



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

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

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SDSD SAR Tactical Search Unit Standard Operating Procedure

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1. Introduction

This document contains standards for the Reserve Deputies and Rescue Volunteers of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team (SDSDSAR) Tactical Search Unit.

These standards are intended to be used as a reference for Tactical Search Unit members on acceptable forms of personal conduct and field certification parameters; as a framework for the planning of Tactical Search Unit events such as Man Tracking Specialist training, Navigation Plus training, and monthly Tactical Search Unit meetings; and ensure that Tactical Search Unit members maintain a high-level of professionalism within SDSDSAR.

2. Tactical Search Unit

2.1. Overview

The primary mission of the Tactical Search Unit is to support Search and Rescue operations with man tracking specialists, navigation plus, and field team leaders. The Unit also provides expertise in varied ground search activities and support to other SAR units as needed.

Tactical Search Unit members are the primary resource toward which the Standard Operating Policy is directed. This policy, expressed in terms of administration, qualification levels and training, supports a larger team, the Search and Rescue Team. Individual and Unit preparedness is key to this support.

2.2. Organizational Structure

The administrative person in charge of the Tactical Search Unit should hold the rank of Reserve Lieutenant or Unit Leader. The Tactical Search Unit Lieutenant/Unit Leader reports to a specified SDSDSAR Reserve Captain/Division Leader who in turn reports to the SDSDSAR Reserve Commander who in turn reports directly to the SDSDSAR Coordinator.

The Tactical Search Unit will be broken into the appropriate number of squads depending on the number of personnel in the unit. Each squad will be assigned a Squad Sergeant or a Squad Leader. The Tactical Search Unit Organizational Structure is shown below in FIGURE 1-1.

One Unit Sergeant or Rescue Volunteer can be designated as the Administrative Sergeant. The Administrative Sergeant duties are assigned by the Lieutenant / Unit Leader. In general these duties may be administrative in nature but may expand to operational matters when needed. The Administrative Sergeant will represent the LT / UL during times when the LT /UL are absent. The Administrative Sergeant will not change Unit policy or procedures during such times.

One Sergeant or Reserve Volunteer will be designated as the Training Sergeant. The Training Sergeant is responsible for coordination of training activities within the Unit and is the liaison with the Training Unit to support the SAR Academy and All Units exercises. The Training Sergeant will issue appropriate certifications and cause Bureau level documentation that is maintained in the SAR Office to reflect the training status of Unit members.

One Sergeant or Rescue Volunteer will be the designated leader in each squadron. Each squadron will have three to five members.

The Squad Sergeant basically oversees the activities of the squadron. The Squad Sergeant will help orient new members into the Unit, encourage participation in Unit and Bureau activities, and provide overall guidance and discipline. "Acting" Squad Leaders may be assigned to lead a squadron by the LT / UL and will have authority and responsibilities allotted a Squad Sergeant.

Squad members will either be a Reserve Deputy, Rescue Volunteer or Civilian Volunteer. The Chain of Command will be followed. Squad members report directly to their Squad Sergeant.

