

**DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S SEARCH AND RESCUE**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**REVISED OCTOBER 26, 2023**

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## **AUTHORITY**

The following policies are established under the authority of Article IX of the By-Laws.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

1. Administration of the business affairs of DCSAR will be conducted by the President and the Board of Directors of DCSAR.
2. Operations Leaders will conduct the administration of the duties of DCSAR during operational situations.
3. A chain of command has been established within the Sheriff's Department and DCSAR (Attachment A). This chain of command has been established to provide effective communications between members of DCSAR and the Sheriff. This chain of command will be followed by all persons involved in DCSAR. Only in rare instances will this chain of command be broken.

## **CONDUCT**

1. Conduct of DCSAR Personnel is dictated by the Policies and Procedures of the Douglas County Sheriff's Department.
2. Members shall conduct themselves in a manner that would be expected of a professional rescue unit. You are a representative of the Sheriff's Department. Always act in a professional manner.
3. Treat all people in a courteous manner, even if you disagree with their viewpoint.
4. Conduct all operations in a safe manner: Safety is first!
5. There will be no illegal activity at any time
6. There shall be no consumption of alcoholic beverages during a DCSAR operation, or while in a DCSAR uniform. No member will participate in a DCSAR operation, training, or meeting while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
7. Each member shall be dedicated to the protection of public and private lands, and the conservation of natural resources. There should be no unauthorized trespass of lands, or destruction or abuse of public or private land or facilities.
8. Vehicle Operations
  - a. Operate vehicles in a safe manner for the conditions, on or off the roadway.
  - b. Operate at a speed whereby you can avoid driving hazards.
  - c. Operate at a safe distance.
  - d. Obey all traffic laws: we do not have the authority to break traffic laws unless directed by Sheriff Personnel, Dispatch or Operations.
  - e. If while operating a Search and Rescue vehicle the vehicle is involved in an accident, however minor, the accident must be reported immediately to the Operations Leader or

Team Leader. The president and Sheriff Liaison need to be informed by the OL and an accident report filled out.

- f. Personally operated vehicles (POV) will not be used while on a mission or assignment unless authorized by an Operations Leader.
9. Operation and Team Leaders
    - a. Treat all members with courtesy and respect.
    - b. In addition to gathering information, pass information down to the members.
    - c. Advise incoming resources of the status when the situation changes.
    - d. Remember: you are not above the others, just in charge at this time.
10. Members
    - a. Do as instructed unless it is unsafe to do so. If unsafe then advise other team members on scene and Command immediately.
    - b. Offer suggestions to the Operations Leader or team leader if the situation warrants.
    - c. In an operation, the final word rests with the Operation Leader, unless it results in an unsafe condition.
    - d. While on missions or DCSAR-related activities, conduct yourself in a professional manner. You represent the entire Search and Rescue Team and the Douglas County Sheriff's Department; your actions (and perceived actions) reflect on all.
11. Disciplinary Actions
    - a. Complaints against members regarding violation of DCSAR Policies and Procedures will result in a disciplinary hearing before the DCSAR Board of Directors. If disciplinary action is deemed necessary, the Board of Directors will advise the Sheriff or his designee.
    - b. Violation of DCSAR Policy and Procedures is grounds for membership probation, suspension, or termination of the offending party. When on probation, a member of DCSAR is not permitted to perform any leadership duties that they would normally be entitled to perform (e.g., Operations, Team Leader or Board member).

## **EQUIPMENT**

1. All members should own, if the unit does not issue, the equipment recommended on the Personal Equipment List (attachment 2). This equipment should be carried on all field trainings as well as DCSAR operations.
2. Members may be issued the safety equipment listed on Attachment 4. This equipment is to be maintained by the member to whom it is issued. This same member is accountable for the loss and/or destruction of the issued equipment at the discretion of Operations.
3. Rescue packs, containing the necessary personal equipment, shall accompany a member any time they use a DCSAR vehicle.

4. Upon notification by Operations of a member's removal from the Operations Roster, the member shall return the Unit's equipment issued to them within one week. Upon reinstatement to the Operations Roster, the member may be reissued Unit equipment.
5. Rescue members who incur damage, loss, or destruction of equipment or clothing on a SAR mission or training may submit a claim, in writing, to the Treasurer within 14 days of such an occurrence. To manage the budget and avoid a situation where one claim is granted over another because of its timing in the budget cycle, the Board may elect to aggregate claims by delaying their consideration for up to six months. Factors the Board will use to determine whether a claim will be paid in-full, in-part or denied will include but are not limited to: the member's good standing in the unit at the time of the loss, the overall financial health of the organization and the available budget set aside for reimbursement, the circumstances surrounding the loss, the replacement cost, fair value of the loss at the time, repair cost, and alternatives to reimbursement. Total annual reimbursement to membership shall be limited to \$1,000 per year and this money will come from subject donations. The Board may augment the budget or carry unpaid claims into the next budget cycle. The Board's decision is final and not subject to appeal.

## **FINANCES**

1. The DCSAR Board of Directors shall approve all expenditures of funds from accounts in the name of DCSAR, prior to obligation.
2. In an emergency, an Operations leader (or their designee) may obligate to expend funds without the prior approval of the Board of Directors. However, the Operations Leader, or their designee shall report the circumstances and the expense to the Board of Directors at the next Board Meeting.
3. Receipts are required for all expenditures.
4. The Treasurer at the Board Meetings shall, by check reimburse (per receipts) for monies expended since the last Board Meeting.
5. At the annual change of the Board of Directors, a financial report shall be prepared by the past and present Treasurers and approved by the Board of Directors at the next Board Meeting.
6. All contracts must be approved by the Board of Directors. The Sheriff's Department Liaison will be notified of contracts through the agenda and minutes of the Board meetings.

