

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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Reference Documents:

HISAR Bylaws
MASAR Recommended Equipment List, combined
MASAR Standards Definitions
MASAR Certification Standards and Procedures Overview
MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard
MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix A - Aerobic Fitness Evaluation
MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix B - Grandfathering of Searchers
MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix C - Training Requirements
MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix D – Rec'd Min. Equipment List
MASAR Mounted Team Certification Overview
MASAR Mounted Team Certification Standard
MASAR Mounted Team Certification Standard, Appendix B: Recommended Equipment List
MASAR Mounted Team Certification Application Checklist
MASAR Appendix A: Grandfathered MT Certification Application Checklist
MASAR MT Recertification Application Checklist
MASAR Mounted Team Evaluation Test Form
MASAR Mounted Air Scent Team Certification Standard, Appendix C
MASAR Mounted Air Scent Team Certification Test Form, Appendix C

HISAR Forms:

New Member Application (PDF)
Online Google Forms:

- Independent Training Tracking
- Outreach Tracking
- Complaints Form

Borrowed Equipment Agreement (PDF)

NOTES:

In case of accidental discrepancy where the HISAR SOPs are more lenient than the MASAR Standards, the MASAR Standards supersede the HISAR SOPs.

Any subject not addressed by these Standard Operating Procedures should be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors for discussion and potential policy creation or amendment.

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SOP #: 101
SUBJECT: Bylaws

SECTION: Procedural Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to adhere to all adopted Bylaws.

PROCEDURE:

All members of HISAR will adhere to all adopted Bylaws. If there is a conflict between the Bylaws and the SOPs, the Bylaws will supersede the SOPs. If such a case arises, it should be reported to the Board immediately for review.

REFERENCES:

HISAR Bylaws

Highlands Search and Rescue

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SOP #: 102
SUBJECT: Compliance

SECTION: Procedural Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue to comply with all federal and state laws, and MASAR policies, and to comply with all policies and procedures as set forth in Highlands Search and Rescue Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures.

PROCEDURE:

Highlands Search and Rescue's Board of Directors (Board) are in charge of reviewing our compliance policy and specific compliance situations that may arise, in regards to all laws and policies referenced above.

All members must carry out their duties in accordance with this Compliance policy. Any violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with SOP #116 Discipline. If a member becomes aware of any violation of this policy, they must report it to the Board. If the member is uncomfortable reporting the violation, they can make an anonymous report to a Director, either via email sent from an anonymous email address or by completing the online Google Form "HISAR Complaints Form".

REFERENCES:

SOP # 115 Discipline
Google Form: HISAR Complaints Form

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 103

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Discrimination

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that all members have the right to participate in an environment free from discrimination.

PROCEDURE:

HISAR will not discriminate against any member because of race, gender, sexual preference or identity, religious belief, nationality, ethnicity or any other class protected by federal law. Any member who feels that they have been subjected to any form of discrimination should report the incident immediately as per the Complaints policy.

REFERENCES:

SOP # 115 Complaints

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 104

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Harassment and Intimidation

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to provide personnel with an environment free from harassment, sexual or otherwise, and intimidation.

PROCEDURE:

HISAR recognizes the right for members to participate in an environment that is free from harassment and intimidation. Such harassment or intimidation may include verbal or physical conduct that is derogatory or hostile toward an individual based on age, race, gender, sexual preference or identity, religious belief, nationality, ethnicity, physical or mental disability or any other class protected by federal law. It is not only a violation of the policy, but it may also constitute illegal discrimination (SOP #103, Discrimination).

Sexual harassment is against Maine's sexual harassment law and constitutes a form of discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

"Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating and intimidation, hostile, or offensive working environment."

Examples of conduct that constitutes sexual harassment are:

- Verbal – such as comments about a person's looks, sexual jokes, or use of derogatory sexual stereotypes.
- Non-Verbal – such as giving suggestive looks, displaying sexual objects or pictures, or making sexual gestures.
- Physical – such as inappropriate touching or massage, pinching, deliberate brushing up against someone, or actual sexual assault.

All members who believe they have been subject to harassment or intimidation of any kind or anyone observing or suspecting harassment or intimidation should report the incident following SOP # 114 (Complaints). Harassment and/or intimidation are considered grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of membership.

REFERENCES:

SOP #103 Discrimination

SOP #115 Complaints

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 105

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Notice of Privacy Practices

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to ensure the privacy of confidential medical or other personal information.

PROCEDURE:

During the course of normal operations it is possible that Unit members may become privy to confidential medical or other personal information about search subjects or other Unit members. In accordance with the applicable laws and Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) policies regarding healthcare information privacy the Unit adopts the following statement:

“We understand that medical and other information about you and your health is personal. We are committed to protecting this information about you. The uses and disclosures of your medical and personal information by Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) will be for the purposes of search operations only. There are some situations where we may be required to release information to an authority which we will accommodate according to the law. Only members who have need of such information will have it.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with MASAR. All complaints must be submitted in writing.

You will not suffer any retaliation or be penalized in any way for filing a complaint.”

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 106

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Confidentiality

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain confidentiality about searches and search subjects as per Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) standards.

PROCEDURE:

All members will maintain confidentiality regarding search operations and search subjects in accordance with MASAR Social Media Policy and the privacy practices as set forth in HISAR SOP #105 Notice of Privacy Practices.

The Warden Service is the main point of contact on search operations, and will release whatever information is proper to be released. As agents of the Warden Service, members shall not say, email, text, or post on the internet, anything about searches, search subjects, or search locations that has not already been announced by MASAR, the Maine Warden Service, or the news media, in accordance with MASAR Social Media Policy.

Members may take and share photos as long as there is no information given that violates the above procedure, including location tags.

REFERENCES:

MASAR Social Media Policy

SOP #105 Notice of Privacy Practices

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SOP #: 107

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Conflicts of Interest

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that all members should use good faith and due diligence to keep honest and fair in all transactions, financial and otherwise, in regards to their duties to HISAR, its policies, and its property.

PROCEDURE:

In their official capacity as officers, directors or members of HISAR all acts shall be for the benefit of the Unit. They shall not accept any favor, monetary or otherwise, that would influence the actions of HISAR. They shall not take advantage of their Office for personal benefit.

All members will disclose in writing to the Board of Directors (Board) any employment, activity, investment, or other interest, which might be in conflict with the interests of HISAR.

The Board will obtain Conflict of Interest Statements from all members affected by exposure to potential Conflicts of Interest. When warranted, the Board shall submit a report to the general membership concerning potential Conflicts of Interest. Board will make the final decision on any action that may be necessary to resolve a Conflict of Interest, however they may take into consideration the opinion of the general membership if the situation warrants.

All members shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this policy and make appropriate disclosures as directed by this policy immediately when a potential conflict arises, either to the Board confidentially or at any regular meeting.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 108

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Alcohol, Marijuana, and Illegal Drug Use

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to enforce a zero tolerance policy on intoxication and drug use at HISAR and Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) sanctioned events.

PROCEDURE:

Any use of illegal drugs, or any use of marijuana, during search operations, meetings, public affairs or any other event sanctioned by HISAR or MASAR is strictly prohibited. The possession, manufacture, distribution or dispensing of any such drugs is strictly prohibited.

Any use of alcohol during search operations, meetings, public affairs or any other event sanctioned by HISAR or MASAR is strictly prohibited, except that reasonable consumption in after-hours scenarios is acceptable as long as the member in question does not become visibly intoxicated.

“After-hours” is defined as the period of time after the official event (training or meeting) has concluded for the day and social time has begun.

Visible intoxication is defined as the level of impairment that any reasonable person can detect by noticing the various obvious visible signs of intoxication. If it is apparent that the person’s behavior, judgment, and coordination have diminished, then the person may be considered visibly intoxicated. Some examples of the signs of visible intoxication that an observer would notice may include: glassy or bloodshot eyes, unusually loud or slurred speech, lack of coordination or concentration, spilling a drink, staggered walk, etc. Violations of this policy will be handled using the disciplinary actions as set forth in SOP #116 Discipline.

REFERENCES:

SOP #116 Discipline

Highlands Search and Rescue

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SOP #: 109

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Prescription Medication

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to ensure the safety of our members. The use of certain medications could have a detrimental effect on safety.

PROCEDURE:

It is the responsibility of each member to be familiar with the effects of any and all medications that they are taking. It will be each member's responsibility to decline participation if any medication has the potential to affect their ability to make sound and appropriate decisions.

During any operation, members should disclose to their teammate any medications that could affect their ability to perform and/or any potential life saving medications they must carry.

Any violation of this policy will be grounds for immediate discipline per SOP #116 Discipline, including possible termination of membership.

REFERENCES:

SOP #116 Discipline

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SOP #: 110
SUBJECT: Officer Position Descriptions

SECTION: Procedural Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to conform with its own Bylaws in its organizational structure, as well as to provide such additional offices as appropriate to conduct the business of the unit.

PROCEDURE:

In accordance with HISAR Bylaws Article III Section A, the Members will elect on an annual basis the Corporate Offices of President, Vice President(s), Treasurer, and Secretary. Subject to majority vote, the Board of Directors shall appoint on an annual basis the following non-Corporate Officers during their first official meeting on or after January 1: Chairperson, one or more Duty Officers, one or more Training Officers, an Outreach & Recruitment Officer (position may be split into two as required, without modification to this SOP), and a Public Relations Officer. The Board of Directors shall be elected as per HISAR Bylaws Article IV Section B. All new officers take office on January 1.

