
Middle Creek Search And Rescue

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Article I

First Notice

1. The team may receive first notice by any of the following:
 - a. Police Department investigating missing person.
 - b. Telephone call by family or friends of overdue or late arrival.
 - c. Airport Control tower reporting missing or downed aircraft or Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) activation.
 - d. Distress signals.
 - e. Report by member of hiking party.

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Article II

Call Out Procedures

SOME TYPE OF RESPONSE SHOULD ALWAYS HAPPEN IMMEDIATELY

1. Immediately after FIRST NOTICE the following alerting procedures should be implemented:
 - a. The team pagers should be activated using the pager protocol as adopted. The type of the search, the area of the search, and the meeting place and time should be indicated.
 - b. The team phone tree should be activated.
 - c. The team pagers should be activated again after the completion of the phone tree. This should be at a period not to exceed one hour from the initial call out.
 - d. Further callout notification should be activated as necessary.

Article III First on Scene and Establishing a Command Post

1. Communications protocol should be as indicated in Article XI.
2. The overhead team and quick response unit should respond as soon as possible after the general team callout. The quick response unit could consist of dog teams, trackers, and a minimum of two hasty teams.
3. The relatives and friends of the subject should be marked with **armbands** for prompt identification.
4. The Command Post should be located at the area where all incident operations are directed. There should be only one command post. The command post should be large enough to handle a massive escalation without relocation.
5. Guidelines for establishing search bases are:
 - a. **Proximity to the Search Area** - safety, sanitation, transportation routes, and travel time for search personnel should be considered.
 - b. **Public Interference** - The Officer in Charge (OIC) should consider the proximity to concentrations of people, job seekers, curiosity seekers, etc.
 - c. **Ownership of the Property** - The OIC or his appointed deputy should secure permission to use the land if it is private property.
 - d. **Communication** - All necessary communications should be considered.

FIRST ON SCENE CHECKLIST

1. Establish command post, request overhead team and resources per SOP.
2. Secure point last scene with law enforcement personnel. Keep personnel at the residence and the point last seen during the search.
3. Establish and designate command staff, implement planning and operations.
4. Identify witness(es) and/or reporting party and complete Lost Person Questionnaire.
5. Commence investigation and secure scent article (use law enforcement and dog team personnel if possible to handle this).
6. Secure maps of area.
7. Establish confinement of search area and set up vehicles for attraction (if applicable).
8. Designate search perimeter.
9. Gather search data required to commence hasty search, including but not limited to: Name, height, weight, hair color, eye color, clothing, equipment that may be discarded, point last scene, and general plans or direction of travel if known.
10. Deploy and document initial quick response units, hasty and/or dog teams. Prioritize resources.
11. Segment search area. Planning for segments:
Rule of thumb $1/2 \times 1/2$ mile = $1/4$ square mile
This is a square, approximately $1 \frac{1}{4}$ ", on a 1:24,000 topographic map.
12. Advise arriving resources to sign in, assemble, and remain in staging area.
13. Identify with armbands all friends and relatives and keep them removed from Plans, Operations Sections, and Communications.
14. If possible retain medical personnel at Command Post.

Article IV Assignments and Responsibilities of Overhead Team

1. The Incident Command Post should be established during the first operational period and should be the only location from which all search operations are directed. There is only one command post for a search.
2. The Incident Command System should be used to maintain a span of control.
3. The highest-ranking officer on scene should delegate responsibility for managing each function as necessary.
4. During the first and all subsequent operational periods Incident Command should develop objectives.
5. The communications plan as outlined in Article XI should be implemented by the Communications officer or an appointed Deputy when arriving "on scene".
6. Where possible a Unified Command Structure should be implemented using a responsible individual from each jurisdiction in a multi-jurisdictional situation.
7. The IC should assure protection of the "Point Last Seen" (PLS) if necessary by the use of police.

