

# LAW ENFORCEMENT MUTUAL AID PLAN (SAR) ANNEX



## MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### SEARCH AND RESCUE MOUNTED TEAMS

February 5, 2004

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
Law Enforcement Branch  
Search and Rescue Mutual Aid – Mounted Searcher Guidelines

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This document is the product of a cooperative effort of an assembled Search and Rescue Mounted Searcher Specialist Working Group and the California's State Sheriff's Search and Rescue Coordinators.

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services gratefully acknowledges the valuable input and collective expertise from the following members of the SAR Mounted Searcher Specialist Working Group:

Gretchen Hurley Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant – Group Chairperson	Mark Tracy Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Sheriff
Mike Baccala Solano County Sheriff's Office Reserve Deputy, Volunteer Coordinator	William Lev Santa Cruz Sheriff's Posse Sheriff's Posse Volunteer
Ray Zachau Santa Cruz Sheriff's Posse Sheriff's Posse Volunteer	Casey Terribilini San Mateo County Reserve Deputy/Mounted SAR Leader
Ed Sullivan Kern County Sheriff's Office Volunteer	Jeff Goodwin San Benito County Sheriff's Office Deputy Sheriff
Phil West Mono County Sheriff's Office Deputy Sheriff	Jim Silva Stanislaus County Sheriff's Lieutenant
Giles New Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office Sergeant	

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### Introduction

Pursuant to the California Government Code, Chapter 7 of Division 1 of Title 2, “The Emergency Services Act”, the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES), Law Enforcement Branch manages and maintains the State of California Search and Rescue Mutual Aid Program. This includes the publication of plans pertaining to Search and Rescue Mutual Aid. This publication, The California OES SAR Mutual Aid Plan, serves as an annex to the California OES Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan.

In order to refine the State’s Search and Rescue Mutual Aid Program, the OES Law Enforcement Branch assembled California’s 58 County Sheriffs’ Search and Rescue Coordinators, as well as California’s State and Federal SAR Cooperators. This group of interested agencies is called the “State Sheriffs’ Search and Rescue Coordinators”. The main objective of this group is to collectively review and address statewide SAR issues to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State’s SAR Mutual Aid Program.

One of the main issues identified was the existence of multiple and inconsistent “standards” that affect the SAR discipline, specifically mutual aid SAR responses. The lack of statewide consistency in how SAR resources were evaluated and categorized made it difficult for SAR resources to be used as a mutual aid resource. This issue was addressed in detail by the State Sheriffs’ SAR Coordinators. Their objective was to create mutual aid guidelines that met or exceeded existing applicable “standards” while creating effective and efficient statewide criteria for mutual aid SAR responses. These guidelines are intended to define SAR proficiencies solely for mutual aid resources.

- These guidelines contain information for law enforcement agencies to consider when addressing the broad range of issues related to Search and Rescue Mutual Aid. These guidelines do not constitute a policy, nor are they intended to establish a standard for any agency. OES is sensitive to the needs for agencies to have individualized policies that reflect concern for local issues. OES intends these guidelines to be a resource for law enforcement agencies that will provide maximum discretion and flexibility in the development of individual agency policies.

The creation of California’s SAR Mutual Aid Guidelines encompass all potential SAR disciplines and are developed as follows:

1. The State Sheriffs’ SAR Coordinators identify the guideline discipline need.
2. The State Sheriffs’ SAR Coordinators elect one of their fellow coordinators to chair the guideline creation process.
3. The State Sheriffs’ SAR Coordinators identify and task a group of subject matter experts into a “Specialist Working Group”.
4. The Specialist Working Group creates the guidelines based upon their knowledge and experience and submits them back to the coordinators for review, recommendation, and/or approval.
5. Once approved by the coordinators, and reviewed by OES Administration and Staff Counsel, the coordinators present the guidelines to the California State Sheriffs’ Association (CSSA) for their review, recommendation and/or approval.
6. Once approved by CSSA, the guidelines become part of the OES California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan – SAR Annex.

Effectiveness and efficiency is achieved as California's SAR Mutual Aid Guidelines are created by California's SAR experts, for California's Sheriff's SAR Coordinators, and approved by the Sheriffs of California, all for the benefit of those who become the subjects of search and/or rescue in California's SAR environments.

The following guidelines include "typing" of both the SAR environment as well as the SAR resource. They are designed to match the conditions, environment and possible length of deployment (normal operational periods should be 12 hours) as determined by the mutual aid requestor and the minimum equipment, experience, and skill level the responding agency should consider when sending SAR personnel.

The goal of "typing" is to be able to identify the largest number of SAR resources while minimizing the risk of placing an unsuitable SAR resource in an unsafe situation. The responding agencies' liaison or leader shall have final approval of any assignments their personnel are asked to perform.

Volunteer SAR personnel should be properly registered as Disaster Service Workers (DSW). DSW registration will ensure that the volunteers are eligible for worker's compensation coverage if they should be injured and provides additional liability protection for the volunteer and the government agency.

