

# **SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAIN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM**

## **PROSPECTIVE MEMBER INFORMATION**

**April 22, 2002**

# Welcome

The San Bernardino Mountain Search and Rescue Team, Unit #214, is made up of exceptional men and women who volunteer their time to assist the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department in its effort to locate and rescue individuals in need.

The members that make up this team are volunteers of varying backgrounds. We have doctors, engineers, business owners, a variety of professionals and many tradesmen. All are non-paid citizen volunteers. The common bond between all team members relate to unselfishness, personal sacrifices and dedication to help those in need.

The emphasis of this type of volunteer organization is **teamwork**. This team is a partner of the Sheriff's organization, therefore, it must be understood that members are part of a paramilitary organization that has a hierarchical structure and chain of command. Team members are bound by policies and procedures that must be adhered to in order to ensure teamwork.

This Search and Rescue Team is under the command of the station commander for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Central Station. The team members are originally processed through the Volunteer Forces Division of the Sheriff's Department. Once processed, a new citizen volunteer is assigned usually to their requested unit. After assignment, it is incumbent upon the member to become familiar with departmental policies, rules and regulations, chain of command, and assigned unit bylaws.

The purpose of this packet is to inform the interested individual of the commitment required **before applying** for membership with the San Bernardino Mountain Search and Rescue Team. It will allow the individual to scrutinize what is expected as a Search and Rescue team member. More importantly, it will also educate one as to mandatory requirements relating to personal, financial and time commitments.

# What is exactly Search and Rescue?

To give examples of what authentic Search and Rescue personnel go through, here is a list of actual missions and the responses by new SAR team members.

## February

The team was called out to find a missing teenager who did not return from a hike. You have to get the day off work to help out. Your day starts by arriving at the command post at 0600 and are put on hold until 1130. Eventually you are given an assignment and driven to the search area. At 1300, via the radio check, it is determined that the teenager was found. You hike out and wait for 2 hours to get picked up. Net activity for the day: 11 hours on call 2 hours actual searching!

## April

You are sent to search for a crashed airplane in an un-traveled arduous canyon. At the start of the canyon the buckthorn was so thick you had to climb on top of it; about 5 feet above the ground. Several times you fall in, resulting in torn SAR shirt and getting many scrapes and cuts. After passing out of the buckthorn and into the canyon, it became necessary to bushwhack through poison oak for the last mile. You are now covered with poison oak and cuts and scrapes, luckily though you spotted the rattlesnake before he got you. Unfortunately no airplane was found.

## July

The team was called for a body recovery of a 2-week-old car crash victim. Only technical rescue basics certified (TRBC) members could attend the scene. You have to stay on top and help haul up the black body bag. To be helpful you place the body bag into the coroner's vehicle. Although, the bag is zipped up and you never see the body you get a whiff of the hot (it is July) decomposing body. You toss your cookies 30 seconds later. Wow, your first victim and you barf!

## August

Mutual Aid called the team to search for an 8 year old who wandered away from camp in Joshua Tree. You end up searching the whole day in 110-degree heat; mutilating your feet with a multitude of blisters and then to top it off you get heat exhaustion induced cramping. Eventually the child was found by a SAR team 15 miles away from where our team was assigned to search.

## October

A missing person on San Geronio Mountain caused the team to be activated. This is your first helicopter ride. You arrive at the CP 0600 and wait in eager anticipation; finally you board the helicopter at 1120, arriving on the summit at 1200. At 1215 the crushing headache hits and the nausea forms. By 1230 you puke up your lunch; you decide you need to read up on Acute Mountain Sickness. You wearily start your assignment but by 1400 you are running down a canyon trying to escape the afternoon lightening. This wasn't in the brochure!

## December

A storm developed with pounding rain, which resulted in the team being called to locate a missing hiker on Mount Baldy. You start hiking in the pounding rain getting drenched, as you climb higher, the rain turns to freezing rain and then into snow. At the ridgeline you get pelted with 60 MPH winds and begin to think that you over your head. You are beginning to get hypothermic because those spiffy new \$95 gloves aren't waterproof or warm and that so called breathable waterproof jacket is neither. You have more ice inside your jacket than on the outside. Your shivering gets worse and you decide it is better to retreat than to become another victim (GOOD IDEA). On the way out you slip down a fresh snow chute and rip your \$200 Gore-Tex rain pants to shreds and bang up your ankle and elbow.

## **Final result of a typical member's first year's missions:**

4 missed days of work (boss not real happy), torn uniform shirt (\$30 to replace), numerous cuts, poison ivy plus infection that follows (doctors visit for prescription \$??), nearly bitten by rattlesnake, puked twice, nightmares about dead bodies for two months, acute mountain sickness, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, destroyed rain-pants (\$200 to replace), hurt elbow and ankle, nearly killed by lightning.

