



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

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

**Motorized Unit Mountain Bike Team
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)

1. Motorized Unit Mountain Bike (MTB) Team

1.1 Policy

The Search and Rescue (SAR) Unit will maintain a SAR Mountain Bike (MTB) Team. This team will be made up of members from within the SAR ranks from any of the bureau's units and is not limited to members from any particular unit. Additionally, other field-qualified units, such as the affiliate San Diego Mountain Rescue Team (SDMRT), may be qualified to join the team.

1.2 Procedure

The SAR MTB Team will follow an organizational plan consistent with the existing command structure and Incident Command System (ICS) currently utilized within SAR. The MTB Team will be led by a MTB Team Leader. If the MTB Team is deployed during a SAR mission, the members will fall under the jurisdiction of the Tactical Search Unit, regardless of their parent unit. Teams (if needed) will be assembled at the Command Post.

The MTB Team will have an internal qualification and leadership structure, which includes a Team Leader (TL), Testing Evaluator (TE), MTB Specialist and Support riders. The qualification standards will be made available and posted to all SAR members. All MTB Team members must recertify annually. The MTB TL will be responsible for surveilling the terrain prior to deploying any MTB members, to evaluate the terrain and assess the feasibility and safety of deployment.

There will be two designated rider capability groups – (1) Support Rider and (2) Specialist Rider. MTB team members should bring their bikes and gear to every search, unless specifically directed not to during the callout.

A SAR MTB team will consist of a minimum of two (2) riders. No rider will ever be dispatched alone. Three (3) riders are the recommended team size. The incident command staff will assemble the bike team as needed.

1.3 Qualifications

All interested SAR MTB team members will be field qualified, after successfully completing the SAR training academy, or equivalent field training program that meets or exceeds the SDSD SAR requirements.

To participate in the SAR MTB program, the SAR member must possess a fully functioning and operational MTB. All prospective riders must have their MTB inspected and approved by the TL. Additionally, all prospective riders must successfully pass a physical agility/capability skills test administered by the MTB TL. The TL will serve as the TE. The SAR Commander will approve the physical agility/capability test with the concurrence of the SAR Coordinator. The test will simulate an actual search scenario and is designed to measure bike knowledge, riding skills, and endurance. Generally, the qualification ride will last approximately one hour and include various levels of technical difficulty and endurance challenges. The levels of endurance and technical skill will determine a rider's qualification level (i.e. Support or Specialist). Once assigned to the MTB team, all members will be expected to participate in at least fifty percent of the scheduled training and exercises. Failure to participate in the minimum amount of training may result in dismissal from the team.

Candidates wishing to participate in the MTB team must receive prior approval from their parent Unit Leader before taking the qualification test. MTB members are also expected to meet the minimum training requirements of their respective unit in addition to the MTB team requirements.

1.4 Organization

The MTB TL will lead the SAR MTB team. The TL will have a "specialist" rating and should complete the San Diego Sheriff's Department (SDSD) bicycle course or comparable program. The TL must be an SRV or Reserve Sergeant (minimally) and be fully field qualified. The TL should be in excellent physical condition. Additionally, the TL should possess operational knowledge and the ability to perform emergency repairs and maintenance on various types of mountain bikes. The MTB TL can be a member of any SAR Unit.

Successful completion of the SDSD, SDPD or comparable bike patrol course may qualify a rider as a "Specialist." The MTB TL and any designated Specialist Rider can recommend another rider for the Specialist rating, based on demonstrated skills during the physical agility/capability test. The SAR Coordinator will approve all recommendations for Specialist Riders. The main criterion involves a person's demonstrated skills, ability and knowledge to safely navigate the types of terrains typically encountered during a missing person's search. The duties of the Specialist Rider will include but not necessarily be limited to perimeter searches, patrol of area roads (paved and dirt), and remote searches as necessary. The Specialist Rider would also be expected to navigate terrain beyond the capabilities of a Support Rider. An annual certification is required for all Specialist Riders.