If any officer is faced with a decision outside the scope of the descriptions below they should communicate the issue to the Corporate Officers and the Board of Directors for discussion before presenting a decision to the general membership. If an officer disagrees with a decision made by another officer the issue should be brought up to the Board Of Directors for discussion with the parties involved.

All official documents and records are to be maintained on a shared electronic location. All officers may delegate duties as appropriate.

ELECTED OFFICERS:

President

- Oversee the administration of HISAR.
- Call to order and conduct general membership meetings.
- Write and communicate agendas for general membership meetings.
- Attend Board of Directors meetings to serve as an advisor; may not vote.
- Serve as alternate Director in case a current Director has a conflict of interest.
- When the Secretary cannot attend, the President will maintain minutes of Board of Directors meetings.
- Supervise HISAR officers' adherence to the Position Descriptions section of the SOPs.
- Notify general membership of cancelled meetings as directed by the Board of Directors.
- Other duties as assigned.

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Vice President(s)

- If there is both a Ground Division and a Mounted Division, then there shall be two Vice Presidents, one for each Division. The duties listed below shall be divided or shared as decided by the Vice Presidents and the Board.
- Serve as President in the absence or incapacitation of the President.
- At general membership meetings, serve as Secretary in the absence or incapacitation of the Secretary.
- Research grant opportunities, present to the Unit and write grant applications as approved by the Unit.
- Attend all meetings of special and ad hoc committees, for the purpose of keeping the membership informed. May not vote unless an official committee member.
- Coordinate annual financial audit by independent auditor. Audit to be performed each January.
- Other duties as assigned.

Secretary

- Serve as President in the absence or incapacitation of the President and Vice President. Whenever the Secretary is serving as President, the Secretary shall appoint an acting Secretary.
- Within 7 days, submit 1st drafts of all general membership minutes to the President and Vice-President for preliminary review of content.
- Within 7 days, submit 1st drafts of all general membership minutes to the Board for preliminary review of content.
- Record, maintain electronically, and distribute minutes of board and general membership meetings within 14 days after the meeting.
- Submit year-end Lost But Found presentation statistics to MASAR.
- Keep attendance records electronically for general membership meetings and board meetings.
- Submit monthly Members Not in Good Standing reports to the board.
- Send and receive general correspondence on behalf of the Unit.
- Maintain unit archives electronically in a shared location.
- Other duties as assigned.

Treasurer

- Maintain HISAR financial records and accounts.
- Send and receive financial correspondence on behalf of the Unit.
- Pay unit bills; all expenses shall be subject to approval by the general membership, excepting annual required expenses such as, but not limited to, annual Maine State corporation filing fees, MASAR membership dues, and website domain and maintenance fees.
- Provide a monthly report of income and expenses for inclusion in the minutes.
- Complete and file all official paperwork as per Federal and State requirements.
- Provide an annual financial summary report to the membership prior to January 15 each year.
- Other duties as assigned.

Chairperson of the Board

- Call to order and conduct Board of Directors meetings.
- Unless the Chairperson is also a Director, they may not vote.
- Ensure that the Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures of HISAR are followed.

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- Inform Duty Officers about Members Not In Good Standing; contact these members as needed.
- Cancel or reschedule Board of Directors meetings; notify members in a timely manner.
- Announce Board's appointment of officers and committees, subject to majority vote by the general membership.
- Other duties as assigned.

Board of Directors

- If the Unit has 9 or fewer members, there shall be 3 Directors.
- These 3 Directors shall be elected from the Vice President(s), Secretary, and Treasurer.
- Once there are 10 or more members the Board will expand to 5 Directors. The 4th Corporate officer from the above list, if any, shall immediately be appointed a Director. The balance of the Board shall consist of Members at Large, elected at the next monthly meeting.
- Review and evaluate new member applications in accordance with SOP #302 (New Member Onboarding).
- Make recommendations to the general membership regarding revisions to the Standard Operating Procedures and other Unit policies.
- Other duties as assigned.

APPOINTED OFFICERS:

Duty Officer (DO) – appointed annually, rotating

- Ensure accurate attendance records (including mileage and hours) for all searches; submit to the Secretary for year-end reporting to MASAR and to the Training Records Coordinator for certification/training tracking purposes.
- Activate unit resources as needed for search operations in accordance with SOP #511 (Activation Procedures).
- Exercise discretion in choosing which resources to activate.

Training Officer (TO) – appointed annually, may have multiple Training Officers

- Research, plan and coordinate all training for the Unit.
- Communicate training discrepancies to Unit members.
- Supervise Training Records Coordinator in maintaining accurate records.
- Supervise Equipment Coordinator in ensuring that members have the appropriate equipment.

Training Records Coordinator – appointed annually by TO; may also be TO

- Maintain training records electronically in a shared location so that members can review and confirm.
- Submit letters of recommendation and other records as needed to MASAR for initial certification and rectification.
- Submit training records to the Secretary on a monthly basis so that Member In Good Standing records can be updated.
- Submit year-end search and training attendance statistics to MASAR.

Equipment Coordinator – appointed annually by TO; may also be TO

- Maintain all Unit-owned equipment, and equipment assignment list.

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- Distribute Unit-owned equipment to qualified members.
- Coordinate the collection of Unit-owned equipment from non-active or former members.

Outreach & Recruitment Officer – appointed annually

- This position may be split as needed, into Outreach Officer and Recruitment Officer.
- Research and coordinate outreach and recruitment opportunities.
- Serve as point of contact for all outreach & recruitment opportunities.
- Maintain outreach and recruitment documents and presentations in accordance with SOP #209 (Educational Outreach and Unit Representation at Events).
- Maintain attendance records (including mileage and hours) for outreach & recruitment events; submit to the Secretary for year-end reporting to MASAR.
- Serve as point of contact for perspective and new members, including the onboarding and certification processes in accordance with SOP #302 (New Member Onboarding), SOP #403 (Mounted Team Certification Eligibility), SOP #509 (Search Support Services Eligibility), SOP #510 (Ground Search Eligibility) and SOP #603 (Mounted Search Eligibility).
- Receive new applications. Review new member applications for completeness, forward to the Board, file the hard copy, and archive electronically. Forward application fee and membership dues to the Treasurer.
- Send and receive recruitment- and outreach-related correspondence.

Public Relations Officer – appointed annually

- Organize and execute HISAR public relations activities in accordance with SOP #207 (Website & Social Media), including but not limited to:
 - HISAR website
 - HISAR social media site(s)
 - Writing articles for publications
 - Interviews for television, radio and print

MASAR/MWS Unit Representative – appointed annually

- This position is appointed annually by the Board, but by default the appointment will be given to the President.
- Attend all MASAR Quarterly meetings, take notes, and report relevant updates at unit meetings
- Vote on MASAR business, with HISAR's best interest in mind
- When appropriate, bring forward any MASAR-related concerns or considerations relevant to the unit
- When appropriate, promote the unit's capabilities, interests, etc to MASAR leadership
- Serve as the main administrative point of contract for the Maine Warden Service.

MASAR Unit Alternate Representative – appointed annually

- This position is appointed annually by the Board, but by default the appointment will be given to the Vice President.
- Attend as many MASAR Quarterly meetings as possible, to stay current with MASAR business
- In the Unit Rep's absence: take notes and report relevant updates at unit meetings
- In the Unit Rep's absence: vote on MASAR business, with HISAR's best interest in mind

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- In the Unit Rep's absence: when appropriate, bring forward any MASAR-related concerns or considerations relevant to the unit
- In the Unit Rep's absence: when appropriate, promote the unit's capabilities, benefits, etc to MASAR leadership

Training Committee

- This committee shall consist of all Training Officers and the Training Records Coordinator.
- The Training Records Coordinator shall Chair this committee.
- Research, plan and coordinate all training for the Unit.

Nomination Committee - appointed annually in November, or as needed ad hoc

- Carefully review the requirements and responsibility for each office.
- Review the membership roster – include eligibility for office based on “good standing” status etc – and select the most qualified candidate(s) by majority vote of the committee.
- Discuss with each nominee whether they want to accept the nomination.
- If a nominee is unwilling to accept the nomination the committee may repeat the selection process.
- Announce the nominated candidate(s) for each position.
- If no qualified nominee is found, the position will be open *except for* nominations from the floor.
- May make appointment recommendations to the Board of Directors for appointed positions upon request.

REFERENCES:

SOP #302 New Member Onboarding
SOP #511 Activation Procedures
SOP #209 Educational Outreach and Unit Representation at Events
SOP #403 Mounted Team Certification Eligibility
SOP #509 Support Services Eligibility
SOP #510 Ground Search Eligibility
SOP #603 Mounted Search Eligibility
SOP #207 Website & Social Media
SOP #116 Discipline

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SOP #: 111
SUBJECT: Elections

SECTION: Procedural Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to hold fair and unbiased elections of its Corporate Officers and Board of Directors annually or as needed.

PROCEDURE:

The President will run the elections. The Nomination Committee will read the slate of officers that they are recommending; the President will ask if there are any nominations from the floor for each position. All elections will be by secret ballot. Voters have the right to vote no to a nominee by writing “no” on the ballot. A blank ballot is counted as an abstention; abstentions are not counted as a vote. Winners are determined by the majority vote.

REFERENCES:

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SOP #: 112

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Board of Directors Meetings

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to hold Board of Directors meetings as needed.

