

**CUSTER COUNTY SEARCH AND RESCUE, INC.**  
**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**April 19, 2007**  
**Reviewed and revised March 2013**  
***Revised June 2014***  
***(2014 Changes Appear in Italics)***

**ARTICLE I**  
**General Policies**

All Custer County Search and Rescue (CCSAR) missions will be initiated by and under the control of the Custer County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff). Non-search activities may be initiated with the Board of Directors' (Board) approval.

All search participants must be members of CCSAR. If non-members are involved in a mission through circumstances not under the control of CCSAR, CCSAR will not be liable for their activities or safety.

**ARTICLE II**  
**Building Protocol**

**Section 1**

**Security**

Only Board members, and those individuals authorized by the Board, will have a key to the office and supply room.

A key log documenting the names of individuals that have an office key will be maintained in the files and on *the* CCSAR computer.

The security code for the north door will be changed at least annually to coincide with the calendar year, or any other time at the Board's discretion. The code will be distributed to members at the first general meeting of the *new year*, or as other circumstances warrant.

**Section 2**

**Rules**

Use, possession, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, *marijuana*, or alcohol is strictly prohibited at the CCSAR building.

Pets will be allowed in the garage area of the CCSAR building only. Mission

participants will be required to leave pets at home, or find another appropriate place to leave their pets while they are deployed. Registered search dogs required for the specific mission is an exception to this rule.

After each use of the building, tables and chairs will be stacked along the walls.

### **Section 3**

#### **Maintenance**

Maintenance of the building will be performed by CCSAR members who volunteer their time. The building will be cleaned to include, but not limited to: vacuuming, cleaning the bathrooms and kitchen, and removal of trash at least once each month. Other maintenance needs (e.g., replacing light bulbs/fixtures, broken or malfunctioning heat system, etc.) should be brought to the attention of the Administrator or other Board member.

### **ARTICLE III New Members**

When individuals indicate they are interested in joining CCSAR, they will be contacted by either the Captain or the *Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)* for a preliminary interview. If the interviewer is satisfied that the person meets the needs of the organization at that time, they will be instructed to visit the CCSAR website and review both the By-Laws and Policies and Procedures documents and submit a written application. Upon receiving the application, the *Chief Administrative Officer* will schedule an interview with the applicant *to include the Captain*. Following the interview, *and with the Board's approval*, the *CAO* will take the application to the Sheriff's Office for a background check. Upon a successful background investigation, the applicant becomes a probationary member.

The applicant will remain in a probationary status for a period of at least six months and until such time that they have participated in at least three missions. (Refer to By-Laws, Article II, Section 1 for further information regarding the probationary period.)

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Membership Ratings**

Active members may be rated as either Support, Base, or Field qualified. Members can attain more than one of these ratings.

#### Ratings Definitions and Qualifications

A. Support - Support members may assist in non-emergency activities: e.g., fund raisers, administrative work, or vehicle maintenance. They may also assist on missions in a limited capacity: e.g., call-outs, check-in sheets, equipment check-out, mission logistics, obtaining and preparing meals for field personnel, etc. They may also participate in training exercises at the discretion of the Captain or Co-captains.

Following are the basic qualifications for Support personnel:

1. Be physically and mentally fit for the position assigned.
2. Possess sufficient knowledge and ability to perform assigned duties.

B. Base - Base members may perform any duties at mission base or field base for which they qualify. This includes all Incident Command related duties, radio communications, media contact, etc.

Basic qualifications for Base personnel are:

1. Be physically and mentally fit for the position assigned.
2. Possess knowledge of the skill required of field search and rescue personnel but are not required to have the field-tested experience nor the physical capabilities of field-qualified personnel.
3. Possess knowledge in first aid, CPR, protection from the elements, and protection from exposure to blood-borne pathogens.
4. If duties require involvement in helicopter operations, possess demonstrated knowledge and proficiency in helicopter operations. Attendance at the annual Flight for Life Lift (FFL) Ticket training session is required. For those members who cannot attend the annual training, it will be their responsibility to attend a class elsewhere. Members who do not attend any annual FFL training will not be qualified to fly in a FFL helicopter.
5. The position of Incident Commander (IC) will be assigned by the Captain from among those members who qualify. It will be the duty of the IC to deploy team members based on their special talents, capabilities, and ratings in order to promote

team effectiveness and achieve a successful conclusion to the mission. Although the IC may have attained a Field-qualified rating, when assigned as IC, the member will remain at Search Base or Field Base to conduct his or her duties. He or she will not become involved personally in field assignments.