### **The real question that individuals have to ask themselves is: Does the above sound worthwhile?**

If one enjoys doing what was just depicted, then you will probably find great satisfaction in doing SAR work. If on the other hand you are looking to be a "rescue hero", saving countless citizens from imminent death, while enduring no discomfort: you will end up being severely disappointed and frustrated.

If you are not dissuaded by now we will move on to the next part; what does it take to become a member of this team? The following two pages will give you an idea of what you need to do, how long you have to accomplish it and how much of your personal time will it take. Peruse it carefully; most individuals who drop out of SAR work do so because of two reasons, one, they thought they would be a hero and two because they cannot afford the **SERIOUS** time commitment it takes.

# Membership Application

## Step 1: Orientation

1. Attend scheduled team meetings for three consecutive months.
2. Be interviewed by the board at a board meeting, after which the board will review and vote to determine your acceptance for membership to this rescue team. The vote will be in private and you will be notified of the board's decision.

## Step 2: Application

1. Complete application package available from Volunteer Forces at Central station.
2. Obtain finger printing and ID photograph at Central station, leave the prints and photographs at Central station.
3. Return your completed application with photocopies of medical certificates (CPR and first aid) to this team's coordinator.
4. Include the completed employer letter of acknowledgment with your application.
5. Take a physical by a qualified physician and have the standardized form filled out.

## Step 3: Acceptance

1. Start to attend monthly general team meetings.
2. Be sworn in at a general meeting after the team has received your ID card.
3. Pay 1 year dues up front (\$48.00).
4. Purchase uniform and boots.
5. Be issued, sign for and abide by, Team and Departmental bylaws, policies and procedures.

## Step 4: SAR Trainee First Year

1. Attend all regularly scheduled team meetings<sup>1</sup>.
2. Attend all regularly scheduled team trainings<sup>1</sup>.
3. Attend driver awareness (EVOC).
4. Complete BSAR academy within the first twelve months and become a SAR Tech II if you are planning on going in to the field.
5. Attend Personal Vertical Skills course and get PVS checked off.
6. Begin purchasing the necessary equipment.
7. Complete 12 month trainee period.

## Step 5: SAR Trainee Second Year

1. Complete Technical Rescue Basics Course.
2. Complete Winter Alpine Certification.

## Step 6 SAR Team Member

1. Attain full Search and Rescue Member status (after completion of all required classes).

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<sup>1</sup> All team meetings and team trainings are mandatory unless a prior notification has been given to team coordinator. During the first year on the team any unexcused absence will result in your removal from the roster.

The following is a guide to the time that you may be putting into SAR to acquire a Full member status on this team

### YEAR ONE

Activity	Occurrence	First year		Hours	Annual Total
Team meetings	Monthly	12	X	4	48
Team Training's	Monthly	8	X	8	64
		2	X	16	32
		2	X	32	64
Equipment Upkeep	Weekly	26	X	1	26
Driver Awareness	Once	1	X	8	8
Basic First Aid	Every 2 yrs.	1	X	4	4
CPR	Every 2 yr.	1	X	4	4
BSAR Academy	Once	1	X	40	40
PVS Class	Once	1	X	20	20
Missions	Varies	6 for Example	X	8	48
Show and tells	Varies	2 for Example	X	8	16
Misc.	Varies	4 for Example	X	8	32
Annual Total					406 hours
Monthly Total					34 hours

### YEAR TWO

Activity	Occurrence	Second Year		Hours	Annual Total
Team meetings	Monthly	12	X	4	48
Team Training's	Monthly	8	X	8	64
		2	X	16	32
		2	X	32	64
Equipment Upkeep	Weekly	26	X	1	26
Alpine Class	Once	1	X	40	40
TRBC Class	Once	1	X	40	40
Missions	Varies	6 for Example	X	8	48
Show and tells	Varies	2 for Example	X	8	16
Misc.	Varies	4 for Example	X	8	32
Annual Total					410 hours
Monthly Total					34 hours

**Take a look at these figures again.**

**You are averaging about 8 hours a WEEK dedicated to SAR.**

**CAN YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR CAREER HANDLE THIS TIME COMMITMENT?**

## Financial Commitment

The next hurdle one must understand is the financial commitment. As a member you will be expected to acquire the majority of personal equipment used in the field over the first year. This equipment is expensive. There is a significant cost involved. The following is a very basic list of some items a member will need. The costs presented here are reasonable approximations.