PROCEDURE:

Board meetings will be held as often as necessary to properly handle Unit business either in person or via teleconference/video conference. Board meetings may be called by any Director, by the Chairperson, or by the President. Advance notification must be given to the membership.

Cancellation or rescheduling of scheduled Board meetings will be informally decided by the Board of Directors and announced to the membership.

At least 3 members of the Board of Directors must be present in order for a Board meeting to be held. In accordance with SOP #107 (Conflict of Interest), when a motion is of direct personal or monetary interest to a particular member and no one else, that member should not vote.

The Chairperson will run Board meetings, the Secretary will take minutes and the President will attend all Board meetings. However, unless the Chairperson, President or Secretary are also a Director they will not vote. In the Chairperson's absence or ineligibility to run the meeting, the President will chair. In the President's absence or ineligibility to run the meeting, the Vice President will Chair. In the absence or ineligibility of the Secretary the Vice President will attend to serve as Secretary. If none are available the meeting will be rescheduled.

Board of Directors meetings will be open to the general membership unless the Board has entered Executive Session. Members who are not specifically invited to the meeting will not be permitted to participate in the discussion unless called upon. The minutes of all Board of Directors meetings will be made available to the general membership, unless two thirds (2/3) of the Directors vote to keep them confidential.

REFERENCES:

SOP #107 Conflict of Interest

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 113

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: General Membership Meetings and Votes

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to hold regularly-scheduled business meetings.

PROCEDURE:

General membership business meetings will be held quarterly at a minimum, or as often as necessary to properly handle Unit business.

Cancellation or rescheduling of scheduled business meetings will be decided by the Board of Directors, and members will be notified by the President in a timely manner.

Absences should be communicated to the President in advance.

A quorum is defined as a simple majority of the currently voting-eligible members (decimal results will be rounded up or down as appropriate by standard practice). A quorum is required for any meeting to be held.

Members will be notified in advance when there will be a vote to rescind or amend something previously adopted, terminate a member, or remove an officer.

This procedure does not apply to votes regarding changes to the Bylaws or SOPs. Bylaw changes are to be made in accordance with the Bylaws, and SOP changes are to be made in accordance with SOP #116 SOP Changes.

All motions will be adopted by majority vote, excepting that a two thirds (2/3) vote in the affirmative is required for approval of financial expenditures over \$100 in value (except mileage reimbursements), as well as termination of membership or office. No one has the right to require a higher vote than majority on issues unless the bylaws or SOPs specifically state that more than a majority is required.

A majority vote means that more than half of those voting approve the motion. Blank ballots and abstentions do not count toward the total number of votes.

Members who arrive at the meeting while a vote is being taken are not eligible to vote on that motion, because they were not present for the preceding discussion.

In accordance with SOP #107 (Conflict of Interest), when a motion is of direct personal or monetary interest to a particular member and no one else, that member should not vote. An exception to this rule is granted when the member is specifically named in the motion, such as when they are either disciplined or nominated to office.

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Unlike meeting minutes, Treasurer's reports will be audited at year-end and therefore cannot be voted on during meetings. They will be sent in advance if possible, and reviewed at the meeting (with that review recorded in the minutes), but not "accepted" or voted on.

REFERENCES:

SOP #107 Conflict of Interest

SOP #116 SOP Changes

HISAR By-Laws

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SECTION 1: Procedural Policies

114: SOP Changes

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain a reasonable set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the purpose of reducing confusion on how unit business is to be managed.

PROCEDURE:

Any member may bring ideas on Standard Operating Procedures to the Board at any time, but generally, SOPs will be created and revised by the Board of Directors, in a setting that is open to the general membership for discussion and comment. If these meetings are not held in person, they shall be held in a videoconference setting with a live-shared document that all in attendance may view if they choose.

Once the Board has created or revised the SOP(s), the new or revised SOP will be adopted by an affirmative vote of at least 3 Directors as per the Bylaws. The new or revised SOP(s) will be presented to the membership immediately via email, and members are invited to respond with any questions or concerns that they would like the Board to address.

Any SOP can be temporarily overridden on a case-by-case basis by unanimous vote of the elected officers.

REFERENCES:

SOP #107 Conflict of Interest

HISAR Bylaws

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SOP #: 115

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Complaints

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to expect professional conduct at all times by its members, including but not limited to adherence to the official Standard Operating Procedures.

PROCEDURE:

Any complaints, by a member or someone outside of the Unit, should be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors (Board). Complaints should, at minimum, include specifics of what SOPs were violated or what behavior or communication was unprofessional, by which member(s), and the date or duration of the behavior or communication.

The Board must acknowledge receipt of the complaint, and may assign someone to investigate the complaint. Complaints must be investigated within 30 days unless there are major extenuating circumstances. Upon completion of any investigation, the Board will rule on any action to be taken as per SOP #116 Discipline and any involved parties will be notified immediately.

A complaint made against a Director should be submitted to 3 uninvolved elected or appointed Officers. The officers to whom the complaint is submitted will appoint an Investigative Committee consisting of at least 3 elected or appointed officers who can be objective in the investigation of the complaint. If they can be objective in the investigation, those officers may appoint themselves if they choose. The findings of the Investigative Committee will be reported to all elected and appointed officers, who will, together, decide on any resulting action against that Director, including Discipline.

If a complaint is made by one or more Directors against any member of the unit, including Officers and Directors, the complaining Director(s) may not be involved in investigating that complaint or disciplining that member.

There will never be any retaliation or punishment for filing a valid complaint as decided by the Investigative Committee.

REFERENCES:

SOP #311 Code of Conduct

SOP #116 Discipline

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SOP #: 116
SUBJECT: Discipline

SECTION: Procedural Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to ensure the safety of its members and effectiveness of operations by maintaining good order, conduct and Unit harmony.

PROCEDURE:

Violations of the SOPs, harassment, unprofessional or abusive behavior, actions that endanger other members or equines, and/or other egregious behaviors that disrupt the harmony of the Unit are some of the situations which may require the use of disciplinary action.

During a search operation, special disciplinary action may be decided and administered by the HISAR Team Leader if the infraction was serious enough to warrant the removal of the member from the operation. If such an action is taken a detailed written report of the incident must be submitted as per SOP #115 Complaints within 7 days of the incident for discussion and possible further disciplinary action.

The type of action taken and duration of such action is decided by the Board and/or by the Investigative Committee, taking the seriousness of the infraction into account.

Disciplinary actions may consist of one or more of the following:

- **Verbal Counseling:** The member is counseled by the Board as to why their behavior was not appropriate and given a proper course of correction. This action is documented in the member's personnel file as a verbal warning, with a brief description of the reason.
- **Written Warning:** A written reprimand from the Board detailing the incident, what the inappropriate behavior consisted of, and what the desired behavior should have been. This report is discussed at length with the member and recorded in the member's personnel file as a written warning, along with a copy of the warning. The member is advised that future behavior of this type could result in termination of membership. The member may be put on disciplinary probation for a time period determined by the Board. While on disciplinary probation the member's privilege to vote and attend searches (in any capacity) is suspended and the member will be required to pay for all required training. While on disciplinary probation, the member will be removed from any elected or appointed offices they hold.
- **Removal from Office:**
 - **Director:** The basic procedure to remove a Director from the Board of Directors can be found in the Bylaws, under section 5.6 Removal. The complaint, and the Investigative Committee's findings, must be presented to the general membership at least 7 days prior to the vote. Meanwhile, the Director in question will be placed on Disciplinary Probation. At the time of the removal vote, the Director will have 10

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minutes to petition against removal, including calling on witnesses to petition on their behalf, and is not allowed legal representation. The vote will be by secret ballot. This action is documented in the member's personnel file, along with any Complaint(s) and the results of the investigation.

- **Elected Officers other than a Director:** The basic procedure to remove an officer from their elected position, other than a director, is in the Bylaws, section 6.3 Term of Office; Removal. The complaint, and the Investigative Committee's findings, must be presented to the general membership at least 7 days prior to the vote. Meanwhile, the officer in question will be placed on Disciplinary Probation. At the time of the removal vote, the Director will have 10 minutes to petition against removal, including calling on witnesses to petition on their behalf, and is not allowed legal representation. The vote will be by secret ballot. This action is documented in the member's personnel file, along with any Complaint(s) and the results of any investigation.
- **Termination of Membership:** A written reprimand from the Board detailing the incident, what the inappropriate behavior consisted of, and what the desired behavior should have been. This report is discussed at length with the member and recorded in the member's personnel record as a recommendation for termination of membership with no eligibility of future membership. The member is advised that the Board is recommending a termination of membership vote to the general membership at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Meanwhile, the member in question will be placed on Disciplinary Probation. Prior to the vote the Board will state the reason they are recommending termination of membership. The member will have 10 minutes to petition against removal, including calling on witnesses to petition on their behalf, and is not allowed legal representation. The vote will be by secret ballot and the member up for termination is allowed to vote even though they are on Disciplinary Probation. A majority vote in favor of termination is required to terminate the membership. If the membership is not terminated by the vote, other disciplinary actions may be implemented. These actions shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.

REFERENCES:

SOP #115 Complaints
HISAR Bylaws

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SOP #: 117

SECTION: Procedural Policies

SUBJECT: Code of Conduct

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to expect professional and respectful actions, behaviors, and communications by its members.