## **OPERATIONS**

1. The management of incidents initiated at the request of the Sheriff's Office will be handled by an Operations Leader. During incidents the Sheriff's Office designee will act as the Incident Commander and the Operations Leader will act as the Deputy Incident Commander.
2. Operations Leaders should be specifically trained members of DCSAR that have been accepted and trained in the operations of DCSAR events.
  - a. The role of the Operations Leader is a demanding job which requires the ability to multi-task in a highly stressful situation. The Operations Leader must be able to size up the situation and assess mission priorities. The Operations Leader will need to develop and manage an incident action plan, develop appropriate organizational structure, determine

- strategic goals, and develop tactical objectives. The Operations Leader ensures member safety, coordinates outside agency resources and leads the mission debrief.
- b. The Operations Leader maintains knowledge of DCSAR policies and procedures, is familiar with all areas of the county, and is aware of resources available to DCSAR and the procedure for procuring them.
  - c. The Operations Leader must be capable of communicating and working with the Sheriff and his staff on a professional basis.
  - d. The Operations Leader is a team player who recognizes the value of each member. The Operations Leader encourages input from other members, is willing to ask for help and is flexible when necessary.
3. Field operations of DCSAR during incidents will be supervised by team leaders that are designated by the Operations Leader or Command Staff as the operation dictates. Team leaders will receive direction from Operations and will have the authority and responsibility of the directions and control of their assigned DCSAR team. The role of the Team leader is not an ongoing position.
    - a. The team leader is accountable to both Operations and the team members. The team leader is the first point of contact for mission issues. The team leader maintains communication with Operations, acts as the Team Safety Officer, delegates assignments based on skill level, makes clear team change handoffs, keeps necessary documentation, and provides thorough input to briefings and debriefings. The team leader understands and follows the chain of command.
  4. DCSAR personnel should work no more than 12 hours continuously in any given 24- hour period. This time limit may be extended by the IC if required by incident circumstances.
  5. DCSAR should conduct a debriefing of an operation or training as soon as possible/practical after the operation or training. The debriefing should include all pertinent personnel, DCSAR and others.
    - a. Debriefings should relay information pertaining to the mission only.
    - b. Critiques should relay what went good, bad, or OK. As well as suggestions on how to make it go better in the future. Each member that participated should have their uninterrupted turn during the critique to expand on their view of the mission.
    - c. Debriefings and critiques should be conducted in a depersonalized way so as not to embarrass or shame anyone on the team. Debrief and critique team actions, not people.
  6. Trainees must be accompanied by a rescue member or be acting at the direction of a Team or Operations Leader during all DCSAR operations.
  7. A trainee may only operate a DCSAR vehicle when accompanied by a rescue member, or when approved by a Team or Operations Leader.
  8. The minimum team size for any DCSAR operation shall be two members, unless directed otherwise by Operations Leader or designee.

9. Until an Operation Leader responds to an incident (is present or available by radio or cell phone), the senior rescue member willing to assume the responsibility of Operations Leader is thereby appointed and continues to function as the Operation Leader until relieved.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION/PUBLICITY**

1. All information released to the public regarding DCSAR operations shall be cleared through the Sheriff or his designee.
2. All publicity must be submitted the Sheriff's Public Information Officer.

## **SAFETY**

The safety of the rescuer (DCSAR member) comes first in all DCSAR operations.

## **TRAINING**

1. All formalized training should be submitted to, and approved by, the Training Committee
2. The training session leader/instructor has the authority to refuse anyone's participation on the training due to poor physical condition or lack of equipment, and to permit participation, with an Operations Leader's approval, of non-unit personnel.
3. Trainees are responsible for completing the required trainee classes.
4. Personnel will remain with the Unit during all training and operations unless excused and checked out by the session leader/instructor. Personnel leaving without permission will be deleted from the exercise and are subject to further discipline, including dismissal from the Unit.
5. Tuition Reimbursement Guidelines
  - a. The class must be approved by the Training Committee.
  - b. The attendee must be approved to attend the class by the Board of Directors. The member should begin the approval process by notifying the Director of Training of their interest in a particular class.
  - c. The attendee must complete the class's requirements and receive a certificate of completion.
  - d. The attendee is eligible for reimbursement after remaining in the Unit as a rescue member in good standing for a minimum of one year after the class is completed AND teaching (or assisting to teach) a minimum of one class for the Unit on the subject of the class.
  - e. Maximum reimbursement per course will be determined by the Board of Directors.

## **UNIFORMS**

1. The uniform of DCSAR will consist of the following items:
  - a. An orange button-down shirt will be the dress shirt of DCSAR. The shirt shall have the appropriate patches and name tape sewn on as specified:
    - i. The patch of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office will be worn on the right shoulder, centered 1" below the shoulder seam.

- ii. The patch of Douglas County Search and Rescue will be worn, centered 1/2” above the left pocket.
- iii. An American flag will be worn on the left shoulder, centered 1” below the shoulder seam.
- iv. Cloth-type name plates, 3/4” in width, having a black background with white letters, centered 1/2” above the right breast pocket, may be worn (optional).

During incidents and trainings, a short or long-sleeved t-shirt approved by the board may be worn.

- b. Appropriate type pants/trousers shall be worn during DCSAR operations.
  - c. Footwear, boots are preferred.
  - d. The DCSAR Unit jacket may be provided by DCSAR.
  - e. Orange or blue hats with the Unit insignia are preferred. Appropriate hats for an event or the weather conditions may be worn.
2. A Unit approved shirt with the DCSAR logo and name should be worn to any incident.
  3. Uniforms may be worn to a non-unit function if the member is acting as a representative of the Unit.
  4. DCSAR uniforms, and/or patches and insignias shall not be worn by non-unit personnel or former members.
  5. Uniforms should be clean and in good condition at all times.

## **PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

1. To maintain membership in Douglas County Search and Rescue, Operations Leaders, Rescue Members, Rescue Support Members and Admin Support Members must participate in a minimum of six incidents/exercises/events, three of which must be Incidents per calendar year.
  - a. Incidents are defined as a Douglas County Sheriff designated mission – Any D4H operation or mission that has a designated Douglas County Sheriff’s Case Number assigned or was requested by the DCSO.
  - b. Exercises are defined as any D4H training, including Training Meetings, General Field Trainings, or Special Team Trainings, with an emphasis on field trainings.
  - c. Events include:
    - i. General Meetings, Board of Directors Meetings, or Committee Meetings.
    - ii. Fund Raising – includes events such as the Haunted House, Special Events, and other events that provides monetary support of Team.
    - iii. Community Service – includes activities that assist DCSO in providing services for the good of the community. Community services may include STOP Programs, Swim Center Presentations, sign boards, and other community services.



