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<th>Rev</th>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Initial release of revised document</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Initial release of POG on Recovery of Human Remains and handout from OSHA.</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Initial release of POG on Fit for Service</td>
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<td>Initial release of POG on First Aid</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>Update and changes to Helicopter External Transport System (HETS) Operations. POG is now entitled Class D Fixed Line (CDFL).</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
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<td>3.01</td>
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<td>Rope Rescue</td>
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<td>Swiftwater Rescue</td>
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<td>Flat Ice Rescue</td>
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<td>Underwater Recovery/Rescue</td>
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<td>Mountain Rescue</td>
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<td>Cave Rescue</td>
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<td>Avalanche Response</td>
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<td>Helicopter Class ‘D’ Fixed Line, Human External Cargo (CDFL)</td>
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<td>Hover Exit/Entry Operations</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
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<td>Civil Emergency</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
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<td>3.12</td>
<td>Canine Search and Rescue</td>
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<td>Mounted Search and Rescue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Recovery of Human Remains</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
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</table>
PURPOSE: To establish procedures for managing and reporting exposure of all SAR volunteers to diseases including airborne, blood borne, blood or body fluids, non-impact skin – injection, inhalation, absorption, ingestion and exposure.

GUIDELINE: SAR Volunteers will exercise caution and utilize proper protective equipment where exposure to diseases is a concern. All exposures will be documented and reported to the SAR leader and or manager, documented in the SAR group first aid record and reported to PEP.

PROCEDURE: Proper protective equipment, including the wearing of latex gloves and face/nose/eye/mouth protection, will be utilized at all incidents where exposure is possible.

EMBC will provide Hepatitis B shots to volunteers who face the risk of exposure to body fluids during SAR operations.

If exposure occurs, the volunteer will follow proper first aid treatment including identifying the source, if possible, and recording all pertinent data as it relates to the incident.

Notify the SAR leader immediately of the incident, who will report the incident to EMBC.

The First Aid Reporting Form will be completed by the SAR leader and EMBC will complete the Employer Report before forwarding to WorkSafe BC.

Any SAR Volunteer who is exposed to communicable diseases will be offered testing and treatment by a responsible medical authority.

REFERENCE: Provincial Emergency Program Policy #00.04
## Common Communicable Diseases and Their Precautions

The following list is provided by the JIBC Paramedic Academy for the information of SAR volunteers. Note that use of universal precautions will protect responders from all those listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>When Contagious</th>
<th>Precautions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A (infectious)</td>
<td>From 1 week before onset of jaundice to 1 week after onset</td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after patient contact.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wear personal protective equipment for direct contact with excreta and contaminated articles.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sanitary disposal of feces and urine by ambulance personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B and C (blood)</td>
<td>As long as carrier state exists</td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after patient contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wear personal protective equipment when handling blood, body fluids, or contaminated equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after patient contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoid direct contact of skin and mucous membranes with blood, body fluids, secretions, and secretions of patients likely to have AIDS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wear personal protective equipment when handling blood, body fluids, or contaminated equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickenpox</td>
<td>Highly contagious 2 days before lesions (pox) appear and while they are present</td>
<td>• Apply a mask to patient’s face and cover the body with a sheet.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after patient contact.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ambulance personnel will double-bag articles soiled by discharges from the nose and throat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis (TB)</td>
<td>Highly contagious until 2 weeks after start of effective treatment</td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after contact.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wear personal protective equipment including a specialized mask.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Careful disposal of sputum and soiled articles (double-bag) by ambulance personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herpes simplex 1 (cold sores)</td>
<td>When the cold sore is first visible until it crusts over and disappears</td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after patient contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pertussis (whooping cough)</td>
<td>From onset until 5-7 days after starting antibiotics</td>
<td>• Wear personal protective equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meningitis</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after patient contact.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wear personal protective equipment, including a mask, before going near patient.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Careful disposal of soiled articles and discharge from nose and throat by ambulance personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles</td>
<td>10 days before rash and 7 after rash appears</td>
<td>• Ambulance personnel will double-bag articles soiled by secretions of nose and throat.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Patient should wear mask and be covered with a sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
<td>18 days before swelling until swelling subsides</td>
<td>• Good handwashing before and after patient contact.</td>
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PURPOSE: To ensure that all PEP SAR volunteers members are provided with Critical Incident Stress Management services when required.

GUIDELINE: The SAR group will make arrangements to ensure Critical Incident Stress assistance and intervention is provided as necessary.

PROCEDURE: The SAR leader and or manager shall ensure that defusing and/or debriefing sessions are held following any significant or critical incident.

When required, the SAR leader and or manager shall arrange for follow-up assistance for any SAR volunteer requesting further assistance.

Any incident encountered by a SAR volunteer that causes them to experience a distressing reaction may be considered for Critical Incident Stress intervention.

The SAR leader and or manager will make every effort to minimize exposure to critical incidents without interfering with any on-going operation.

All SAR leaders and or managers and volunteers will be alert for acute stress reactions in themselves and their team mates. The SAR leader will provide support, encouragement and consultation and will where necessary; implement the appropriate steps at the scene to assist the SAR volunteers in dealing with stress reactions.
INTERVENTION PROCESS:

Upon recognition of the need, or upon request by a SAR volunteer at the scene, the SAR leader and or manager will initiate the following steps in the intervention process:

**Defusing**: May be asked for by any SAR Volunteer participating in an incident and will take place as soon as possible after return to the unit’s headquarters. Any obvious signs of distress and/or depression by a road rescue member present will be noted by the person facilitating the defusing session and a recommendation will be made that full debriefing session take place. Only SAR volunteers involved in the incident will participate in the defusing. Arrangements will be made to hold a formal debriefing, if necessary. A defusing is not a critique of departmental operations at the incident, nor will a person’s performance be discussed.

**Debriefing**: If necessary, will be arranged by the SAR leader and or manager and will be held as soon as possible after the incident. Debriefings will be only for those members involved in the incident. Assistance through the Provincial Emergency Program can be requested.

**Follow-up Assistance**: Will be provided by the BCSARA CISM team and or EMBC as necessary. Where the SAR leader and or manager is aware of an individual problem or receives a request from a SAR volunteer, follow-up assistance or referral through Emergency Management BC shall be arranged.

**TRAINING**: Critical Incident Stress general awareness and management training should be provided to all SAR volunteers.

**REFERENCE**: BCSARA Critical Incident Stress Management Program
PURPOSE: To provide for the use of protective clothing and equipment by SAR volunteers.

GUIDELINE: Appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment will be worn by all SAR volunteers during any exercise, training or operational task.

Personal protective clothing and equipment includes:

- clothing to protect from the weather and environment;
- limb and body protection worn during use of chainsaws or other equipment;
- helmets, face/eye protection, footwear;
- high visibility/distinguishing apparel;
- respiratory protection, and;
- Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs).

For SAR operations on or near a roadway SAR volunteers are to wear hi-visibility apparel, such as a hi-visibility vest worn over a team jacket.

For SAR operations away from roadways SAR volunteers are to wear apparel which is readily identifiable. This may be team jackets, vests (high-visibility or otherwise), and/or helmets or caps; that contrasts with the environment.

PROCEDURE: The SAR Leader will be responsible to ensure that SAR volunteers follow Operational Guidelines, training materials and policies regarding the use of personal protective clothing and equipment.

Required personal protective clothing and equipment will be largely dependent on the weather conditions, the type of operational task, terrain and any specialty rescue procedures that are required to be undertaken by the SAR volunteer.
All SAR volunteers are responsible for their safety and will utilize proper protective equipment as prescribed within these guidelines and training materials.

All personal protective equipment will be approved by the SAR group. No alterations to any equipment shall be done except where pre-approved by the manufacturer.

Under no circumstance is any aspect of personal safety to be sacrificed in order to increase the speed of the emergency operations.

Damage to personal protective equipment will immediately be reported to the SAR leader and or manager, who will have the article inspected for replacement or repair as necessary.

Personal protective equipment will be inspected regularly for defects; a record is to be maintained of these inspections and the results.

Personal protective equipment will be washed regularly as per the manufacturer’s guidelines to remove any build up of contaminated materials.

SAR volunteers who respond to any exercise, training or operational task without appropriate personal protective equipment will be limited to duties they have suitable protective gear for, or not allowed to take part in the exercise, training or operational task, at the determination of the SAR leader.

REFERENCES: Provincial Emergency Program Policy Repair or Replacement of Damaged Equipment # 00.02
PURPOSE: To provide guidance on the role of Safety Officers in ensuring the health and safety of all SAR volunteers during training, practice and response.

GUIDELINE: SAR Leaders are responsible for the safety of SAR volunteers participating in training, practice or response.

Part of the SAR leaders role is to act as the Safety Officer unless that position is filled by another individual.

PROCEDURE: The role of a Safety Officer is to monitor safety conditions and develop measures for ensuring the safety of all assigned SAR volunteers by:

- Conducting a risk assessment before a operation begins and on an ongoing basis
- Providing advice to SAR Leaders on safety issues, provide safety related information during briefings
- Monitoring safety and potential risks, and ensure unsafe practices are corrected or the operation halted if a threat of injury exists
- Recording any safety concerns for discussion at debriefings and safety meetings. Serious concerns are also to be forwarded to the appropriate EMBC Regional Office and SAR Specialist.

SAR Volunteers or other personnel fulfilling the function of Safety Officer will be briefed on the roles and responsibilities of the position, and provided with any required equipment such as emergency communications.

REFERENCE: BCERMS Standards – ICS 100
PURPOSE: To establish a procedure to ensure that all SAR volunteers are promptly alerted when an evacuation is required during training, practice or response.

GUIDELINE: When the SAR Leaders determines that a risk within an area may soon deteriorate to the point where SAR volunteers may be in imminent danger, an emergency evacuation signal will be issued.

PROCEDURE: When the SAR Leaders or Safety Officer determines it is necessary for the crew to evacuate an area the following procedure will be followed:

The SAR Leaders or Safety Officer will broadcast a priority message over the radio that all personnel are to evacuate the area immediately, and will sound a pre-established audible signal (e.g., sounding of air horns continuously).

Upon evacuation all SAR volunteers are to report to the SAR Leaders or designated area.

When evacuation is complete the SAR Leaders will conduct a roll call of all SAR volunteers involved at the emergency scene.