PROCEDURE:

All members are expected to adhere to HISAR Standard Operating Procedures. In addition, all members should participate fully, respectfully, and in a spirit of community. It is every member's responsibility to ensure that new members feel welcomed and supported, as well as encouraging all members to feel appreciated and part of a team working toward a common goal.

Violations of the SOPs, harassment, unprofessional or abusive behavior, actions that endanger other members or equines, and/or other egregious behaviors that disrupt the harmony of the Unit are some of the situations which may require the use of the SOP #115 Complaint process and disciplinary action in accordance with SOP #116 Discipline.

Members who think other members' actions, behaviors, or communications need *minor* correction, but *do not* believe the infraction is serious enough for a formal Complaint as per SOP #115, should communicate their opinion directly to the other member(s) in question. If a member is not comfortable approaching the member in question directly, that member may ask an elected officer to serve as a mediator.

REFERENCES:

SOP #115 Complaints

SOP #116 Discipline

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SOP #: 201

SECTION: Finances and Assets

SUBJECT: Membership Dues

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to collect dues annually from its membership body.

PROCEDURE:

Members must pay annual membership dues of \$50. Membership dues are payable in January of each year. Failure to pay by March 31 will result in membership termination, removal from unit communications lists, and relinquishment of all Unit-owned equipment. All Members who pay after March 31 will owe 150% of their usual dues, and be required to turn in a new application, except that members on Leave of Absence may pay when they return to active membership with no penalty.

Dues are non-refundable.

REFERENCES:

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 202

SECTION: Finances and Assets

SUBJECT: Fundraising

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to regularly fundraise to cover operational needs.

PROCEDURE:

HISAR encourages all members to organize and/or actively participate in at least one fundraiser each year for the benefit of the unit.

Prior to each fundraising event, members must fill out the Fundraising Information Form and submit it to the Board unless full involvement of the membership is required. In such a case, at a regularly scheduled general-membership meeting a discussion will be held and a vote will be taken (majority vote required). If that much advance notice is not possible, the member must get approval from the Board and then notify the general membership as soon as possible via email, phone, or text message.

If the fundraiser is at a physical location, at least two members must be present, and at least one of them must be fully MASAR-certified.

Within 7 days after the fundraiser, any funds raised must be turned over to the Treasurer, or deposited to the HISAR checking account. Also within 7 days, a Fundraising Report must be completed and signed by at least two of the members who were present for the fundraiser, and sent to the Treasurer.

REFERENCES:

Fundraising Information Form

Fundraising Report

Highlands Search and Rescue

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SOP #: 203

SECTION: Finances and Assets

SUBJECT: Unit-Owned Equipment

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to provide operational equipment to certified members whenever possible.

PROCEDURE:

All excess donated or Unit-owned equipment and supplies will be maintained by the Equipment Coordinator.

Unit-owned equipment available to borrow currently includes:

- Vehicle Magnets
- Hi-Viz Vests
- 2-Way Radios

Unit-owned equipment available to purchase may include:

- HISAR Patch - \$5 each

Members are eligible to receive or purchase these items once they can attend a search in support capacity, with the exception of radios which will be distributed when a member is eligible to attend a search in a ground or mounted search capacity. Items are provided as available and must be maintained in excellent working condition. Upon distribution of any/all Unit-owned equipment the member must sign a Borrowed Equipment Agreement form.

Upon termination of membership or a leave of absence, the member is responsible to return all borrowed Unit-owned equipment in good working condition to the Equipment Coordinator . If any equipment is damaged or lost the member is responsible for reimbursing the Unit for the replacement cost of said equipment.

If a member feels the unit-owned equipment in their care was lost or damaged through no or partial fault of their own they may appeal to the Board for an exception.

REFERENCES:

Form: Borrowed Equipment Agreement

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SOP #: 204

SECTION: Finances and Assets

SUBJECT: Logo and Unit Name Use, and Uniforms

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to portray a professional image through consistent use of the official logo, Unit name and uniforms.

PROCEDURE:

The HISAR name and logo is Unit property. Any physical use of the HISAR name or logo, including but not limited to use on marketing materials, garments, vehicle decals, etc. must be approved in advance by the Board.

To request approval members must provide the Board with all relevant details on where and how they would like to reproduce the name or logo. The Board will vote on the request. Any necessary artwork will be provided by the Board upon approval of this request. Approved reproductions are limited to the items specified in the request, subsequent items will require a separate request.

It is the responsibility of the member to ensure the supplier uses the correct colors, fonts and sizes as specified below. If a member is unsure they may send a copy of the proof to the Board for assistance.

Clothing:

- **Vests:** All search vests: Back center of vest, Highlands SAR – 3 lines of text. If there are reflective stripes on the vest, the text should not be printed on the stripes and should be between vertical stripes
- **Jacket/shirts:** Back center of shirt/jacket, Highlands Search and Rescue – 4 lines of text.

Members are eligible to receive and display/wear Unit insignia once they are eligible to attend a search. Refer to SOP #509 (Search Support Services Eligibility), SOP #510 (Ground Search Eligibility) and SOP #603 (Mounted Search Eligibility).

Qualified members may display/wear Unit insignia as marketing outreach at any time they feel it is appropriate.

For safety and survival reasons, it is recommended that no cotton apparel should be worn on searches.

All attire, tack, and equipment should be safe, clean, well-fitted, and well-kept. It is recommended that as much blaze orange be used as possible.

- **SHIRT:** Members must provide.
 - **Formal:** Khaki or light olive green, preferably not 100% cotton, partial or full button up. HISAR logo should be on the left chest, MASAR logo should be sewn on the right sleeve near the shoulder.
 - **Informal:** Solid color, with HISAR or MASAR logo on left chest

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- **LONG PANTS:** Members must provide. Member's choice, but no jeans and no 100% cotton.
- **VEST:** Blaze orange vest is required at all searches and training events. Unit-owned vests may be available to borrow. If a member-owned vest is used, it is recommended that it be screen printed on the back with the unit name as specified by Logo/Name guidelines above.
- **HELMET:** Mounted members must provide and wear an ASTM-certified helmet at all times when mounted at an HISAR event. At searches, a blaze orange helmet cover is required. Ground searchers may wear a SAR hard hat at their discretion.
- **SADDLE BLANKET/PAD:** Blaze orange saddle blanket or pad is recommended.
- **SADDLE BAGS:** Members must provide the saddle bags of their choice (orange preferred).
- **TACK:** Member must provide. It is preferable that bridles, reins, and breastplates contain some orange if at all possible. Breastplates are preferred for safety reasons but not required. Equine **MUST** wear a halter at all times, either under the bridle or as part of it. Whenever the horse is saddled, a lead rope must be readily available, not packed into a saddle bag.

REFERENCES:

SOP #509 Search Support Services Eligibility
SOP #510 Ground Search Eligibility
SOP #603 Mounted Search Eligibility

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SOP #: 205

SECTION: Finances and Assets

SUBJECT: Website and Social Media

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain a website and social media presence for public relations and educational purposes.

PROCEDURE:

The HISAR website will be maintained by the Public Relations Officer or their designee. It will contain, at minimum, information about HISAR's mission and purpose, membership procedures, standards and policies, and links to the Maine Association for Search and Rescue.

HISAR's social media presence will be maintained by the Public Relations Officer or their designee. Social media posts and replies will remain professional and courteous at all times. The focus will be on education, updates on unit activities, and team building within MASAR. All social media posts will be done in accordance with SOP #106 (Confidentiality) and the MASAR Media Policy.

Only member's first names will be used on websites or social media, and no social media "person tags" will be used unless placed there by the tagged member. Members must notify the Public Relations Officer in advance if they do not want their name and/or photo to be used in communications including website, social media, and press releases.

REFERENCES:

SOP #106 Confidentiality

MASAR Social Media Policy

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SOP #: 206
SUBJECT: Archives

SECTION: Finances and Assets

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain effective records and archives of all activities, correspondence and meetings (general and Board).

PROCEDURE:

Archiving consists of complete information being located and accessible in more than one place, at least one being electronically. Unit documents to be archived annually will include, but is not limited to:

- General business meeting minutes *
- Board meeting minutes *
- Annual Treasurer's report *
- Copies of annual federal and/or state filings *
- Liability Waivers / Risk Releases *
- SOPs
- Bylaws
- Contact list
- Attendance records
- Training statistics
- Search statistics
- After action reviews
- Disciplinary reviews/actions
- Photos
- Equipment list
- Press releases/news articles
- Official Unit communications

** These documents are required to be archived annually and kept for 7 years in case of audit.*

REFERENCES:

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SOP #: 207

SECTION: Finances and Assets

SUBJECT: Educational Outreach and Unit Representation at Events

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to provide educational outreach to the public as requested.

PROCEDURE:

MASAR-Certified members are eligible to perform educational outreach, including but not limited to mounted search and rescue, and Lost But Found video presentations.

Prior to each outreach event, the presenter should get approval via a majority vote at a regularly scheduled meeting. If that much advance notice is not possible, the presenter must get approval from at least two additional elected or appointed officers and notify the general membership as soon as possible via email, phone, or text message.

Outreach Resources May Include

- “Lost but Found, Safe and Sound” DVD
- PowerPoint presentations for various types of audiences
- Display board
- Tri-fold flyers
- Vinyl banners
- Other visual aids
- Business cards

To help maintain consistency and accuracy of the information presented:

- The Outreach and Recruitment Officer will maintain all PowerPoint presentations and will adjust them as necessary for the audience; will ensure all members have the correct version for their audience.
- Presentation must follow one of the outlines provided by the officially- approved HISAR PowerPoint presentation, even if no projector is utilized. (Print the outline format if necessary.)
- Before giving a presentation, each potential presenter is encouraged to attend at least one presentation given by an experienced presenter.
 - Before giving a presentation, each potential presenter is encouraged to give their presentation to one or more certified members as a practice session.