2. In addition to Participation Guidelines, members must maintain CPR and Medical proficiencies.
  - a. Rescue and Rescue Support Member in addition to the above, members must in a calendar year participate in:
    - i. the Annual Proficiency Hike. Rescue Members must fulfil Level A or B and Rescue Support Members must fulfil Level B or C requirements. (See Attachment H for proficiency hike requirements.)
    - ii. Complete the Annual Swim Proficiency Test
3. Trainee Members
  - a. Trainees must complete the following within their six (6) to twelve (12) month probationary period:
    - i. The DCSAR Academy;
    - ii. Rescue Support Candidates must complete an overnight bivouac using only the contents of the SAR Academy Pack contents;
    - iii. Rescue Support must complete a successful proficiency hike within the probationary period.
4. Reserve Member: No participation requirement.
5. Emeritus Member: No participation requirements.
6. If, after a Calendar Year starting January 1 and ending December 31, a member, not including Reserve, does not meet Participation Guidelines, a review by the Board of Directors will determine if the member is retained, made inactive or dismissed following Paragraphs 'k' below.
7. Each newly elected Board of Directors shall be responsible for preparing and publishing a calendar for the upcoming year. This calendar will include all regularly scheduled Field Trainings, Training Meetings, National Holidays, and General Meetings.
8. Participation will be tracked in D4H or whatever tracking system the team may use in the future.
9. Inactive Membership
  - a. Any member except for Trainees, may become inactive for a period up to twelve months. The period may be extended with approval of the Board of Directors for up to an additional six (6) months after which the member will be dismissed.
  - b. The request must be made in writing with appropriate detail outlining the reasons and expected duration.
  - c. Exceptions may be allowed for medical conditions, military leave, or other viable reasons as determined by the Board of Directors.
  - d. All inactive status requests shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors and announced to the DCSAR membership.
  - e. Inactive members will be required to return all unit issued equipment; new equipment will be issued upon return to active status.

10. Any member may resign or retire honorably by giving written notice to the Board of Directors and surrendering all DCSAR property.

11. Membership Dismissal

a. The following criteria will be considered before dismissing a member from DCSAR:

- i. Violation of the DCSAR Bylaws and/or Policies & Procedures;
- ii. An interview of the member to determine their desire to stay a member of DCSAR;
- iii. A review of past participation in DCSAR activities;
- iv. At the request of the Douglas County Sheriff;
- v. Misconduct that reflects discredit upon DCSO or DCSAR;
- vi. Misuse or abuse of DCSO or DCSAR property;
- vii. Does not reside within 75 miles of Douglas County.

b. The member shall be notified, in writing, outlining the reasons for possible dismissal. If desired by the Member, a meeting with the Board of Directors and the Member shall be convened to discuss with the Member the reasons for the consideration of dismissal. By a vote of the majority of Board of Directors the Member may then be retained with specific requirements or dismissed. If dismissed, all DCSAR property will be surrendered.

## **ADVANCED TRAINING COORDINATORS**

1. Advanced training coordinators (ATCs) may be appointed by the Training Committee with approval of the Board of Directors for leadership in specialty areas. These areas include, but are not limited to, swift water, medical, technical rope systems, overhead, man tracking, canine search, drones, incident command and search theory, air resources, and Nordic.
2. ATCs are responsible for coordinating advanced training and continuing education for the Unit in their specialty area. In addition, they will identify equipment needs or advise of maintenance needed on existing equipment. They will coordinate their activities with existing committees (e.g., Training, Logistics, Overhead, Operations, or Finance) regarding proper equipment deployment and training issues.
3. The Training Committee's selection criteria will include:
  - a. Applicant's current level of expertise within the specialty.
  - b. Applicant's ability to conduct in-house certification training.
  - c. Past history of commitment to the Unit.
  - d. Quality of the submitted plan detailing the team goals.
4. Appointments to the ATC position are continuous until revoked by the Training Committee with approval of the Board of Directors.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM LEADERS**

1. The role of the Administrative Team Leader (ATL) is to provide a reasonable span of control to meet the needs of members assigned to them. Span of control is no more than seven members. ATLs work with those assigned to them to inventory vehicles and equipment to insure they are mission ready. ATLs work closely with Training to ensure the trainees assigned to their team are continuing on a positive track toward full Rescue Member status. ATLs are the first point of contact for personnel issues within their span of control. ATL commitment is one year.
2. The Administrative Team Leader should have demonstrated leadership abilities, proven accountability, knowledge of policies and procedures, and knowledge of equipment. The ATL may be a Rescue, Rescue Support, or Administrative Support Member.
3. The Administrative Team Leader is appointed by the Board of Directors. Members need to inform the Board of Directors of their interest in this position.

## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

The purpose of the Awards and Recognitions policy is to provide awards for actions above and beyond the expectations of the regular investment of time and performance of service given by individual members to the Search and Rescue Unit. Recognitions are given at set intervals of time as both a thank you for a member's efforts but also for other members to be able to recognize the more senior members of the unit. In addition, a recognition board will hang in the office to honor those grant donors who have enriched the unit. Another board will list the names and year of the member who was recognized as Member of the Year by the Sheriff's Office.

1. Awards will be given out at the end of the calendar year at the annual Business Meeting except for the Member of the Year award. Members are nominated by their fellow rescue members. Nominations will be vetted by the Awards Committee and proffered to the Board of Directors for final approval.
  - a. Nominations will be accepted in August and voted on at the Annual Business Meeting in October.
  - b. The Member of the Year award will be presented to the member at the Annual County Recognition Dinner usually held in May. His or her name will be added to the Member of the Year plaque to be displayed in the DCSAR office.
  - c. In order to be considered for an award or recognition the Member needs to adhere to the participation guidelines.
2. Member of the Year: Given to the member who has provided consistent, excellent service to the public or his/her fellow members, has performed an act of courage or bravery beyond that which is expected or has created and donated a service to Search and Rescue that benefits the unit as a whole.
3. Educator of the Year: Given to the member who has provided training to the members in both formal and informal settings. This member has organized and led field trainings, has organized formal classroom training, and has made him or herself available to all members for ongoing one-on-one mentoring.

