

# Searcher Safety Procedures



Clark County Sheriff Core Comp Rev. # 2018.1  
Searcher Safety Procedures

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## Course Objectives

- Core Competency Objectives
  - Classroom and Field
- GAR (green-amber-red)
- Vehicle Operation and Traffic
- Weather
- Operational Area Hazards
- Fire Safety & Use of Pyrotechnic Devices
- Medical / First Aid Preparedness
- Water Safety
- Animals
- General Safety Items
- Individual Training

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# Core Competency Objectives

- This session will comply and meet Core Comp Criteria for: Searcher Safety - Classroom

Requirement	Classroom - Performance Criteria
Through written evaluation the applicant will demonstrate knowledge of searcher safety involved in Search and Rescue in the State of Washington.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Common weather hazards for the region that they typically operate.</b></li> <li>2. Situational awareness of a defined search area or areas. The searcher must be able to explain the GAR (green-amber-red) individual and team safety system and processes used to arrive at which level of searcher safety is being assigned to the assigned task and search area.</li> <li>3. Searching on private property, searcher safety level assignment (GAR) and awareness.</li> <li>4. Avalanche/Winter searcher safety level assignment (GAR) and awareness.</li> <li>5. Water safety and searcher safety level assignment (GAR) and awareness.</li> <li>6. Searcher fatigue</li> <li>7. Identify basic searcher safety priorities, contained in a briefing and the IAP.</li> </ol>

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# Core Competency Objectives

- This session will comply and meet Core Comp Criteria for: Searcher Safety – Field Performance Criteria

Requirement	Field - Performance Criteria
Through performance evaluation, the applicant will demonstrate the ability to:  <i>These Field Performance Criteria – Must be performed in a field setting – Proficiency Must Be Demonstrated)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the area for safety issues and concerns and the safety of a searcher, found subject, team members, or injured team member.</li> <li>2. Identify which level of searcher safety is being defined for the area of the search assignment (GAR). Identify what environmental or weather hazards are being considered in the searcher safety assessment and safety level assignment.</li> <li>3. Identify and assign a safety level (GAR) for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Single Searcher and a single subject (unhurt - moderate weather – moderate terrain)</li> <li>▪ Multiple searchers and no subject (moderate weather – wilderness terrain)</li> <li>▪ Multiple searchers and 2 subjects (injured – injuries severe – wilderness terrain – severe weather)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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## What is GAR?

- GAR is a Risk Management Training tool that exceeds the basic “be safe” or “in a safe manner” as normally presented in a SAR mission briefing.
- It determines effective and measurable safety objectives for the mission and calculates the risk using the GAR Model (Green-Amber-Red)
- The process utilizes principals adopted by the USCG, US Navy, National Park Service, USFS, and the Catastrophic Incident Search and Rescue Addendum to the National SAR Plan.
- Let’s look at the USGC Risk Management presentation and how they evaluate a mission.

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## Green-Amber-Red

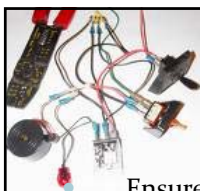
- The GAR model allows for time critical task assessment and generates communication concerning the mission risk.
- It will Identify the risk and leads to appropriate mitigation.
- GAR can be applied in a variety of situations.
  - Used to identify risk and is efficient enough to be utilized as a pre-mission risk assessment tool.
  - It is not intended to replace pre-mission planning, briefing and debriefing, or post action follow-up.
- A GAR risk assessment determines a GO/NO-GO decision tool on the task assigned and can be conducted individually by each team member before deployment.

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## Risk Calculation Worksheet

- Risk Control Categories – Hand out and discussion
  - Supervision
  - Planning
  - Team Selection
  - Team Fitness
  - Environment
  - Event or Evolution Complexity.
- Depending on the complexity of the mission the utilization of the GAR risk management tool will be an option available to the Incident Commander.

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## Vehicle Operation

Ensure vehicle is properly maintained (engine, drive train, brakes, lights, winch, etc).

- Ensure operator is capable of assignment, in good health, and alert.
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- Carry road safety equipment and tools; know how to use them.



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## Vehicle Operation

- Make your vehicle's presence known – use lights and horn as appropriate.
- Drive at a safe speed.
- Be especially careful in base camp, and give way to SAR animals.
- Don't be afraid to admit that you are too tired to drive safely.



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## Vehicle Operation

- Be prepared to walk; bring clothes and gear for the outdoors.
- Wear high visibility clothing when dismounted.
- Look and listen for subject while searching.



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## Vehicle Traffic

**Wear high visibility clothing (day and night)**  
**ANSI-II is minimum recommended**

ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 specifies three classes of garments based on work environment:



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## Vehicle Traffic

- Walk where you can see oncoming vehicles and they can see you (see and be seen).
- Assume vehicles will not / do not see you.