For MASAR's education tracking purposes, if the Lost But Found video is used, then the presenter must send certain information to the Outreach and Recruitment Officer immediately following the outreach event in accordance with SOP #515 (Individual Documentation of Outreach, Searches and Training). Mileage for outreach events is not reimbursable.

For PR events, parades, and any event with an HISAR horse present, the horse and handler/rider must have passed the HISAR Mounted Team Evaluation together, and at least two HISAR members must be

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present. In parades, there must be a minimum of two MASAR-certified mounted teams, and the HISAR teams must be physically separated from other horses in some way.

Representatives must be in official HISAR uniform in accordance with SOP #206 (Logo Use and Uniforms). Representatives must follow all safety guidelines normally in place at searches and training exercises in accordance with SOP #501 (General Safety Practices).

Any compensation (monetary or otherwise) that is given for participation in these events is Unit property and, as such, must be disclosed to the general membership at the next scheduled meeting. All or part of this compensation may be given to the presenter via a majority vote. Any remaining compensation must be turned over to the Treasurer.

REFERENCES:

SOP #515 Individual Documentation of Outreach, Searches and Training Exercises

SOP #206 Logo Use and Uniforms

SOP #501 General Safety Practices

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SOP #: 301
SUBJECT: Eligibility

SECTION: Membership Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to accept members in accordance with the criteria set forth below.

PROCEDURE:

Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) is an equal opportunity and non-discriminating organization in accordance with SOP #103 (Discrimination).

All members must self-certify that they are at least 18 years of age and have never been convicted of a felony or convicted of any crime involving illegal drugs or domestic abuse, and must not be a registered sex offender in any state or nation or convicted of any crime that would require them to be so. Must also meet drivers requirements in accordance with SOP #507 (Driver Requirements)

REFERENCES:

SOP #103 Discrimination
SOP #507 Driver Requirements

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SOP #: 302

SECTION: Membership Policies

SUBJECT: New Member Onboarding

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to fully screen new applicants and to provide a clear path to membership.

PROCEDURE:

1. The application and application fee must be submitted to the Outreach & Recruitment Officer, who will forward the application to the Board, and either forward the funds to the Treasurer or deposit them and provide the relevant records to the Treasurer.
2. One or more Directors will conduct a preliminary interview with topics including the specific information presented on the application, the applicant's reasons for being interested in HISAR, and their suitability for it.
3. Once the application and preliminary interview findings have been reviewed by the Board of Directors, the applicant must then attend at least 6 meetings, training exercises, or other unit events within a period of no less than 3 months and no more than 9 months. The applicant must also certify that they have read and that they understand the Bylaws and SOPs, before their application may be considered for acceptance.
4. Upon completion of these attendance requirements, the Unit will vote on whether to immediately accept the applicant as a Member. A majority vote by the Unit to approve membership will move the applicant to Member status. If a majority vote in the affirmative is not reached, the membership may opt to reconsider at a later date, no more than 12 months from application date.
5. The application must be either accepted or rejected no more than 12 months after the application was submitted.
6. Membership Dues must be paid within 30 days after application acceptance.
7. Immediately after payment of dues, the Member is eligible to vote if not otherwise excluded.

REFERENCES:

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SOP #: 303

SECTION: Membership Policies

SUBJECT: Membership Standing

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain a full roster of Members in Good Standing.

PROCEDURE:

Membership Standings consist of the following.

1. **Member in Good Standing:** Member whose attendance requirements are currently met, and who is current on dues. Members in Good Standing can vote, and the Unit will pay for any required training in which they participate. May deploy on searches in any capacity for which they qualify.
2. **Member Not in Good Standing:**
 - a. Any member whose attendance requirements are not currently met, and/or who is not current on dues. Members Not in Good Standing cannot vote and cannot attend searches in any capacity.
 - i. If, after repeated attempts to contact them, there has been no communication from a member for 3 months, they will be removed from the communication lists. If that individual then wants to rejoin they will be required to reapply and pay dues again.
 - b. Any member under Disciplinary Probation. Refer to SOP #116 Discipline.

If there has been no communication from a member within 3 months, with repeated attempts at communication, they will be removed from our distribution list.

REFERENCES:

SOP #116 Discipline

SOP #204 Insurance Coverage

MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard

MASAR Mounted Team Member Certification Standard

MASAR Mounted Air Scent Team Member Certification Standard

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SOP #: 304
SUBJECT: Attendance

SECTION: Membership Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain members in good standing by enforcing minimum attendance of regular meetings and training.

PROCEDURE:

Anticipated absences from meetings and/or training should be communicated in advance to the President or Training Officer as appropriate, as well as via SAR Organizer.

Attendance records shall be maintained on SAR Organizer. However, it is the member's responsibility to keep track of their own attendance to ensure they remain in good standing without being told.

To maintain good standing, all members must attend no less than 75% of the meetings and certification-relevant training exercises in the previous 12 months.

Any member who does not meet the attendance requirement is no longer in good standing. They will have their privilege to vote and attend searches in any capacity suspended and will need to pay for their own training, even if a grant has been obtained to pay for it. Suspended/ reinstated privileges will be communicated to the member by one or more Directors. Once the member's attendance is back in compliance, the suspended privileges will be immediately reinstated.

REFERENCES:

SOP #303 Membership Statuses and Classes

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SOP #: 305

SECTION: Membership Policies

SUBJECT: Availability

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain maximum availability of its members for search and rescue operations.

PROCEDURE:

All team members are expected to be available to search year-round. If any member is not ready or available for ground or mounted operations at any time during that period, they must notify the duty officer (DO) as soon as they become unavailable.

If there are any limiting conditions to a member's search capabilities (i.e. rough terrain, extreme temperatures, icy conditions, etc.) the member must communicate these limits to the DO at the beginning of the year and/or as these limitations change.

All members are expected to keep their current contact and emergency information on file with the DO at all times.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 306

SECTION: Membership Policies

SUBJECT: Leaves of Absence

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to grant leaves of absence as appropriate to accommodate our members.

PROCEDURE:

The Board of Directors (Board) may grant leaves of absence (LOA) to members in good standing for the purposes of medical conditions/rehabilitation, mourning, family emergencies or other appropriate circumstances. While on LOA, members are excused from the attendance and training requirements, and maintain their good standing, but are not eligible to vote or attend a search or other HISAR or MASAR sanctioned events in any capacity.

LOAs will be granted in periods of 6 months and will be reviewed at the request of the member with the Board one month prior to the expiration for an extension. Absences prior to the granted LOA will not be counted toward the LOA period.

If a LOA is extended for an additional 6 months the member will return all Unit-owned equipment to the training officer and will be removed from the email distribution list for the duration of the LOA. The equipment, as available, will be returned to the member at the conclusion of the LOA. After 1 year on a LOA the member will need to reapply for membership.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 307

SECTION: Membership Policies

SUBJECT: Distribution List and Communications

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to communicate effectively with its members regarding unit operations.

PROCEDURE:

General information about meetings and training exercises will be communicated to all members who have paid their dues and attended one meeting or training. Care should be taken by all members to ensure that emails remain respectful and on topic. New topics should be introduced in new emails with appropriate subject lines for future search reference purposes.

Members will be removed from the general distribution list once they have been on Leave of Absence for 6 months, once they voluntarily remove themselves from membership, or once their membership is terminated. If there has been no communication from a member within 3 months, they will be removed from our distribution lists.

Unit Officers may choose to send certain communications to subsets of the membership, including but not limited to: Fully-MASAR Certified Members, Ground searchers, Mounted searchers, Directors, and Officers. Care should be taken by all these members to ensure that replies are not sent to anyone outside the initial group.

Not everyone has constant access to technology. If a member sends an urgent communication with a reply requested and does not get that reply within what they consider to be a reasonable time frame, that member must contact all applicable members in every other available manner.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 308

SECTION: Membership Policies

SUBJECT: Dual Membership

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to allow members to hold membership with other MASAR Units.

PROCEDURE:

HISAR allows members to hold membership with other MASAR Units as long as the member adheres to SOP #107 (Conflict of Interest).

REFERENCES:

SOP #107 Conflict of Interest

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SOP #: 401

SECTION: Training and Certification Policies

SUBJECT: Required Training Schedule

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that its operational members follow a regular and planned training schedule to ensure safe and effective search operations.

PROCEDURE:

This procedure outlines the minimum required training topics that must be covered, and how often. Refer to the Attendance policy for overall requirements; compliance with SOP #401 has no direct effect on “in good standing” status (which only applies to voting and whether training fees are covered by the unit).

SEARCH SUPPORT STAFF:

Once

- Intro to Incident Command System (IS-100) online FEMA course

GROUND SEARCHERS:

In addition to all requirements above:

Once (If Certifying as a MASAR Search Team Member)

- Basic Search and Rescue (BASAR) online course
- BASAR Written Exam
- Completed STM Individual Documentation and Test Checklist (Field Skills)

At Multiple Training Exercises Each Year

- Demonstration of skills in map & compass, GPS, radio communications, and self-extraction from the field on foot.

