



*Prepared for the San Diego County  
Sheriff's Department Search and  
Rescue Team, Motorized Unit*

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**San Diego County Sheriff's Department  
Search and Rescue Team**

**Motorized Unit Standard Operating Procedures**

Further distribution authorization requests shall be referred to the San Diego County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team Coordinator, ASTREA Base, 1745 N. Marshall Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020, 619-956-4990 (office)

**San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Search and Rescue Team**

**Motorized Unit Standard Operating Procedures**

**Signature Page**

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## 1. Introduction

This document contains standards for the Reserve Deputies, Rescue Volunteers, and Citizen Volunteers of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Detail Motorized Unit.

These standards are intended to be used as a reference for Motorized Unit members on acceptable practices of personal conduct, vehicle requirements, and field certification parameters. These standards will be used as a framework for the acceptable roles and missions of the Motorized Unit and for the planning of Motorized Unit events. Furthermore, these standards will be a guide for other SAR and Unit functions, such as participation in quarterly All-Unit trainings, quarterly Team Meetings, and monthly Motorized Unit meetings. This SOP is designed to ensure that Motorized Unit members understand their roles and responsibilities within the Unit as well as maintaining a high-level of professionalism within SDSARSAR. The SOP shall support SDSARSAR Policy and Procedures.

### 1.1 Updates and Revisions

The Motorized Unit has a responsibility to review this document annually. Suggested updates or revisions are to be submitted to the Motorized Unit Administrative Sergeant via a Squad Leader. The Administrative Sergeant will prepare a recommendation to the Unit Leader/Lieutenant for consideration. The Unit Leader will, in turn, submit suggested revisions to the Division Leader/Captain who, in turn, will submit it to the SAR Detail chain of command for final review and approval.

### 1.2 List of Abbreviations

AS	Administrative Sergeant
CP	Command Post
CPR/AED	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation / Automated External Defibrillator
CV	Civilian Volunteer
DSW	Disaster Service Worker
EMR	Emergency Medical Responder
EMT	Executive Management Team

EMT-B	Emergency Medical Technical-Basic
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
GPS	Global Positioning System
HAM	Amateur radio operator
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
MM	Mission Manager
OES	California State Office of Emergency Services
POST	Peace Officer Standards and Training
POV	Privately Owned Vehicle
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services
RV	Rescue Volunteer
SAR	Search and Rescue
SDSD	San Diego County Sheriff's Department
SDSDSAR	San Diego County Sheriff's Department SAR
SL	Squad Leader
SMS	Short Message System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TS	Training Sergeant
UL/RL	Unit Leader/Reserve Lieutenant
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue

## **2. Motorized Unit**

### **2.1. Overview**

The Motorized Unit is responsible for many aspects of motorized transportation requirements in support of the SAR mission. The Motorized Unit contributes to the SDDSDSAR mission principally through perimeter searches and containment, primary and secondary road searches, hasty searches, deployment of tactical, technical, and canine field teams, logistical resupply, serving as forward command posts and communication retransmission sites, performing route reconnaissance for other department vehicles, subject recovery, and vehicle recovery and extrication.

The Motorized Unit can be deployed in both urban and field searches and can perform multiple functions simultaneously. Unit members typically use POV's during SAR deployment.

### **2.2. Organizational Structure**

The Motorized Unit is a sub-unit of Division I, and is led by the Motorized UL/RL. The Motorized UL is responsible for the overall direction and leadership of the Unit as well as for maintaining Unit discipline and professionalism. The Motorized UL reports to the SDDSDSAR Reserve Captain/Division Leader for Division I who, in turn, reports to the SDDSDSAR Commander who, in turn, reports directly to the SDDSDSAR Coordinator.

In the event that the UL is unavailable, the position's responsibilities may be delegated to the Administrative Sergeant, the Training Sergeant, or to a Squad Leader, as appropriate.

The Motorized Unit is divided into the appropriate number of squads depending on the number of personnel in the Unit. Each squad will be assigned a Squad Leader. Other key billets within the Unit include: a Training Sergeant, who is responsible for all Unit training and coordination; and the Administrative Sergeant, who is responsible for Unit administrative requirements as needed, including use of the Mission Manager (MM) platform for time keeping, member data, mission response statistics and other MM design features that support the SAR Team. The Motorized Unit chain of command is shown below in Figure 2-1.