The MTB Team Support Rider is an entry-level category for all team members. A prospective MTB team member will be assigned to the Support group category until he/she is capable of successfully completing the Specialist requirements. Riders can choose to remain in the Support Rider category if they desire. The Support level rider must be in good physical condition and demonstrate a minimum level of competence on a mountain bike. The Support level rider should be able to competently and safely navigate fire roads and wide trails, as well as navigate over minor obstacles. Support level rider duties are less technical than Specialist Riders.

Specialist and Support level riders may ride together as a team. However, the terrain should not exceed the Support level rider's capabilities. The TL will be the senior ranking Specialist Rider.

1.5 Uniform Requirements

Due to the unique requirements of riding a MTB, a special uniform is authorized for MTB team members. The MTB uniform will consist of the following:

- Black or olive drab MTB shorts, or patrol uniform shorts. Black or green long pants are acceptable in appropriate weather conditions.
- Yellow, moisture-wicking MTB jersey (with SAR logo), or yellow SAR t-shirt. Any approved SAR uniform shirt is acceptable.
- An ANSI or SNELL approved helmet
- MTB shoes. Clipped pedals are optional for experienced riders only.
- "Camelback" style hydration backpack designed for biking or other available hydration device

- MTB gloves
- Eye protection
- Cold weather jacket and equipment (optional, as needed)

All MTB team members will wear their standard SAR uniform to all SAR callouts. MTB members should change into their MTB attire, only after being assigned to an MTB team.

1.6 Equipment Requirements

All MTB team members will arrive at a search callout with their full complement of field gear required by their assigned unit, as well as the MTB equipment list below.

SAR MTB members will carry a modified field pack in order to maintain the agility required to safely operate a MTB off-road. The equipment list is outlined in Appendix 5.3 below.

The MTB must be designed for off-road use and include aggressive off-road tires. Frames made of chrome-molly, aluminum, titanium, or carbon fiber are acceptable. All MTB should be capable of accommodating lights for nighttime usage. All team members will be expected to keep their MTB in safe operating condition at all times. Safety is paramount in any MTB excursion.

1.7 Training

Each member of the MTB team will participate in an individual continuous physical training program in order to stay physically fit and technically proficient for the demanding rigors of MTB team outings/callouts.

Group rides and group training sessions will be established and coordinated by the MTB TL as required. All team members must successfully complete an annual (re)certification ride.

1.8 MTB Equipment List

EQUIPMENT FOR HYDRATION BACKPACK

- First Aid Kit
 - Band-Aids, assorted sizes, 10 each
 - Elastic bandage
 - Gauze pads, 4X4, 2 each
 - Gauze roll, 4 inches wide x 5 yards
 - Providone-iodine pads
 - SAM splint, one per team

- Other SAR Gear
 - Compass
 - Whistle
 - Strobe light
 - GPS (may be handlebar mounted)
 - Maps (may be handlebar mounted)
 - Pager/cell phone
 - Parachute cord (50')
 - Marker pen
 - Radio (one per team)
 - Signal mirror
 - Tracking card
 - Trail tape
 - Trash bag
 - Water (100L minimum)
 - Waterproof notepad
 - Tweezers
 - Headlamp
 - Taillight

EQUIPMENT FOR UNDERSEAT TOOL BAG

- Spare tubes (2)
- MTB multi-tool kit and adjustable wrench
- Tire levers
- Tire pump or CO2 cartridges
- Chain breaker
- Tire patch kit
- Gerber multi-tool (optional)

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL GEAR

- Gookinaid/Gatorade, 1 package
- Snack food
- Ground cloth
- Sunglasses
- Toilet paper
- Trauma sheers
- Triangle bandages, 1 each
- Waterproof tape
- Lamp, handlebar mounted
- Extra bulbs, batteries for lamps
- Strobe light/batteries
- Light sticks, 3 each