4. Leader of the Year: Given to the Team Leader or Operations Leader who has consistently shown excellent leadership during operations, training, administrative duties and civic events. This leader makes him or her readily available to members of the team and can be counted on to provide sound judgment throughout all events ensuring the safety of all members.
5. Recognitions:
  - a. Service Pins: Earned at end of the second year, fifth year and every five years thereafter. To be worn on hats, jackets, or vests.
  - b. Patches Provided by Training Outside DCSAR: These patches are usually indicators of CPR, WFA, TRACKER, NASAR SAR TECH, and other technical training completed by the member. To be worn on the jacket or vest.
6. Retirement Plaque: Given to retiring members with 5 or more years of service.
7. Certificate of Appreciation: Given to spouses of members who are retiring with 5 or more years of service.
8. Donor Plaque: The donor plaque will be displayed in the DCSSAR office and will list the names of individuals or organizations who have provided grants to the unit.
9. Member of the Year Plaque: This plaque will be displayed in the DCSSAR office and will list the name of the individual and the year he/she received the award.

## **SPECIAL TEAMS**

Policies for Special Teams will be added as attachments to this document.

# **ATTACHMENT A – DCSAR BUSINESS AFFAIRS CHAIN OF COMMAND**

Sheriff Administrative Officers

Liaison

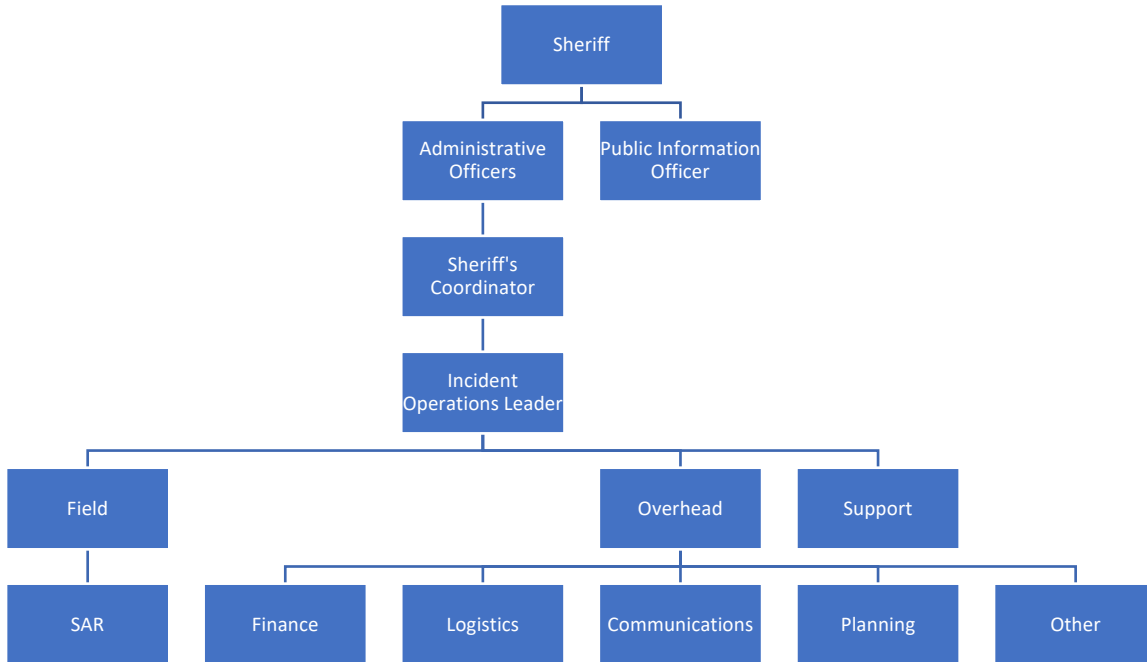
President

Search and Rescue Board of Directors

Administrative Team Leader

Search and Rescue General Membership

## ATTACHMENT B – DCSO INCIDENT CHAIN OF COMMAND



## ATTACHMENT C – PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

The following equipment is commonly compiled to form what is referred to as a "24-hour ready pack". Such a pack holds those items that will assist the holder in functioning safely, effectively, and efficiently during a DCSAR incident. Some items may be carried on a belt, in pockets, or strapped to the person. This is the minimum equipment is recommended to be carried on all missions in non-urban or wilderness areas.

EVERY ITEM ON THIS LIST MUST BE PRESENT FOR THE CANDIDATE TO PASS THE PACK CHECK STATION OF THE SARTECH II AND THE NEVADA WILDERNESS TECHNICIAN SKILLS EXAMINATION. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.

### Personal First Aid and Survival Kit

1 Plastic bag, zip lock, qt. size, for kit	8 Matches in a waterproof container
4 Acetaminophen or aspirin tablets	1 Moleskin
4 Antacid tablets	1 Chemical Light Stick
2 Antiseptic cleansing pads	1 Roller gauze bandage
1 Antiseptic ointment	2 Safety pins, large
6 Band aids, various sizes	1 Splinter forceps, tweezers
1 Candle, long burning/ Survival Type	1 Space blanket or space type sleeping bag
2 Cotton swabs, non-sterile	1 1 oz. container of hand sanitizer
1 Duct tape, 5-10 ft.	1 Whistle
1 Leaf bag, large	

### (Non-urban) Personal SAR Equipment

1 Pack, 2,400 cubic inch (minimum)	1 Metal cup or pot
4 Bags, various sizes, zip locked	1 Mirror, signal
1 Bandanna, handkerchief	1 Nylon twine or small rope, 50 feet
1 Cap or other headgear	1 Pad and pencil
2 Carabiners, locking gate (F1956 compliant min)	1 Rainwear jacket and pants, durable/ breathable
1 Clothes bag, waterproof	2 Prusik cords (6mm – 8mm; 6 ft. length)
1 Clothing, adequate for climate (worn)	1 DCSAR personal picture identification
1 Clothing, extra set, suitable for climate	1 Shelter Material, 8x10 plastic or coated nylon
1 Compass, orienteering type	2 Extra leaf bags
1 Flagging tape, roll	1 Socks, extra pair
1 Flashlight or headlamp w/extra batteries and bulb (bulb if applicable)	1 Sunscreen lotion
1 Extra Flashlight or headlamp w/extra batteries and bulb (bulb if applicable)	2 Water separate containers, at least 1-liter size each
1 Footwear, sturdy, adequate for climate	1 Toilet Paper
1 Gloves, durable, season dependent	1 Tracking stick, 42" long
1 Eye protection, clear	1 Watch
1 Insect repellent	1 Food, minimum 1 days' worth
1 Knife, multi-tool type or Swiss army type	2 Webbing, 1" tubular – 25' length
1 Lip balm, with sunscreen	8 Wire ties, plastic, self-locking
1 Measuring device, 18 in. minimum	1 Foam (Sleeping Pad)

## **ATTACHMENT D – UNIT ISSUED EQUIPMENT**

All equipment is considered the responsibility of the person to whom it is issued. The equipment will be replaced at the cost of the Unit/Department only if it is found to have been damaged, destroyed, or used up due to DCSAR operations. It will not be replaced if it is found that the equipment was misused or neglected by the DCSAR member to whom it was issued.

