

# General Group Accreditation Standards for All Teams

## 1.0 ) General Administrative Requirements:

- 1.1) Submit a properly completed application for evaluation to receive a recommendation for a State MOU along with a non-refundable processing fee of \$25 to the Virginia Search and Rescue Council.
- 1.2) All additions or deletions to a standing MOU must be vetted through the Virginia Search and Rescue Council. Requests for asset inclusion of or in addition to an existing MOU must be brought to the attention of the Virginia Search and Rescue Council MOU committee. Said requests will be brought before the council as a New Business agenda item and requires the approval of the Council prior to the council President submitting the request to VDEM for approval and updating of said MOU.
- 1.3) Agree to meet the Virginia Search and Rescue Council Standard Operating Procedures on all mutual-aid searches or searches under the auspices of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.
- 1.4) Agree to the provisions found in the Virginia Department of Emergency Managements (VDEM) Memorandum of Understanding.
- 1.5) Submit a copy of the group roster.
  - (1.4.1) The group roster must provide the following information:
    - a). Group information (name, address, alerting information) last update date.
    - b). Individual's names
    - c). Mailing addresses
    - d). Phone numbers (home, work, pager, cellular, etc)
    - e). Field qualifications (ground)
    - f). Level of medical training.
    - g). NIMS ICS minimum requirements compliance (completion date)
    - h). Any specialty certification (See Sect VII)
  - (1.4.2) The submitted roster will be current within 6 months of the date of application.
- 1.6) Non-governmental organizations should obtain a charter from a local government agency for the purpose of becoming eligible for federal death benefits.
- 1.7) Submit a copy of the group's bylaws/policies/operations manual. The Manual must provide a mission statement, membership policies, and group policies.

- 1.6.1 **Mission Statement** This mission statement should include
1. The primary and secondary missions of the group
  2. Missions or roles the group will exclude itself from (ie criminal apprehension)
  3. The regional area in which the group will typically respond.

- 1.8) **Membership Policies** The membership policies should include:
1. A uniform standard. The uniform standard should provide for a uniform shirt and name badge. Blue jeans are not encouraged.
  2. Procedures to become a group member.
  3. Procedures to revoke an individual's membership. These procedures should provide for due process which include:
  4. Notifying the individual of all charges and evidence against them.
  5. Providing the individual an opportunity to respond to charges.
  6. A hearing provided in a timely fashion.
  7. An appeals process.
  8. Disciplinary procedures for failing to act in a professional manner while on-scene.
  9. Procedures addressing the use of illicit drugs or alcohol while on-scene or en-route to a search.
  10. Procedures for removing/suspending a person from field operations.
  11. Group authority or limits of authority over members on searches.
  12. Member's right to refuse certain field assignments.
  13. The carrying or use of, firearms.
  14. Travel to search procedures.
  15. On-scene arrival procedures including sign-in.
  16. Transportation or search payment or reimbursement.

- 1.9) **Group Policies** Group policies shall include:
1. Procedures that address how the group will respond to a search. Issues that should be addressed must include where applicable:
  2. Dispatching of personnel
  3. Transportation
  4. Equipment assembly and delivery
  5. Mobilization
  6. Procedures that establish group appointment of an on-scene agency representative. Additional procedures should address chain of command.
  7. Procedures that establish internal rules of government.
  8. Special rules regarding the use of minors

9. Radio licensee operating procedures. To include a copy of said groups license to the VA SAR Council's communications committee.
10. Safety related policies.
  - a). Use of group equipment for personnel use, training, and missions.
  - b). Special procedures for catastrophic disasters
  - c). Criminal Background Check policy
  - d). A Call Out Qualified (COQ) or minimum knowledge requirement based upon group type and composition.

- 1.10) **Callout Procedure** Submit a copy of groups callout procedure
- a). List the emergency contact number provided to the requesting agencies.
  - b). The group must establish a 24 hour contact number for alerting from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (pager number, local EOC, etc.)
  - c). The group should utilize alerting telecommunication devices (pagers, cell phones, etc) for individuals responsible for alerting group members.

- 1.11) **Disciplines** Any group seeking a discipline beyond or in addition to that of a Ground SAR Team (Sect. 2.0).
- a) Are required to meet at a minimum all requirements set forth in the General Administrative Requirements as listed above.
  - b) Are required to meet or exceed the qualified personnel requirements set forth under said specialty requirements.
  - c) Are required to meet or exceed the equipment needs beyond that of the general SAR team to include those as specified under said specialty requirements.

## **Appendix A: Key Terms / Definitions**

- Key terms / definitions
- Acronym Listing

## **Appendix B: Additional Standards and Guidelines**

- **Communications and Communications Equipment**
  - **FCC Typed accepted or NITA accepted**
    - **The following are standard Council operational radio frequency designations:**
      - 155.160 CSQ
      - 155.205 CSQ
      - 155.280 CSQ
      - 155.895 PL 91.5 (DEM Simplex)
    - **All radios should be labeled as to location of frequencies and in the same order as above (ie., 155.160 CSQ, etc. NOT Alpha, Bravo, etc.). Any organization which requires a different placement or requires PL tones should still have the above frequencies CSQ and well labeled.**
    - **No radios used on searches should be locked on a single frequency (should be able to change in the field).**
    - **VA DEM Simplex can be used ONLY if approved by VDEM on an incident by incident basis. Misuse of DEM Simplex will result in the loss of use by Council members.**
    - **All Council members must have an FCC license or letter of authorization from an FCC licensed agency.**