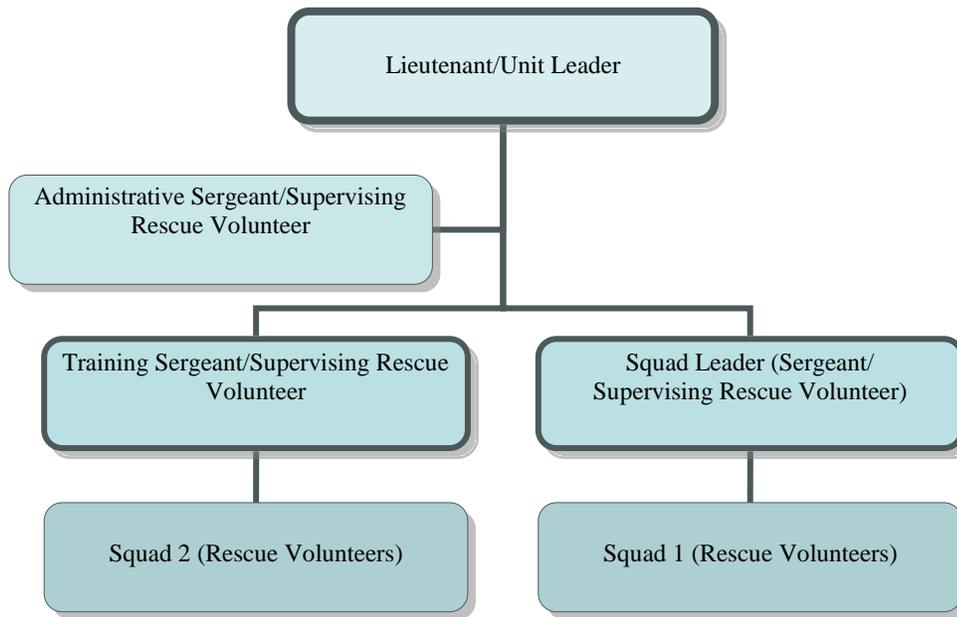


Figure 1-1. SDSARS Training Unit Organizational Structure

2.3. Unit Member Requirements

Any SDSARS member may join the Tactical Search Unit with the approval of the Tactical Search Unit Lieutenant/Unit Leader. The Tactical Search Unit is a "field" unit and Tactical Search Unit members must maintain a "field qualified" status and the minimum unit participation requirements noted in the Unit Participation Section of this document. Remember, it is each member's individual responsibility to maintain their own "Field Qualified" status.

2.4. Unit Participation

All Tactical Search Unit members will meet minimum standards of participation in Missions, Quarterly All Units Training Exercises, Quarterly All Hands Team Training Meetings, Unit Trainings and Unit Meetings as defined by the Team and Unit Policies and Procedures. Those requirements include:

- Completion of the SDSDSAR Academy
- Maintaining current Disaster Service Worker (DSW) cards
- Maintaining current CPR/AED Certifications (renewed annually)
- Maintaining current First Aid Certifications (renewed every three years)
- Maintaining current Fitness Certifications (renewed annually)
- Contribute at least 100 hours of participation each year
- Reasonable effort to participate in half of all Team Wide Missions
- Participation in at least two of the 4 All-Units training exercises each year
- Participation in at least two of the 4 SAR Team Meetings each year
- One training per month, either Training Unit training or other Unit's Training

These requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the SDSDSAR Executive Management Team. All changes to Unit requirements will be communicated when appropriate and notated in updates to this document.

Members who do not meet SDSDSAR or Unit requirements will have their field and/or membership status evaluated and may be prohibited from further participation permanently or until such time as all requirements are met.

2.5. Unit Meetings

The Tactical Search Unit will hold monthly meetings and periodic training exercises. The monthly meeting and training exercise maybe combined. All SAR Bureau members are welcome to attend. We also have several meetings focused on improving our skills related to the Academy or training skills.

There is no uniform requirement for these meetings. Unit members should bring their Sheriff's ID.

If a member cannot attend the meeting, notice should be given to the supervising Sergeant with as much advance notice as possible.

2.6. Unit Trainings

The Tactical Search Unit will hold monthly meetings and periodic training exercises. The monthly meeting and training exercise may be combined. All SAR Bureau members are welcome to attend. At a minimum, each Tactical Search member should participate in at least one training per month -- either Tactical Search Unit Training or another Unit's Training.

2.7. Specialized Training

The Tactical Search Unit will provide man tracking and navigation classes for the SAR Bureau. All classes will be open to any member of the organization. Major classes such as the Specialist classes will be offered a minimum of once a year. Training will be coordinated by the Unit Training Sergeant with the SDSDSAR Bureau Training Unit.

Tactical Search Unit members are also encouraged to pursue specialized certifications and education in any SAR area such as EMT-B, USAR, Tech. Rescue Specialist.

If a member is interested in pursuing specialized training in a field relevant to SDSDSAR (i.e. EMT-B), the training time counts toward the 100 hour Unit participation requirement and should be included as part of the timekeeping function within Mission Manager. Approval for such training should be obtained from the member's supervising Sergeant.