- Unit handheld radio
- Unit shirt
- Safety protective helmet
- Safety vest
- Avalanche Beacon, Probe, Shovel
- Unit Jacket
- Fire PPE, Shirt, Pants, Helmet with shroud, and goggles



## **ATTACHMENT E – TRAINEE II CHECKLIST**

1. Intro to SAR
2. Equipment Orientation, Radio Operation
3. Navigation 1, Identify position on map, Use of GPS
4. Basic First Aid, Med Bags
5. Intro to Swift water/Floods/Mines
6. Evidence/Criminal Events
7. Infectious Disease/Critical Incident Stress
8. Pack Check
9. 4wd Off-road Driving
10. Bylaws/Policies & Procedures
11. Deployment Procedures, Limitations of Trainees
12. CPR certified
13. ICS 100, 200, & 700 Classes
14. DCSAR Shirt
15. NASAR Book

## ATTACHMENT F – EQUIPMENT REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM

<b>Date of Loss:</b>	<b>Reimbursement Request Date:</b> <small>(Must be within 14 days of loss)</small>
<b>Member Name:</b>	
<b>TL/OL loss was reported to:</b>	<b>Date Reported:</b>
<b>Loss Witnessed?   YES   NO   By Member:</b>	
<b>The equipment was lost/destroyed by:   Me   Teammate.   Subject   Other</b>	
<b>Circumstances of loss:</b>	
<b>Detailed description of equipment: (Use additional pages if needed)</b>	
<b>Replacement value (please attach quote or webpage):   \$</b>	
<b>Equipment Age:</b>	<b>Equipment condition (1-10):</b> <small>(worn out=1, mint=10)</small>
<b>Member Signature:</b>	

**Board Decision**

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Member meets participation requirements?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Reasonable standard of care for equipment?   YES   NO</b>			
<b>Decision points:</b>			
<b>Decision:   Approved in Full   Partially Funded   Reconsider Next Cycle   Denied</b>			
<b>Amount:   \$</b>	<b>Check #</b>	<b>Date Paid:</b>	
<b>Alternate Solution: (Use additional pages if needed)</b>			

## **ATTACHMENT G – CANINE TEAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **PURPOSE**

To establish best practices and training guidelines for DCSAR Canine Teams. To develop a set of standards for all canine team disciplines.

### **HANDLER TRAINING**

All Handlers must complete the Douglas County Search and Rescue guidelines and be compliant with participation guidelines to operate as a canine team member.

Training should include at a minimum the following areas:

- Safety
- Care of the canine
- Kenneling
- Obedience
- K-9 First Aid
- Veterinary Care
- Search Techniques
- Proficiency & Maintenance Training
- Training Aid Storage, Maintenance, and Accountability
- Concealment Techniques
- Record Keeping
- Canine Health and Conditioning
- Drives & Traits
- Odor Theory and Properties of Scent

### **MAINTENANCE / PROFICIENCY TRAINING:**

All canines must join the canine team and train together regardless of the discipline. This ensures we support each other in our endeavors and ensures minimum canine socialization.

The team shall conduct regular objective-oriented training to maintain and enhance operational proficiency.

It is recommended that all DCSAR canine teams should train a minimum of 5 hours quarterly.

Trainings should replicate real scenarios, e.g., engine compartments, trunks, furniture, buildings, public areas, and outdoor areas that simulate the team's actual working environments.

The handler and canine must maintain a level of fitness appropriate for the certification discipline and typical search environment.

The handler and canine should be comfortable and safe in various modes of transportation such as helicopters, ATVs, snow machines, and others.

The handler must clean the vehicle or other transportation device immediately after use of any fur or dirt caused by the canine unless the canine was in an appropriate canine kennel. Any damage to the vehicle or transportation device caused by the canine must be reported to the Board immediately.

Only mission ready canines are allowed to deploy to missions. All in training canines are to be left at home as the focus is on the mission.

Training should include:

- Variety of search and environmental conditions
- Varied durations of searches
- Varied times of day / night
- Varieties of distractions within the working areas
- Varied set times of training aids
- Varied weights and quantities of target odors
- Variety of concealment methods
- Correction of deficiencies or operational concerns

## **RECORD KEEPING / DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**

The handler shall document all training, deployment, certification, and proficiency evaluations.

All records shall be maintained by the handler.

DCSAR will keep a copy of all records including but not limited to training, deployment, certification, proficiency, veterinary, and training aid handling and storage.

### **TRAINING AID RECORDS / ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Agencies should have a policy in place clearly stating how they manage / store their training aids.

Training aids should be clearly labeled or identifiable in a manner that supports accountability.

### **VETERINARY RECORDS:**

Vaccinations will be documented, and copies placed in the records of each canine team.

All canines will be vaccinated for rabies by 16 weeks of age. The vaccine will be boosted 1 year after that, then every 3 years as required by federal law.

All canines will be given a 3-set series of distemper parvo vaccines by 16 weeks of age. The vaccine will be boosted 1 year after that, and then every 3 years.

### **OBEDIENCE:**

All canine units within DCSAR will have control over their canine at all times to ensure the safety of their dogs, fellow teammates, and the public.

All canine's training and working for DCSAR will be allowed to wear authorized "search and rescue" equipment.

All canines will maintain a collar with identification at all times the canine is not working.

All canines must be able to perform obedience while on and off leash.

All canines must be able to perform obedience with distractions.

Basic obedience will include:

- Sit

- Stay
- Down
- Heal
- Come
- Kenneling

## **NEVADA POST STANDARDS OBEDIENCE STANDARDS**

### **PURPOSE:**

This evaluation is designated for K-9 teams to show proficiency in obedience and control. It is a basic evaluation of the levels of control and obedience a K-9 handler should have while working their K-9 in varied working environments. It will be left up to the individual departments as to whether or not their single purpose detection teams require an obedience certification; however it is a recommended training discipline.