Article	Approx. Cost
1 Year team dues for the first year only Second yr. maintain 6 month credit @ \$24:00	\$ 48
Team uniform	\$ 70
Full grain leather mountaineering boots	\$ 150
5 degree mummy sleeping bag	\$ 250
Sleeping pad	\$ 20
Gore-Tex bivy bag	\$ 160
Internal frame pack 4,800+ cu ins.	\$ 250
Polypropylene underwear top and bottom	\$ 80
Wool gloves/mittens	\$ 40
Appropriate socks	\$ 20
Rain Gear	\$ 400
Stove	\$ 50
First aid kit	\$ 30
SAR Ready pack contents not listed here	\$ 500
10 Essentials, Compass, Matches, Spare food Spare Clothing, Whistle, Sunglasses, Flashlight, Knife, Extra water, Toilet paper, Space blanket.	\$100
Approximate Total	\$2218.00

## Physical Condition

The last consideration is that of physical fitness. SAR work can be very strenuous. In addition to carrying your own personal equipment to function in the field (approx. 40lbs in the summer, up to 55lbs to 70 lbs+ in the winter) we will often carry additional medical equipment, trauma packs, litters, rescue equipment, ropes and hardware. If you are not physically fit your usefulness on the mountain will be greatly limited. The following is the team's physical fitness guideline and should be used as a baseline to judge you level of conditioning. Scores attained by some members of the team are noted in parentheses.

### AEROBIC:

Time for three-mile run	24 min. (18 min.)
Time up, middle fork Lytle Creek to third stream crossing, no pack	20 min. (12 min.)
Time up, middle fork Lytle Creek to third stream crossing , 50 lb pack	32 min. (24 min.)
Time up Vivian Creek Trail to San Gorgonio Summit	4.7 hr. (3.1 hr.)

### ANAEROBIC:

Sit-ups in two minutes	60 (80)
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### STRENGTH:

Pull-ups	10 (20)
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## **Congratulations**

If at this point you have finished reading the entire package and are still interested, SAR may be for you. Please don't think the portrayal above was hyperbole, it was not, and it is presented to you to as a bona fide example of what the regular SAR team member goes through.

## **So what's next?**

Attend the team's general meetings, which are held on the second Friday of every month at 1900. They are held at the "shack" located at 3250 Harrison Street in San Bernardino. A prospective member will be invited to an interview by the Board after demonstrating a sincere interest in joining the team.

## **I don't think this Search and Rescue stuff is what I want, what should I do?**

The fact that you are reading this handout says something about your very character. You feel a need to help.

The last thing we want to do is to stop you from wanting to help. As mentioned earlier this packet was prepared by us to help you. If you thought SAR was something else, and it's not how you want to help, there are many avenues open to you. The information that follows presents some alternative methods in which you can volunteer your time to assist the community.

- There are different volunteer teams within the Sheriff's department: Patrol Reserves, Posse, Dive team, Aviation, Search Dog Team, and Citizen Patrol. Contact Volunteer Services for further information.
- Local hospitals are often in need of volunteers to help them in different areas (refer to a telephone book).
- Have you considered volunteering time to youth programs? The Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts have outdoor activities etc.
- There are many other support groups and volunteer organizations listed in the telephone books.

**Whatever you decide we thank you for your interest in our team, and wish you well.**

**Prospective Member Check Off Sheet for a Board Interview  
San Bernardino Mountain Search and Rescue Team Unit #214**

The following Table should be completed by the Prospective member to obtain a Board interview unless specific arrangements have been made with the Board to override the following requirements.

MEETING #1	_____	BOARD MEMBER	
	DATE	NAME	SIGNATURE
MEETING #2	_____	BOARD MEMBER	
	DATE	NAME	SIGNATURE
MEETING #3	_____	BOARD MEMBER	
	DATE	NAME	SIGNATURE
CPR	_____	BOARD MEMBER	
	DATE	NAME	SIGNATURE
First Aid	_____	BOARD MEMBER	
	DATE	NAME	SIGNATURE

For Completion by a Board member.-----

Board Interview Scheduling – For Board member Completion. The signing Board member should evaluate the table above and check case A or B in order to schedule the interview. Please inform the Commander of the interview to allow time at the Board meeting.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. This prospective member has completed all requirements for a board interview.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B. This prospective member not has completed all requirements for a board interview but has presented sufficient interest in joining the team such that they deserve an interview. The reasons are listed below.

Case B only. Reason(s) for override:

My Board Interview is scheduled for		
Arranged on	_____	by _____
	DATE	BOARD MEMBER NAME
		SIGNATURE