REFERENCES Emergency Communications Operational Guideline
PURPOSE: To ensure SAR volunteers safety by providing guidance on assessing risk during training, practice and response.

GUIDELINE: The goals of the British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) are to be considered at all times. These are;

- Provide for the health and safety of all responders
- Save lives
- Reduce suffering
- Protect public health
- Protect government infrastructure
- Protect property
- Protect the environment
- Reduce economic and social losses

The safety of SAR volunteers is the highest priority.

PROCEDURE: No risk to the safety of SAR volunteers is acceptable when there is no possibility of saving lives.

Should a risk assessment determine that SAR Volunteers would be at risk that cannot be reduced to what is considered normal for the type of operation then any response activity is to be halted until the risk is within normal parameters.
Risk assessment includes surveying the area of operation for potential dangers, such as:

- tree snags, rock falls, other risk from falling objects
- cervices, caves or cliffs,
- avalanche terrain/conditions,
- bears, cougars, and other animal threats,
- chemicals or other hazmat concerns,
- River banks, swiftwater

SAR Leader/Safety Officers may conduct the risk assessment or if required engage Subject Matter Experts such as Avalanche Technicians, Conservation Officers, Swift Water Rescue Technicians.

SAR Volunteers are to conduct ongoing risk assessments when moving through terrain or other environments, and undue risks are to be reported to the SAR Leader/Safety Officer and the SAR Volunteer is to leave the area.
PURPOSE: To provide traffic control to ensure safety for all SAR volunteers, other emergency responders, patients and members of the general public when the operational task involves activities in a traffic area.

GUIDELINE: Traffic control is not a SAR function. However it is recognized that in some responses, such as assistance to local governments and Police during evacuations or a rope rescue beside a roadway, SAR Volunteers may need to be involved in traffic control.

The SAR Leaders will ensure that effective traffic control is established at all emergency incidents where SAR Volunteers are working close to an active roadway.

PROCEDURE: Where traffic control is required to provide a safe working area the SAR Leaders will request the Tasking Agency to provide or arrange for the provision. Should the Tasking Agency indicate they are not able to provide traffic control, the PEP Regional Office should be contacted through the ECC for assistance.

SAR volunteers may provide temporary traffic control to ensure SAR volunteers safety. Only SAR volunteers trained in emergency scene traffic control will provide traffic control.

During the course of an incident, the SAR Leaders will ensure a safe working area for SAR volunteers.

Roles and responsibilities for traffic control during evacuations are outlined in the Civil Emergency OG and the RCMP Evacuations Protocols.

REFERENCE: Civil Emergency OG

RCMP Evacuations Protocols
PURPOSE: To support SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice by ensuring access to communications in the event of injury or threat to their safety.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the use of, and provided with, a means of communicating with incident command or other appropriate source of assistance during training, response or practice.

PROCEDURE: Training in the use of, and legal requirements of, communication equipment will be provided before an SAR Volunteer participates in any activity which may require use.

Training will include:

- proper procedures for use, orientation of antennas/equipment,
- battery replacement,
- frequency/channel selection,
- emergency communication protocols.

Before placing into use communication equipment is to be checked for battery level. Spare batteries should be provided if anticipated usage may exceed battery life.

Communication equipment must be suitable for the type of deployment, terrain/environment, compatible with other equipment, and provide adequate range.
Communication checks (transmits and receive) will be conducted before communication equipment is placed in use and on a pre-established schedule during deployment. Checks does not apply to emergency beacons, which should not be activated unless with test equipment, or in an emergency.

Care should be taken to ensure the transmit function of radio equipment is not inadvertently activated, eg a push to talk microphone that catches on equipment. This may cause an emergency frequency to be rendered unusable.

Prevent “radio feedback” when transmitting by maintaining adequate distance between radio and pager or other equipment.

If a serious injury or threat to safety requires immediate assistance priority access to air, marine, or land VHF radio channels can be gained by calling **Mayday, Mayday, Mayday** followed by assigned call sign and nature of the emergency.

If an injury or threat to safety requires assistance, but not on an immediate basis, priority access to air, marine, or land VHF radio channels can be gained by calling **Pan Pan, Pan Pan, Pan Pan**, followed by assigned call sign and nature of emergency.

The transmission of the term **No Duff** during an exercise indicates that the information is real life and not part of the exercise.

All communications will be brief, factual and without personal content.

**REFERENCE:**

- Provincial Emergency Program Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Training Manual
- Communication equipment operational manuals
- Industry Canada Spectrum Management and Telecommunications regulations
PURPOSE: To ensure SAR volunteers do not engage in SAR business while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs

GUIDELINE: SAR volunteers will not engage in any Provincial Emergency Program business while under the influence of alcohol or illegal or non-prescribed drugs, or prescription medication that has been identified to impair or affect an individual’s ability to drive a vehicle or operate machinery or equipment.

PROCEDURE: The SAR leader and or manager will immediately remove a SAR volunteer if they arrive at an exercise, training or operational task while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Attending any exercise, training or operational task under the influence of alcohol or drugs is very serious and dangerous situation and will result in disciplinary action being taken.

REFERENCE: Criminal Code of Canada

BC Motor Vehicle Act
PURPOSE: To establish training standards for SAR volunteers to enable them to perform their duties safely and effectively.

GUIDELINE: The SAR group will ensure all SAR volunteers are trained and practice skills on a regular basis. Training will be to standards that reflect best common practices and as approved by Emergency Management BC.

PROCEDURE: The SAR group will be responsible for:

- Determining training needs;
- Maintaining training records for all members, and providing access to EMBC staff if requested;
- Evaluating continuity of training;
- Scheduling and coordinating special training sessions;
- Conducting training as required, and;
- Instructing according to training schedule and utilizing applicable standards, manuals and Operational Guidelines, as well as unit and other aids.

All SAR volunteers will participate in training activities and maintain personal and professional competence relative to the skill and knowledge levels required of their respective position within the SAR group

SAR volunteers will maintain a record of their SAR training and operational experience, and provide the record to SAR leaders and EMBC staff if requested.

Emergency Management BC will support SAR volunteer training through courses provided through the Justice Institute of B.C. (JIBC) and other sources, and approve content of courses not provided.

REFERENCE: JIBC Emergency Management Division, Search and Rescue
PURPOSE: To ensure SAR volunteers understand requirements for maintaining First Aid training, coverage for applying such training, and what levels of first aid are to be available in case of injury to a volunteer.

GUIDELINE: Individual volunteer requirements:

All SAR volunteers are to obtain an minimum of an 7 hour First Aid course certification prior to completion of the Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Course, and maintain\(^1\) at least that level of certification while a registered SAR volunteer.

Should a SAR volunteer be unable to complete a First Aid course due to physical limitations the volunteer may be utilized in a role within the area of the Incident Command Post (ICP) if approved by their SAR group.

First Aid training will include, as a minimum, demonstration of the following competencies;

- identification and performing appropriate interventions for minor soft tissue injuries, including the need for medical referral, providing follow-up care and be able to accurately complete the required First Aid Record (should the course not include record completion the SAR group will ensure a volunteer with that training is available should injury occur).
- Identification and management of respiratory and circulatory critical interventions for responsive and unresponsive patients.
- Identification and management of bleeding critical interventions and describe how to identify and manage various medical emergencies.

PROCEDURE:

It is recommended that teams (with 4 or more members) assigned outside the ICP area include a person with a minimum of 16 hours of First Aid training that includes the above requirements and the following competencies:

- Oxygen administration
- Spinal immobilization and patient transfer and transport
- Common environmental emergencies
- Common heat and cold related emergencies

\(^1\) Renewed before expiry, or scheduled to renew within 6 months of expiry
All SAR volunteers will carry a personal first-aid kit (suggested list attached as Appendix A) when away from the ICP when on training or response. Teams assigned outside the ICP will carry a field kit (suggested list attached as Appendix B).

**Additional requirements during responses:**

When the number of responders involved in activities outside the ICP exceeds 25, or the response includes specialized rescue (mountain, swiftwater, rope, avalanche), and travel time by vehicle (or by helicopter if a suitable resource is involved in the response) to a Hospital or Primary Health Care Centre exceeds 20 minutes a person with a minimum of 70 hour First Aid (list of minimum course competencies attached as Appendix C) training or above will be assigned as First Aid Attendant.

It is recognized that SAR responses may escalate quickly, a First Aid Attendant should be in place at the earliest time possible or a plan developed to have one in place by the next operational period.

During a large response with responders in teams in various locations the First Aid Attendant will form part of a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), along with other specialized rescue trained personnel if likely required, within a Safety Plan that includes transportation (rotary wing if weather permits) to access, stabilize, and transport a injured responder or subject. Members of a RIT may be assigned other roles within the ICP area.

The First Aid Attendant may be assigned other duties, as long as medical aid is designed as their primary duty. An advanced medical kit, that includes equipment as outlined in Appendix D, will be available at the ICP when a First Aid Attendant is required.

**Provision of First Aid to injured subjects**

SAR volunteers are to consider their, and other responders, safety when providing first aid to subjects located during a response. A risk assessment of the location is important, focus on the subject can result in injury to responders from missed hazards. Exposure to disease can occur when treating unrelated injuries, preventative measures should be taken.
SAR volunteers are to only provide first aid to the level they are certified in, this is for theirs and the subject’s safety as well to stay within policies and limitations for liability coverage.

At the first opportunity the injured subject is to be transferred to ambulance personnel.

REFERENCES:  Provincial Operating Guideline #1.01 Exposure to Disease  Provincial Operating Guideline #1.06 Risk Assessment  EMBC policy 2.17 titled ‘Search and Rescue’  Public Safety Lifeline Volunteers Injury, Disability, accidental Death, Liability and General Insurance Coverage.
Appendix A

Personal 1st Aid Kit Contents:
- Disposable Nitrile Gloves, appropriate size (2)
- Pocket mask (1)
- Ear plugs disposable (1pr)
- 4x4 gauze pad (2)
- 3” Gauze Roll (1)
- 2” Tensor Bandage (2)
- Band aids, assorted (8)
- Knuckle bandages (2)
- Mole Skin (1 sheet)
- Alcohol swabs (10)
- Triangular Bandage (2)
- 1” Tape (1)
- Emergency Blanket (1)
- EMT Shears (1)
- Tweezers (1)
- Sam Splint (1)
- ABD Pad (1)

Please Note:
Wilderness & Remote First Aid Field Guide should be part of your kit.

