

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL



## MOHAVE COUNTY SHERIFF'S SEARCH and RESCUE

March 23, 2023

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Mohave County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue (MCSO SAR) is an all-volunteer organization grouped into Units based on geographic distribution; Kingman, Lake Havasu City, Bullhead City and Arizona Strip, that operates under the direct control of the Mohave County Sheriff's Office (MCSO). These Units may operate as independent 501(C)3 non-profit organizations.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of MCSO SAR is to assist the Sheriff in complying with ARS 11-441. Subsection C specifically states: *"The sheriff shall conduct or coordinate within the county search or rescue operations involving the life or health of any person or may assist in such operations in another county at the request of that county's sheriff, and may request assistance from any persons or agencies in the fulfillment of duties under this subsection"*.

To accomplish this purpose, the Sheriff of Mohave County may request the MCSO SAR Units to:

- Conduct search and rescue operations throughout Mohave County.
- Assist other counties and states when requested to do so by the Sheriff of that county or state.
- Assist and augment the MCSO personnel in any emergency which may arise such as evidence searches and other support duties whether civic or public deemed appropriate for volunteers by the Sheriff or his representative.

## 3. MCSO SAR MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance public safety that promotes a quality of life, safety and welfare for the citizens of Mohave County, and its visitors. To wisely use the resources which have been entrusted to us. To maintain public trust through open, honest and ethical behavior exercising integrity in the use of power and authority, to perform all duties with the highest level of personal and professional principles, and to create positive relationships with the public by treating all with fairness, dignity and compassion.

## 4. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to join SAR, an applicant must be:

1. 21 years of age,
2. Hold a valid driver's license,
3. Own 4-WD vehicle and must be capable of driving in difficult terrain,
4. Possess "Smart" phone or tablet to support Agency used applications,
5. Pass an MCSO background check, and
6. Meet the new-member requirements of the individual Units to which they are applying.  
As found in member specific unit By-Laws.

## **5. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon admittance to MCSO SAR, each and every member must agree to conduct themselves professionally at all times; members should never become belligerent or loud in public, otherwise act in a manner which is disturbing the peace; they will at all times be mindful that each individual member shall always uphold the dignity of the Sheriff's Office; they shall understand that each and every member of the MCSO SAR Unit is a representative of the Sheriff and any act in conflict of the above agreement would be a direct reflection on the Sheriff of Mohave County.

Each member is expected to make all reasonable efforts in support to any assignment, callouts, missions, and functions in support to MCSO SAR and unit needs.

No MCSO SAR member shall institute any action contrary to this manual, and/or the By-Laws of the MCSO SAR Unit to which they belong without complete authorization from the Commanding Officer, his representative, and/or representative of MCSO.

No member shall participate as an individual in an exhibition or contest for a prize while wearing the uniform of MCSO SAR.

No member shall work at any function, public or private, in uniform without the approval of MCSO.

## **6. UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each Unit shall provide a current roster monthly to the SAR Coordinators and the other Units that contains the following information for each member affiliated with the Unit:

- a. Name
- b. Badge number
- c. Phone number
- d. Email
- e. Advanced qualifications (RS, TRT, T2, T1, EMT, SWT, Paramedic, CPD, etc)

Units shall provide training at each monthly meeting, preferably coordinated with the other Units. Training shall include Bloodborne pathogens (annually), helicopter safety, winter and summer weather training, recap on previous missions and other training deemed necessary. The Units are responsible to ensure that their members are trained to the minimum standards and provide routine refreshers, as necessary – to ensure mission readiness.

Each Unit shall turn in all expense receipts for mission reimbursement within 3 days of completing the mission. Fuel receipts shall include the mission number and the total amount of quantity and cost of fuel used in support of that mission.

Each Unit is responsible for assembling members to respond for mission callouts. Membership should be minimally trained for mission readiness demands of that unit area of responsibility.

## **7. TRAINING**

MCSO SAR members are required to learn and be competent in mandatory skills needed to meet their functions and are required to demonstrate them in periodic testing programs scheduled by MCSO SAR Coordinators or their respective Units. All MCSO SAR members will be required to obtain recertifications of all training programs in which certification is required and will be periodically required to demonstrate proficiency in the required and advanced skills.

No person shall attend any training, exercise or official Sheriff's Office function until their background check has been completed by the Sheriff's Office. This requirement does not extend to the individual monthly meetings, Basic Academy, and Advance Academy.