NOTE: The endeavor of Search and Rescue necessitates response into difficult and unpredictable circumstances in widely varied and many times hazardous terrain. These guidelines are intended to assist Search and Rescue Coordinators in identifying appropriate emergency response resources to effect searches and rescues in the most expeditious manner possible while considering known and unknown hazards. These guidelines are not intended to address all eventualities. Rather they are a set of tools derived from collective knowledge to address the task at hand. Search and Rescue is inherently dangerous and participants respond with knowledge of the associated risks.

It is the responsibility of agencies responding to California Search and Rescue Mutual Aid requests to provide qualified personnel and equipment that meet or exceed the recommended level of skills and capabilities stipulated in these guideline documents.

The California SAR Mutual Aid Guidelines are only minimum guidelines and circumstances that are unique to a particular search and rescue mission may dictate that additional or higher skills and qualifications may be necessary for the safety of the searcher and for successful search and rescue operations.

### **Mounted Search and Rescue Criteria**

A Mounted SAR Team member is a SAR member capable of conducting search and rescue operations from horseback in various terrain and weather conditions. All team members must first meet the criteria for a ground searcher. There are basic skills that all Search and Rescue Team members 'should' have before going into the field during a search. It is considered that a "Mounted SAR Team" minimally consists of a two-person team, with individual horses.

The following pages contain two tables:

- 1) Search Environment Type
- 2) Recommended Capabilities and Skills

Keeping in mind local conditions and safety requirements, the SAR Coordinator should select the resource required by combining and selecting from the Search Environment Type and Recommended Capabilities and Skills Type tables. For example, if the search area includes rugged conditions, but is under 7000 feet without ice or snow this would probably be a Type 2 Environment, that would be appropriate for most Type 1 and Type 2 Capability and Skill searchers.

<b>Search Environment Type for Mounted SAR</b>			
<b>Type 1 Extreme / Complex Terrain Environments</b>	<b>Type 2 Rugged Terrain Environments</b>	<b>Type 3 Moderate / Gentle Terrain Environments</b>	<b>Type 4 Urban Environments</b>
Extreme Conditions (including but not limited to) Altitude (generally 7000+) or Snow, Ice, Desert, Heat, Heavy Ground Cover, Steep difficult terrain.	Rugged Conditions, Altitude generally under 7000', Heat, Cold concerns, Moderate to Heavy Ground Cover.	Gently Rolling Terrain, Open Spaces, Maintained Trailheads, Agricultural Areas.	High Traffic, Urban Office Complexes, Man-Made Surfaces, Public Interaction and Park Trails.

<b>Recommended Capabilities and Skills</b>				
	<b>TYPE 1</b>	<b>TYPE 2</b>	<b>TYPE 3</b>	<b>TYPE 4</b>
<b>Can be deployed to Environment Type</b>	<b>1 / 2</b>	<b>2/3</b>	<b>3/4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Operational assignments w/o external support</b> *note: time is listed in hours not a 12 hr ops period	2-4 hr average without breaks. High elevation may require horse given time to acclimate.	4 hr average without breaks. High elevation may require horse given time to acclimate.	Multiple 4-6 hr operational periods. Water must be available for horse/rider.	Multiple 4-6 hr operational periods. Water must be available for horse/rider.
<b>Medical Skills</b>	Current First Aid/CPR	Current First Aid/CPR	Current First Aid/CPR	Current First Aid/CPR
<b>Radio Communications</b>	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.
<b>Knowledge of Basic SEMS/ICS</b>	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System/ICS."	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System/ICS."	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System ICS."	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System/ ICS."
<b>Helicopter Safety</b>	Basic Helicopter Safety. Knowledge and familiarity with Loading/ Unloading (Both Hot and Cold). Help establish landing site.	Basic Helicopter Safety. Knowledge and familiarity with Loading/ Unloading (Both Hot and Cold). Help establish landing site.	Basic Helicopter Safety - Help establish landing site.	Basic Helicopter Safety - Help establish landing site.
<b>Field Interview Skills Information Handling</b>	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.
<b>Navigation</b>	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and map/compass; route-finding.	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and map/compass; route-finding.	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and/or map/compass; route-finding.	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and/or map/compass and/or route finding.
<b>Tracking Skills</b>	Clue and track aware.	Clue and track aware.	Clue and track aware.	Clue and track aware.
<b>Fitness</b>	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.