Article V

Equipment for Overhead Team

1. The following is a list of the minimum equipment required for the operation of the MIDSAR Overhead Team:
 - a. Pennsylvania state map showing county borders and major roadways
 - b. Search is an Emergency Handbook
 - c. Complete set of the Middle Creek Search & Rescue forms
 - d. Permanent and erasable transparency marker set
 - e. Fifty overlays for overhead projector
 - f. Calculator
 - g. Magnetic compass, Silva or equal, for map work
 - h. Drafting compass for marking circles on maps
 - i. Resource listings
 - j. Full set of Berks, Chester, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Schuylkill, and York topographic maps
2. Additional items when available:
 - a. Laptop computer with dual power supply
 - b. Package of 10 spare disks
 - c. Overhead projector
 - d. Copier
 - e. Extension cords and power strips

- f. Communications equipment (radio and repeater)

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Article VI

Assignments and Responsibilities - Field Teams

1. All field team members should compile a pack using Article VII Equipment for Field Teams.
2. Field Team Leaders should be responsible for carrying out the task assignment as issued by the Incident Command staff Operations Section.
3. Field teams should consist of the following.
 - a. Hasty Teams (2-4 persons)
 - (1) Field Team Leader
 - (2) Communications operator
 - (3) Member with basic first aid or higher training
 - (4) Other qualified support personnel.
 - b. Grid Teams (5-7 persons)
 - (1) Field Team Leader
 - (2) Communications operator
 - (3) Member with basic first aid or higher training
 - (4) Other qualified support personnel.
 - c. Dog Teams (2-3 persons)
 - (1) Dog handler with K-9
 - (2) Communications operator
 - (3) Other qualified support personnel
 - d. Mantrackers (2-3 persons)
 - (1) Mantracker
 - (2) Communications operator
 - (3) Other qualified support personnel
6. Field teams communications:
 - a. Radio communications should be kept to a minimum with priority given to command center or stations with emergency traffic.
 - b. Field team members should at no time discuss operations with any media personnel or the general public unless directed by the Public Information Officer or Incident Commander.

Article VII

Equipment-Field Teams

1. The following is a **list of suggested equipment** for field team personnel. Items in **bold** are mandatory depending on the weather, time of search, and terrain.
 - a. **A minimum of two quarts of water.**
 - b. **Compass for maps and field work (Orienteering type w/2 degree increments)**
 - c. **Fanny pack or light rucksack or backpack.**
 - d. **Flashlight(s)- spare bulbs and batteries (necessary for night searches)**
 - e. **Fox 40 survival whistle or equal**
 - f. **Appropriate footwear (hiking boots or shoes) and headwear**
 - g. **Identification – personal and medical**
 - h. **Appropriate clothing for weather (multi-layer clothing during cold weather searches)**
 - i. **Rain Gear**
 - j. **Eye protection (Goggles or glasses)**
 - k. 50 feet nylon parachute cord.
 - l. Brush pants or equal.
 - m. Chem Lites
 - n. Fire starters (butane lighters, magnesium fire starters, matches, etc.)
 - o. Personal First Aid Kit (Personal Medications)
 - p. Latex Gloves
 - q. Energy food
 - r. One roll flagging tape (tape is also available in the trailer)
 - s. Paper and pencil in waterproof bag
 - t. Space blanket or large trash bags
 - u. Survival knife or equal.
 - v. 3’-5’ Tape- fiber reinforced (Duct Tape)
 - w. Toilet paper
 - x. Watch or equal
 - y. Signal mirror
 - z. Gloves (leather)
 - aa. Chemical heat packs
 - bb. Insect repellent
 - cc. Radio equipment and extra batteries

2. Supplemental Field Team Supplies

- b. 6' x 8' Nylon tarp.
- c. Collapsible Army shovel or equal.
- d. Complete spare set of clothing, shoes and socks
- f. Single man tent.
- g. Sleeping bag
- h. water purification tablets
- i. PFD (Personal Flotation Device)
- j. Pocket strobe light
- k. Sunscreen
- l. Binoculars
- m. Camera
- n. Folding saw
- o. Gators

