

Tennessee Area
Search and Rescue
(T.A.S.A.R.)



STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

July 2013

T.A.S.A.R. STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

I. Purpose:

- A. The purpose of the Standard Operating Guidelines (“SOG”) is to provide a set of guidelines for operations for Tennessee Area Search and Rescue (“TASAR”).
- B. The SOG’s are designed with safety as the highest priority. Members wishing to maintain membership in TASAR must abide by these guidelines. At any time, members may be dismissed from the scene by the TASAR Team Leader should he/she compromise the safety of the operations.
- C. The mission of TASAR is to provide support to appropriate services in the state of Tennessee and its surrounding areas. TASAR will provide manpower and K-9 assets to assist in the search for lost or missing persons (“Operation”).
- D. TASAR is not a “First Responder” organization and due to liability issues will only respond if requested by an appropriate agency.

II. Preplanning

- A. TASAR members should:
 - 1. Thoroughly understand the guidelines listed herein.
 - 2. Possess and maintain at all times a 24 hour ready pack, with the items described in the TASAR Equipment List. Members should be equipped to endure the rigors of an operation without outside support.
 - 3. Maintain themselves in a fit manner to be able to endure the rigors of an Operation for 24 hours.
 - 4. Train on a regular basis to remain proficient in the skills needed to participate in Operations.
 - 5. Possess appropriate personal clothing and gear for the weather conditions and terrain that are likely to be encountered in an Operation.

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- B. Understand and be able to work within the Incident Command System (“ICS”).
- C. Maintain with TASAR a current address, home telephone number, and work telephone number. TASAR members shall if available, also provide a cell phone number, pager number and an e-mail address.

III. Notification and Dispatch for an Operations Response:

- A. Receipt of Notification:
 - 1. A Lead Handler of TASAR will be notified of a request to respond to an Operating Incident only from an appropriate agency. If contacted by any other person/s or agency not deemed an appropriate agency said person/s or agency will be directed to contact the appropriate agency able to request TASAR.
 - 2. Information regarding the incident will be obtained consisting of the following:
 - a) Requesting Agency
 - b) Call Back Phone Number
 - c) Nature of Operation
 - d) Number of Members Requested
 - e) When the Team is needed
 - f) Where the Team is to Report (Staging Area)
 - g) To Whom the Team Leader is to report
 - h) Call off procedures
- B. Member Notification:
 - 1. Members will be notified via a telephone calling tree and/or via e-mail or text message.
 - 2. Dependent upon the needs and location of the Operation it is possible that all Members will not be notified of an Operation.
- C. Requesting Agency Verification
 - 1. Once members are notified the TASAR member taking the initial notification will call the Requesting Agency to confirm the number of members that will respond to the Operations and a Service Request Form will be completed by the agency once on scene and filed by TASAR.

IV. Departure to Scene:

- A. Prior to responding to the Staging Area TASAR members shall take the necessary time to be certain they are properly dressed and have the necessary equipment.
- B. All TASAR members when responding to the Staging Area of an Operation shall abide by all laws of the road. They shall not speed and shall not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- C. Members must transport themselves to the Staging Area in a safe and responsible manner.
- D. Emergency lights and/or audible warning devices of any kind are not to be used on route or return from a callout. Use of emergency lights or audible warning devices will result in automatic suspension and possible expulsion from the team.

V. On Scene Arrival:

- A. First arriving TASAR member assumes the responsibility as Team Leader until a member of TASAR of higher authority or seniority arrives at the Staging Area. If more than one Lead Handler arrives on scene the Lead Handler that is inherent to the location will be named Team Leader.
- B. In a search, the Team Leader should report to the Incident Commander once the team is assembled. In the case of extenuating circumstances the Team Leader may approach the Incident Commander and may be dispatched without the team fully assembled.
- C. The Team Leader is in charge of setting up the appropriate Sector of the Incident Command System (ICS) as it relates to TASAR and the mission assigned to the Team.
- D. Signing In:
 - 1. All members must sign the TASAR Operations Log as soon as they arrive at the Staging Area.
 - 2. Before leaving the Staging Area, members need to check in with the Team Leader and sign out in the Operations Log.
 - 3. Members returning to the Staging Area must complete the TASAR Operations Log by signing their return time.

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4. A separate TASAR Operations Log entry must be completed any time any member leaves or returns to the Staging Area.
5. TASAR members arriving after the first arriving team has been assigned missions shall remain at the Staging Area until dispatched.

VI. On Scene Behavior:

A. Professionalism:

1. Behavior of all members of TASAR must display a professional attitude.
2. Professional attitude is dictated by common sense, the standard of technical skill level to which each member is trained, and a regard for personal safety above all other issues.