Every 12 Months

- A successful MASAR Aerobic Fitness Evaluation proctored by a MASAR-Certified Search Team Member from any MASAR-Certified unit. (Without this requirement being met within the last 12 months, a member cannot participate in any Regional or Unit ground or mounted training, regardless of who pays.)
- In order to recertify through MASAR, an average of 12 hours of ground search skills per year over a 3-year period must be documented. In an effort to be consistent with this requirement, HISAR requires that at least 12 hours of ground search skills training must be logged per calendar year, between unit training, regional training, and independent training. Members should keep in mind that it is their own responsibility to ensure that they have their 12 hours of training each year, and that if they do not accomplish this, they may not be able to recertify. Independent Training forms must be filled out within 7 days of completion to be accepted and entered into your record.

Every 2-3 Years

- CPR Certification (Red Cross, American Heart Association, or equivalent)
- Basic First Aid (or higher)

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MOUNTED TEAMS:

In addition to all requirements above:

Once Per Mounted Team

- Successful Mounted Team Certification Test

Annually

- At least 4 mounted unit training exercises
- **MASAR Mounted Team Members:** In order to recertify through MASAR, an average of at least 70 hours of training per year over a 3-year period must be documented. This is inclusive of the 12 hours required to maintain the rider's Search Team Member certification. In an effort to be consistent with this requirement, HISAR requires that at least 70 hours of training must be logged per calendar year between unit and independent training exercises. Members should keep in mind that it is their own responsibility to ensure that they have their 70 hours of training each year, and that if they do not accomplish this, they may not be able to recertify without undergoing a new Mounted Team Certification Test. Independent Training forms must be filled out within 7 days of completion to be accepted and entered into your record.

MOUNTED AIR SCENT TEAMS:

In addition to all requirements above:

Once Per Mounted Air Scent Team

- Successful completion of all Mounted Air Scent Team Certification Tests

Annually

- At least 4 mounted air scent unit training exercises
- **MASAR Mounted Air Scent Team Members:** In order to recertify through MASAR, an average of at least 140 hours of training per year over a 3-year period must be documented. This is inclusive of the 12 hours required to maintain the rider's Search Team Member certification and the 70 hours required to maintain the mounted team's Mounted Team certification. In an effort to be consistent with this requirement, HISAR requires that at least 140 hours of mounted skills training must be logged per calendar year between unit and independent training. Members should keep in mind that it is their own responsibility to ensure that they have their 140 hours of training each year, and that if they do not accomplish this, they may not be able to recertify without undergoing new Mounted Air Scent Team Certification Tests. Independent Training forms must be filled out within 7 days of completion to be accepted and entered into your record.

REFERENCES:

MASAR Recommended Equipment List, combined

MASAR Standards Definitions

MASAR Certification Standards and Procedures Overview

MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard

MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix A - Aerobic Fitness Evaluation

MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix B - Grandfathering of Searchers

MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix C - Training Requirements

MASAR Search Team Member Cert'n Standard, Appendix D - Recommended Minimum Equipment List

MASAR Mounted Team Certification Standard

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MASAR Mounted Team Certification Standard, Appendix B: Recommended Equipment List
Google Form: Independent Training form

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 402

SECTION: Training and Certification Policies

SUBJECT: Notification of Training Exercises

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to notify MASAR and the Maine Warden Service in advance of our training so that our fully-certified members may be covered under the Maine Warden Service's Workers' Compensation policy.

PROCEDURE:

The Training Officer will notify the Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife SAR Liaison or the Maine Warden Service (MWS) SAR Coordinator, whichever the MWS prefers, at least 2 weeks prior to each training event. The notification will include the date, location, the names of all MASAR-certified personnel who will be attending, and the training topic. Immediately after the training, the Training Officer will file a report with the names of MASAR certified personnel who attended, as well as report a brief synopsis of the training event.

REFERENCES:

MASAR "Maine Insurance Policies - Application to SAR Personnel"

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 403

SECTION: Training and Certification Policies

SUBJECT: Training Fees

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to pay required training fees for all field/mission-ready members in good standing, as long as sufficient funds are available.

PROCEDURE:

Once a member is field/mission-ready, as long as they remain in good standing, HISAR will pay the fees for all required training. This is dependent on a minimum bank balance of \$1500. Independently-obtained CPR and/or First Aid is reimbursable at a maximum combined total of \$25.

REFERENCES:

SOP #303 Membership Standings

SOP #304 Attendance

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 404 **SECTION:** Training and Certification Policies
SUBJECT: Non-Members Attending Training

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that participation in HISAR training sessions will be limited to HISAR members, with two exceptions.

PROCEDURE:

Potential Members: A potential HISAR member who wishes to observe a training must:

1. Receive pre-approval by the Recruitment Officer who has determined the applicant is likely to be suitable for SAR.
2. Sign the HISAR Liability Release prior to attending the training.
3. Attend only one training before applying to join the unit.
4. Cover any costs associated with observing or participating in the training (if there is a fee to audit, or in cases such as CPR or First Aid classes).

Guests: We encourage joint training sessions with other MASAR Teams, as well as participation from civilians acting as Search Subjects, helping with Logistics, etc. When attending an HISAR training, each Guest must:

1. Sign the HISAR Liability Release prior to attending the training.
2. Cover any costs associated with observing or participating in the training (if there is a fee to audit, or in cases such as CPR or First Aid classes).
 - a. Exception: MASAR-Certified members of other MASAR teams when a funding grant has been obtained to pay for the training session.
3. Inform the Training Officer whether or not they are MASAR Certified (for insurance purposes).

Potential guests must be at least 16 years of age. Minors' Liability Releases must be signed by a Legal Guardian, and the Minor must be directly accompanied and supervised by a Legal Guardian.

REFERENCES:

SOP #302 New Member Onboarding
HISAR Liability Release

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 405 **SECTION:** Training and Certification Policies
SUBJECT: Mounted Team Suitability Assessment

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that prospective mounted teams must successfully pass a Mounted Team Suitability Assessment before participating in Mounted Team Certification Testing or mounted training.

PROCEDURE:

A MASAR-certified HISAR Mounted Team Member must ride with the prospective mounted team outside the confines of an arena to ensure that the following standards are met.

- Rider has reviewed the MASAR Mounted Team Certification Standard to ensure that their equine is acceptable for mounted searching
- Equine is healthy with appropriate body condition and fitness level
- All tack/equipment fits the equine and rider, and is in safe condition
- Tow vehicle and trailer are appropriate and in safe condition
- Rider is competent and confident at all gaits
- Equine can safely walk, trot or gait, and canter, regardless of whether leading or following
- Effort should be made to confront prospective mounted team with a situation that has the potential for them to spook or be uncertain; prospective mounted team must respond to this challenging situation safely and successfully
- Equine must not bite or kick, must be safe and easily controlled by the handler/rider at all times

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 407 **SECTION:** Training and Certification Policies
SUBJECT: Mounted Air Scent Team Suitability Assessment

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that prospective mounted air scent teams must successfully pass a Mounted Air Scent Team Suitability Assessment before participating in Mounted Air Scent Team Certification Testing.

PROCEDURE:

A MASAR-certified Mounted Air Scent Team Member, or an alternative approved by the HISAR Board of Directors and Training Officers, must observe the prospective mounted air scent team during at least two air scent training exercises, and interview the rider to ensure that the following standards are met.

- Provide detailed and accurate written training records sufficient to prove that the mounted team could conceivably pass all air scent certification tests.
- Demonstrate the ability to plan an efficient search, best utilizing the wind and existing environmental conditions to provide maximum coverage of the terrain.
- Demonstrate that the rider recognizes when the equine is indicating that it detects human scent.
- Demonstrate the ability to judge sweeps of areas as to their suitability to the prevailing conditions.
- Demonstrate that they recognize when either member of the mounted team is working ineffectively, and take action to compensate for, or remedy, the situation.
- Report clearly on a map the following information after the search, demonstrating a knowledge of how to evaluate the clues inherent in the equine's alerts, indications, and behavior:
 - o Areas and/or routes covered.
 - o Location of alerts and/or indications.
 - o Wind direction and other observed environmental factors which may be pertinent to the search effort.
 - o Location of any clues encountered during the search.

If the prospective mounted air scent team meets these requirements, at their request the training officer may submit their application for certification testing as a Mounted Air Scent Team under the MASAR standard.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 408
Policies

SECTION: Training and Certification

SUBJECT: Mounted Air Scent Team Certification Testing Eligibility

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that all prospective mounted air scent team members who are current on their MASAR Mounted Team certification.

PROCEDURE:

Members must have the following training / current certifications prior to Mounted Team Certification Testing:

- Successful Mounted Air Scent Team Suitability Assessment (SOP #407)
- Member in Good Standing*
- MASAR-Certified Mounted Team Member
- Written Training Records

REFERENCES:

SOP #401 Required Training Schedule

SOP #407 Mounted Air Scent Team Suitability Assessment

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 501

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: General Safety Practices

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to reduce the potential for hazards and injuries.

PROCEDURE:

Safety is everyone's responsibility. All members shall use care in the performance of their duties and act in a manner that will assure maximum safety for themselves, fellow members, their mounts, other SAR personnel and the public.

HISAR is not responsible for the maintenance or care of any personal equipment, or Unit-owned equipment in the care of one of its members. It is the responsibility of the Unit member to use equipment that is safe, clean and well-maintained in serviceable and good working condition. Defective equipment will be removed from service and replaced immediately.