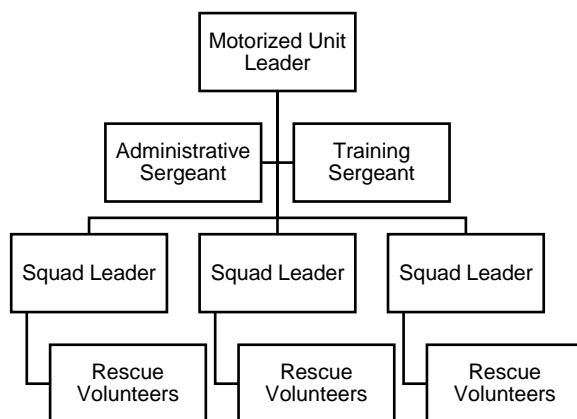


Figure 2-1. SDDSDSAR Motorized Unit Organization Chart

## 2.3. Unit Member Requirements

Any SDDSDSAR member may transfer to the Motorized Unit with the approval of both the Motorized Unit UL and the UL from which the member is transferring.

The Motorized Unit is a "field" unit and Unit members must maintain the minimum qualifications and equipment necessary to perform the functions for which Motorized is responsible. In addition, each member must meet the minimum participation requirements noted in Section 2.4 of this document. Because of the unique nature of using POV's for searches, the 8-mile annual SAR qualification hike is not required for field duty within the Unit. However, Unit members lacking full SAR field qualification will generally be restricted from participating on ground search teams and can participate in a Motorized or other support capacity only. All members are encouraged to participate in the annual hike requirement if they are physically able. Motorized Unit members who are fully field qualified can participate in any search capacity in which they are qualified, subject to the needs of the Unit and the mission. All other standard SAR field qualification requirements are required and are detailed in Section 2.4. Ownership of a 4WD vehicle is not required to join the Unit. Any appropriately licensed and insured vehicle can be used in the Unit within the limits of the vehicle's and Unit member's capabilities

All Unit members will adhere to the current SDDSDSAR uniform and grooming regulations.

## 2.4. Unit Participation

All Motorized Unit members must meet minimum standards of participation in missions, quarterly All-Units training exercises, quarterly SAR Team training meetings, Unit trainings and Unit meetings as defined by the Team and Unit Policies and Procedures SOP. Those requirements include:

- Graduation from the SDSDSAR Academy (can be waived by the Motorized UL)
- Maintaining a current DSW card
- Maintaining current CPR/AED certifications (renewed every two years)
- Maintaining current EMR or Title 22 certification (renewed every two years).
- Maintaining current fitness certification (optional for Motorized Unit members, as described in Section 2.3) (renewed annually through completion of the qualification hike)
- Participating in at least 100 hours of approved SDSDSAR activities annually
- Reasonable effort to participate in half of all team-wide missions
- Participation in at least half of the scheduled All-Units training exercises each year
- Participation in at least half of the SAR Team meetings held each year
- Reasonable effort to attend all Unit meetings and training events
- Within one year of joining the Motorized Unit, members must obtain an amateur HAM radio license, at least at the Technician level, and a UHF/VHF radio (portable or mobile, or both).

Participation in other units' training events announced in the MM Calendar is encouraged.

These requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the SDSDSAR EMT. All changes to Unit requirements will be communicated to Unit members and will be included in updates to this document.



Members who do not meet SDSARSAR or Unit requirements will be subject to field and/or membership status evaluation. In these instances, the UL may prohibit members from further participation until such time as all requirements are met.

## **2.5. Unit Meetings**

The Motorized Unit holds a monthly meeting usually arranged by the Unit TS, AS, and/or UL. This meeting typically covers general SDSARSAR information disseminated at the most recent EMT meeting as well as information about upcoming Unit and SAR Team events. Training on a relevant SAR skill or topic may also be provided. All Unit members are encouraged to attend.

The monthly Unit meeting is held on the first Monday following the week of the EMT meeting, which is nominally held on the first Wednesday of the month. Typical Unit meeting length is approximately one hour. Typical training meetings are 1.5-2 hours. Meeting and training times can be recorded in MM.

Uniforms are not required for Unit meetings, although unit shirts are encouraged. If a member cannot attend a Unit meeting, advance notice should be given to their SL, the AS, or the UL. RSVP via MM is typically sufficient.