### **PROCEDURE:**

- The K-9 team will heel at different directions and at all times remain under control at the handler's side.
- The evaluation should simulate the K-9 team's working environment and include associated distractions.
- During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized "on duty" equipment only

The evaluation consists of the following exercises with the dog ON and OFF Lead:

- The team will heel on a course with a minimum of two left turns, two right turns, and two about turns.
- The K-9 will be commanded to sit, stand, or down in motion. The handler will continue walking, leaving the dog in the last position commanded. The handler will turn and face the K-9 and at the direction of the evaluator recall the K-9 to a finish position.
- The Evaluator may waive the on lead portion of the test if the team successfully passes the off lead requirement.

This evaluation will be judged Pass / Fail.

Certification shall be valid for a twelve (12) month period from the date of issue, not to exceed fifteen (15) months.

### **A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL BE:**

The K-9 staying under control at the handler's side and performing the sit, stand, or down without breaking. A minimal amount of forging or lagging will not be considered a failure.

## **ARTICLE / EVIDENCE DETECTION STANDARDS**

### **PURPOSE:**

This evaluation is to demonstrate that the K-9 team can successfully identify target odors in a typical environmental and operational setting, demonstrating the team's ability to locate articles / evidence bearing human odor in a simulated working environment.

**AREA TYPE:**

The area selected by evaluator should simulate the K-9 teams working environment. Weather conditions during evaluation should permit for a fair and reasonable deployment setting.

**ARTICLE / EVIDENCE SELECTION:**

Items used should be of different materials e.g. metal, plastic, wood, leather, cloth, etc. They should be well saturated with human odor by the person hiding / placing the items.

**PROCEDURE:**

- The evaluation area will be determined by the evaluator with consideration given to the K-9 teams working environment.
- The area should not exceed 100 ft x 100 ft.
- Four (4) well scented articles will be utilized.
- Set time of items should be no less than 20 minutes.
- During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized “on duty” equipment only.
- The handler will demonstrate control of the K-9 during the evaluation.
- The K-9 will successfully locate / retrieve 3 of the 4 items within 30 minutes.
- Any one area failed during the evaluation period may be subsequently remediated to a pass.

Prior to the evaluation, the handler will inform the evaluator what the K-9’s final response will be.

The evaluation will be judged PASS / FAIL

Certification shall be valid for a twelve (12) month period from the date of issue, not to exceed fifteen (15) months.

**A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL BE:**

- K-9 actively searches and remains under control of the handler.
- K-9 team successfully locates / retrieves 3 out of the 4 items hidden.
- K-9 team does not exceed 30-minute time limit.

**AREA/WILDERNESS CERTIFICATION**

The Area/Wilderness K-9 Team certification will consist of three phases:

- Obedience Phase
- Final Response Demonstration Phase
- Search Phase

The K-9 team must pass the Obedience and Final Response Demonstration Phases before attempting the Search Phase. Successful completion of all three phases is required to receive certification in Area/Wilderness.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

Certification shall be valid for a twelve (12) month period from the date of issue, not to exceed fifteen (15) months.

**Final Response Demonstration Phase**

**PURPOSE:**

This evaluation is to demonstrate that the K-9 will independently perform the trained final response as articulated by the handler.

**PROCEDURE:**

This demonstration can be done in conjunction with the obedience evaluation.

Successful completion of this test does not indicate proficiency in operational environments.

During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized “on duty” equipment only.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

The handler will state what the K-9’s final response is.

A live person will be placed in a location not visible to the K-9 and at a location where the K-9 can get odor and follow it to the subject quickly.

Evaluations will be conducted in environments that have natural distracter odors.

**A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE:**

- The handler will start the K-9 with its search command.
- The K-9 will locate the subject and perform its final response without cues or assistance from its handler.
- The final response should be what the handler described.

**A FAILURE WILL INCLUDE:**

- The K-9 not performing its final response independently;
- The K-9 not performing the final response indicated by its handler.

**Search Phase****PURPOSE:**

This evaluation simulates a typical area/wilderness working environment where a person is missing.

**PROCEDURE:**

The handler will receive no information regarding the number of subject(s), subject location(s), or any other aspect of the set prior to or during the search. All reasonable efforts will be made to assure the evaluation is conducted at a minimum of a single blind standard.

There will be a minimum of one (1) live human placed in the search area.

The area to be used will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

Evaluations will be conducted in environments that have natural distracter odors.

The area will be approximately 40 acres of mixed terrain that can be searched to a reasonable Probability of Detection (POD).

There will be a two (2) hour time limit for the team to complete the test, including breaks.

The search area will be clearly identified to the handler prior to the start of the evaluation on a master map.

The evaluator will signal the start and finish of the test.

During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized “on duty” equipment only.

It is preferred that only one team be tested in a given area per day.

**A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE:**

- The team shall demonstrate the stamina to search the entire area.
- The K-9 shall independently search for and locate all subjects in the allotted time.

**FAILURE OF THE EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE**

- The team fails to locate all subject(s).
- Handler does not recognize inadequate coverage of their assigned area.

### **TRACKING/TRAILING HOT TRACK CERTIFICATION**

The Nevada POST K-9 Tracking/Trailing Hot Track Certification will consist of one phase.

**PURPOSE:**

This evaluation is to demonstrate that the K-9 team can successfully follow a target odor from the last known point (LKP) to the subject.

**PROCEDURE:**

The handler will receive no information regarding the source locations, blank areas, distractions, or any other aspect of the sets prior to or during the search. All reasonable efforts will be made to assure the evaluation is conducted at a minimum of a single blind standard.

This exercise will consist of a track not less than 440 yard (1/4 mile) and no more than 880 yards (1/2 mile).

During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized “on duty” equipment only.

Search areas to be used will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

Whenever possible, the tracklayer will be an unfamiliar person to the K-9.

The track will begin from a vehicle, evidence article, or by casting the K-9 in the area.

The track will conclude where the tracklayer will be concealed from the K-9 team’s sight.

The directions and travels of the tracklayer will simulate the actions of a lost or fleeing subject.

To show that the K-9 can follow a track across multiple surfaces, the surfaces types of the track will consist of a variation of grass, weeds, dirt, gravel, etc. The combination of surfaces types should represent the handler’s potential area of deployments.