Article VIII

Briefing Overhead and Field Teams

1. Briefing is one of the most important activities on a search. A poor briefing can result in, among other things, poor search implementation, unsearched segments, misuse or destruction of clues, and ultimately, the failure to find the subject.
2. Briefing should provide:
 - a. Situation status
 - b. Objectives
 - c. Strategy
 - d. Tactical assignments
3. *Everyone should be briefed!* - Lack of briefing can make or break an operation.
4. Briefings should be oral and written.
 - a. Written briefing statements and task assignments reduce confusion and improve communications.
5. Who coordinates the briefing?
 - a. Briefing is coordinated by the Operations Team.
6. Plans Chief:
 - a. Briefs overhead team.
 - b. Briefs agency liaison personnel.
7. Operations Chief briefs supervisors, group leaders, and team leaders.
8. Team Leaders brief team members.

9. On large missions a public address system may be used to dispense general search data such as description, point last seen, articles carried, etc. Specific briefings may then be held on assignments, routes, confidential info, etc.
10. Briefings should take place in:
 - a. A designated area
 - (1) that has plenty of room.
 - (2) is sheltered from the weather.
 - (3) is quiet and free from interruptions.
11. Briefings should take place:
 - a. For team leaders, briefings should take place just prior to the team leaving for their search area.
 - b. For others, briefing can be conducted
 - (1) after teams move out to the search area.
 - (2) when there is a lull in activity.
 - (3) when overhead teams change shifts.
12. What information should be presented in the briefing?
 - a. Situation status, objectives, strategies and predictions.
 - b. Subject information - All information about the subject that will help the searcher recognize the subject, find clues, or determine the subject's behavior, such as:
 - (1) Complete physical description.
 - (2) Clothing and equipment the subject might have.
 - (3) Physical condition.
 - (4) Mental condition.
 - (5) Behavioral traits.
 - (6) Circumstances causing the search.
 - (7) Recent photo of subject.
 - c. Vital Concerns - Medical / Health Problems - Medicine the subject may be in need of, etc.

- d. Clue Considerations:
 - (1) Sole pattern of footwear.
 - (2) Items carried by subject that could be dropped or left behind.
 - (3) How to report clues.
 - (4) Instructions on logging clue locations and times found.
 - (5) How to protect clue locations for follow-up.
- e. Subject's trip plans.
- f. Terrain, hazards, etc., in assigned search area.
- g. Current (and predicted) weather in assigned area.
- h. Communication details – protocols, designator, frequencies, etc.
- i. Reporting details: When to report in and where.
- j. Transportation details.
- k. How long will the teams be out.
- l. Who the relatives or close associates of subject are and where they are located.
- m. Media procedures - where the media are located, who the media liaison is, instructions if searchers are contacted by media, etc.
- n. Tactical assignments with explicit searching instructions for team:
 - (1) Specific area, where to start, and how to get there.
 - (2) Configurations, spacing, etc.
 - (3) Marking procedures, clues, flagging, etc.
 - (4) Adjacent teams, etc.
 - (5) Have other teams searched the area? (implications for tracking)
 - (6) When to start, when to stop. What to do if subject is found - alive, injured, dead; instructions on protecting the scene
- o. Safety instructions - helicopter, terrain hazards, snakes, etc.

- p. Procedures if team member is injured.
- q. All teams will be debriefed upon completion of assignment.