### **A. MINIMUM SKILL SET**

All MCSO SAR members will be required to meet minimum training requirements and to keep them current to meet re-certification requirements including:

- a. Basic Academy-16 hour course completed within the first year. No member will be allowed to participate in searches or rescues without completing Basic Academy.
- b. Advanced Academy-16 hour course containing SARTopo Mapping, Swift Water and Rope Awareness, and other classes as directed by the SAR Coordinators.
- c. CPR (recertification required every two years).
- d. First Aid (recertification required every two years)
- e. Bloodborne pathogens awareness (annual recertification required)
- f. Swift Water Awareness
- g. Rope Awareness
- h. Use of communications equipment and procedures
- i. Basic Navigation
- j. Use of Smart Applications, such as SARTopo Mapping, Resgrid, and coordinate conversion tools
- i. AZSARCA SAR Tracker III
- j. AZSARCA SAR III
- k. Basic NIMS courses as defined in the SAR Unit's new-member manual
- l. Obtain a Hepatitis A and B vaccination, present a copy of a positive titer test or a signed declination form.

- m. Other training as required by individual member unit by-laws or new-member manual.

## **B. ADVANCED TRAINING**

Every member is encouraged to attend advanced training opportunities to enhance their skills and become better SAR members. Proficiency is required to maintain certification in these advanced skills.

### **1. INCIDENT COMMANDER TRAINING**

A volunteer member may function in the capacity of Incident Commander if they meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. At the direction of MCSO
2. Must attend Inland Search Management Course
3. Recommend MAG300 (Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents)

### **2. FIREARMS TRAINING**

Only members in good standing that have been in their respective Unit for a minimum of one year and completed probation are eligible to participate in the certification shoot.

Members authorized to carry a firearm must do so in a concealed manner. Members must have a current CCW Permit and qualify annually as set by the MCSO Firearms Range Master.

No member of MCSO SAR will be authorized to carry a firearm on any assignment unless that member has qualified with MCSO. The firearm used for MCSO qualification will be the only firearm the member will be authorized to carry on MCSO SAR assignments. The make, model, and serial number of the weapon to be carried must be registered with MCSO. The possession of a Concealed Firearms Permit does not supersede the rules and regulations of the MCSO, nor does the right to open-carry law apply.

LEOSA qualified members are exempt.

### **3. TECHNICAL ROPE TRAINING**

The MCSO SAR Rope Training requirements are further defined in the MCSO SAR Rope SOP and are drawn from several resources such as National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), National Park Services Technical Rescue handbook, American National Standards Institute (ANSI) deemed appropriate to meet local conditions in wilderness rescues.

MCSO SAR recognizes three levels of rope training; Technical Rope Technician (TRT), Rope Ground Support (RS, aka Operational) and Rope Awareness (RA) (RA training obtained as Advance Academy). All members of MCSO SAR are

required to be trained at the RA level. Advanced training at the RS and TRT levels are at the discretion of each individual and their abilities and members must maintain proficiency.

MCSO SAR has the authority, as the Agency Having Jurisdiction, to determine the certifying entity or individual that certifies its members.

#### **4. SWIFT WATER (SW) TRAINING**

The MCSO SAR SW Training requirements meet or exceed the requirements contained in National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) standards 1006 and 1670 with modifications as deemed appropriate to meet local conditions.

MCSO SAR recognizes three levels of SW training; Swift water Technician (SWT), Operational (SWO) and SW Awareness (SWA) (SWA training obtained at Advance Academy). All members of MCSO SAR are required to be trained at the SWA level. Advanced training at the SWO and SWT levels are at the discretion of each individual and their abilities. Members must recertify every two years to maintain proficiency.

MCSO SAR has the authority, as the Agency Having Jurisdiction, to determine the certifying entity or individual that certifies its members.

#### **5. ATV/UTV TRAINING**

All members are required to complete ATV and UTV safety training before they can operate those vehicles during an MCSO SAR mission. The safety course will be approved by MCSO to ensure it meets requirements.

### **8. FIELD OPERATIONS**

The MCSO SAR Coordinators identify members from each Unit as the POC for operational missions. Upon activation of a Unit to support a mission, the ICS command structure will be in place and all members will report directly to the Incident Command. No member shall self-respond to any mission without first notifying their unit's POC.

No member shall go on a mission until they have attended the Arizona Basic SAR Academy and have completed a background check by the Sheriff's Office.

The primary duty of MCSO SAR members is to save lives by locating lost subjects or rescuing them if they are in a dangerous situation. SAR personnel are not required to rescue or recover property of the lost or rescued subject.

A 911 call that requests assistance for the rescue of animals will be handled as a non-emergency situation and the safety of MCSO SAR members will take priority. The response to such a call

may be delayed because of weather, nightfall or any other safety concern or manpower availability. Calls for assistance involving humans will always take precedence over calls involving animals.