SAR volunteers should carry at least 48 hour supply of any required personal medicines, as well carrying the following drugs (or similar) should be considered for personal use with instructions for use and awareness of any contrary indications;

Recommended Drug List
- ASA – 325 mg – Mild Analgesic
- Antibiotic Cream – Topical Antibiotic
- Anti Histamine – Allergy Relief
- Benadryl – Allergic Reaction
- Ibuprofen – Anti Inflammatory
- Imodium – Gastro Intestinal
- Dextrose Tabs – Hypoglycaemia
- Electrolyte Tabs – Dehydration
Appendix B

Advanced 1st Aid Kit Contents:
- Disposable Medical Gloves (XL) (6)
- CPR Shield (1)
- Ear plugs disposable (1pr)
- Cotton Tip Applicators (2)
- Triangular bandages (2)
- 4x4 gauze pad (4)
- 3” Gauze Roll (1)
- 2” Tensor Bandage (1)
- ABD pad 8x10 (2)
- Band aids (8)
- Knuckle bandages (2)
- Mole Skin (1 sheet)
- Pressure Bandage (1)
- Steri Strips (1)
- Alcohol swabs (10)
- Duct tape (1)
- 1” White medical Tape (1)
- Emergency Blanket (1)
- Large garbage bag (1)
- EMT Shears (1)
- Tweezers (1)
- Safety Pins (4)
- 20cc irrigation syringe (1)
- Disposable razor (1)
- Rite in Rain Book (1)
- Carpenters Pencil (1)
- 1st aid guide (1)
- Sam Splint (1)

Please Note:
A Wilderness & Remote First Aid Field Guide should included in kit.
Appendix C

Minimum competencies for Advanced First Aid training with minimum of 70hrs of instruction:

- Ability to perform the Primary Assessment of a patient upon arrival at medical incident.
- Identify and manage critical interventions of the Airway, Respiration and Circulation systems as well as Spinal precautions during Primary Assessment of a medical incident.
- Identify respiratory and airway structure emergencies and manage critical interventions for conscious patients and patients with a decreased level of consciousness.
- Identify circulatory emergencies and manage critical interventions for conscious patients and patients with a decreased level of consciousness.
- Prepare patients for transportation whether in Critical or Stable Condition
- Conduct a Secondary Assessment on a medical subject
- Assess, manage, and identify the need for medical aid referral for soft tissue injuries.
- Identify and manage head, brain, and spinal injuries for conscious patients and patients with a decreased level of consciousness.
- Identify and manage abdominal injuries
- Identify upper and lower limb fractures and dislocations
- Identify and manage environmental emergencies,
- Describe how to identify and manage diabetic conditions and seizures
Appendix D

Note: This kit will also require the following items not outlined in the list above: Oxygen therapy unit consisting of Oxygen Regulator, Oxygen Tank, Non Rebreather mask (2), and Bag Valve Mask (BVM) (1)
The above list is the minimum requirements for this kit. SAR Groups may include any additional equipment to this kit that is within their scope of training.
PURPOSE:
To ensure safety when SAR groups are attending an exercise, training or operational task in an area where there are known problems with wildlife that could put the SAR volunteer at risk.

GUIDELINE:
Before a SAR team deploys into an area where an animal threat or concern is considered to be present, all volunteers should receive a short period of instruction on dangerous animal awareness.

PROCEDURE:
All persons participating in a SAR operation will be encouraged to take the usual precautions of carrying bear spray, bear bells, bear bangers, use bear caches, etc.

SAR Groups that operate in areas where dangerous animals are located should, as part of their Ground Search and Rescue Course, include a period of time devoted to dangerous animal awareness.

SAR teams observing or encountering dangerous animals will report to Command as soon as possible.

Decision to Employ Firearms

The decision whether firearms will be allowed to be brought into a search area or base camp will rest with Command. In reaching this decision, due regard should be given to:

- The likelihood of dangerous animals being in the area (from this point forward, all reference to animals will mean any animals presenting a danger to the searchers)
- The season and its effect upon animal behaviour
- Historical experience in encountering animals on SAR operations in the search area
- The nature of any recent encounters with animals in the area
- Any other variables relevant to that SAR operation
In weighing the various factors outlined above, Command will consider consulting a Conservation Officer and/or other expert resource.

If there are volunteers who are not comfortable working in a team with a team guard carrying a firearm, they should be given the option of another assignment. Alternately, if a decision is made not to use firearms in a search and searchers are uncomfortable or feeling unprotected due to the potential risk, they have the right to refuse to participate in the assignment.

**Designating Persons to Carry Firearms**

Command will designate those who will be permitted to possess and carry firearms either in base camp or in the field. No other person participating in a SAR operation will be permitted to possess or carry firearms for the duration of that SAR operation. Any person found in violation of this policy may be discharged from responsibility in the SAR and may also be removed from the area of the operation on the grounds that they pose an unreasonable risk to other personnel.

In determining who will be authorized to carry and use firearms in the field, Command will consider:

- Whether the person has demonstrated proficiency with the firearm and possesses sufficient common sense to safely carry that firearm and utilise it in a hazardous situation, such that it will not pose a risk to other searchers and persons in the area
- Whether the person possesses and carries a valid Firearms Licence
- Whether the person has completed an approved course of instruction on bear awareness, firearms safety, marksmanship, or CORE training
- Whether the person’s firearm is of a sufficient type and calibre/gauge to adequately perform the job of protection
- The possession, carrying of, and storage of that firearm shall not violate either the laws of Canada or of the Province of British Columbia or of Municipal bylaws, or any regulations except where authorized by the of the police for the safety of SAR personnel
Command may designate one person in each SAR Base to possess, carry and use a firearm inside the Base Camp. Such a person will be called the "Camp Guard".

Command may designate one or more person(s) in each SAR team to possess, carry and use a firearm outside the Base Camp. Such person(s) will be called the "Team Guard".

Those persons designated as "Peace Officers" under The Police Act R.S.B.C. shall have the authority to possess and carry firearms in the Base Camp and the SAR Area.

**Base Camp**

The odours and garbage which may accumulate when cooking for large numbers of people may cause the Base Camp to be a high attraction area for animals, thus raising the necessity for a minimum level of protection. At the same time, the high concentration of persons in this small area may cause unnecessary risk if firearms are carried or used imprudently.

Command may designate one Camp Guard to possess, carry, and use a firearm while in Base Camp. Command may delegate that authority and responsibility to other Alternate Camp Guards for those time periods in which the Camp Guard is off duty or otherwise occupied.
Should the use of Alternate Camp Guards be approved, the responsible Camp Guard shall draft a schedule showing the times for which responsibility passes between Camp Guard and Alternates. A copy of that schedule shall be kept at the Incident Command Post and by the Camp Guard and all Alternates. The Camp Guard’s sole responsibility will be the protection of the camp and the position reports directly to the Safety Officer.

Those persons who are appointed as Team Guards may possess and carry both their firearm and their ammunition while in the Base Camp, however, all ammunition must be physically removed from the firearm. Ammunition will be placed in the firearm only once the SAR team has left the Base Camp, at which time ammunition may be inserted into the firearm, which has its safety engaged. The Team Leader will observe this procedure to ensure compliance with this policy. Upon completion of the SAR task and immediately before entering the outer boundary of Base Camp, the Team Guard will physically remove all ammunition from the firearm, leave the action in the open position, place it on safe, and have the firearm physically inspected by the Team Leader before entering the Base Camp.

**Shooting A Dangerous Animal**

If a dangerous animal is posing a persistent nuisance and/or threat to the Base Camp or SAR Team, the local Conservation Officer should be contacted to deal with the animal before it becomes necessary to take more drastic measures. The Conservation Officer Service can be contacted through the Emergency Coordination Centre (1-800-663-3456).

In the event of an animal posing a significant threat to personnel and no other reasonable measures are successful in driving that animal away or if operational necessity requires it, the Guard may take such reasonable measures as deemed necessary to kill that animal.
Before implementing any measures to kill an animal, the Guard will, if reasonable under the circumstances, warn all people in the immediate area before shooting.

If an animal is killed, reasonable steps shall be taken to ensure that all relevant information is conveyed to the local Conservation Officer and that the animal is dealt with in accordance with their directions.

After shooting an animal and ensuring that there is no further hazard, the Guard will make notes on the grid reference of the shooting incident, type and size of animal, the behaviour exhibited by the animal, to whom the incident was reported and when that report was made. These notes shall be turned over to Command and a review will be conducted on the shooting incident.

If an animal is wounded and escapes before it can be killed, this will be reported to the ICP immediately and the Command, in consultation with other resource persons, may consider suspending part or all of the SAR operation temporarily until such time as the wounded animal can be dealt with or until it is believed that the hazard posed by that animal is considered to be minimal.

**Carrying and Possessing Firearms**

Any person with a firearm who enters the SAR area or Base Camp without being designated to do so must immediately notify the Command team of the firearm. Unless permitted to carry a firearm by Command, the firearm must be either securely locked and/or stored with all ammunition in the person’s vehicle, or the firearm and ammunition must be turned over to the Equipment Manager for secure storage. If that person refuses to comply, Command may have that person removed from the SAR area.

**Briefings**

All persons who are designated as Guards will be briefed on this Firearms Policy upon designation or their arrival at SAR Base
PURPOSE: To provide additional information on potential hazardous materials that may be encountered during search and rescue incidents.

GUIDELINE: Hazardous materials may be encountered in any environment that SAR Volunteers respond in. It is critical that all SAR Leaders and Volunteers are aware of such hazards. If there are any concerns all SAR Leaders and volunteers are to leave the area and request an assessment by an expert. Hazmat response is not a function of SAR Volunteers. Hazardous Material (Hazmat) incidents are the responsibility of the provincial Ministry of the Environment, who will request appropriately trained and equipped response by Fire Departments or other resources. Federal agencies are responsible for spill response in the marine environment.