The track will contain naturally occurring cross tracks and distractions.



The track will be aged a minimum of twenty (20) minutes and not more than one (1) hour.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

There will be no evidence articles between the starting and ending points.

It will be the responsibility of the K-9 team to determine the direction of travel.

The only direction eliminated will be the path taken by the team to arrive at the starting point.

The team must successfully complete the track by locating the tracklayer within thirty (30) minutes.

The evaluation will be judged PASS / FAIL.

A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE:

- It is obvious to the evaluator that the K-9 team is on track.
- The K-9 team must find the subject within thirty (30) minutes.

Tracking / Trailing Aged Track Certification

PURPOSE:

This evaluation is to demonstrate that the K-9 team can successfully identify and follow a target odor from a scented article and locate the target subject. This evaluation will consist of one phase.

PROCEDURE:

The handler will receive no information regarding the source locations, blank areas, distractions, or any other aspect of the sets prior to or during the search. All reasonable efforts will be made to assure the evaluation is conducted at a minimum of a single blind standard.

This exercise will consist of a track not less than one (1) mile and no more than one and one-half (1½) miles.

During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized "on duty" equipment only.

Search areas to be used will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

Whenever possible the tracklayer will be an unfamiliar person to the K-9.

The evaluation begins when the K-9 is scented on an article that contains only the scent of the tracklayer in the area of where the track begins.

It will be the responsibility of the K-9 team to determine the direction of travel.

The only direction eliminated will be the path taken by the team to arrive at the starting point.

The tracklayer will return to the end of the track for the K-9 to find, taking a route that does not coincide with or cross the original track.

The track will conclude where the tracklayer will be concealed from the K-9 team's sight.

The directions and travels of the tracklayer will simulate the actions of a lost or fleeing subject.

To show that the K-9 can follow a track across multiple surfaces, the surface types of the track will consist of a variation of grass, weeds, dirt, gravel, etc. The combination of surface types should represent the K-9 team's typical area of deployments.

The track will contain naturally occurring cross tracks and distractions.

The track will be aged a minimum of four (4) hours and not more than six (6) hours.

There will be no evidence articles between the starting and ending points.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

The team must successfully complete the track by locating the tracklayer within ninety (90) minutes.

This evaluation will be judged PASS / FAIL.

A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE:

- The handler is correctly reading / interpreting their K-9 (teamwork)
- The K-9 team must find the subject within ninety (90) minutes.

### **HUMAN REMAINS DETECTION CERTIFICATION**

The Canine Human Remains Detection certification will consist of two phases:

- Obedience Phase
- Search Phase – Includes vehicle, shallow water, building and outside areas

The K-9 team must first pass the obedience phase before attempting the search phase. Successful completion of both phases is required to receive certification in Human Remains Detection.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

Certification shall be valid for a twelve (12) month period from the date of issue, not to exceed fifteen (15) months.

### **SEARCH PHASE**

#### **PURPOSE:**

This evaluation is to demonstrate that the canine can successfully identify target odors in a typical environmental setting.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

The handler will receive no information regarding source location(s), blank areas, distractions, or any other aspect of the sets prior to or during the search. All reasonable efforts will be made to assure the evaluation is conducted at a minimum of a single blind standard.

The team has completed and passed the obedience phase prior to attempting the search phase.

During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized "on duty" equipment only.

The three odor sources include human bone, human blood, and decomposing human remains ("decomposition"). Each odor source will be used at least once over the course of the evaluation.

Evaluation areas include: vehicle, building, shallow water, open shrub land, and forest.

Search areas will be at the discretion of the evaluator. Areas may be attempted in any order at the discretion of the evaluator.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

The area to be searched will be clearly identified to the handler prior to the start of the evaluation and may include flagging or other means to mark boundaries.

Three source configurations will be presented: elevated (level at which a dog can no longer sniff and have four paws on the floor and no higher than 6'), buried (~12"), and surface.

Final responses are determined by the handler. A false response is a handler stating that a source is present where it is not.

It is preferred that only one team be evaluated in a given area per day.

Only one team may be evaluated in a given area per day.

The evaluator will signal the start and finish of each test.

In order to assure the human remains odor is available for the canine to detect, a buried source will set a minimum of four (4) hours prior to testing. All other sources will be set no less than twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of the evaluation.

The evaluation will be judged PASS / FAIL.

Odor Sources:

All sources will be used in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes and local regulations.

The following are not considered valid sources: hair, fingernail, pseudo scent, soil.

Blood will be contained on a material such as gauze or in a vial or similar containers.

All sources used in the search phase must be tested by a certified human remains detector K-9 prior to placement.

Sources should be reasonable representations of the variability that would be encountered during deployments.

A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE:

- All odor sources must be located.
- Exactly one false response is allowed for the entire evaluation sequence.
- The handler will verbally indicate to the evaluator that he/she has a positive alert from his/her K-9 and believes that the odor source is in the immediate vicinity. The evaluator will not comment or provide feedback until the entire area has been completed.
- Final response is passive. A recall re-find is not considered passive.
- Failure of an area will also include:
  - Eating, retrieving, defecating or urinating on a source.
  - Any other behavior by the K-9 that cannot be stopped by the handler that would compromise a source.

### Area 1: Vehicle search

This element demonstrates that a K-9 team can locate human remains odor on or in a vehicle.

(4) Vehicles (1) source (3) blanks 20 min. max

- K-9 teams may sniff the interior and exterior of every vehicle.
- Handler identifies which vehicle contains the source.
- The source will not be visible to handler or K-9.

### Area 2: Building search

This element demonstrates that a K-9 team can locate human remains odor inside of a building.

- Approx. 1500 square-foot structure (1-2) sources 60 min. max
- A coin toss will be used to determine the number of sources (1 or 2).
- Location of sources is at evaluator discretion.
- The source(s) will not be visible to handler or K-9.

### Area 3: Shoreline search

This element demonstrates that a K-9 team can locate the odor of human remains in shallow water from shore that does not require deployment of divers or a technical swift water recovery team to recover the source.

A shoreline of water 75-100 yards in length (1) source 30 min. max

- Decomposition will be the source for this area.
- The water depth at placement will be no greater than 18" and no farther than 5' from shore.
- The source will not be visible to the handler or K-9.