Article IX

Debriefing Overhead and Field Teams

1. Debriefings should be used to gather, through interviews and interrogation of the team members, all information necessary for a complete, accurate understanding of the team's field activities. This information should be used to help plan future search strategy and tactics.
2. To ensure consistency - one person or a small cadre should debrief all teams.
3. Who should be debriefed
 - a. Depending on factors such as team size and type of operation, either the entire team, or just the team leader should be debriefed. If debriefing is to be limited to team leaders - the team leader should first debrief team members.
 - b. Oncoming shift personnel should debrief current personnel.
4. Debriefing should take place
 - a. As soon as the teams come out of the field, while the information is still fresh in their minds and before they talk with other teams.
5. The following information should be obtained.
 - a. Extent of coverage and spacing
 - b. Estimation of POD
 - c. Location of any clues-preferably on the map they took with them
 - d. Search difficulties, gaps in coverage, and effectiveness of the search
 - e. Hazards observed
 - f. Problems encountered with communication
 - g. Suggestions, ideas, recommendation or criticism for future use.
6. Debriefing should be done in writing.

Article X Resources - Availability, Functions, and Assignments

1. The following are suggested procedures to follow when dealing with resources of any kind.
2. Prioritization of resources should be as follows:
 - a. The most efficient and available resource with the highest POD should have priority of assignment during a mission.
 - b. All resources should be categorized according to functions performed as follows:
 - (1) Dog Teams
 - (2) Mantrackers
 - (3) Horse Units
 - (4) Quick Response Teams
 - (5) Hasty Teams
 - (6) Grid Teams
 - (7) Overhead Teams
 - (8) Airborne units
 - (a) Civil Air Patrol
 - (b) Helicopters and planes
 - (9) Amateur Radio Operators
 - (10) Red Cross
 - (11) Salvation Army
 - (12) Four wheel drives and all terrain vehicles.
 - (13) Fire Departments and Rescue Units
 - (14) Technical Rescue Teams
 - (a) High Angle Rescue
 - (b) Cave Rescue
 - (c) Mountain Rescue
 - (d) Water and Ice Rescue
 - (e) Others
 - (15) Establish an EVAC unit (Evacuation Team) possibly consisting of the following personnel:
 - (a) Two Certified EMT's or higher with medical field packs.
 - (b) Two radio operators with extra batteries.
 - (c) Six field team members/leaders with litter and all

packaging.

- (d) Fourteen (14) to sixteen (16) personnel from adjacent hasty or grid teams.
 - (e) Items C & D may be technical rescue personnel if deemed necessary by command.
3. The functions of the above listed units are self explanatory. The priority of assignment should be assessed during the mission using knowledge of resource function, past experiences, and present mission requirements.
 4. The following factors influence the allocations and deployments of resources:
 - a. Search Urgency
 - b. POD of resources available.
 - c. POD of resources desired.
 - d. POA of the segments to be searched.
 - e. Terrain difficulty, density of vegetation, hazards, and travel aids.
 - f. Condition of the subject with regards to mobility and responsiveness.
 5. It is imperative that the right resources are matched with the right needs. The team should diversify it's resource options. The team should provide backup and support for it's resources.
 6. The "First on Scene" arriving resources should be assigned under the following guidelines when available and in the following order :
 - a. Dog teams
 - b. Mantrackers
 - c. Hasty Teams
 - d. Air Operations
 7. These resources should be used in conjunction with:

- a. Confinement
 - b. Attraction (where feasible)
 - c. Binary Search (Sign Cutting)
 - d. Hasty Searches checking drainages, travel aids, and areas of high probability
8. The Special Resources Officer should maintain duplicate files of all resources in both written and electronic format. This resource file should be updated at least once per year. This updating should be done by mail or by telephone.
 9. The MIDSAR team is a ground search team for the purpose of locating missing persons or downed aircraft. The team should for the purposes of technical rescue maintain written mutual aid agreements to provide the following services: water rescue, cave rescue, ice rescue, high angle rescue, medical command, and other technical rescue specialties as should be needed for the successful completion of a mission.