PROCEDURE: Dangerous goods are moved on every mode of transport, including road, rail, marine, and air. When responding to an incident involving a vehicle, vessel, or aircraft the following must be considered;

- When requested to respond enquire as to the presence of dangerous goods;
- Watch for placards and labelling identifying specific materials being transported, which is required by Federal Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations;
- Do not rely on the presence of placards as dangerous goods maybe present in small qualities, placards are not visible, or hazardous materials present that are not considered dangerous goods;
- If there are any indications of fumes or smoke leave the area immediately, even non dangerous goods can emit toxic fumes when burning;
- The presence of any type of fuel and batteries requires extreme caution to ensure ignition sources are extinguished and Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment is worn appropriate to potential exposure.
During a Civil Emergency or other SAR response, caution is required due to potential hazardous materials being present:

- During a flood sewage maybe spilled, contaminating houses and large areas. Contact with sewage is to be avoided;

- Fuel storage tanks may float or spill during a flood, creating a fire/explosion hazard, as well as fumes and corrosive hazard;

- Fumes from stored chemicals in both industrial and residential buildings may be toxic or create a fire/explosion hazard;

- Clandestine drug materials can potentially be encountered in any urban or rural environment.

Risk assessment of SAR Groups areas is to include hazards known to be present. For example in areas with gas and oil exploration/production there are hazards such as Hydrogen Sulphide (H2S) that require specific precautions.

Should SAR Leaders and volunteers have any concerns over the presence of Hazardous Materials during a response the requesting agency is to be notified and an assessment by qualified experts be conducted prior to SAR Volunteer’s entering the area.

Hazmat response and expertise can be accessed through the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC), who will contact the appropriate response agency and notify the proper authorities.

REFERENCE: Ground SAR and Civil Emergency OGs

Canadian Transport Emergency Centre (CANUTEC) Emergency Response Guidebook.
PURPOSE  To enhance SAR Volunteer safety through ensuring effective communication of potential hazards, and the tracking of any concerns to assist in improving the SAR Safety Program.

GUIDELINE  Safety will be part of a briefing provided to SAR volunteers by SAR Leaders prior to deployment, the debriefing of SAR volunteers following completion of team assignments, and during the review at the end of a SAR response.

PROCEDURE

During a briefing of SAR volunteers being deployed the SAR Leader and or manager will provide:

- Any specific hazards identified during the risk assessment;
- Protocols to advise of any safety concerns, threats, or need to evacuate;
- Communication frequencies and emergency protocols;
- Reminder of safety priorities.

When debriefing SAR Volunteers returning from team assignments the following will be discussed and reported to the SAR Leader and or manager (if not reported as a threat already):

- Any hazards identified, eg signs of bears or cougars in area or dangerous terrain;
- Any safety concerns over assignment;
- Recommendations for further team assignments.

During a review (informal or formal) all SAR Volunteers and other agency personnel involved will be asked if there was any safety concerns or best practices identified. Any safety related items will be discussed and recommendations forwarded to EMBC.

REFERENCE:  SAR Review Process
PURPOSE: To ensure the health and safety of SAR volunteers when responding to, or participation during search and rescue activities.

GUIDELINE: SAR volunteers may receive callouts at all times of the day and night, and those callouts may extend beyond the normal workday. The volunteer may be exposed to requests that go beyond their ability to operate in a safe environment. Some of the influences that may affect the members are:

- Stimulation from external influences:
  - Alcohol
  - Prescription drugs
  - Illegal drugs
  - Exhaustion
  - Sleep deprivation

- Stimulation as a result of the task assignment:
  - Physiological effects of one or more facets of the task assignment
  - Negative outcome of the task
  - Self questioning of actions taken during assignment

It is the responsibility of all SAR volunteers to understand the demands that may be put on them both from personal reasons and the demands as a SAR volunteers. SAR Leaders need to understand and recognize the signs and symptoms of the stress put on their members from both external and internal influences, and the resources’ that are available for their members.

SAR volunteers may chose to respond to calls for search and rescue in a condition that may put themselves and others at risk through pre existing conditions. The SAR group will need to identify these conditions and develop guidelines to assist SAR Leaders in dealing with them on an individual basis. The SAR Leaders involvement in the training of the SAR volunteers will allow them to become familiar with the normal characteristics of the SAR volunteer and allow them to more readily
identify when the SAR volunteer is exhibiting abnormal or unexpected behaviours at a task assignment.

The SAR Leader also needs to recognize when the actions at a task or the conditions surrounding the task may affect the SAR volunteer.

As part of the SAR Management overview the management team during their Incident Action Plan development need to determine if the task will go into the second operational period. If indications are that it will, the SAR Management team should request mutual aid from neighbouring departments as soon as possible.

PROCEDURE:
While the recognition of when the conditions while on task may affect the ability of the SAR volunteer to continue, or to determine if the SAR volunteer is able to safely return to base or home is the responsibility of all SAR volunteers involved in the task, the final decision of actions to protect the SAR volunteer rest with the SAR Leader.

During the onsite task debrief the Team Leader/SAR Manager should as part of the debrief, review the actions and assignments during the task to determine if there are any issues present at the time. This may give them an indication if there are any underlying issues with any of the SAR volunteers involved in the task. This may be as simple as asking on the wellbeing of the involved SAR volunteers. If it is apparent that the SAR volunteers have been exposed to stress, it may be appropriate to have a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), session held. The SAR Manager should arrange for this through the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). The costs of the session are covered by EMBC as part of the active task.

If the task has come at the end of the day, and the SAR volunteer has not had time to receive adequate rest, or the callout has been done in the early part of the day where the SAR volunteer has had their rest disturbed, they may not have had adequate time for adequate rest, the SAR Leader may determine that a chance exists that the SAR volunteer may be put at risk in the return trip to base or home. A number of options are available to ensure the safe return of SAR volunteers from the field:

- Use a minimum of two SAR members per vehicle (leaving one or more vehicles on site and having them brought back by a Towing service is an acceptable task expense).
• Have fresh volunteers dispatched to site to have vehicles driven back to base.
• If the task has been conducted at a distance from the SAR base or the SAR volunteers home, and lodgings are available, it may be advantageous to book rooms for the SAR volunteers to allow appropriate rest before returning home (again this is an acceptable expense, with EMBC Regional Manager Approval).

The other consideration by the SAR Leader is to ensure that there are adequate breaks provided for the SAR volunteer while on task. This includes providing adequate time for rest periods and an adequate area for the SAR volunteer to relax (this should include an area away from the active SAR Command, which will allow for minimum distractions, and an area where they can recover – Shade in the summer, warming area in the winter, dry area when raining, etc.).

These breaks should also allow the SAR volunteer to hydrate and get appropriate nourishment. The SAR Leader/SAR Manager should ensure that the volunteer has adequate resources available to them to provide for adequate recharge. If the resources are not available, then they should be acquired and made available to the SAR volunteers (This is an acceptable reimbursable claim allowed under the task).

REFERENCES:

SAR Safety Program Guide – Appendix L
Provincial Operating Guideline 1.02 Critical Incident Stress Management
Provincial Operating Guideline 1.09 Drug and Alcohol
Provincial Operating Guideline 1.14 Safety Briefings/Debriefings
BCSARA Critical Incident Stress Management Program
PURPOSE: To ensure the safe and efficient response of all SAR volunteers by vehicle during emergency and non-emergency operations.

GUIDELINE: The driver of any vehicle bears full responsibility for adherence to this guideline and the BC Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations.

PROCEDURE: SAR volunteers, while responding in a personal or other non-emergency vehicle are not provided any special privileges and as such will adhere to all statutes as outlined in the BC Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations.

SAR Volunteers should travel in the minimum number of vehicles required from an assembly point to the incident scene.

Vehicles used during a response, such as in a search along a roadway, are to be operated according to the BC Motor Vehicle Act and Regulation. Activities such as transporting people in the box of a pickup or on an external part are not legal.

It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure seatbelts are utilized by all passengers prior to moving and while the vehicle is in motion.

The responsibility of the driver during a response will be to operate the vehicle safely. The operation of a radio or device is to be delegated to a crew member. If there is no other passenger, the driver will operate the radio or device only if it can be done safely.

Before backing up the driver should ensure they are guided by another SAR volunteer using recognized hand signals. This guide will be safely positioned at the rear of the vehicle on the driver side whenever possible. The driver will sound the horn indicating before backing up.

The driver of a vehicle is responsible to ensure that the vehicle is in a state of readiness. This includes ensuring that equipment is in place and stored safely and all doors are closed and secured before a response.
The SAR Leaders upon arrival at an emergency scene will evaluate the need for other vehicles to continue to respond or not. Whenever possible, other responding vehicles not needed at the scene shall be advised of a status change and redirected as required.

When approaching an emergency scene the driver will watch for vehicles approaching from other directions. The driver will be on the alert for civilians, and other emergency personnel who may inadvertently step in front of the approaching vehicle.

**Operation of Emergency Vehicles**

Under specific conditions SAR volunteers, with the appropriate approvals and licences as required by the Dec 7, 2011 Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) Policy Directive and the Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations may operate an emergency vehicle.

The driver of an emergency vehicle may exercise the privileges granted in Section 122 of the Motor Vehicle Act of BC. The driver must take into account factors such as:

- The nature, use and condition of the highway;
- The amount of traffic;
- Visibility; and
- Pedestrians.
The driver of any emergency vehicle responding to an incident will continually assess whether utilizing Section 122(4) of the BC Motor Vehicle Act poses an inordinate risk to other members within the vehicle and to that of the general public.

Only members who have the necessary licenses and endorsements for the vehicle being operated, as required by the BC Motor Vehicle Act, and who are accepted by the organization, shall be permitted to drive, except when under supervision of a trainer for the purpose of driver training.

Warning devices and emergency lights will be operated in compliance with the Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations. Emergency vehicles will respond on an emergency basis only when all warning devices are in continuous operation (emergency lights and siren).

Each organization must ensure that all operating permits for emergency lights and sirens are obtained and current.

The driver will maintain a speed consistent with the safe operation of the vehicle under prevailing conditions. If conditions permit, the maximum speed limit may be exceeded, in accordance with Section 122 the BC Motor Vehicle Act.

Driving in the oncoming traffic lane is dangerous and should be avoided whenever possible. If it is necessary to drive in the oncoming traffic lane, extreme caution will be exercised and a safe operating speed maintained.
Intersections are dangerous areas to approach during an emergency response. The following precautions shall be observed by all responding vehicle operators:

- When a responding vehicle must approach an intersection in the oncoming traffic lane, the driver will come to a complete stop until other traffic in the intersection has yielded.

- When approaching a controlled intersection with a stop sign or red light, the driver will come to a complete stop until all other traffic in the intersection has yielded.

- The driver will use good judgement with respect to proceeding through an intersection; however, the maximum allowable speed through any intersection will be the posted speed limit.