### Areas 4 and 5: Open area / wild-land interface search

These two areas demonstrate that a K-9 team can locate human remains in natural and urban wild-land interface environments, and that a canine team can correctly clear an area that is blank.

½-acre area that is predominantly shrub cover (0-2) sources 30 min. max

½-acre area that is forest or predominantly treed (0-2) sources 30 min. max

- A coin toss will be used to determine which one of these two areas will be blank.
- For the area that is not blank, a coin toss will determine whether 1 or 2 sources are set.
- At least one source will be a 12" burial and the buried source will be decomposition. Bone and blood may be buried with a decomposition source.
- Every effort shall be made to disguise the location of the burial.
- The source(s) will not be visible to handler or K-9.
- Any tree cover is valid (e.g., native conifer, Joshua trees, landscaped).

### Certification - Water Recovery

The Water Recovery K-9 Team certification will consist of three phases:

- Obedience Phase

- Boat Phase
- Shoreline Phase

The K-9 team must pass the Obedience Phase before attempting the Search Phase. Successful completion of all three phases is required to receive certification in Water Recovery.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

Certification shall be valid for a twelve (12) month period from the date of issue, not to exceed fifteen (15) months.

Search Phase

PURPOSE:

This evaluation is to demonstrate that the K-9 team can successfully locate a submerged subject.

PROCEDURE:

The handler will receive no information regarding the odor source location, or any other aspect of the set prior to or during the search. All reasonable efforts will be made to assure the evaluation is conducted at a minimum of a single blind standard.

All personnel will wear a minimum of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) type III personal flotation device (PFD) in the watercraft and when working along the shore.

The area(s) to be used will be at the discretion of the evaluator. The search phases will be conducted when conditions allow the test to be solved within test parameters.

The evaluator will signal the start and finish of the test.

Evaluators may terminate the certification process at their discretion at any time.

Evaluations will be conducted in environments that have natural distracter odors and where it is reasonably expected that there is not a submerged decedent.

During the evaluation the K-9 will be deployed wearing authorized "on duty" equipment.

The K-9 should have a final response that provides a definitive location from which follow up focal searches using divers, side scan sonar or other methods to locate the body.

Barking as a sole final response is not allowed.

The K-9 may enter the water where conditions allow at the handler's discretion.

Odor Sources:

Human decomposition is the source type and may include human blood, but human blood alone is not a sufficient source. All sources will be used in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes and local regulations.

The following are not considered valid sources: hair, fingernail, pseudo scent, soil.

All sources used in the search phases must be tested by a certified human remains detector canine prior to placement.

Scent pumps will have sufficient tube length such that the location of the odor outflow relative to the scent pump location on shore can be disguised.

#### Boat Phase:

From a boat, the K-9 team will locate and mark the location of the simulated drowned subject in a lake, reservoir or similar body of water.

A gas engine may be used if a trolling motor is not available. The handler will be told the type of engine used prior to starting the test.

The boat driver will not know the solution to the test. The boat driver will be experienced to the degree that he/she can maneuver the boat safely and execute the handler's directions.

Boats must have an approved capacity to accommodate the number of people who will be on board. The K-9 counts as one person.

The search area size should simulate a typical working environment, no less than ½ acre (e.g., 50 yards by 50 yards), yet reasonably sized to be solved within test parameters.

The search area to be covered should be clearly defined and may include buoys.

There will be a forty-five (45) minute time limit to complete this phase.

Water depth should be at least three feet deep.

The odor source should be no deeper than approximately ten (10) feet.

The test should be set (odor reaching the water surface) prior to the team beginning deployment.

Bubbles will not be apparent to personnel or K-9 in the boat.

The handler will mark the location of the odor source with a final buoy based on the K-9's response to odor and will tell the evaluator where divers should be deployed.

#### Shoreline Phase:

From shore the team will locate and mark the location of the simulated drowned subject.

The designated search area should be approximately, but no more than, one hundred (100) yards in length with endpoints clearly marked.

Water depth should be at least eighteen (18) inches deep.

The shoreline should be accessible to the team from land.

There will be a forty-five (45) minute time limit to complete this phase.

The simulated drowned subject should not be visible (e.g., bubbles) to the K-9 or handler and should be within ten (10) feet of the shoreline.

The test should be set so that odor reaches the water surface prior to the team beginning deployment.

#### A SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE:

- From a boat, the odor source is located within approximately twenty (20) feet from source.

- From shore, the odor source is located within thirty-five (35) feet.
- Sources are located within the allotted time.

FAILURE OF THE EVALUATION WILL INCLUDE

- The team fails to locate all sources within the allotted time.
- A handler marking a source where there is none.
- Marking outside of the distance requirements stated above.

## **ATTACHMENT H – PROFICIENCY HIKE GUIDELINES**

The requirements for the Annual Proficiency Hike are as follows:

### **Level A Physical Fitness**

Complete a 9-mile hike on the Rim Trail while carrying a 20+ pound pack: from Stagecoach to Monument Pass in less than 2.75 hours and return to Stagecoach for a total time of less than 4.5 hours OR some other activity that is clearly indicative of this fitness level as determined by one OL and a TL or second OL.

### **Level B Physical Fitness**

Complete a 9-mile hike on the Rim Trail from Stagecoach to Monument Pass while carrying a 20+ pound pack in less than 6 hours OR some other activity that is clearly indicative of this fitness level as determined by one OL and a TL or second OL.

### **Level C Physical Fitness**

Complete a 4-mile hike on any section of the Rim trail within 3.5 hours OR some other activity that is clearly indicative of this fitness level as determined by one OL and a TL or second OL.



**ATTACHMENT I – AMENDMENTS**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Section Amended</b>	<b>Comments</b>
06/15/19	Sec 13	Changed attendance requirements for members.
10/24/19	Attachment F	Command Staff Proficiencies added.
10/24/19	Sec 15	Administrative Team Leader added.
08/20/20	Sec 4e	Personal Equipment Reimbursement added.
04/25/21	Attachment F	DCSAR Application for Reimbursement for Lost, Destroyed, or Damaged Equipment relabeled to Attachment G.
04/25/21	Attachment G	Amendments to Policies and Procedures relabeled to Attachment H.
08/26/21	Attachment F	Changes made to Command Staff Proficiencies.
10/26/23	Entire Document	Complete rewrite and reformat of policies and procedures.