Article XI

Command and Field Communications

1. The first radio unit arriving on scene should monitor the MIDSAR simplex operations frequency of 144.350.
2. As soon as possible an incident command phone number should be established. This could be the communications operator's phone or someone else's. The pagers should be set off again with this phone numbers as the message followed by the code 227. Example: 717-733-5555*227
3. As soon as the on scene frequency of operations is determined, activate MIDSAR pagers indicating the incident command operational frequency followed by the appropriate incident command designator for radio frequency. I.E.- 155*895*228 meaning a frequency of operation by on scene incident command staff of 155.895 Mhz. For example 228 indicates incident command radio frequency.
4. MIDSAR pagers should be activated at least once each hour during the first three hours of an active incident and every six hours thereafter or until it is deemed that no further personnel should be necessary or the incident has been terminated at the discretion of the Incident Command on scene.
5. MIDSAR responders should call the MIDSAR electronic voice mail following a page and also any other numbers as requested during paging. The electronic voice mail should contain the following information:
 - a. The type of incident
 - b. The present weather conditions on scene.
 - c. The 24 hour weather forecast on scene if possible.
 - d. The type of terrain at the incident.
 - e. Any special gear or clothing requirements.
 - f. The incident command phone number and operational frequencies when available.

- g. The geographical location and directions.
 - h. I.E.- The following could be a theoretical electronic voice mail message:
MIDSAR has been dispatched to the Camp Mack Scout reservation in Lebanon County. We are searching for a missing 10 year old Boy Scout who has been lost for eight hours. Present weather is clear skies with temperatures in the mid forties. The 24 hour forecast is for heavy snows starting in 12 hours with expected accumulations of up to one foot. Temperatures will not exceed 30 degrees over the period. Typical terrain is hilly with moderate to heavy underbrush. Dress for the weather and overnight operations. On scene radios check in on 155.555 and telephone at 717-626-9999. At Route 322 and 501 take 501 North for 2 miles and camp entrance is on left. Staging is at park rangers office. END OF MESSAGE
6. All MIDSAR radios should be programmed as necessary by authorized personnel and radio operations should be confirmed prior to field assignments when available. The appropriate radio number and field assignment should be indicated prior to leaving the staging area. All radios should be returned to the MIDSAR Incident Radio Officer upon return from Incident Command or Field assignments or upon termination of the incident by on scene Incident Command staff. **ALL RADIOS SHOULD BE CHECKED PRIOR TO ENTERING THE FIELD BEFORE TRANSPORTATION LEAVES! REMEMBER SPARE BATTERIES!**
 7. Upon completion of the incident all MIDSAR radios should be reprogrammed to default frequencies as specified and all units should be charged and returned to storage.
 8. All radios should be periodically charged as required.
 9. Personnel should be placed on call to respond with the MIDSAR trailer to all incidents.
 10. Field teams should be assigned tactical callsigns using the standard as outlined below:
 - a. Field Team One, Field Team Two, Field Team Three, etc., etc.

- b. Hasty One, Hasty Two, Hasty Three, etc., etc.
 - c. Dog Team One, Dog Team Two, Dog Team Three, etc., etc.
 - d. Tracker One, Tracker Two, Tracker Three, etc., etc.
 - e. Mobile One, Mobile Two, Mobile Three, etc., etc., for 4x4's, autos, snowmobiles, three and four wheelers.
 - f. Grid Team One, Grid Team Two, Grid Team three, etc., etc.
11. The Incident Command post should have a radio net within command to permit communications between all necessary incident command personnel.
 12. The Incident Command Post Communications Section should contain equipment capable of monitoring and transmitting on all frequencies which may be used during the mission. The Mission Radio Net should be capable of communicating directly or through repeater with all field assignments. The Communications Section should also maintain a net with any resources within the staging area to permit ready access in the event of activation of that resource.
 13. The Communications Section should maintain a log of all radio transmissions during the mission and should place this with all mission paperwork.
 14. The Communications Section should maintain a readily available list of all frequencies used during the mission. This list should reflect which frequencies are active and inactive during any phase of the mission.
 15. The Communications Section should train members as necessary in proper radio procedures and should provide written documents of all communications procedures.