Passing other emergency vehicles is dangerous. If passing is necessary, radio communications will be made, if possible, with the driver of the other vehicle prior to passing.

The driver of the emergency vehicle will ensure that a trip inspection is conducted on the vehicle and record maintained.

REFERENCE: BC Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations

Dec 7, 2011 Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) Policy Directive
PURPOSE: To increase SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice involving the operation of, or transportation by, All Terrain Vehicles (ATV).

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR leader and or managers will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the use of, and provided with, appropriate equipment before participating in any activities involving the operation of or transport by ATV during training, response or practice.

For the purposes of this Operational Guideline ATV’s includes:

- Four wheel sit astride vehicles with handlebars.

- Sit in vehicles, usually with a steering wheel, where the driver sits in a conventional seat and there is generally seating for one or more passengers.

- Tracked vehicles (Nodwell, SnoCats, etc.), usually equipped with an enclosed cab and used for transportation in snow or wet terrain.

SAR volunteers should not use three wheel ATV’s

PROCEDURE: Training in the use of the specific type of ATV will be provided before a SAR Volunteer participates in any activity which may require use or operation.

Training will include proper procedures for:

- safe operation,

- orientation on procedures in response to potential emergencies that may arise as a result of the use of the ATV:
  - mechanical failure,
  - hypothermia and frostbite, and
Terrain issues (water and topography).

A recognized, commercially available training course for basic operation may be used, or the SAR group may develop a skills checklist that each authorized member would be evaluated against prior to operating any group ATV’s. This training would also be desirable when the members personal ATV is used on task or training.

The ATV and all equipment carried are to be checked before placing into use to ensure they are being used in the manner for which they are intended and:

- it is in good mechanical condition (belts, spark plugs, etc.);
- all required maintenance spares are in place;
- that an adequate supply of fuel is available.

All SAR volunteers that operate, are transported on, or sit astride ATV’s will:

- wear an approved helmet and approved eye protection;
- wear clothing suitable for the environmental conditions, and
- wear suitable gloves and clothing which covers the ankles and legs and the arms to the wrist when necessary to protect against anticipated hazards.

When using other sit in machines, ATV’s must have adequate roll over protection in place to protect all occupants and all occupants must wear approved restraint devices (seat belts) and helmets.

Riding on the exterior or in the box of an ATV is forbidden.

Transportation in an ATV trailer (unless specifically designed and authorized by the manufacturer), is also prohibited for SAR volunteers.
All ATV’s will be operated in accordance with applicable rules and regulations, and considering SAR volunteer safety first.

Each SAR Volunteer will carry enough personal survival equipment (24 hour pack), and if the ATV is being operated during or near darkness SAR Volunteers will carry suitable headlamps and flashlights.

Each SAR Volunteer that either operates or is transported by ATV will have a means of communication with the search base.

SAR volunteers operating or being transported in ATV’s in mountainous terrain in winter, must comply with the requirements of the Operating Guideline for Avalanche Response #OG 3.08.

REFERENCE:

Canada Safety Council ATV Training

Worksafe B.C List of approved helmet standards

Avalanche Response Operational Guidelines
PURPOSE: To increase SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice involving the operation of, or transportation by, snowmobile(s).

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the use of, and provided with, appropriate equipment before participating in any activities involving the operation of or transport by snowmobile during training, response or practice.

For the purposes of this Operational Guideline, Snowmobile includes ski/track combination personal snowmobiles.

PROCEDURE: Training in the use of the specific type of snowmobile will be provided before a SAR Volunteer participates in any activity which may require use or operation.

Training will include proper procedures for safe operation, orientation on procedures in response to potential emergencies that may arise as a result of the use of the snowmobile such as mechanical failure, hypothermia and frostbite, and terrain issues (water and topography).

A recognized, commercially available training course for basic operation may be used, or the SAR group may develop a skills checklist that each authorized member would be evaluated to prior to operating any group snowmobiles. This training would also be desirable when the members personal snowmobile is used on task or training.

The snowmobile and all equipment carried is to be checked before placing into use to ensure it’s mechanical condition and all maintenance spares required are in place and it good condition (belts, spark plugs, etc.), and that an adequate supply of fuel is available.

All snowmobiles will be operated in accordance with applicable rules and regulations, and considering SAR volunteer safety first.
All SAR volunteers that operate, or are transported on snowmobiles will wear an approved helmet.

Each SAR Volunteer that either operates or is transported by snowmobile will have a means of communication with the search base.

Every SAR volunteer that operates a snowmobile should:

- Understand the basic mechanics of the assigned snowmobile.
- Respect the capabilities and the limitations of the assigned snowmobile.
- Know how to manoeuvre through a variety of operating conditions.
- Always exercise good judgement and respect others and the environment.

SAR volunteers operating snowmobiles in mountainous terrain must comply with the requirements of the Operating Guideline for Avalanche Response #OG 3.08.

REFERENCE:

- Canadian Snowmobile Federation
- Worksafe B.C List of approved helmet standards
- Avalanche Response Operational Guidelines
PURPOSE: To increase SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice involving the operational use of, or transportation by helicopters.

GUIDELINE: SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the use of and provided pre-flight briefings and, provided with appropriate equipment before participating in any activities involving the operation of or transport by helicopters during training, response or practice.

PROCEDURE: Training in the use of the specific type of helicopter selected will be provided before a SAR Volunteer participates in any activity which may include the use of that model of helicopter.

Training will include:

- proper procedures for safe operation,
- orientation on the helicopter by the pilot, and
- the procedures to follow in the event of emergencies on or around the helicopter and launching and landing zone area.

Communication between ground and air shall be established at all times during the operation of the helicopter, using one ground contact person.

The individual assigned the air operations role shall be designated as the person to supervise the non flight (the pilot will retain the control of all flight operations), safety around the helicopter.

Safe work procedures include:

- No smoking within 20 metres of the helicopter;
- Unless assigned specific responsibilities by the air operation person - remain at least 20 metres away from the helicopter;
Exercise extreme caution when working around the helicopter especially when helicopter engine is running;

Leave and approach the helicopter from the front - with caution;

At all times, keep eyes and head forward and maintain eye contact with the pilot;

Avoid rear and tail sections of helicopter at all times;

Never walk under tail section of helicopter;

Do not extend any equipment vertically into rotor blades – such as backboards, skis, ski poles stretchers, etc.

Carry all equipment parallel to ground within 20 metres of helicopter.

Do not slam a helicopter door, gently close and latch it.

Pilots are the authorities concerning all helicopter flight operations if you have questions, ask them.

Never, under any circumstances, throw any loose material such as pack contents, clothing, paper, etc. around the helicopter - whether it is running or not.

The landing area should be cleared of debris and, where necessary, wet down.

Protect your eyes as well as your equipment when helicopter is landing and taking off.

Plot plans and maps will be prepared to locate landing area, intended flight paths, designated emergency landing sites, and location,
The pilot in command will have final approval as to aerial traverse and hovering positions of the aircraft.

REFERENCE: Canadian Aviation Regulation
**General Ground Hand Signals**

**“Mayday”**
Wave arms frantically from your side to over your head

**“All is Well”**
Thumb up.

**“Not ready – fly another circuit”**
As the helicopter is approaching, one arm above your head, swing your arm in a wide circle.
"Wind direction"
With back to the wind outstretched arms like a wind sock pointing
down wind. Point toward helispot if possible.

"Shut down the helicopter"
Hand and arm make a cutting motion in front of your neck.
PURPOSE: To provide for SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice involving the operation of, or transportation by, powered or unpowered watercraft.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the use of, and provided with, appropriate equipment before participating in any activities involving the use of watercraft.

Watercraft includes ships, boats, canoes, kayaks, rafts, barges, hovercraft, amphibious vehicles, catamarans, paddleboards, Personal Water Craft (eg. Jet skis), and any other vehicle or vessel used on water.

PROCEDURE: Training in the use of, and legal requirements for, the specific type of watercraft will be provided before a SAR volunteer participates in any activity which may require watercraft use or operation.

Training will include:

- Proper procedures for safe operation;
- orientation on procedures in response to potential emergencies that may arise such as fires on board;
- use of Personal Protection Equipment such as Personal Flotation Devices (PFD);
- use of flares and other distress signalling devices, and;
- frequency/channel selection and emergency communication protocols for radio equipment on board.

The watercraft and all equipment onboard is to be checked before placing into use to ensure structural integrity, compliance with all applicable regulations governing the specific type of watercraft, and if applicable, that an adequate supply of emergency equipment and fuel is on board.
All watercraft will be operated in accordance with applicable rules and regulations, and considering safety first. The rated capacity of any watercraft is not to be exceeded; the number of crew should be kept to the minimum required for the task, and with consideration to space for the subject(s) on return.

SAR volunteers operating, or being transported by watercraft during a Swiftwater Rescue operation will be trained and equipped as per the Swiftwater Rescue Operational Guidelines.

SAR Volunteers operating, or being transported by, watercraft in a swiftwater environment during a operation other than Swiftwater Rescue will be trained and equipped as per the Swiftwater Rescue Operational Guidelines, or be briefed in swiftwater procedures and be under guidance of a trained and equipped Swiftwater Rescue Technician.
Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)

Rules and regulations governing the type and number of PFDs and emergency equipment on board will be adhered to, in addition all SAR volunteers will wear appropriate PFDs in the prescribed manner while operating, or being transported on, watercraft.

In addition each SAR Volunteer will have an emergency whistle (pea-less) attached to the PFD, or otherwise readily available. If the watercraft is being operated during or near darkness SAR Volunteers will carry a suitable strobe light and/or other appropriate light signalling device.

SAR Volunteers should be equipped for possible extended exposure to inclement weather.

On the water towing of a disabled watercraft is only to be undertaken if it is unsafe to leave it where located, and then only to the nearest safe place. Extreme caution is to be exercised when towing with regard to weather conditions, danger from tow rope breakage, and other watercraft in area. If possible no person should be onboard the watercraft being towed.

REFERENCE:

- Canada Shipping Act, 2001, Small Vessel Regulations
- Transport Canada, Office of Boating Safety
- Swiftwater Rescue Operational Guidelines
PURPOSE: To ensure the safety of SAR Volunteers when participating in Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) training, response or practice involving the search for lost persons, and/or the care and transportation of subjects.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained, and provided with appropriate equipment, before participating in any Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) activity.