#### **A. CALL-OUT PROCEDURES**

All callouts and MCSO SAR field operations will be organized using the Incident Command System (ICS). The initial Incident Commander (IC) will be the first MCSO or MCSO SAR member to arrive on scene. Ultimately, the individual with the most training or the one assigned by MCSO will be the IC of that specific incident.

All MCSO SAR members shall make every effort to respond to mission callouts. The responding member shall respond with proper PPEs that will include boots that support the ankle, long pants or shorts and SAR identifying shirt, jacket, or vest. In short, members follow the unit uniform requirements, or as found below section "D".

All MCSO SAR members **must** sign-in to a MCSO authorized sign-in sheet at all missions, trainings, and MCSO SAR activities.

#### **B. PROVIDING MEDICAL CARE IN THE FIELD**

All MCSO SAR members are expected to render first aid and medical assistance at the level of the member's training and within the limits of the relevant laws and regulations when providing medical care while on MCSO SAR operations with priority given to immediate evacuation to advanced medical care.

When it is known that a mission involves an accident or injury, every attempt should be made to have a medically certified member included in the call-out and once contact is made, to have a medically certified MCSO SAR member in contact with the subject as soon as possible. The highest medically trained member will be in charge of subject care until the subject can be transported to advanced medically trained personnel or the medically trained personnel are able to reach the subject.

#### **C. POST CALL-OUT DEBRIEF**

After all missions, trainings or MCSO SAR activities, the IC shall conduct a debrief to solicit input from the responding members as to how the event developed and how improvements can be made. All members shall report their time home and mileage.

#### **D. UNIFORM CODE**

MCSO SAR has two levels of uniforms, Class "A" and "B". The Class A will typically be worn for formal events. The Class B (field uniform) will be worn for training, missions, or callouts. Any changes to the uniform code requires the Sheriff's approval.



Class A; The 5.11 Style #72516, High Vis Orange (405), long-sleeve button up collar shirt or the Red Kap Style #SS14-EHV, Long Sleeve Enhanced Visibility button up collar Work Shirt. The shirt will have the SAR badge patch above the left breast pocket, the (approximate 3 1/2" by 2") American flag and name embroidered in 1/2" black letters above the right breast pocket. The Sheriff SAR shoulder patches on each side. In place of the right shoulder patch, the ASARCA SAR may be worn with earned ASARCA or MCSO SAR rocker patches. Rank will be designated with a pair of black metal insignias on the collar. Black t-shirt. Khaki pants with a black belt. Black shoes or boots. Brown western style felt hat or SAR ballcap. Blue and gold hash marks to designate years of service may be worn on the left sleeve.

Class B; A standard marked orange SAR long sleeve or short sleeve t-shirt or orange battle/combat shirt or orange button up shirt with SAR markings or patches. Khaki tactical style pants or shorts. Boots with ankle support. Any headgear must be plain or have some type of SAR logo. Any deviation from this uniform is at the discretion of the MCSO Coordinators or IC.

MCSO uniforms are only to be worn for official SAR events and functions.

#### **E. MANDATORY EQUIPMENT**

All MCSO SAR members are required to carry a 24-hour pack that will include a minimum of mandatory equipment listed in Appendix 1. The member will also carry a minimum of equipment in their vehicle that is listed in Appendix 2.

### **9. ADMINISTRATIVE**

MCSO SAR will be under the direction of most recent MCSO policy and county policy.

#### **A. WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

MCSO SAR members will be covered by the county's workman's compensation insurance during all MCSO SAR mission, trainings and authorized activities. During authorized missions the coverage will be from the time they leave their place of residence until they return to their place of residence with no unnecessary deviations. During MCSO SAR trainings and authorized activities, the coverage will start upon the arrival of the member to the location of the activity and will end when the member leaves the location of the activity.

#### **B. REPORTING INJURIES TO SAR PERSONNEL**

All injuries and exposures to MCSO SAR members occurring during covered activities will be reported immediately to the IC or the Unit Commander. The proper forms should be completed, and documentation (including pictures) attached by MCSO SAR Coordinators.

### **C. REPORTING DAMAGES TO PERSONAL VEHICLES OR EQUIPMENT**

Damage to personal vehicles, equipment and unit equipment that occurs during covered activities may be covered by the Mohave County or DEMA. The incident must be reported to the SAR Coordinator as soon as possible and all forms and documentation (including pictures) should be included in a report of the incident.