Article XII

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

1. CISD Teams were developed to provide debriefing following critical incidents to any emergency response agency requesting assistance. The focus of this service is to minimize the harmful effects of job stress, particularly in crisis or emergency situations. The highest priorities of the team are to maintain confidentiality and to respect the individuals involved. It is not the function of a Team to replace on-going professional counseling, but to provide immediate crisis intervention and support. Through the CISD process, a Team provides emergency personnel a tool to potentially alleviate stress related symptoms. The CISD Team also provides education regarding critical incident stress to emergency services workers.
2. Following or during a mission, the TEAM should consider contacting Lancaster County Wide Communications and request that the Lancaster County Critical Incident Stress Management Team perform a debriefing. Especially if the mission involved any of the following circumstances:
 - a. Death or Injury of either subject(s) or responder(s)
 - b. Suspension of mission without location of subject(s)
 - c. Any situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later...All that is necessary is that the incident, regardless of the type, generates unusually strong feelings in the emergency workers.

Article XIII

Criteria for Mission Suspension and Demobilization

1. Evaluate by consensus, the following factors prior to the decision to suspend or demobilize the mission:
 - a. Are we searching for a person who is most likely deceased or living?
 - b. Is the subject no longer within the search area boundaries?
 - c. What is the POD of the search area coverage?
 - d. What is the assessment of searcher safety?
 - e. What is the overall family and political climate?
 - f. Have all the segments been searched and researched?
 - g. Depletion of resources?
 - h. Priority of other SAR incidents?
 - i. Cost effectiveness of a continued search?
 - j. The present and future weather?
 - k. Major equipment malfunctions?

2. LIMITED CONTINUOUS SEARCH should be organized as follows:
 - a. Overflights of search area.
 - b. Posting of signs - At trailheads, camps, etc. to keep public informed of missing person.
 - c. Inform the public and media, particularly people who may be going into the search area.

- d. Use the search area for training exercises.

3. DEMOBILIZATION

- a. The demobilization process should begin when the decision has been made to suspend the mission.
- b. All units must sign out with Incident Command prior to departing the search scene. All paperwork should be completed and a timetable for a mission critique should be given.

Article XIV Safety & Health Standards NFPA 1500

The Safety Officer or his appointed delegate should strictly adhere to the safety guidelines as provided for in the following sections of NFPA 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program. The term "Search and Rescue team" should be substituted for the term " fire department. The term "Chief or Duty Officer" should be substituted for the term "fire chief".

The most current addition of NFPA 1500 should be adopted by the team, a copy or copies of which should be kept as a permanent attachment to the team SOP's.

The following sections of NFPA 1500 should be adopted with the changes as indicated in the first paragraph of this article:

1. Chapter 1 Administration Adopted in it's entirety.
2. Chapter 2 Organization Adopted in it's entirety.
3. Chapter 3 Training & Education Adopted as follows:
Parts 3-1.1, 3-1.2, 3-1.3, 3-1.4, 3-1.5, 3-2.1, 3-2.2, 3-3.1, 3-3.6,3-3.7, 3-4.1,3-4.4, 3-4.5, 3-5.1, 3-5.2, 3-5.3, 3-5.4.
4. Chapter 5 Protective Clothing and Protective Equipment Adopted as follows:
Parts 5-1.2, 5-1.3, 5-1.4, 5-1.7, 5-8.1, 5-8.1.2, 5-8.2, 5-8.3, 5-8.4, 5-8.5, 5-10.1
5. Chapter 6 Emergency Operations Adopted in it's entirety.
6. Chapter 8 Medical & Physical Adopted as follows:
Parts 8-1.5, 8-4.1, 8-4.2, 8-4.3, 8-5.1, 8-5.2

7. Appendix A Information

Adopted as follows:
Parts A-2-2.3, A-2-3.1, A-2-3.2, A-2-4.1.2, A-2-6.1, A-2-6.3, A-2-7.1, A-2-7.4, A-3-1.5, A-3-3.1, A-4-2.2, A-4-2.3, A-6 (all), A-7(all), A-8(all)