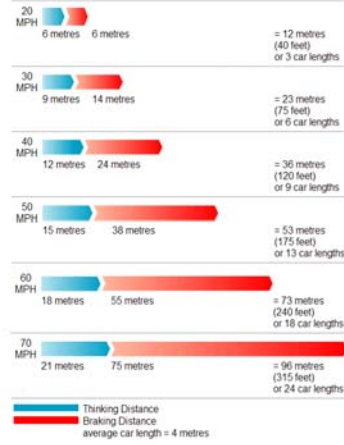
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# Vehicle Traffic

- Remain a safe distance from approaching vehicles and warn others.
- Cross the road only at places with adequate visibility for traffic.
- Obey traffic control directions and give way to emergency vehicles.



Typical Stopping Distances



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# Weather

- Know current conditions and the 24-hour forecast.
- Do not trust the forecast.
- Be prepared for the worst possible weather – bring appropriate clothing and gear.



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## Weather

- Account for altitude for your area of operation.
- Hydrate before a search (all seasons).



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## Operational Area Hazards

- Be aware of natural terrain features (swift water, beach, mudflats, bluffs, bogs, slides, "widow makers," snow hazards, etc.).



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## Operational Area Hazards

- Be aware of man made hazards (highways, condemned structures, dumps, drug sites, etc.).

**Total of All Meth Clandestine Laboratory Incidents**  
Including Labs, Dumpsites, Chem/Glass/Equipment  
Calendar Year 2004

AK	57
HI	7
GUAM	1
VT	1
DC	1
NH	2

Source: National Clandestine Laboratory Database  
Total: 15,994 / 49 States Reporting  
Date: 01/01/04 to 12/31/04

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## Operational Area Hazards

Be informed, avoid the hazards if possible, communicate the hazard to base, and use safety equipment as appropriate.

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## Fire Safety & Use of Pyrotechnic Devices

- Know the current fire hazard status and obey it.
- Be confident of your ability to extinguish a fire before starting one.
- Have a shovel on-hand.



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## Fire Safety & Use of Pyrotechnic Devices

- Check wind direction, speed, and downwind fuel if you're planning to build a fire.
- Make a fire pit, and beware of fuse trails to other fuel.
- Make a conscious decision before using pyros or starting a fire – think first.



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## Medical / First Aid Preparedness

- Carry first aid supplies
  - Enough for an individual and the team
  - Split larger items between team members if possible
- Maintain current First Aid/CPR/AED training.
- Perform periodic inspection of first aid kit supplies.
  - Discard expired and worn items
  - Don't carry items that you're not authorized to dispense or use



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## Water Safety

- **Recognize a water hazard when you see it; take precautions.**
- **Use safety equipment (Personal Floatation Devices, throw bags, belay leash).**
- **Maintain a safe operating distance from water hazards.**
- **Maintain visibility and accountability of team members.**



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## Water Safety

- Use downstream lookouts and audible signaling methods for emergencies.
- Use reach and throw methods for water rescues (do not enter the water if at all possible).
- **Swift water self rescue:**
  - Jettison gear as necessary
  - Swim on back, keep feet up and pointed downstream
  - Look for rescuers
  - Avoid strainers
  - Swim to a logical exit point
  - Remain near shore at exit point to link up with team members



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## Water Safety

- Check tide schedule for beach operations.
- Anticipate sneaker waves and remain clear of logs adrift.
- First aid skills: CPR, hypothermia, fall injuries.



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## Water Safety and Hazards

- **If you find yourself in a water hazard**
  - **Jettison gear as necessary**
  - **Roll on your back and keep feet up and pointed down stream**
  - **Look for rescuers and swim to a logical exit point.**
  - **Avoid strainers**



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## SAR Animals

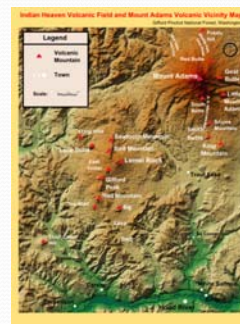
- **Animals are unpredictable.**
- **Do not touch or approach SAR animals without permission from handler.**
- **Horses have trail right of way – ground searchers stand off trail.**



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## General Safety Items

- Situational Awareness:
  - Know where you are and what is going on around you.
  - Check a map for recognizable boundaries in your area of operation.
  - Get a sense of bearing before you leave base camp.



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## General Safety Items

- Anticipate problems and have a contingency plan:
  - Lost communications
  - Medical emergencies
  - Lost team member
  - Hazardous weather
  - Operational area hazards
  - General egress instructions
  - Out of gas



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## General Safety Items

- **Equipment maintenance:**
  - Clean and inspect equipment regularly. Check for dirt, corrosion, expiration dates, and serviceability. Repair and replace as needed.
  - Replace batteries before/after searches and periodically.
  - Carry extra batteries!



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## General Safety Items

- Do not enter an area if the property is posted (No Trespassing) – Note it in report.
- Back away from and report: suspicious people, aggressive dogs, and other perceived unsafe situations.



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## Individual Training

- Be confident of your skills – be prepared to survive and save others.
- Know your limitations and don't be ashamed to admit them.
- Seek additional training if you're not confident with required skills or abilities.



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## Common Mission Safety Procedures



**THE END**



**Excellence in Mission Duty.  
PROFESSIONALISM  
Always!**



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