## **2.6. Unit Training**

As discussed in Section 2.5, the Motorized Unit conducts monthly training in conjunction with its monthly meetings. Ideally, the Unit also conducts a quarterly training event. This training is usually "field oriented," and incorporates much of what has been learned during the monthly trainings. The quarterly training events may be overnight in duration, depending on the training requirements. These training events must have prior approval from the SAR Coordinator via a Training Lesson Plan and should be posted on the MM calendar. Training topics include, but are not limited to:

- Proficiency in paved road and off-road driving
- Familiarity with local backcountry roads
- Skilled in man tracking from vehicles
- Effective use of radio communications
- Navigation using GPS, compass, and maps

- Motor vehicle safety and preventive maintenance
- Vehicle recovery
- Proficiency in first aid, CPR, and the use of vehicles for patient extraction
- Knowledge of SAR management and search techniques
- Or any other topic that enhances the skill or readiness of the Unit

## **2.7. Specialized Training**

Motorized Unit members are encouraged to pursue specialized certifications and training in any SAR area, such as Off-Road Specialist, EMT-B, or OES Search Management; as well as to pursue certifications from other SAR units; e.g., Tech Rescue Specialist, Land Navigation Specialist, Alpine Team, USAR, or FAA Part 107 UAS pilot certification.

If a Unit member is interested in pursuing specialized training in a field relevant to SDSARSAR (e.g., EMT-B), the time spent in that training may be counted toward the 100 hour minimum Unit participation requirement and should be recorded in MM.

Training that is relevant to SAR, but outside the SAR certifications, is also allowed in certain circumstances. FCC Amateur Radio certification is an example of appropriate training. Every Unit member shall obtain an FCC Amateur Radio License, at least at the Technician level, within one year of joining the Unit. Other acceptable training topics include off-highway driving and vehicle extrication, as well as any form of motorized vehicle training such as with quads, motorcycles, and mountain bikes. All POST-certified training relevant to the SAR mission is also encouraged.

## **2.8. Unit Member Time Commitments**

Like all SAR members, Motorized Unit members should expect a large time commitment to SDSARSAR. Because of the unique requirements of off-road POV's, additional personal expenses should be expected compared to members of other SAR units. In addition to the mandatory SAR field pack list for field qualified personnel, Unit members are expected to own and maintain equipment found on the Motorized equipment list (see Appendix, Section 4).

## **2.9. Unit Member Communications**

Communication between Unit members outside of SAR mission time is primarily by SMS text message, email, and telephone.

For communications intended for SDSARS as a whole, the Unit can post messages or calendar entries in MM. The Unit calendar entries for meetings and trainings are managed by the TS, AS, and UL.

## **2.10. Time Keeping**

Motorized Unit members are required to complete MM timekeeping updates monthly to allow SDSARS management to track member resources. Timekeeping updates shall be completed by the final day of each month. It is the responsibility of each Unit member to ensure that MM timekeeping updates are entered on time. SL's are required to verify the timekeeping entries for their squads. A persistent pattern of delinquency may lead to disciplinary action.

If any Unit member has no hours to record on their time sheet during a given month, an entry covering the entire month with "no activity this month" or similar shall be recorded.

All members are encouraged to train physically to maintain physical fitness. Outside of the annual qualification hike, these hours cannot be recorded in MM.

In the event that a Unit member will be unavailable for service due to personal, business, or medical reasons, the member shall notify their SL, the AS, or UL.

## **2.11 Off-Road Specialist**

The Motorized Unit offers Off-Road Specialist certification to all SDSARS members. The purpose of the certification is to provide SAR mission planners with specialized resources that may be needed when off-road activities are required. This may include searches in off-road wilderness areas, field team delivery to off-road locations, vehicle recovery, or extraction of search subjects and/or SAR personnel from otherwise inaccessible locations. Certified Off-Road Specialists will be able to operate 4WD-capable POV's off-road in support of a SAR mission.

Details of the Off-Road Specialist certification course and requirements are provided in a separate document.

## 2.12. Public Relations Events

The SDSARSAR Detail occasionally receives requests for SAR Unit(s) to participate in community events throughout the County of San Diego. These events enhance the image of SAR and the Motorized Unit. Member participation is encouraged. Unit member's vehicles used as displays shall be clean and in good repair so as to present the Detail and the Unit in the best possible light.

## 3. Motorized Unit Search Operations

### 3.1. Callout Procedures

Field-qualified Motorized Unit members participate in searches in the same capacity as other field-qualified SAR Team members. The Unit is organized as an administrative unit and functions under its own structure for administrative and unit training purposes. During SAR incidents and SAR Team training events, Unit members will report to, and be assigned duties by, the IC Staff/search command without regard to the Unit chain of command.

In the event of a search call out, Unit members use the following actions to inform SAR management of their status:

1. Send an email message to one of the following addresses:

If available to respond: **yes.sdsar@missionmanager.net**

If unavailable to respond: **no.sdsar@missionmanager.net**

If availability is unclear: **maybe.sdsar@missionmanager.net**

-Or-

Respond to the MM automated response notification sent via text message.