C. Field - Field members may perform duties away from mission base or field base. Their specific roles are further defined by advanced training they may have received (e.g., technical rock and rope rescue, Incident Command, Medical).

Basic qualifications for Field personnel are:

1. Be physically and mentally fit for the position assigned.
2. Possess knowledge of and demonstrated proficiency in survival techniques and outdoor living through mission participation and experience.
3. Possess knowledge in first aid, CPR, bone immobilization, protection from the elements, and protection from exposure to blood-borne pathogens.
4. Possess knowledge in wilderness navigation including map, compass, and GPS navigation methods.
5. Possess knowledge of search and rescue techniques.
6. Possess knowledge of crime scene recognition, evidence recognition and protection, and recognition and protection of human remains.
7. If duties require involvement in helicopter operations, possess demonstrated knowledge and proficiency in helicopter operations. Attendance at the annual Flight for Life Lift Ticket training session is required. For those members who cannot attend the annual training, it will be their responsibility to attend a class elsewhere. Members who do not attend any annual FFL training will not be qualified to fly in a FFL helicopter.
8. *Field personnel may be required to demonstrate any of these basic qualifications. Specific minimum physical standards may be imposed by the written standards of the Custer County Sheriff's Office, the County Human Resources Department, or the specific field team guidelines. The IC on any mission shall have the final prerogative for fielding members of CCSAR or any mutual aid responders.*

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Mission Planning and Implementation**

Under most circumstances upon notification of a mission from the Sheriff, the Captain will contact members of an Incident Action *Team (IAT)*. If deemed necessary, the *IAT* will meet at the CCSAR building to plan the search. The objective of the *IAT* is to improve the response and preparedness capabilities of search participants by providing a comprehensive search and rescue plan which can be implemented by the Captain, Co-captains, IC, and team leaders. The *IAT* will, in most cases, determine when the search will begin, depending on urgency, weather, time, information, etc.

During the planning process, when it has been determined that a call-out is required, the *IAT* will contact the call-out members who will in turn begin the process of calling CCSAR members and requesting their participation in the mission.

After a mission, a debriefing will be conducted at the discretion of the Captain, preferably within 72 hours of the completion of the mission. All mission participants are expected to attend the debriefing; other members are encouraged to do so.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Radio Procedure and Protocol**

Board members may have an ICOM radio at their home upon request. The Board may assign radios to CCSAR members for special purposes in order to improve mission readiness.

When a mission is initiated, the Captain, IC, or other designated person will assign radios to team leaders and team members depending on the number of personnel involved. Normally each team will be assigned one 800 radio and two ICOMs. In cases where splitting of teams may be anticipated, four ICOMs per team may be assigned.

All personnel are expected to know and use proper radio protocol including, but not limited to the following procedures:

1. Avoid unnecessary traffic (talking) and conserve battery life as much as possible. Each member who has been assigned a radio will take an extra battery.
2. Before transmitting, monitor the channel to be sure no one else is transmitting. If there is traffic on the channel, wait until the transmitting station clears before attempting your own transmission.
3. When transmitting, key the microphone one second before speaking. Speak in a normal speaking voice, holding the mic. about four inches from your mouth. On a windy day, try to orient your body such that the wind does not distort your transmission.

4. When calling another station, identify the other station first, then yourself.
5. Speak in clear, plain *language* without the use of codes. *Plain Language* is less likely to be misunderstood. Exceptions apply when transmitting the following information regarding subjects:  
  
Code 1: subject found in good condition; no medical attention is required.  
  
Code 2: subject found in fair condition; some medical attention required; possible evacuation needed.  
  
Code 3: unexpected emergency, assistance required; more information to follow.  
  
Code 4: subject found deceased; recovery information to be determined.  
  