All Operational Guidelines (OGs) within the SAR Safety Program are applicable to aspects of GSAR. OGs such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provide specific information to be referenced, while specialized rescue OGs such as for Mountain Rescue define activities that is not be undertaken without additional training and equipment.

PROCEDURE: SAR Volunteers engaged in GSAR activities outside a command post, camp, vehicle, or building environment will wear long pants, long/short sleeve top, eye protection, and footwear with adequate protection and traction. They will also wear or carry other clothing suitable for climatic conditions likely to be encountered.

All SAR Volunteers while participating in GSAR activities outside a camp, command post, vehicle, or building environment will wear clothing which includes distinctive reflective markings, and/or a reflective vest, which is visible. See Personal Protective Equipment OG for acceptable retro-reflective standards.

Before undertaking any GSAR activity SAR Volunteers will be provided with a briefing on potential hazards within their assigned area by a SAR Leader and or manager.
All vehicles, watercraft, and aircraft used to transport SAR Volunteers will be operated in accordance with applicable rules and regulations, and considering safety first. SAR Volunteers will follow instructions of vehicle, watercraft, and aircraft operators at all times.

Each SAR Volunteer will have an emergency whistle (pea-less) attached to an article of clothing, or otherwise readily available, and carry a headlamp suitable for lighting the way ahead and signalling in darkness.

SAR Volunteers conducting a search in residential areas (rural or urban) are to wear clothing or other visible articles that readily indentifies them as part of the search operation.

When operating as a Search Team at least one Volunteer will carry Emergency Communications equipment. Other team members must remain within voice contact range, or carry alternative communications capable of reaching team members with Emergency Communications. Wherever possible it is recommended that each field team member carries a piece of communications equipment that is capable of communicating with the command post.

GSAR response may require extended time away from command posts or other resources. Additional clothing, food, water, and protection from the weather suitable for at least 24hrs is to be carried.

REFERENCE: Provincial Emergency Program Ground Search and Rescue Training Manual

Other SAR Safety Program Operational guidelines
PURPOSE: To ensure SAR volunteer safety while participating in a response, training, or practice requiring specialized techniques including use of ropes and associated apparatus to provide safe access to and/or transport trapped or injured persons, or to access allow safe access to challenging terrain during a search.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR volunteers are trained and equipped according to current standards outlined in the British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program Search and Rescue Rope Rescue Manual, and the Rope Rescue Team Leader Manual if fulfilling that function.

PROCEDURE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure proper records are kept of SAR Volunteer’s training, operational experience and annual practice (this requires at least 20 hours of logged rope rescue practice in any year for all rope rescue team members and rope rescue team leaders), in rope rescue, and of maintenance of appliances/apparatus.

All hardware and software used for rope rescue tasks will meet the standard as set out in the Provincial Emergency Programs Rope Rescue Team Members or Rope Rescue Team Leaders Rope Rescue manual, the Worksafe B.C. regulations and all manufacturer’s instructions and recommendations.

All ropes used for rope rescue will a have a log to log their uses and will be taken out of service when they reach an age of 60 months (5 years).

All hardware and software will be inspected by a qualified rope rescue team member/rope rescue team leader after every use and at least quarterly to ensure that it is still fit for service. Any item that has obvious damage or if its’ integrity is at all in question, will be immediately removed from service, tagged and inspected by a qualified person before placing back into service.
SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that qualified and trained SAR Leaders are assigned as follows:

Slope Assist – A Ground Search Team Leader or Rope Rescue Team Leader will be assigned to oversee the assignment.

Slope/High Angle Rope Rescue – A Rope Rescue Team Leader must be assigned to oversee the technical rope rescue component of the assignment. SAR volunteers assigned to participate in technical rope rescue positions within this assignment must be qualified as rope rescue team members.

REFERENCE:

Provincial Emergency Program Rope Rescue Manual

Provincial Emergency Program Rope Rescue Team Leader Manual

Provincial Emergency Program Volunteer Policy 2.17
PURPOSE: To provide for SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice involving searching or conducting a rescue operation beside, on, or in moving water.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the use of, and provided with, appropriate equipment before participating in any activities within 3m of, on, or in fast moving water where there is a risk of being swept downstream.

It is recognized that SAR Volunteers may encounter small streams and creeks during ground searches and rescue operations which can be easily crossed, or banks searched, without additional risk. If there is any concern advice from a trained Swiftwater Rescuer is to be sought.

PROCEDURE SAR Volunteers engaged in activities within the Warm Zone (within 3 m of fast moving water) will be provided with training or a briefing at the awareness level including:

- Scene assessment and incident size up (of existing and potential conditions,
- How to request Swiftwater Rescue resources
- Site control and scene management
- Hazard recognition and mitigation procedures
- Principles, application, and hazards of Swiftwater rescue
- As well, SAR Volunteers will be equipped with and wear an approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD), a pea-less emergency whistle, emergency communications and suitable Personal Protective Clothing.
SAR Volunteers engaged in activities within the Hot Zone (in or on fast moving water) under the direction of a Swiftwater Rescue Technician will be provided with training at the operations level including:

- Training at the awareness level,
- Shore and boat based rescues
- Management of thermal related stress
- Technical rigging
- Subject packaging
- Scene evaluation

As well, SAR Volunteers will be equipped with, wear, and be trained in the use of an approved rescue PFD, pea-less whistle, fixed blade rescue knife, throw bag, thermal protection, and other appropriate Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment.

SAR Volunteers overseeing rescue activities in the Hot Zone will be trained at the Technician level, including:

- Training and equipment at the operations level
- Procedures to plan a response with the available resources
- Procedures to implement a response consistent with capabilities
- Procedures to conduct both boat assisted and boat based rescues
- Procedures to conduct a 'go' rescue.
Swiftwater Rescue training courses must be approved by the Provincial Emergency Program in order to be eligible for WorkSafe B.C. and other coverage’s. SAR Groups considering Swiftwater Rescue Training courses should contact the PEP SAR Specialist to discuss.

Rescuer and SAR group Swiftwater Rescue Equipment will be maintained according to these Operational Guidelines, manufacturer’s recommendations, and approved training course material.

Reference:
- Watercraft Operational Guidelines
- Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment Operational Guidelines
PURPOSE: To ensure SAR volunteer safety while participating in an response, training, or practice requiring specialized techniques and associated apparatus to respond safely to flat ice related emergencies.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the use of, and provided with, appropriate equipment before participating in any activities that involves access onto flat ice.

For the purposes of this Operational Guidelines Flat Ice includes:

- Ice that has formed on large still bodies of water (lakes, ponds reservoirs, etc).
- Ice that has formed on bodies of large slow moving water (.5 M/sec).

PROCEDURE: Training will be provided to all SAR volunteers that are required to approach or to gain access to the surface of flat ice to gain access to a subject who is unable to provide self rescue from the flat ice emergency. Training will be provided by a commercially recognized available training course for basic flat ice rescue operation.

All SAR volunteers that access to the flat ice surface will be equipped with:

- An approve PFD c/w an attached pealess whistle
- Thermal protection (a combination of insulation and dry suits/wetsuits)
- Approved head bump protection
- Footwear suitable of providing stable footing
- A lifeline c/w chest harness and rope that is tended by SAR volunteers.

- A standby Flat Ice Rescuer that is equipped and capable to initiate rescue without undue delay

All SAR volunteers that enter the “warm Zone” (within 3 metres of the edge of the flat ice edge), will be equipped with:

- An approve PFD c/w an attached pealess whistle

- Approved head bump protection

A successful flat ice rescue is based on a recognized and logical process inherent in any rescue operation. This process includes five basic steps:

- Evaluate scene conditions

- Evaluate subject’s condition

- Assess manpower and equipment

- Develop operational plan

- Ongoing evaluation of rescue process

REFERENCE:

Worksafe B.C List of approved helmet standards

Canadian Coast Guard list of approved personal flotation devices
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| Rev: |

**Purpose**

To ensure SAR volunteers understand current policy on Underwater Recovery/Rescue.

**Guideline**

SAR volunteers are not to engage in Underwater Recovery/Rescue response, other than providing surface support functions if requested by Police Dive Team members. SAR Volunteers providing surface support will operate according to operational guidelines for Marine Search and Rescue.

**Procedure**

SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure SAR volunteers do not engage in Underwater Recovery/Rescue responses other than surface support when requested by Police dive Team members. SAR Leaders will ensure SAR volunteers providing surface support functions are trained and equipped as required under Marine Search and Rescue Operational Guidelines.

**Reference**

Provincial Emergency Program Volunteer Policy 2.17
PURPOSE: To ensure SAR volunteer safety while participating in a mountain rescue response, training, or practice defined as being in 4th class or steeper terrain, or glaciated/snowfields, or at high altitude. Lead climbing and ice climbing is also considered Mountain Rescue.

Top down rope rescue where the anchor station is in 3rd class terrain while the subject is in 4th class or higher terrain is not considered mountain rescue.

Class 4 terrain is defined as having steep sections requiring the use of both hands and feet to climb up or down, where a rope may be utilized and un-rope’d falls could be fatal.

Class 3 terrain is defined as requiring some scrambling with the occasional use of hands to assist and where falls could cause severe injury but are usually not fatal. A rope is generally not used in 3rd class terrain.

High Altitude is defined for the purposes of mountain rescue in BC as above 10,000 feet

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR volunteers are trained and equipped according to current standards outlined in the British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program Mountain Rescue Training Program Manuals before permitting their involvement in mountain rescue.

“Mountain Rescuers with the appropriate experience and training are to operate within the parameters stated within the British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program Mountain Manuals according to the level (MR1, MR2, MR3).
PROCEDURE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure proper records are kept of SAR Volunteer’s:

- Training;
- operational experience;
- annual practice in Mountain Rescue, and;
- maintenance of apparatus.

SAR volunteers and apparatus not meeting the standards within the noted training materials will not be utilized, or participate, in Mountain Rescue functions.

REFERENCE:

- JIBC Emergency Management Division SAR Training
- Provincial Emergency Program Mountain Rescue Training Program Manual
- Provincial Emergency Program Volunteer Policy 2.17
PURPOSE: This operational guideline is necessary to ensure that all SAR activities involving caves (defined as naturally formed underground voids extending beyond daylight) are carried out by personnel who are familiar with and prepared for cave environments and hazards and are competent in the specialized techniques of caving and cave rescue.

