of the pilot and will be used with reasonable care to ensure proper functioning. Equipment malfunctions shall be brought to the attention of the pilot's supervisor as soon as possible.
5. All flights will be documented on a form or database designed for that purpose, and all flight time shall be accurately recorded. In addition, each deployment of the UAS shall include information regarding the reason for the flight; the time, date, and location of the flight; the name of the supervisor approving the deployment, name of the pilot and a summary of the activities covered, actions taken, and outcomes from the deployment.
6. The UAS shall not be operated in an unsafe manner or in violation of FAA rules.
7. The UAS shall not be equipped with weapons of any kind.

8. The Special Operations Bureau Commander (PC) and SAR Resource Officer shall approve any payload used on a UAS.
9. The UAS shall not be used for routine observation of the public at large.
10. The UAS shall not be used for surveilling or “spying” on the public.
11. The UAS shall not be used in flights over populated areas unless the populated area is within the SAR search area.
12. All missions will be flown in accordance with the FAA regulations 14 CFR Part 107.
13. Night Flight operations shall be restricted unless the UAS pilot has obtained appropriate waivers from FAA.
14. The Department of Public Safety shall not be responsible or liable for any UAS, UAS support equipment or UAS payload breakage or failure, even if the UAS is operated within the established manufacturer’s recommendations. Any damage to the UAS and associated equipment shall be the responsibility of the UAS owner.

#### C. Approved Mission Uses

All UAS mission requests shall be initiated by the SAR Incident Commander and then forwarded to the SAR Area Commander for approval. The SAR Area Commander shall notify the SAR Resource Officer of the request and approval. The SAR Area Commander shall insure that the UAS to be used has been approved by the PC.

#### D. Pre-Flight Briefing

A briefing led by the pilot, and to include the observer, will be conducted prior to aircraft launch. This briefing includes, but is not limited to:

1. Review of the missions goals and expected outcomes.
2. Review of current and forecasted weather conditions.
3. Review of current Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) and Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) that have been issued for the proposed flight area.
4. Identification of mission limitations and safety issues such as battery charge, GPS signal strength, and potential for radio interference.
5. Review of proposed flight area to include surrounding airspace and any obstructions that are present.
6. Review of communication procedures between pilot, observer, and other personnel used to support the mission. This includes verifying phone numbers and radio frequencies used to communicate with Air Traffic Control (ATC) in the event of a fly-away or other flight emergency when operating in controlled airspace.
7. Review of emergency/contingency procedures including aircraft system failure, flight termination, diversion, lost link procedures, and lost communications with ATC if applicable.
8. Execution of a pre-flight check utilizing the approved checklist.

E. Maintenance

UAS maintenance is the responsibility of the UAS owner in accordance to manufacturer's recommendations. The New Mexico Department of Safety will not be required to insure recommend maintenance is conducted or make payments for said maintenance.

F. UAS Observer

In the event an observer is required, the pilot on-scene will assign an observer from available on-scene personnel. All training and mission details will be provided to the selected observer at the time of the mission.

G. Accident Notification and Investigation

All inflight accidents involving fatalities, injuries, fly-aways, or in which the aircraft receives substantial damage will be immediately reported to the UAS supervisor, SAR Incident Commander, SAR Resource Officer and Special Operations Bureau Commander (PC). The Special Operations Bureau Commander (PC) will immediately notify the FAA in cases of serious injury, or loss of consciousness, or damage to property (other than the UAS) in excess of \$500. Any property damage caused by an accident involving the UAS will immediately be reported to the UAS supervisor.

H. Documentation Of Flight Time and Mission Reporting

All UAS flight missions shall be documented on a UAS Flight Report and submitted with the SAR Incident Report. At a minimum, the original UAS Flight Report shall include the date, time, location, Pilot's name, Observers name, flight time, NMDPS UAS registration number, and a brief summary of the mission.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Pre-flight checklist
- B. UAS Flight Report form