*Code 5: Isolate radios and/or turn volume down. Prepare for next transmission. Typically used prior to a Code 4 transmission. Used to alert members that a potentially sensitive transmission will follow.*
6. No information regarding a deceased subject may be given to any person (media, other non-CCSAR members), including the fact that a deceased subject has been located. Only the County Coroner may release such information.
7. Keep messages brief. Lengthy messages should be broken down into short transmissions no longer than 30 seconds. Using the term “break” allows others to be aware there is more traffic to follow.
8. Use words like “copy that” to indicate you understand a message, and “clear” to indicate your transmission has ended. It is good practice to acknowledge directives by repeating them to the person delivering them to you (example: “I understand that you want me to ...”).

## **ARTICLE VII Vehicle Policy**

### **Section 1**

#### **Rules**

- A. A member must possess a valid driver’s license to operate a CCSAR vehicle.
- B. CCSAR vehicles will only be used for official purposes.
- C. New members will be checked out on vehicles before they are assigned to operate them. Knowledge of 4-wheel drive, manual transmissions and other systems peculiar to

specific vehicles must be learned.

D. Due to insurance concerns, nonmembers will not ride in CCSAR vehicles unless they are being rescued.

E. Members are not authorized to operate a personal or CCSAR vehicle in an emergency response mode. The emergency lighting on some vehicles is to be used for special situations (e.g., road closures or as a location signal for aircraft). CCSAR vehicles are not designed for, nor to be use in high speed response. When responding to a mission, CCSAR vehicles must be driven in accordance with posted traffic regulations. This requirement includes operation of private vehicles proceeding to the CCSAR building as a result of a mission call-out.

*F. Only active members may operate CCSAR vehicles. On missions, the vehicle driver will contact search base to communicate which vehicle, with X number of searchers, is leaving the SAR Barn and name the CCSAR member who is driving.*

## **Section 2**

### **Maintenance**

CCSAR vehicles will be maintained routinely by a member assigned that responsibility. That member will be authorized by the Board to spend up to \$100 on any one transaction to maintain a vehicle. Repairs expected to exceed the \$100 limit must receive an estimate from the repair shop. Depending upon the cost of the repairs, multiple estimates are encouraged to ensure a fair price. Vehicle maintenance records will be on file for each vehicle. All vehicles will be filled with fuel and checked for damage immediately following a mission, or no later than 24 hours thereafter.

A vehicle log will be located in each vehicle. Drivers, or their designee, will note the vehicle mileage before and after each use, the purpose for the use, and any problems during the trip. Any vehicle problems encountered during use must be relayed to the Captain, Board member, or the person responsible for vehicle upkeep.

When departing on a mission or training exercise, vehicle operators must notify the Sheriff (or alternately Search Base) of how many members are participating and when they return to base. Such notification will not be required for using a CCSAR vehicle for attending meetings (e.g., RETAC).

## **ARTICLE VII ATV Policy**

### **Section 1**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the ATV team is to assist in various aspects of search and rescue in an appropriate and safe manner. Following are examples of appropriate ATV response:

- A. Assist with the search and rescue of lost individuals when the use of an ATV will enhance mission accomplishment.
- B. Assist in body recovery.
- C. Transport *CCSAR* personnel and equipment as needed.

### **Section 2**

#### **Safety**

All members of the *CCSAR* ATV team must:

- A. Be proficient in the operation of ATVs.
- B. Attend training sessions when scheduled.
- C. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment to include a helmet, proper clothing and foot wear, eye protection, and gloves.
- D. Have knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of the ATV.
- E. Know their own limitations.
- F. Never drive too fast for conditions. There will rarely, if ever, be a need to operate an ATV at a high rate of speed.
- G. Never embark on a mission alone. ATV team members will be deployed on a “buddy” system; two ATV operators will work together as much as possible.
- H. Never, at any time, perform any duty that in their opinion is unsafe to them or another individual. If an operator feels uncomfortable performing an assigned duty, he or she will state such to the team leader and be excused from the assignment with no



negative repercussions.