All unsafe conditions shall be corrected immediately whenever possible. All unsafe conditions, accidents and injuries shall be reported immediately to the appointed safety officer or person in charge of the operation. The appointed safety officer or person in charge of the operation must respond to all reports of unsafe conditions.

During HISAR and/or MASAR mounted operations appropriate footwear is required when in close proximity to an equine. While mounted, all members must wear an ASTM approved helmet and appropriate riding boots with a heel. Stirrup cages may be used to satisfy the heel requirement.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 502

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: General Equine Care

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that equines are valued members of the Unit and are to be treated with the same respect and care as their human counterparts.

PROCEDURE:

All equines are to be treated with the utmost care and respect. All mounted members are expected to have the knowledge and experience to care for and maintain their equine to be healthy and in fit condition. Members are expected to provide routine veterinary care, hoof care, etc. All equines are expected to be healthy and capable before participating in certification, training or search operations.

Failure to maintain an equine properly, neglect or abuse of, or forcing a mount to participate in certification, training or search operations when the equine is not physically or mentally fit for the operation is in violation of this SOP and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with SOP #116 Discipline.

Any member witnessing another member abusing their equine or another equine should immediately notify the appointed safety officer or training officer at the operation. If the infraction is severe enough the offending member may be asked to leave the operation immediately and the Board notified of the incident. If not, the witness may submit a complaint in accordance with SOP #115 Complaints.

REFERENCES:

SOP #115 Complaints

SOP #116 Discipline

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 503

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Driver Requirements

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to ensure that all members can safely and effectively transport themselves and, if a mounted search member, their equine to and from a search or other sanctioned event.

PROCEDURE:

To be eligible to attend a search in an operational capacity all members must maintain a valid operator's license and must not have their privilege to operate a motor vehicle in the State of Maine (and/or their state of residence) revoked or suspended. Any member who loses such a right will no longer be eligible to attend a search in an operational capacity until their right is reinstated.

Members transporting equines must also adhere to SOP #604 (Equine Transportation).

REFERENCES:

SOP #604 Equine Transportation

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 504

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Equine Transportation

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that all mounted search members have reliable and safe transportation for their equine.

PROCEDURE:

All mounted search members must have reliable transportation for their equines. This means that a mounted member must own a truck and trailer, have ready access to one or both, or be able to readily “trailer-pool” with another member. Any member who habitually misses training exercises or searches due to lack of reliable, safe equine transportation may lose their good standing and/or be subject to action in accordance with SOP #116 Discipline.

REFERENCES:

SOP #116 Discipline

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 505
SUBJECT: Field Levels

SECTION: Operations Policies

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain a full roster of Members no matter the level of Mission-Readiness.

PROCEDURE:

Mission-Ready: Currently able to respond to searches. Must be a member in good standing. Includes MASAR-Certified Support Services Members (SSM), MASAR-Certified Search Team Members (STM), MASAR-Certified Mounted Team Members (MT), MASAR-Certified Mounted Air Scent Team Members (MAST), and Trainees in the Support, Search Team, and Mounted Team categories.

Not Mission-Ready: Not currently able to respond to searches. Includes but not limited to members who choose to only serve in Support capacity, and members who are not in good standing.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 506

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Safety Briefings

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HSAR) to conduct regular safety briefings and risk assessments.

PROCEDURE:

During training and search operations regular safety briefings will be conducted to minimize risk to Unit members. The appointed safety officer or training officer will conduct such briefings.

Briefings will be held at the discretion of the appointed safety officer or training officer at the commencement of operations, and at any other time as deemed necessary due to changing conditions. Attendance at safety briefings is mandatory and will consist of weather and other environmental details, terrain concerns, and any other health and safety risks.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 507

507 SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: SOP Suspension

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to ensure the safety and well-being of its members, and to provide effective search operations.

PROCEDURE:

Notwithstanding any procedure and policy, authority is given to individual Unit members in search operations to suspend any section of HISAR SOPs if such suspension is required to ensure the safety of personnel, including animals, and/or to protect life and limb. Such suspensions must only be made in circumstances where careful consideration has been given to the liabilities that may be incurred and the overall effectiveness of the mission. The authority does not extend to any circumstance that would violate any federal or state law. All suspensions must be reported to the Board for review within one week of said suspension.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 508

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Firearms

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that firearms, if carried, must be concealed, and carried as per the law at any HISAR or MASAR sanctioned event.

PROCEDURE:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that firearms, if carried, must be concealed, carried as per the law, and used in emergency situations only. Anyone who chooses to carry a firearm must inform any team mates attending the event, and will not be allowed to carry said firearm at any mounted event if there are any objections from any team mate with a mount present. Firearms should not be carried at the Command Post.

Any violation of this policy is subject to discipline in accordance with SOP #116 Discipline.

REFERENCES:

SOP #116 Discipline

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 509

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Radio Procedures

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to utilize radio communications in a manner consistent with Federal regulations, MASAR policies, and emergency services best practices.

PROCEDURE:

When using radios, due to the nature of our operations, it is imperative that all communications be brief, to the point and in plain language, using only the assigned frequencies.

When calling over the radio use your ID first then use the ID of the station you are calling to avoid confusion. (Example; if you are assigned the designation "Horse Team 1" you would call the command post by saying, "Horse Team 1 to Command Post".)

Items of a sensitive nature, including but not limited to personal information or the condition of a search subject, should be communicated in another secure method of transmission if possible.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 510

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Infection Control and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to practice proper infection control procedures and properly utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) in order to maintain the health and safety of its members.

PROCEDURE:

HISAR members have the potential for exposure to blood and other vectors of infection during search operations. Communicable disease transmission is possible during any aspect of emergency response.

Members will utilize universal precautions when dealing with human blood or other potentially infectious materials to limit their exposure, including wearing appropriate gloves when handling any such materials. Equipment that has become contaminated with human blood, bodily fluids or other potentially infectious materials will be cleaned with an approved disinfectant, and examined prior to being placed back into service. Waste must be handled with gloves, placed in leak proof containers or in a plastic bag, and carried out.

Due to the 2020 COVID-19 virus, the Maine Association for Search and Rescue developed a COVID-19 Procedure that specifically addresses procedures and PPE required on all search/rescue missions. Until further notice, this procedure must be followed by all HISAR unit members in attendance at a search. See mainesearchandrescue.org/bylaws-policies for the current full procedure, but wraparound glasses or goggles, disposable gloves (multiple pairs), and a face mask are required at the Command Post and during all rescues or other scenarios where physical distancing is not possible – even outdoors.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 511

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Individual Equipment Requirements

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) that all members maintain the equipment necessary for effective search operations in good repair.

PROCEDURE:

Mounted search members will maintain all equipment in good working order, including but not limited to; tack for their mount, towing vehicle and trailer, recommended equipment list as outlined in the MASAR Mounted Team Certification Standards, Appendix B: Recommended Equipment List.

Ground search members will maintain all equipment in good working order as outlined in the MASAR Search Team Certification Standard, Appendix D: Recommended Equipment List.

Violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with SOP# 115 (Discipline).

REFERENCES:

MASAR Mounted Team Certification Standard, Appendix B: Recommended Equipment List

MASAR Search Team Certification Standard, Appendix D: Recommended Equipment List

SOP #116 Discipline

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 512

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Support Services Eligibility

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain members who are able to safely and effectively perform support operations.

PROCEDURE:

There are three levels of eligibility to perform the role of Support Services:

Not Mission-Ready - This member is capable of performing support services such as operations and logistics at training exercises and other events, but not at searches. The only requirement for this category of Support staff is that they be current on membership Dues.

Mission-Ready - This member is capable of performing support services at training exercises, searches, and other events. Within this category there are two levels.

1. Trainee –

- Current on dues
- Passed Intro to Incident Command System (IS-100) online FEMA course
- Attended at least 2 consecutive meetings or training exercises
- Interview and Approval by at least 2 Elected or Appointed Officers. This interview is in addition to the initial interview that was done prior to acceptance of the application. Discussion/interview should, at minimum, include:
 - HAVE YOU READ THE BYLAWS AND SOPs, and do you have any questions? (If the member has not read these documents, the interview needs to stop ASAP and can not continue until this step is completed.)
 - Confidentiality Policy – what this really means in practice
 - Incident Command Trailer – what those personnel do
 - Volunteer Check-In/Out Trailer – what those personnel do
 - Team Leader – who this is, and what they do
 - Procedure upon arrival at the Command Post
 - PPE/BBP – how to protect yourself
 - Uniform/appropriate attire/behavior
 - Minimum equipment

2. MASAR-Certified – All of the above, plus current certification as a MASAR:

1. Support Team Member,
2. Search Team Member,
3. Search Team Leader,
4. Mounted Team Member, or
5. Mounted Air Scent Team Member

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 513

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Ground Search Eligibility

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain members who are able to safely and effectively perform ground search operations.

PROCEDURE:

It is the responsibility of each individual searcher to ensure that they are physically and mentally capable of searching for extended periods and distances in the terrain and weather of each particular search area.