### **D. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM) TEAM**

Each unit shall have identified at least one available member that have been trained in CISM and remind the members of the existence of the CISM team to help in high stress or cumulative stress situations. Special consideration should be given to host a meeting after a long SAR mission, a mission with an unfortunate outcome, or when there are indications that such a meeting would be to the benefit of the MCSO SAR team.

### **E. REIMBURSEMENTS**

Any receipts and/or reports for fuel, food, lodging, vehicle damage and other expenses incurred from a county or state sanctioned mission will be forwarded to MCSO Coordinators through a Unit point of contact within 3 working days in original format or PDF format via email.

### **F. VOLUNTEER DRIVERS OF COUNTY VEHICLES**

Prior to any MCSO SAR member driving a county vehicle they shall complete the Defensive Driver course furnished by the County, maintain the certificate current and be approved by the MCSO Coordinators.

### **G. VOLUNTEER CONTACT WITH NEWS MEDIA and SOCIAL MEDIA**

MCSO SAR members will have no contact with the press or post information regarding MCSO SAR activities on social media unless the contact or information has been approved by MCSO administration or MCSO Coordinators. Refer to MCSO Policy on Social Media. Any media request should be referred promptly to the MCSO Media Specialist.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheriff Schuster

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX 1 - MANDATORY PERSONAL SAR EQUIPMENT

The following personal equipment must be carried:

1. 24-hour personal survival pack with food and water for 24 hours
2. Smartphone with battery pack AND compass OR GPS with extra batteries
3. Tracking stick
4. Note pad and pencil
5. Radio and spare battery
6. First aid kit and personal medications
7. Flashlight and headlamp with extra batteries
8. Signal mirror
9. Gloves (leather and latex)
10. Flagging tape
11. 20-ft tubular webbing-Provided by the unit.
12. Knife
13. Whistle
14. Emergency blanket (foil)
15. Fire starter
16. Locking T-rated carabiner
17. Approved helmet

<b>FLAGGING – Unit Colors</b>	
AZ Strip	Pink
Bullhead	Blue
Havasu	Yellow
Kingman	Orange
Les and Mike	White

### Optional Equipment

1. Binoculars
2. Insect repellent
3. Sunscreen and lip balm
4. Hat
5. Measuring tape
6. Extra socks, shoes, or clothing
7. Duct tape
8. Plastic bags (Ziploc various sizes, large trash bags)
9. Towelettes, sanitizer or hand wipes
10. Bandana
11. Paracord
12. Tissue paper
13. Poncho or rain gear
14. Clear glasses or goggles
15. Gaiters and ice cleats or micro-spikes
16. Firearms (only if certified by MCSO)
17. Chest pack

## **APPENDIX 2 - MANDATORY VEHICLE SAR EQUIPMENT**

Each SAR member must have a 4-WD vehicle that is in good, mechanically sound condition and prepared for extensive off-road traveling. No electric vehicles (some hybrids may be acceptable).

Emergency Lighting - Red and/or blue emergency lights may be temporarily (magnetic) or permanently installed in a "concealed" manner on a vehicle, but only turned on once specifically directed to by MCSO SAR Coordinators.

Each SAR member shall carry in their vehicle the following basic list of mandatory equipment to ensure:

1. The safety of the SAR member.
2. The proper equipment to complete his mission.
3. The proper equipment/supplies to ensure the safety and comfort of the victim.

Each SAR member shall carry the following mandatory equipment in their vehicle. Additional optional equipment such as camping gear, etc., may be carried at the member's discretion.

1. Water
2. Tools sufficient to complete basic in-field vehicle repairs
3. Spare tire and equipment to change flats
4. SAR radio mounted and grounded
5. Flashlight and extra batteries
6. Jumper cables
7. Shovel (long handle or folding)
8. Tow strap, chain or other recovery equipment
9. First aid kit (hot packs and cold packs)
10. Disposable emergency blanket
11. Orange reflective safety vest

### **Optional vehicle equipment**

1. Snow chains
2. Air compressor
3. Tire plugs
4. Extra fuel

Members operating ATVs or UTVs must wear a DOT-helmet.

UTV mandatory equipment

1. Spare belt
2. Tools
3. First aid kit
4. Spare tire
5. Tire plug kit
6. Shovel
7. SAR radio mounted and grounded
8. Water
9. Insurance

UTV recommended equipment

1. Extra fuel
2. Radio headsets
3. Extra light
4. Air compressor

Motorcycle/ATV mandatory equipment

1. Spare belt (if applicable)
2. Tools
3. Tire plug kit
4. First aid kit
5. Water
6. Insurance
7. Helmet