The following information shall be included in the subject line of the email: last name, SAR radio call sign, response 10-Code, search identifier or location, and reporting ETA.

Examples: **SMITH R-123 10-8 El Cajon ETA 1800**

**SMITH R-123 10-7 El Cajon**

**SMITH R-123 Maybe El Cajon ETA 1800**

2. Send an email to all members of the Unit with the same availability information as previously described. These messages are to be sent within 30 minutes from time of receipt of the initial callout or standby notification. The email address [motorized.sdsar@missionmanager.net](mailto:motorized.sdsar@missionmanager.net) may be used for this purpose.
3. In the event that email and SMS communications are unavailable, Unit members shall use a telephone tree to communicate mission information down the Unit chain of command and to communicate Unit member status and availability up the Unit chain of command.

## 3.2. Search Procedures

During a SAR mission, Motorized Unit members perform mission assignments under the direction of the IC Staff/search command. The UL and/or senior Unit members should be available at all times during a SAR mission for consultation and assistance on safety issues related to Unit assignments. Unit members should be prepared to assist fellow Unit members in the event of POV malfunctions or recovery needs.

Subject to the needs of the mission, upon arrival to the mission CP, the first responding Unit supervisor will identify themselves to the IC and will coordinate Motorized Unit asset availability and staging. This role, known as the Motorized Liaison, and its duties, may be delegated to another Unit member arriving later. The duties include identifying all Unit members present, determining the number of personnel each vehicle can carry, assigning radio identifiers (Motor 1, Motor 2, etc.), and coordinating the duties of the Unit during the mission. In the event no Motorized Unit supervisor is available, the duties of the Motorized Liaison will be assumed by the senior Unit member present. In the event that insufficient Unit members are present for a mission, the Motorized Liaison position may not be used in lieu of the needs of the mission and the performance of the duties for which the Unit is responsible.

As soon as practical and when appropriate, as directed by the IC or the Motorized Liaison, a selected Unit member may conduct a survey of the local terrain, roads, trails, road hazards, and access limitations.

This survey is conducted for the purpose of advising the IC Staff/search command on options for safe and effective search team and equipment transport.

Unit drivers are responsible for the safety of their passengers, their vehicles, and for themselves. As such, Unit drivers are "in command" of their vehicles and are empowered to make decisions leading to the safe execution of their mission. Unit members must know the capabilities and limitations of themselves and of their vehicles and must always operate within those limitations. A Unit member is empowered to refuse or modify an assignment deemed to pose unreasonable safety risks. In such cases, the Unit member shall notify the IC Staff/search command and/or the Motorized Liaison of the situation in a timely manner and, if appropriate, recommend a course of action to mitigate the safety risk.

Unit members on assignment shall keep the IC Staff/search command informed of their location and status. While on assignment, drivers shall check in with the CP at least every thirty minutes or when a significant action or status change occurs. This function will typically be coordinated through the Motorized Liaison.

Upon delivery of a search team, the Unit member will ensure that the search team has successfully established radio communications with the CP radio operator before leaving the drop-off location. In the event that the search team is unable to establish radio communications with the CP radio operator, the Unit member shall contact the CP directly with a request to remain with the team as a radio relay. Unless specifically directed by the IC or SAR Coordinator, in no case will a team be dropped off at a location without available communications. At a minimum, the driver will inform the CP radio operator upon delivery or pick-up of a search team.

In the event that a Unit member must leave a mission before its conclusion, they shall notify the Motorized Liaison and check out with the IC Staff/search command.

Unit members participating in a SAR mission shall notify the Motorized UL in a timely manner of any problems or issues relating to the mission. The purpose is to keep the UL informed of Unit performance during the mission and possible subsequent EMT discussions, if any.

### **3.3. Radio Procedures**

IC Staff/search command designates 800 MHz and/or UHF/VHF frequencies for mission communications. Unit members may need to communicate with each other without using operational frequencies. Unit members with an FCC HAM license may use the following RACES channels for intra-Unit communications:

While in route: RED1 (repeated)

During a mission: RED4 (simplex)

Other RACES channels are available for training or specialized use. For example RED8 is useful when operating in the Anza Borrego Park area.

When using RACES channels, radio operators must comply with the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 97. In particular, radio operators shall identify themselves using their FCC call sign on the initial transmission and every 10 minutes during a communication. In addition, Unit members shall identify themselves using their SAR radio call sign.

