

**California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
Law Enforcement Division
Search and Rescue - Ground Searcher Guidelines**

Summary

The endeavor of Search and Rescue necessitates response into difficult and unpredictable circumstances in widely varied and many times hazardous terrain. These guidelines are intended to assist Search and Rescue Coordinators in identifying appropriate mutual aid emergency resource requests to effect rescues in the most expeditious manner possible while considering known and unknown hazards.

A Ground Searcher is a SAR member capable of conducting a ground search for people, clues and evidence in various terrain and weather conditions. There are basic skills that all Search and Rescue Team members 'should' have before going into the field during a search.

The following typings are designed to match the conditions, environment and possible length of deployment (normal operational periods should be 12 hours) as determined by the mutual aid requestor and the minimum equipment, experience and skill level the responding agency should consider sending.

The goal of typing is to be able to identify the largest number of ground searchers while minimizing the risk of placing an unsuitable searcher in an unsafe situation. These are only minimum guidelines and circumstances that are unique to a particular search and rescue mission may dictate that additional or higher qualifications may be necessary for the safety of the searcher and for successful search and rescue operations. The responding agencies' liaison or leader shall have final acceptance of any assignments their personnel are asked to perform.

The following is a general description of four different environment 'types' (conditions, environment and possible length of deployment) and suggested minimum abilities for searchers operating within each area type.

All searchers should be Disaster Service Worker members or equivalent by responding agency.

Search Environment Type			
Type 1 Extreme / Complex Terrain Environments	Type 2 Rugged Terrain Environments	Type 3 Moderate / Gentle Terrain Environments	Type 4 Urban Environments
Extreme Conditions (including but not limited to) Altitude (generally 7000+) or Snow, Ice, Desert, Heat, Heavy Ground Cover Steep difficult terrain.	Rugged Conditions, Altitude generally under 7000', Heat, Cold concerns, Moderate to Heavy Ground Cover.	Gently Rolling Terrain, Open Spaces, Maintained Trailheads, Agricultural Areas.	High Traffic, Urban Office Complexes, Man-Made Surfaces, Public Interaction and Park Trails.

Recommended Capabilities and Skills				
	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4
Can be deployed to Environment Type	1/2/3/4	2/3/4	3/4	3/4
Operational periods w/o external support	Capable of multiple operational periods, up to 72 hours deployments.	Capable of field assignments up to one day. With the possibility of an overnight in the field.	One operational Period	One Operational Period with external support
Medical Skills	Current First Aid/CPR	Current First Aid/CPR	Current First Aid/CPR	Current First Aid/CPR
Radio Communications	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.	Member should be familiar with basic radio communication skills. This should include: understanding the use of Mutual Aid Radio Frequencies and basic radio etiquette.
Knowledge of Basic SEMS/ICS	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System/ICS."	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System/ICS."	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System ICS."	Member should be familiar with the "Standardized Emergency Management System/ ICS."
Helicopter Safety	Basic Helicopter Safety Knowledge and familiarity with Loading/ Unloading - Both Hot and Cold- Help establish landing site	Basic Helicopter Safety Knowledge and familiarity with Loading/ Unloading - Both Hot and Cold- Help establish landing site	Basic Helicopter Safety - Help establish landing site	Basic Helicopter Safety - Help establish landing site
Field Interview Skills Information Handling	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.	Member should be familiar with the handling of sensitive information and basic interview skills when dealing with witnesses and the public.
Navigation	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and map/compass; route-finding.	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and map/compass; route-finding.	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and/or map/compass; route-finding.	Determine and communicate position; navigate point-to-point with GPS and/or map/compass and/or route finding.
Tracking Skills	Clue and track aware.	Clue and track aware.	Clue and track aware.	Clue and track aware.
Fitness	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.	Fitness appropriate for conditions, terrain and missions.
Rope Skills	Basic Low Angle Skills; Assist with packaging and litter work. Basic raising and lowering skills.	Basic Low Angle Skills; Assist with packaging and litter work.	Basic knots. Assist with packaging and litter work.	Assist with packaging and litter work.
Crime Scene Protection	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene protection, chain of evidence and documentation.	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene protection, chain of evidence and documentation.	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene Protection, chain of evidence and documentation.	Member should be familiar with basic crime scene protection, chain of evidence and documentation.