B. Continuum of Command:

On scene changes in the command structure, must be clearly communicated to all involved. Both members, the one giving up the position, and the one undertaking the position must be present together and aware of the exchange and all others in the Team's chain of command must be notified.

VII. Planning, Strategy, Tactics and Operations

A. The Chain of Command

1. The overall planning and operational authority of a field response belongs to the Requesting Agency.
2. The overall incident will be run under the Incident Command System (ICS). TASAR members must be familiar with the form and vocabulary of the ICS in order to function smoothly with other agencies. The Team Leader is in charge of all team operations and the Safety Officer is allowed and dictated to stop any unsafe behavior.

B. Knowledge and Skills of K-9 SAR

All members should, at a minimum, be familiar with:

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1. Personal safety
2. Land navigation (e.g., map and compass, GPS)
3. Basic Search Techniques (e.g., Types I-III, confinement operations, concepts of active and passive search)
5. CPR and Basic First Aid

C Communicating with the Media

It is the policy of TASAR to not communicate with the news media during field operations. Refer all questions to the Command Post, Public Relations Officer or the Team Leader.

D Safety

Personal and team safety are of the highest priority in all phases of K-9 search and rescue operations. Any member uncomfortable with a particular duty or situation due to safety concerns should relay the circumstances by the appropriate chain of command to the Team Leader.

E. Providing Medical Care in the Field

Team members are expected to perform to their level of training and within the limits of the relevant laws and regulations when providing medical care while on an Operation.

F. Personal Preparation

It is the responsibility of the TASAR individual team member to be appropriately prepared for K-9 SAR operations. Any unprepared member may be required to end their participation in an Operation and possibly depart the scene.

G. Attitude

Members on a call represent TASAR. As representatives they are expected to behave professionally at all times. Any behavior counterproductive to the team's efforts and or function within the ICS will not be tolerated. Unessential critiques and dissent have no place during the course of an Operation and they should be reserved until such operations have ended. Strict adherence to the chain of command is absolutely necessary in the field.

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H. Dismissal

The TASAR Team Leader can dismiss someone from the field at any time without discussion, and that person must be prepared to leave as ordered. This is only done when necessary to protect the Team and maintain the safety of its members.

VIII. Upon Completion of an Emergency

A. Leaving the Scene

The Team Leader must verify by the Operations Log that all members have departed the scene before the Team Leader leaves the scene.

B. Debriefing Report

It is the responsibility of the Team Leader present on the call to collect all relevant information for post incident review.

C. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

Members of TASAR are encouraged to use available resources after any incident that may have been psychologically trying. TASAR will assist in finding a local critical incident stress debriefing team composed of people trained to help others recover from the psychological trauma that often accompanies emergency work. A Critical Incident Stress Debriefing can be requested through any TASAR Lead Handler.

IX. Personal Responsibility/Liability

A. TASAR does not provide insurance coverage for its members or the organization. All members must be aware that the activities of TASAR are hazardous and that there is the possibility of death, disability, and/or loss of property and that the member recognizes and accepts these risks, releasing TASAR and its members from all liability.

B. Members are expected to carry adequate personal health and auto insurance. Individual participants in TASAR functions assume all responsibilities and consequences of all actions/events related to the Operation.

X. TASAR Personnel Under the Age of 18

- A. Young adults under the age of 18 are encouraged to participate in TASAR missions. Participation can only be granted upon the completion of the following:
 - a. The participant must have a notarized waiver signed by a legal guardian and the participant which has been filed with TASAR.
 - c. The participant must complete the online NMIS ICS-100 training and submit a copy of the completion certificate to the NMSAR office.
- B. Upon receipt of the waiver and ICS-100 completion certificate and approval by TASAR the participant shall be equipped with a TASAR ID Card.
- C. The participant shall be responsible for their own behavior on SAR missions. Any unwarranted behavior or attitude towards the ICS staff, on-scene agency personnel or other SAR responders shall not be tolerated and the Lead Handlers will be notified and permission to participate may be revoked. Likewise, the participant shall immediately inform the incident commander or TASAR of any unwarranted behavior or attitude directed at the participant from any person during a SAR mission.
- D. TASAR shall maintain emergency contact information on the participant to include name, address, and phone number of the minor's parents/legal guardian. The above information shall be available to the ICS staff at any SAR mission that the young adult is participating in.
- E. The Incident Commander and TASAR Team Leader shall be the final authority of the utilization of minors on the SAR mission and may limit the type and duration of an assignment for a minor. Additionally, TASAR Team Leader shall avoid searchers/rescuers under the age of 18 of handling or viewing a deceased subject.
- F. In the event of an injury to the minor the Team Leader shall follow the established medical plan and include notification of the minor's parents/legal guardian.