There are two levels of eligibility to perform the role of Ground Search:

1. Trainee –
 - Current on dues
 - Passed Intro to Incident Command System (IS-100) online FEMA course
 - MASAR Aerobic Fitness Evaluation
 - First Aid and CPR (Basic or higher)
 - Attended at least 2 consecutive meetings or training exercises
 - Interview and Approval by at least 2 Elected or Appointed Officers. This interview is in addition to the initial interview that was done prior to acceptance of the application, but is the same interview required in SOP #509 Search Support Eligibility. Discussion/interview should, at minimum, include:
 - HAVE YOU READ THE BYLAWS AND SOPs, and do you have any questions? (If the member has not read these documents, the interview needs to stop ASAP and can not continue until this step is completed.)
 - Confidentiality Policy – what does this really mean in practice
 - Incident Command Trailer – what do those personnel do
 - Volunteer Check-In/Out Trailer – what do those personnel do
 - Team Leader – who is this, what do they do
 - What is the procedure when you arrive at the Command Post?
 - PPE/BBP – how do you protect yourself (also see mainesearchandrescue.org/bylaws-policies)
 - Uniform/appropriate attire/behavior
 - Minimum equipment you must have in your bag/on your person to ground search
2. MASAR-Certified – any member with a current certification as a MASAR:
 - Search Team Member,
 - Search Team Leader,
 - Mounted Team Member, or
 - Mounted Air Scent Team Member

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Trainees must be supervised by a MASAR-Certified Search Team Member or Leader in order to participate at a search. Supervisors must be supplied by HISAR unless specific arrangements are made in advance with another unit. There will be no more than two (2) trainees per MASAR-Certified Search Team Member/Leader. MASAR-Certified Search Team Members/Leaders must attend at least 2 searches in ground search capacity prior to supervising any qualified Trainees, and are permitted to decline this Supervisory role or limit it to one (1) Trainee at their discretion.

REFERENCES:

MASAR Search Team Member Certification Standard, Appendix A - Aerobic Fitness Evaluation

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 514

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Mounted Search Eligibility

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to maintain members in good standing who are able to safely and effectively perform mounted search operations.

PROCEDURE:

It is the responsibility of each individual searcher to ensure that they and their mount are physically and mentally capable of searching for extended periods and distances in the terrain and weather of each particular search area.

1. Trainee –
 - Aged 18+
 - Current on dues
 - Passed Intro to Incident Command System (IS-100) online FEMA course
 - MASAR Aerobic Fitness Evaluation within the last 12 months
 - Passed Mounted Team Evaluation
 - First Aid & CPR
 - Radio Training
 - HISAR- or MASAR-sponsored GPS training
 - Attended at least 2 consecutive meetings or training exercises
 - Interview and Approval by at least 2 Elected or Appointed Officers. This interview is in addition to the initial interview that was done prior to acceptance of the application, but is the same interview required in SOP #509 Search Support Eligibility. Discussion/interview should, at minimum, include:
 - HAVE YOU READ THE BYLAWS AND SOPs, and do you have any questions? (If the member has not read these documents, the interview needs to stop ASAP and can not continue until this step is completed.)
 - Confidentiality Policy – what does this really mean in practice
 - Incident Command Trailer – what do those folks do
 - Volunteer Check-In/Out Trailer – what do those folks do
 - Team Leader – who is this, what do they do
 - What is the procedure when you arrive at the Command Post?
 - PPE/BBP – how do you protect yourself (also see mainesearchandrescue.org/bylaws-policies)
 - Uniform/appropriate attire/behavior
 - Minimum equipment you must have in your bag/on your person to ground search
2. MASAR-Certified – any member with a current certification as a MASAR:
 - Mounted Team Member, or
 - Mounted Air Scent Team Member

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Trainees must be accompanied by a MASAR-Certified Mounted Team Member in order to participate in a search. There will be no more than two (2) Trainees per MASAR-Certified Mounted Team Member.

MASAR-Certified Mounted Team Members must attend at least 2 searches in mounted search capacity prior to supervising any qualified Trainees, and are permitted to decline this Supervisory role or limit it to one (1) Trainee at their discretion.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 515

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Activation Procedures

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to have the Duty Officer (DO) provide as much preparation time as possible by using an efficient form of communication to activate members.

PROCEDURE:

HISAR members only deploy to searches when called out by MASAR or the Maine Warden Service.

Early Alert (AKA Unofficial Standby) Procedure: When the HISAR DO sees something going on in the media or within any other MASAR teams that leads them to think that there may soon be a search callout, they may put the unit on early alert standby via text, email or phone. The method of alert will be decided by the DO based on each situation.

Callout/Standby Procedure:

1. MASAR callout/standby text is received by HISAR Unit Duty Officer (DO) for that week. In the event that the Unit DO cannot perform the next steps, s/he will call one of the other Unit DOs to request that they take over. In that case, the other Unit DO will perform the remaining steps.
2. Unit DO checks D4H for details on the search, including whether horses are requested. If more information is needed, the Unit DO will contact MASAR DO.
3. Unit DO enters "HISAR – msg received xxxx hours".
4. Unit DO immediately texts all qualified members in accordance with SOP #509 (Search Support Services Eligibility), SOP #510 (Ground Search Eligibility) and SOP #603 (Mounted Search Eligibility) to give them the maximum possible preparation time. **Members who receive texts must reply with either "Received" or with their availability (Yes, No, or Maybe) within 30 minutes**, as lack of response will be taken as a lack of availability. Negative responses must either be sent within 30 minutes, or wait until after 7:00 am.
5. Unit DO then calls any qualified members they have not already heard back from, at all phone numbers, leaving messages if no answer. Members must return those calls within 30 minutes, as lack of response will be taken as a lack of availability. Negative responses must either be sent within 30 minutes, or wait until after 7:00 am. *(This is to allow the Unit DO to either prepare to deploy, or get back to sleep!)*
6. At some point before the deadline given by the MASAR DO (if any), the Unit DO will update D4H with numbers of personnel responding. Format should be similar to: "Highlands – 2 ground searchers and 1 mounted team (2 horses) as of 0430 hours".
7. DO then sends an email to all members at all-members@mainemountedsar.org with all available information.
8. If the search is called off, DO will only text (or call) those members who have replied with a yes or a maybe. All other members will receive the stand-down notice via email.

Weekly Procedure:

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Member Responsibility: Each member is responsible for informing the Duty Officers of changes to their availability. This should be done by sending an email to the group duty-officers@mainemountedsar.org so that all the Duty Officers receive the same information.

Duty Officers' Responsibilities:

On Sunday, as close as possible to 1700 hours, the new unit Duty Officer will perform the following steps, in any order:

- Send a text message to all other unit Duty Officers stating that they are taking over.
- Send an email to all-members@mainemountedsar.org with a list of personnel and their eligibility/availability to respond to a mission, as well as any applicable details that might be useful (ie, fitness test needed, attendance not in good standing, unavailable, etc).
 - a. Be sure to save the email from the previous week so that the text can be copied, pasted, and modified as necessary given additional information received during the week.
- Update D4H whiteboard with pertinent information. Syntax should be similar to: "FirstName LastName is Highlands DO from date1-date2." Then list any pertinent contact info, such as cell/home/work numbers (label them) and email address.

REFERENCES:

SOP #509 Search Support Services Eligibility

SOP #510 Ground Search Eligibility

SOP #603 Mounted Search Eligibility

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 516

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Incident Command System (ICS)

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to provide effective operations by conducting all operations in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS), including an effective chain of command.

PROCEDURE:

All members will complete the IS-100 training and be familiar with the basic ICS competencies. All search operations, and all large-scale training, will be conducted within the command structures of the ICS model. Even if only 2 HISAR members attend a search or a training, a discussion must be held, however brief, regarding which member will serve as Safety Officer and which as Search Team Leader. Other ICS positions will be filled as the situation warrants.

While conducting search operations the overall chain of command will be as follows:

1. Incident Commander - Designated by Agency Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)
2. Safety Officer - Designated by AHJ
3. Liaison Officer - Designated by AHJ
4. Team Leader (for each search team)

While conducting search operations, the chain of command for HISAR's responding personnel will be as follows. This structure shall be repeated within each HISAR search team.

1. Team Leader & Liaison with AHJ and volunteer check-in station
2. Safety Officer
3. Search team members

The chain of command supersedes HISARs organizational structure and is terminated at the cessation of the search or training.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 517

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: After Action Reviews

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to use after action reviews to increase operational awareness, effectiveness and maintain the safety of its members, and help improve future operational performance.

PROCEDURE:

After all search and training operations, all members who participated will participate in an after action review (AAR). The purpose of the AAR is to provide a constructive and useful critique of the operation to improve future operational performance.

The highest ranking personnel for the operation will conduct the AAR and it is mandatory for all participants. If necessary, it is acceptable to conduct the AAR within 24 hours of the operation via a conference call. Details of the AAR shall be recorded and communicated to the general membership for discussion at the next general membership meeting.

REFERENCES:

Highlands Search and Rescue

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP #: 518

SECTION: Operations Policies

SUBJECT: Documentation of Outreach, Searches and Training Exercises

POLICY:

It is the policy of Highlands Search and Rescue (HISAR) to accurately report to the Maine Warden Service all data and statistics about Unit Member attendance at educational events, training, and searches.

PROCEDURE:

Outreach Presentations - Presenter will complete and submit the online Outreach Tracking form within 7 days following each presentation.

Unit Training & Searches –

- Members will complete SAR Organizer Event Logs within 7 days following each training.
- Applicable Training Officer(s) or Duty Officer will review and correct SAR Organizer Event Attendance and Event Logs within 7 days following each training.

REFERENCES:

Google Form: Outreach Tracker

Google Form: Independent Training Tracker