GUIDELINE: Consistent with a 1992 MOU among the RCMP, PEP, BCAS and BC Cave Rescue (BCCR), BCCR is to be the lead agency in cave SAR operations and will provide personnel trained in first aid and cave SAR, as well as rescue equipment unique to cave rescue.

PROCEDURE:
Note that even SAR personnel who have received cave rescue training should not initiate or participate in a cave search or rescue activity outside the BCCR framework described below:

CAVE SEARCH OR RESCUE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. General public or SAR Manager contacts RCMP or PEP ECC (Alberta or BC) 1-800-663-3456; Concerned member of public or caver contacts a BCCR caver or coordinator. Go to Step 3.

2. RCMP or PEP ECC contacts BCCR -
   1st - Provincial Coordinator; if no contact -
   2nd - Regional Coordinators, preferably in order listed; if no contact -
   3rd - individual cavers as listed for communities nearest incident who will either contact a designated Coordinator or proceed to Step 3 on an acting basis.

3. BCCR representative provides expert assessment of situation and pursues an A or B response, as appropriate.

BCCR protocols for working with rescue loads conform to BC PEP Rope Rescue standards. Protocols for individual movement through caves and single rope techniques conform to prevailing North American caving safety standards.
A - Major or life-threatening situation

A4 - BCCR recommends that RCMP initiate a formal rescue operation under the 1992 BCCR/PEP/RCMP/BCAS Memorandum of Understanding, mobilizing support as appropriate. RCMP contacts PEP ECC to obtain Task Number for operation.

A5 - Upon initiation of A4, BCCR designates a Coordinator to work with designated RCMP, PEP and BCAS representatives.

A6 - BCCR undertakes a callout - 1st - area cavers and resources 2nd - out of area cavers and resources 3rd - NCRC (American) resources - may also request, through RCMP/ECC, specific support from EMBC (e.g. air transport, surface support)

A7 - BCCR designates:  - field cave rescue leader  - off-site central BCCR contact

A8 - Cave rescue proceeds under RCMP authority with EMBC liaison, above ground support and Task Number.

B - Less serious situation (e.g. overdue party)

B4 - BCCR representative consults with BCCR Coordinators and local cavers to further evaluate the situation. If not already contacted, RCMP may be alerted and briefed.

B5 - BCCR may dispatch a team to investigate, assist, etc., as appropriate

| a) internal resolution | b) serious situation |

B6 - BCCR reports back to RCMP and PEP ECC

| a) incident closed | b) proceed to Step A4 |
BCCR delivers formal training annually in the form of two types of 20-hour workshops (Small Party Self-Rescue and Cave Rescue Response) and offers a week-long Cave Rescue Seminar biennially (even years). Participants are not evaluated on performance, but attendance and general skill level is tracked for reference of BCCR operational coordinators, who then match resource personnel to cave SAR tasks appropriate to their competence.

REFERENCE: 1992 BCCR/PEP/RCMP/BCAS MOU

Provincial Emergency Program Volunteer Policy #2.17
PURPOSE:

To provide for SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, practice or response to an incident within, or travelling through, avalanche terrain.

GUIDELINE:

Avalanche terrain includes all terrain that can be impacted by an avalanche; the start zone, track and runout zones. This may include areas that are not "typical" for avalanches, such as in amongst trees and on flat terrain. There are many examples such terrain, as when a large avalanche comes down one side of a valley and continues up\textit{hill} on the other side.

While response to an incident where people may be buried by an avalanche is time sensitive the safety of all responders is paramount. In many cases further large avalanches on or close by the same path may occur. An assessment by an Avalanche Safety Officer is critical with control measures possibly required before anyone enters the area.

SAR Groups and SAR leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained, and equipped with appropriate equipment, to operate safely when responding to an avalanche incident or travelling through avalanche terrain.

PROCEDURE:

SAR Volunteers responding to an avalanche incident will be trained at the JIBC Organized Avalanche Response (OAR) Training Course or other approved course.

SAR Volunteers will be trained at the JIBC Organized Avalanche Response Team Leader (OARTL) Course level before fulfilling the Team Leader role during an avalanche response.
All SAR Volunteers responding to an avalanche incident or travelling through avalanche terrain will be equipped with;

- A avalanche transceiver that is compatible with all others in the team,
- A avalanche rescue shovel
- A avalanche probe
- A rescue whistle

In addition to the above the Safety Officer will carry a means of alerting all personnel of the need to immediately evacuate the avalanche area.

For requirements on avalanche assessment and response, refer to the EMBC Avalanche Safety Plan and the EMBC Search and Rescue Response – Avalanche Risk Zone Policy.

SAR groups that have avalanche terrain in their area of response are to establish an Avalanche Pre-plan to ensure SAR Volunteers and agencies involved are aware of the correct safety protocols prior to responding to an incident. The pre-plan should be reviewed at the start of each avalanche season.

REFERENCE: Organized Avalanche Response Training Manual
EMBC Search and Rescue Response – Avalanche Risk Zone Policy
PURPOSE: To increase SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice involving the operation of the Class ‘D’ Fixed Line Human External Cargo (CDFL).

GUIDELINE: SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in accordance with the air carrier that they are working with.

For the purposes of this Operational Guideline CDFL (Class ‘D’ Fixed Line Human External Cargo), will be the term used throughout.

PROCEDURE: CDFL (on hook) training will be provided in accordance with the air operators CDFL training program. Off hook training will be provided by a qualified ground training instructor in accordance with EMBC policies and SAR operating guidelines.

The CDFL assembly inspection must comply with the air carriers’ requirements and the requirements of the equipment supplemental type certificate (STC). The CDFL assembly must be inspected in accordance with TC Regulations and the manufactures specifications.

The air carrier that is selected to supply the helicopter service must be approved by Transport Canada, have helicopters and pilots in place to perform the required service. The air carrier must also have a Memorandum of Understanding with the group that provides personnel for the CDFL deployment.

All CDFL operations will be operated in accordance with applicable Transport Canada rules and regulations, and considering SAR volunteer safety first.
Any equipment used in a CDFL operation that is attached to the aircraft must comply with TC regulations. This includes the personal carrying device.

All rescuers will wear clothing and footwear that is practical to the task. In cold environments, thermal protection must be part of the overall rescue plan. In addition each member of the CDFL crew will wear:

- A UIAA/CE climbing helmet or approved flight helmet.
- Appropriate eye protection. This maybe integral to a flight helmet, protective eyewear or separate goggles;
- Hearing protection, headsets or ear muffs or plugs;
- Rescuers must have radio communication with aircraft with hand signals recognised by the air carrier as a backup.

REFERENCE:  
Canada Aviation Regulation
Commercial Air Service Standards
Transport Canada Commercial and Business Aviation Guidelines
P.E.P. Policy 2.17 Search and Rescue
P.E.P Helicopter Policy, August 2001
EMBC Class ‘D’ Fixed Line, Human External Cargo Policy
Helicopter Industry General Operating Guidelines
PURPOSE: To increase SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice involving the application of helicopter hover exit/entry operations.

GUIDELINE: SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained in the proper techniques to safely implement the procedures required to safely exit/enter a helicopter while it is in the hover mode above the ground.

PROCEDURE: Formalized training will be done for SAR Volunteers prior to the practical application of hover exit/entry from a helicopter during training, response or practice. Only those SAR Volunteers trained will be allowed to perform the hover exit/entry operation.

The SAR Leaders and or the Pilot will provide a briefing outlining the sequence of events prior to take off and them immediately prior to actual deplaning by on board SAR Volunteers.

All volunteers will wear hearing protection while the helicopter is in operation (this may be the headsets from the helicopter, if provided, or secondary hearing protection, ear muffs or plugs), it is also recommended that all personnel involved wear proper eye protection.

All volunteers in the helicopter will remain in their seat with proper restraint on at all times until instructed to deplane by the SAR Leader and or manager in charge of the operation. When instructed they will remove the restraining device, reconnect it behind them and move into position to the open or removed door.

When deplaning, all personnel will gently transfer their weight from the helicopter to the ground, avoid sudden movements, do not jump off the helicopter.

Once deplaned, do not go uphill, move slowly to the front of the helicopter and wait for all remaining personnel to deplane.
The helicopter pilot will be the final say in all operations involving the helicopter operation.

In a hover entry operation, radio communication must be made with the helicopter pilot prior to the entry procedures commencing. All volunteers will assemble at the designated hover entry location, (the group should be as close as possible to the pick up area to avoid extended hover time by the helicopter). The SAR Leader and or manager will provide a briefing for all members (and if a subject will be part of the pickup, a “buddy” will be assigned to them.

All loose clothing and gear must be secured before arrival of the helicopter.

Once the helicopter is in place, and eye contact is made with the pilot and a positive signal from the pilot, the entry procedure may commence. Volunteers will load one at a time, again transferring their weight gently from the ground to the helicopter, do not use sudden movements and do not jump to the helicopter.

Once in the helicopter SAR volunteers will move to their designated seat and their restraint put on until the completion of the flight. All personal gear is to be securely stored

Reference:

- Canadian Aviation Regulations
- P.E.P. Policy 2.17 Search and Rescue
- P.E.P Helicopter Policy, August 2001
- Helicopter Industry General Operational Guidelines
- B.C. Ministry of Forests Hover Exit Training Plan
PURPOSE: To ensure SAR Volunteer safety when participating in training, response or practice in non-traditional SAR roles in support of local government response to events such as interface fires, floods and earthquakes.

GUIDELINE: It is recognized that SAR Volunteers may be requested by local governments to assist in roles such as evacuations, sandbagging, support roles in Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) or Incident Command Posts (ICPs), providing communications, or conducting Light Urban Search and Rescue (LUSAR) in damaged buildings.

SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure SAR Volunteers are appropriately trained and equipped in the specific task and role before practicing or participating in functions related to civil emergency.

During a civil emergency the local government maintains overall responsibility for the response and for the safety of all personnel including SAR Volunteers.

An incident related to an emergency response, such as Swiftwater Rescue, is considered a SAR response and the roles and responsibilities outlined in the SAR Safety Guide and appropriate Operational Guidelines will be followed.

SAR Volunteer’s assistance to local governments is supported by PEP under a Task Number in the same manner as in a SAR Response.

PROCEDURE: SAR Leaders are to ensure that when reporting to a local government EOC/ICP that confirmation of overall responsibility for safety is confirmed before SAR Volunteers engage in response activities.