<b>Rope Skills</b>	Basic Low Angle Skills; Assist with packaging and litter work. Basic raising and lowering skills.	Basic Low Angle Skills; Assist with packaging and litter work.	Basic knots. Assist with packaging and litter work.	Assist with packaging and litter work.
<b>Crime Scene Protection</b>	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene protection, chain of evidence and documentation.	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene protection, chain of evidence and documentation.	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene Protection, chain of evidence and documentation.	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene protection, chain of evidence and documentation.
<b>Recommended Capabilities and Skills</b>				
	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4
<b>Can be deployed to Environment Type</b>	<b>1/2/3/4</b>	<b>2/3/4</b>	<b>3 /4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	Suitable tow vehicle & horse trailer combination to be maintained in good working order.	Suitable tow vehicle & horse trailer combination to be maintained in good working order.	Suitable tow vehicle & horse trailer combination to be maintained in good working order.	Suitable tow vehicle & horse trailer combination to be maintained in good working order.
<b>Horse/Rider</b>	Annual successful completion of basic skills, see below **	Annual successful completion of basic skills, see below **	Annual successful completion of basic skills, see below **	Annual successful completion of basic skills, see below **
<b>Rider – Search Skills</b>	Have ability to modify traditional ground search techniques to mounted search environment	Have ability to modify traditional ground search techniques to mounted search environment	Have ability to modify traditional ground search techniques to mounted search environment	Have ability to modify traditional ground search techniques to mounted search environment
<b>Rider – knowledge to administer first aid to horse</b>	Recognize animal distress & either provide emergency treatment or summon appropriate assistance.	Recognize animal distress & either provide emergency treatment or summon appropriate assistance.	Recognize animal distress & either provide emergency treatment or summon appropriate assistance.	Recognize animal distress & either provide emergency treatment or summon appropriate assistance.
<b>Equipment - Rider</b>	Mission suitable attire, minimally: heeled riding shoes/boots, long pants, hat, cap or helmet, gloves, flashlight.	Mission suitable attire, minimally: heeled riding shoes/boots, long pants, hat, cap or helmet, gloves, flashlight.	Mission suitable attire, minimally: heeled riding shoes/boots, long pants, hat, cap or helmet, gloves, flashlight.	Mission suitable attire, minimally: heeled riding shoes/boots, long pants, hat, cap or helmet, gloves, flashlight.
<b>Horse Fitness</b>	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.
<b>Equipment - Horse</b>	Mission suitable tack minimally: saddle, bridle, halter, lead rope, hoof pick, horseman knife. Food/water ***	Mission suitable tack minimally: saddle, bridle, halter, lead rope, hoof pick, horseman knife. Food/water ***	Mission suitable tack minimally: saddle, bridle, halter, lead rope, hoof pick, horseman knife. Food/water ***	Mission suitable tack minimally: saddle, bridle, halter, lead rope, hoof pick, horseman knife. Food/water ***

**NOTE:** All Mounted SAR teams are presumed to be self sufficient, with regards to their horses, for up to 72 hours. This is true when teams are returning to base camp in between operational periods. This includes food, limited water and horse related supplies. Depending on the duration/conditions of the mission requesting agencies should be prepared to provide a water source. This may be any domestic water source (creeks, ponds, water trucks, etc.)

**\*\* Basic Skills Objective:** To provide a safe and reliable resource for Mounted Search and Rescue Operations. These qualifications for horse and rider (as a team) are to include, but are not limited to the following: It is recommended horse and rider qualify annually.

**SAFETY:**

- \* Horses must NOT exhibit the following behaviors: kicking, biting, rearing or bucking. Any horse that has a tendency toward any of these behaviors is NOT suitable for SAR work of any kind.
- \* Riders must demonstrate control of the horse at all times.
- \* The horse must be sound and in good health.
- \* Horses must be deemed calm and steady.

**GROUND MANNERS:**

- \* Ties and does not pull back
- \* Leads
- \* Leads and can be led by another horse and rider
- \* Loads and unloads from ramp and step-up style trailers
- \* Allows all feet to be picked up without resistance
- \* Rider can mount/dismount horse, from ground, on either side
- \* Exhibits good ground manners

**MANNERS UNDER SADDLE:**

- \* Neck or direct reins without resistance
- \* Stands calmly
- \* Walks, jogs, lopes, and stops under control
- \* Side passes to left and right
- \* Backs a pattern without resistance
- \* Compatible with other horses

**TRAIL MANNERS:**

- \* Crosses over and thru water calmly
- \* Crosses bridges
- \* Safely negotiates trail obstacles
- \* Leaves and returns to a group alone
- \* Can calmly negotiate varied terrain
- \* Stands calmly while rider opens and closes gates
- \* Calmly accepts and performs for another rider as needed
- \* Is able to carry essential supplies for mission

**SENSORY:**

The horse will remain under the control of the rider in the following situations: around boxes, papers, plastic, boards, flags, balloons, flares, firecrackers, markers, ribbons, flagging tape, strollers, dogs, bicycles, motorbikes, emergency vehicles, aircraft and various noises.

The horse will also remain under the rider's control when the rider is giving/receiving items from someone on the ground. And, will allow the rider to put on or remove articles of clothing while mounted.

\*\*\* Depending on the weather/terrain/mission the following equipment items are recommended: Emergency shoeing supplies, emergency vet kit, picket line, hobbles, fence pliers, collapsible bucket, easy boot, limb saw, leather-man type tool, bug spray, emergency blanket.

\*\*\*\* Recommended first aid supplies and wound management information:

Cotton roll	Roll gauze
Vetrap	Elastikon
Duct tape	Telfa pads (4x4)
Betadine scrub	Betadine solution or Nolvasan solution
Water soluble antibiotic/ointments (nitrofuvasin)	Hoof pick
Pliers	Sharp scissors
Hemostats	Flashlight w/spare batteries
Thermometer	Stethoscope
Bucket	