2.8. Qualification Levels

Individual qualification levels and the subsequent assignment to SAR tasks are based on performance, education and experience, not rank. The Tactical Search Unit welcomes members of other Bureau Units to become certified at levels above the Field Qualified Status. Any SAR Bureau member who meets the requisite qualifications will be designated a Man-Tracking Specialist and/or Navigation Specialist. A Bureau member holding these specialist designations will annotate their "T-Card" accordingly when checking in for a mission.

The Tactical Search unit holds annual qualification training for the following qualifications: Land Navigation Specialist, Man-Tracking Specialist, and Type 2 Mountaineering Specialist.

Land Navigation Specialist: The Land Navigation Specialist is able to guide a field team accurately from one point to another as well as locate the position of a lost or injured subject. In order to do this, the specialist uses a map and compass, terrain, and other supplemental tools (i.e. G.P.S.) to aide them in accurately navigating in order to support the mission.

Man-Tracking Specialist: The Man-Tracking Specialist supports the mission of Search and Rescue by using their track awareness and man-tracking clues to locate subject signs and clues and follow them to their logical conclusion.

The SAR Team recognizes the following qualification levels:

Field Qualified: SAR Academy students successfully completing the approved curriculum are designated as Field Qualified. A yearly recertification for the physical fitness hike and the CPR / AED qualification and a three-year recertification for the First Aid for Public Safety Personnel (Title 22) qualification must be completed in order to maintain the Field Qualified status. These persons will be able to participate in a field team under the leadership of a Field Team Leader. The Field Status is annotated on the T-Card by each member when checking in for a mission.

Field Team Leader: A Field Qualified person will become a Field Team Leader based on mission experience, ability to function in a team environment, and any unique needs occurring during a SAR mission as determined by the Command staff. A Field Team Leader is a position of trust and is not to be taken lightly. A Field Team Leader will be able to complete the mission under all conditions, day and night.

Specialist: All members of the Tactical Search Unit are highly encouraged to attain a Specialist certification within one year of joining the Unit. The Unit will establish the base course of instruction for these qualification levels. A Red Card for Navigation Specialist and a Red Card for Man Tracking Specialists will outline the requirements, provide a record of progress and ultimate completion. The Training Sergeant will supervise the Specialist training program. The Lieutenant / Unit Leader will certify Specialist awards.

2.9. Unit Member Time Commitments

Tactical Search Unit members should expect a larger time commitment to SDSDSAR than some other units, especially around the time of the SDSDSAR Academy or large training events.

2.10. Unit Member Communications

For Tactical Search Unit non-mission, member-to-member communication is done primarily through phone and email.

For communications that are required for SDSDSAR as a whole, the Tactical Search Unit will post messages or calendar entries in Mission Manager and/or the SDSDSAR Yahoo Groups website at <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/sdsdsar>.

2.11. Timekeeping

Tactical Search Unit members are required to log time and mileage for their volunteer hours. Mission Manager provides a timekeeping form for this purpose. It is accessed by logging into Mission Manager and clicking on the Timekeeping tab. Timekeeping is managed on a monthly basis and runs from the 26th of one month to the 25th of the next month. The form is intuitive and accommodates a variety of SAR related activities. In addition to entries for various activities, time should be entered to account for emails and administration (i.e. a minimum of 1 hour per month).

Mission Manager will notify Unit members if they have not submitted timekeeping information for any given month. Also, the Tactical Search Unit Administration Sergeant will review each member's entries on a monthly basis to ensure accuracy. If a consistent pattern of delinquency develops, the Supervising Sergeant will work with the Unit member to identify and remove obstacles preventing the information from being entered on time.

2.12. Unit Call-out Procedures

Tactical Search Unit members are field qualified and, as such, are encouraged to participate in searches. It is important for SAR Management to know whether or not you will be responding to a Callout. Several email addresses have been incorporated into Mission Manager that allows a member to report their Callout status (Yes, No, On Scene, or Maybe).

Within 30 minutes of receiving a Callout Notice, each Tactical Search Unit member needs to report their status by using the appropriate email address.

The SAR Information line is available to hear Callout information and update messages. The number is (760) 856-0757.

Note: If the Callout is for a scheduled event, the response time is extended to 2 hours.

If you are going to be out-of-service for vacation or any other reason, please send a message to the Tactical Search Unit so we do not try to reach you when you are not available.