SAR Volunteers are not to participate in any function that they are not adequately trained or equipped to perform. If requested to perform such a function the request will be declined and referred to the SAR Leaders and/or to the EMBC Regional Office.
SAR Volunteers assisting in evacuations are to be briefed on roles and responsibilities outlined in the RCMP Evacuation Protocols.

SAR Volunteers providing traffic control functions are to follow the Traffic Control Operational Guidelines.

When sandbagging along moving water the guidelines established for Swiftwater Rescue, including wearing PFDs, will be followed.

A Safety Officer must be present at all civil emergency response; if not present the EOC/ICP is to be contacted. A Safety Officer may be a SAR Volunteer with the appropriate training, however this must be agreed to by the Local Government.

SAR Volunteers providing LUSAR functions must be trained and operate according to NFPA 1670. A proper damage assessment must be completed before entering any damaged buildings.

SAR Volunteers are not to respond to incidents where Hazardous Materials are known or suspected to be present. If there are any concerns about HazMat being present all SAR personnel are to be removed from the area until experts verify the area is safe.

SAR Volunteers are not to respond to incidents where it is suspected that criminal activities are involved, unless confirmation is received from the police authority that the area is safe.

Fire fighting or other activities within an active fire zone are not to be undertaken.

SAR Volunteers are not to engage in crane or structural high angle rescue activities.

REFERENCE:

Provincial Emergency Program Volunteer Policy 2.17
RCMP ‘E’ Division Evacuation Protocols
NFPA 1670
PURPOSE: To provide for the safety of SAR Volunteers when participating in training, response or practice involving the use of dogs in the search for lost persons.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained, and appropriately equipped according to the Ground Search and Rescue OG and this OG before permitting the use of dogs in any aspect of a search.

PROCEDURE: SAR volunteers, and their dogs, engaged in avalanche dog search activities will be validated within the Canadian Avalanche Rescue Dog Association (CARDA) recognized by the RCMP and the Provincial Emergency Program.

SAR volunteers, and their dogs, engaged in ground search activities will be a member of a Search and Rescue group and be certified as a Civilian Search Dog team by the RCMP and recognized by the Provincial Emergency Program.

Only certified search dogs are to be utilized, or to be within the operational area, during a SAR operation.

Dog Handlers are to advise SAR Volunteers and other personnel in the area not to approach their dogs unless given specific approval. Dog Handlers will maintain control of their dogs at all times.

Reference:
- Provincial Emergency Program Ground Search and Rescue Training Manual
- CARDA Validation Regulations
- RCMP Civilian Search Dog Training Program
- Other SAR Safety Program Operational Guidelines
PURPOSE: To provide for the safety of SAR Volunteers when participating in training, response or practice involving the use of horses in the search for lost persons.

GUIDELINE: SAR Groups and SAR Leaders will ensure that SAR Volunteers are trained, and appropriately equipped according to the Ground Search and Rescue OG and this OG before permitting the use of horses in any aspect of a search.

PROCEDURE: SAR volunteers engaged in horse search activities will be a member of a Search and Rescue group which is a Mounted Search and Rescue (MSAR) team recognized by the Provincial Emergency Program.

In addition to completing Ground SAR Training, SAR volunteers involved in MSAR must adequately demonstrate competency within a certification process which includes at least:

- Ability to navigate in all terrain, and awareness of unsafe areas,
- Physical fitness suitable for riding over long periods of time,
- Confidence in their horses to safely negotiate obstacles
- Experience in riding at all times of day, and all types of weather,
- Ability to setup camp for self and horse,
Horses used in MSAR must demonstrate within a certification process:

- Ability to stand quietly while being held or tied, and load safely,
- Physical condition suitable for extended riding in the terrain likely to be encountered,
- Ability to work with other riders and horses, without showing aggression, and able to work independently of other horses,
- Ability to remain in control in a busy environment, such as a search camp, and around equipment such as ATVs.

SAR Volunteers and their horses involved in MSAR will practice safe riding and searching on an ongoing basis, their skills and abilities will be recertified at least every 2 years,

SAR Volunteers engaged in MSAR, in addition to Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment listed in the Ground SAR OG, will wear a helmet which is approved by the manufacturer for horse riding. Eye protection will be worn if riding in bush or treed areas.

Horse handlers will advise SAR Volunteers and other personnel to stay away from their horses unless specifically given approval.

Reference: Provincial Emergency Program Ground Search and Rescue Training Manual

Other SAR Safety Program Operational guidelines
SAR Safety Program

Recovery of Human Remains

O.G.# 3.14

Issued: March 2014
Rev:

PURPOSE: To ensure the health and safety of SAR volunteers when they are requested to assist in the recovery of human remains.

GUIDELINE: SAR volunteers may receive requests to assist in the recovery of human remains, this is an eligible activity within policy if:

- specialized training and equipment is required to access and/or transport the remains
- the request is from the Coroner, or the Police acting on behalf of the Coroner

Although the recovery of human remains is an eligible activity there is no requirement for SAR Organizations or individual SAR volunteers to engage in the recovery. It is recognized that involvement may cause higher levels of stress and health concerns for some people, SAR volunteers should not feel obligated to participate. Agencies are to provide as much information as possible on the incident and scene to assist in the determination of involvement.

SAR Volunteers may also be requested to protect human remains until the site can be accessed by other agencies for investigative purposes, such as following an aircraft crash. While this may be appropriate initially the requesting agency should be informed that this is not a Ground SAR responsibility and to make other arrangements as soon as possible.

PROCEDURE: The risk of disease transmission during the recovery of human remains is similar to when administering first aid to a live subject. Contact with blood and any body fluids should be avoided by wearing proper protective clothing and equipment including:

- eye protection; safety glasses with side guards, goggles, or face shield
- mask; surgical grade or higher
- gloves; medical grade gloves, heavy weight gloves such as Ansell 92-600 disposable nitrile gloves are recommended, or other heavy weight gloves can be worn over medical gloves.
In most recoveries, except in cases of advanced decomposition, wearing of protective suits is not necessary; however SAR volunteers may choose to wear one for any recovery. Suits, such as Tyvek coveralls, prevent transfer of blood and bodily fluids onto personal clothing and exposed skin. Protective suits should only be worn during the actual recovery, they are waterproof and virtually airtight, prolong use and physical exertion when wearing one can cause hyperthermia. Exposure can be further limited by having only 2 responders place the remains into a body bag with vinyl liner, which once sealed protects other responders.

Care must be taken when handling contaminated clothing and equipment, whether to be cleaned with appropriate disinfectant or to be disposed of. Contaminated materials should be placed into a heavy plastic bag/container; local hospitals can be contacted to arrange for drop off for disposal as a bio-hazard if the clothing or equipment might leak fluid.

Personnel involved in the recovery must wash, with a non-abrasive soap or sanitizer, any areas of their body that may have been contacted with blood or bodily fluid. Eyes, nose, and mouth should be flushed for 15 minutes with water if contacted by blood or bodily fluid.

Any incident where a SAR volunteer may have had contact with blood or body fluid on an area of their body with broken skin or around their eyes, nose or mouth is to be reported.

A Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) session is to be offered to SAR volunteers who participated in the recovery, attendance is to be encouraged.

SAR volunteer are encourage to get vaccinated for Hepatitis B, costs are covered within EMBC policy.

REFERENCES:
EMBC Policy 00.04 Hepatitis B Prevention/Post Exposure Follow-up
EMBC Policy 2.11 Body Recovery
EMBC Policy 2.17 Search and Rescue
Provincial Operating Guideline 1.02 Critical Incident Stress Management
OSHA Fact Sheet, Health and Safety Recommendations for Workers Who Handle Human Remains
Health and Safety Recommendations for Workers Who Handle Human Remains

Employers and workers face a variety of health hazards when handling, or working near, human remains. Workers directly involved in recovery or other efforts that require the handling of human remains are susceptible to bloodborne viruses such as hepatitis and HIV, and bacteria that cause diarrheal diseases, such as shigella and salmonella.

General Precautions
The following precautionary measures can help employers and employees remain safe and healthy while handling human remains.

Personal Protective Equipment
• **Hand Protection.** When handling potentially infectious materials, use appropriate barrier protection including latex and nitrile gloves (powder-free latex gloves with reduced latex protein content can help avoid reaction to latex allergies). These gloves can be worn under heavy-duty gloves which will, in turn, protect the wearer from cuts, puncture wounds, or other injuries that break the skin (caused by sharp environmental debris or bone fragments). A combination of a cut-proof inner layer glove and a latex or similar outer layer is preferable.

• **Foot Protection.** Footwear should similarly protect against sharp debris.

• **Eye and Face Protection.** To protect your face from splashes of body fluids and fecal material, use a plastic face shield or a combination of eye protection (indirectly vented safety goggles are a good choice if available; safety glasses will only provide limited protection) and a surgical mask.

Hygiene
• Maintain hand hygiene to prevent transmission of diarrheal and other diseases from fecal materials on your hands. Wash your hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand cleaner immediately after you remove your gloves.

• Give prompt care to any wounds sustained during work with human remains, including immediate cleansing with soap and clean water. Workers should also be vaccinated against hepatitis B, and get a tetanus booster if indicated.

• Never wear PPE and underlying clothing if it is damaged or penetrated by body fluids.

• Ensure disinfection of vehicles and equipment.

Ergonomic Considerations
• Lifting or moving heavy objects, particularly when done repetitively, can result in injuries to the workers involved. Human remains that have been in water for some time are likely to be even heavier than normal. Having more than one person involved in lifting the human remains will help to reduce the potential for injury. Following appropriate lifting techniques will also help to protect people, as will the use of mechanical lifts or other devices when available.

Myths
• There is no direct risk of contagion or infectious disease from being near human remains for those who are not directly involved in recovery or other efforts that require handling the remains.

• Viruses associated with human remains (e.g., hepatitis B and C, HIV, various bacteria, etc.) do not pose a risk to someone walking nearby, nor do they cause significant environmental contamination.
• The smell of human decay is unpleasant; however, it does not create a public health hazard.

Additional Information
• For more information on this, and other health-related issues affecting workers, visit OSHA’s Web site at www.osha.gov. More detailed guidance addressing this topic can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Website at http://www.cdc.gov.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For more complete information:

U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov
(800) 321-OSHA

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