

SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Search and Rescue Bureau Communications Unit Standard Operation Procedures

MISSION STATEMENT: Communications Unit personnel are responsible for providing communication services to the department. Although this assignment is primarily in support of the Search and Rescue Bureau during missing person incidents, it also includes support of any department functions including but not limited to: natural disasters, law enforcement details, criminal investigations, and public relations events.

ADMINISTRATION:

Chain of Command: The Administrative person in charge of the Communications Unit shall hold the rank of Reserve Lieutenant or Unit Leader. The Unit will be broken into the appropriate number of Squads. Each Squad will have a Squad Sergeant or a Squad Leader. Members are responsible for following the Incident Command System Chain of Command during operations.

Administrative/Operations Sergeant/Leader - Responsible for the administration and records of unit personnel

Training Sergeant/Leader- Responsible for the coordination of training along with the training records and shall act as the unit representative to the Bureau Training Committee.

Squad Sergeant/Leader- Responsible for the supervision and management of the squad as well as maintenance and inventory of all equipment and hardware assigned to the communications unit

The Communications Unit is responsible for radio equipment and communications necessary to conduct a SAR mission. The Communications Unit shall maintain a supply of topographic maps, ICS forms and related supplies for SAR missions. The Communications Unit is responsible for issuing equipment from the Command Bus and ensuring it is returned after the mission has ended.

Upon activation, the Reserve Lieutenant /Unit Leader or designee shall determine the initial support required and arrange for the Command Bus to be driven to the search Command Post. Drivers must be assigned to ensure the unit equipment is moved to the search site. Upon arrival at the search site, unit members will assist with the establishment of base camp. If no driver is available the Reserve Lieutenant /Unit Leader or designee will notify the on duty SAR Coordinator.

TRAINING:

All Communications members shall be trained in the proper operation of all unit vehicles including all systems on the vehicles.

Members of the Communications Unit are encouraged to attend the SAR Academy for field qualification, but are not required to do so. Permanent members may remain civilian volunteers and participate only in controlled field operations.

QUALIFICATIONS

Each unit member shall be classified as to his or her individual capability. This classification will be based on training, education and practical field experience. They are listed below in ascending order. Each member shall be qualified at each level before progressing to the next.

Training provided to meet minimum qualifications shall meet SDSO SAR Academy standards, NASAR standards or those outlined by the unit commander where not otherwise specified.

Communications Trainee

The Trainee position is the entry-level position. Training will be provided and personnel should be utilized in an observation mode only. To obtain this rating you shall be authorized as a Citizen Volunteer.

Communications Specialist 3 (Radio Operator)

This position is intended as the radio operator's position. Persons at this level are expected to be familiar with the location and operation of all equipment assigned to the unit. They are also expected to be proficient radio operators. To obtain this rating you shall meet the following requirements:

- SAR Tech III or equivalent
- Basic ICS (100) / SEMS
- Communications Specialist 3 training Class
- Mobile Command Post radio room Ride-Along (6 Hours)

Communications Specialist 2 (Incident Support Specialist)

This position is intended for the individual wishing to expand their capabilities. This position enables the individual to support the operation in several other areas. This would include map plotting, check-in, message runner and scribe functions. To obtain this rating you shall meet the following requirements:

- ICS (200) / SEMS
- Communications Specialist 2 training Class
- Minimum of 10 hours as the Radio operator on an actual SAR mission

Communications Specialist 1 (Communications Specialist)

This position is for the field qualified individual. This person can be utilized as a foot deployed relay, place portable repeaters or provide communications support to field teams. This individual may also serve as a regular search team member. To obtain this rating you shall meet the following requirements:

- Communications Specialist 1 training Class
- SDSO SAR Academy (Rescue Volunteer qualified)
- FCC Amateur Radio License (Technician Class or greater)
- Full Required Field Pack

MOBILE COMMAND POST DRIVER:

A current Class C License issued by the State of California is required. All drivers must have prior approval by an established Communications Unit driver evaluator. All drivers of a Mobile Command Post must know and adhere to all laws and department procedures pertaining to the operations of a vehicle.

REQUIRED PARTICIPATION:

It is expected that Communications Unit members will meet minimum standards of participation in: Missions, Quarterly All Units Training Exercises, Quarterly Bureau Training Meetings and Unit Meetings as defined by the Bureau Procedures.

Unit Meetings: The Communications Unit shall hold a monthly meeting at a place and time as designated by the Reserve Lieutenant/Unit Leader.

Time Tracking: All Communications Unit personnel shall enter their monthly hours and mileage into the Mission Manager Application no later than the 27th of each month. The Administrative/Operations Sergeant/Squad Leader shall review the times/mileage, no later than the 29th of each month.

The Unit Lieutenant/Unit Leader will review monthly unit hours after the 1st of the following month. Any discrepancies shall be brought to the attention of the individual member for corrections.

EQUIPMENT

Each unit member should be prepared to operate self-contained for 24 hours. On each callout each individual shall have immediately available to them the following equipment:

- First-Aid Kit (see bureau pack list)
- 10 Essentials (see bureau pack list)
- Pencils (2 minimum)
- Pens (2 Black fine point Sharpies)
- Pens (2 ball point pens)
- ICS forms packet
- Food for 24 hours (2400 calorie minimum)
- Water (2 quarts minimum)
- Flashlight or Headlamp (with extra bulb and batteries)

General Notes

Communications Unit members who have completed the SAR Academy shall stay proficient in other basic disciplines such as: Orienteering, Basic tracking, Basic Survival, Basic Communication procedures, etc.