An amateur HAM radio license, beginning with the Technician class, is required to transmit on amateur radio frequencies. Unit members shall acquire the equipment and minimum FCC license required within one year of joining the Motorized Unit.

### **3.4. Safety Procedures**

It is essential that Motorized Unit members maintain their vehicle in safe operational condition. This includes all essential mechanical, electrical, and safety systems. If, at any time during a training event or SAR mission, a driver has reason to believe that their vehicle is no longer safe to use, it shall be immediately taken out of service. The search IC shall be notified of the decision to remove the vehicle from service.

The Unit will conduct at least one POV safety inspection annually during a training event.

Motorized Unit personnel should use amber road warning lights any time their use will enhance the safety of the member and in compliance with the California Vehicle Code. These instances may include: when parked along the side of the road; on dirt roads where dust creates visibility issues; when assigned traffic control duties; when directed by the UL, Motorized Liaison, SAR Coordinator, or IC; or any other time when the safety of SAR personnel would be enhanced by

their use. Amber lights will generally not be used when traveling along highways or paved roadways unless their use has been specifically directed or the emergency situation requires it. Motorized Unit members shall receive training for the use of these lights per California Vehicle Code sections 25250(a) and 25259.1. Those that have been trained in the legal use of amber lights will have a notation to that effect in the Member Notes section of MM.

All in-field training within the Unit will include a comprehensive medical emergency plan documented and approved using the SAR Unit Lesson Plan, available for download on Mission Manager. The plan shall be sent up the SAR chain of command for approval in advance of the training event.

If a Unit member seeks medical treatment from their personal physician or US Health Works as a result of a SAR training activity or actual mission, the member shall complete a MLU-4 form (Report of Occupational Injury), check the "documentation only" box at the top of the page, and notify the SAR Coordinator immediately or as soon as practical. The MLU-4 form is available for download in MM. The member must notify their chain of command of any SAR-related injuries or illnesses. The Unit UL (or the ranking Unit member if the UL is not present for the event) shall document the details of the injury or illness and shall submit the documentation to the SAR Coordinator

#### 4. Appendix: Motorized Unit Equipment List

The following equipment is in addition to the standard SAR pack list. All equipment listed must be appropriate for the POV in use. Vehicle equipment must be safely secured for off-road travel or sudden highway stops. Equipment load-out will vary by season, mission, and personal and vehicle needs.

	Required	Recommended	Optional
A5BC fire extinguisher	X		
Amber flashing beacon	X		
Battery jumper cables or remote starter	X		
Extra batteries for flashlight	X		



Flashlight (200 lumens minimum)	X		
Front and rear recovery points on vehicle	X		
Potable water (5 gallons minimum)	X		
12v cell phone charging cable	X		
Recovery strap or tow rope	X		
Road flares, reflectors, or warning beacon lights	X		
Shackles (2 minimum)	X		
Small folding shovel	X		
Spare tire (inflated and in good condition)	X		
Tire jack (appropriate for vehicle)	X		
Tire patch kit	X		
Tool kit (wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers, cutters, tape, etc.)	X		
Traffic control vest	X		
Traffic magnetic door placards	X		
Vehicle fluids (oil, brake fluid, coolant)	X		
Work gloves	X		
VHF/UHF handheld and/or vehicle-mounted radio	X		
Forms: ICS forms packet, T-cards, medical forms	X		
Additional food		X	
Air filter replacement element for POV		X	
12V air compressor for tire inflation		X	
Binoculars or monocular		X	
Blanket/cold weather gear		X	
Emergency shelter/tent		X	
Fire suit		X	
Folding table and chair		X	
Hi-Lift jack		X	

Sheriff's Department barrier tape		<b>X</b>	
Sleeping bag		<b>X</b>	
Spare radio fuses		<b>X</b>	
Spare vehicle fuses		<b>X</b>	
Tow chain (for use with Hi-Lift Jack)		<b>X</b>	
Vehicle recovery gear (D-rings, tree strap, snatch block)		<b>X</b>	
Vehicle-mounted or handheld GPS		<b>X</b>	
Vehicle-mounted winch		<b>X</b>	
12V refrigerator or ice chest			<b>X</b>
Fan belts			<b>X</b>
FRS (Family Radio Service) radio			<b>X</b>
Pop-up shelter			<b>X</b>
Pull-Pal or similar recovery anchor			<b>X</b>
Spotlight or vehicle-mounted off-road lights			<b>X</b>
Tire chains			<b>X</b>
Vehicle-mounted VHF/UHF mobile radio			<b>X</b>
Zip ties, duct tape, radiator tape, hose clamps			<b>X</b>