### **Section 3**

#### **Environment**

ATV operators are expected to respect and protect the environment in which they operate. Operators will adhere to the following:

- A. Never ride off marked paths or trails.
- B. Never let the ATV idle for more than one minute. Shut the ATV down during prolonged rests or down time.
- C. Avoid disturbing wildlife. The mere presence of the ATV will disturb wildlife to some extent, but operators must never chase wildlife and should find an alternate route when wildlife is present, if possible.
- D. Never take a shortcut through unspoiled areas.
- E. Never trespass on private property. Seek permission to cross private property if necessary. Without such permission, use an alternate route.
- F. Know and abide by the Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment 1) between the United States Forest Service and the CCSAR.

### **Section 4**

#### **Equipment**

ATV operators are expected to know what equipment to bring for specific missions. The following is a list of equipment for a typical response:

- A. ATV
- B. Pack with personal equipment.
- C. Fuel
- D. Tools appropriate for ATV repair
- E. Tow line
- F. Radio (if assigned)

## **Section 5**

### **Leadership**

ATV team members must also be members of CCSAR, and will answer to the usual chain of command (i.e., Captain or Co-captain, IC, or team leader).

## **Section 6**

### **Rules**

If at any time an ATV team member does not abide by the rules as set forth in these Policies and Procedures, he or she will appear before the Board to answer to their actions. If the Board determines that the individual acted out of neglect or in any way compromised safety, the environment or mission accomplishment, that individual may be dismissed from the organization.

## **ARTICLE IX Conflict of Interest Policy**

In the event that any member of CCSAR will have any direct or indirect interest in, or relationship with, any individual or organization which proposes to enter into any transaction with CCSAR, including but not limited to transactions involving:

- A. The sale, purchase, lease or rental of any property or other asset;
- B. Employment, or rendition of services, personal or otherwise;
- C. The award of any grant, contract, or subcontract;
- D. The investment or deposit of any funds of CCSAR;

such person will give notice of such interest or relationship to the Board and will thereafter refrain from discussing or voting on the particular transaction in which he or she has an interest, or otherwise attempting to exert any influence on CCSAR or its components to affect a decision to participate or not participate in such transaction. If any member fails to notify the Board of a conflict of interest and it later becomes known by the Board, that member may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board, including dismissal from the organization.

From time to time, items are donated to CCSAR that cannot be used directly by the organization, and therefore are sold to raise operating funds. To prevent the appearance of a conflict of interest, CCSAR members are allowed to purchase such items from the organization provided two criteria are met: 1) the item is advertised for

sale to the public and the CCSAR member's bid for the item is considered along with those from the general public, or 2) the CCSAR member pays fair market value for the item, determined by an independent third party in writing.

### **ARTICLE IX Dismissal for Cause**

If any member of the organization should fail to perform his or her duties as directed, or creates or causes any conflict in any manner whatsoever on a search or during the general assembly of the unit, or individually which would reflect or cause an undesirable reflection upon the organization and/or its members, that member can or may be dismissed from the organization by action of the Board. Prior to any such dismissal the member will have the opportunity to meet with the Board and present a defense on their own behalf.

### **ARTICLE X General Exceptions**

When deemed necessary and appropriate, the Board or other appropriate officer (Captain, Co-captain, IC, team leader) may suspend specific policy or procedure for purposes of team or individual safety or mission accomplishment. Whoever takes such action must be prepared to defend his or her actions before the Board.

### **ARTICLE XI Personal Property Disclaimer**

*CCSAR accepts no responsibility for damage to, or loss of, personal equipment in the performance of a mission or training exercise.*

### **ARTICLE XII Amendments**

These Policies and Procedures may be amended by a majority vote of the Board, and approval by the Custer County Sheriff's Office.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States Forest Service and the Custer County Sheriff's Office regarding policies for search and rescue operations within designated Wilderness.

*Attachment 2: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County of Custer, a political subdivision, and CCSAR, dated January 1, 2014.*

**AMMENDMENT 1**  
**Revised March 2013**

**PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Attendance is expected at all meetings, training sessions, missions, and other SAR activities such as parades, fund raising, etc. Participation in a minimum of 75% of training sessions, 50% of those missions that a member is called on, and 50% of routine and scheduled community or work projects is necessary to maintain membership in good standing. If an individual fails to meet these conditions, the Board will review the member's record and will have the option of dismissing the member from Custer County Search and Rescue.