

# SEARCH AND RESCUE RESOURCES

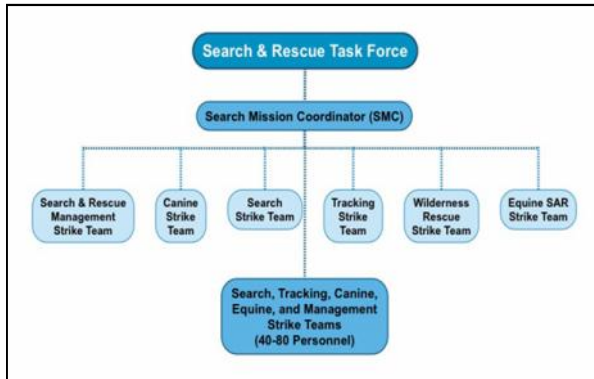
Search and Rescue Coordinator consultation

Certified Teams in the following disciplines:

- ) Search Management Team
- ) Search Team Members and Leaders
- ) Canine Search Teams
  - ) Trailing
  - ) Live Find - Air Scent
  - ) Human Remains Detection (HRD)
  - ) Water Search
  - ) Disaster First Response
- ) Equine Search Teams
- ) Visual Trackers
- ) Wilderness Rescue Teams
- ) Cave Rescue Teams

The initial response depending on circumstances for most search incidents is shown below.

VA - Type III Search and Rescue Task Force



Additional Special Operations resources include:

- ) Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)
- ) Radio Caches
- ) Technical and Urban Search and Rescue
- ) Swiftwater Rescue Teams
- ) Incident Management Teams (IMT)
- ) Access to other state agency resources

24 Hour Emergency Number  
**800-468-8892**



Search and Rescue Resources are primarily provided by highly trained professional volunteer teams from throughout the Commonwealth. These teams provide their services free of charge through Memorandum of Understanding with VDEM. The only cost the locality incurs for requesting resources is the logistical support of the incident.

Questions about the program can be directed to [SAR@vdem.virginia.gov](mailto:SAR@vdem.virginia.gov).  
[www.vaemergency.gov](http://www.vaemergency.gov)

**"...That Others May Live!"**

Some of the information contained in this guide is used with expressed written consent of dbS Productions, LLC [www.dbs-sar.com](http://www.dbs-sar.com)

Additional resources for information and training:  
*Endangered & Vulnerable Adults and Children*  
&  
*Lost Person Behavior*  
dbS Productions

Additional SAR Training is also available through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management - Training, Education, and Exercise Division.  
Contact: [sartraining@vdem.virginia.gov](mailto:sartraining@vdem.virginia.gov)

Commonwealth of Virginia  
Department of Emergency Management  
Special Operations Branch  
**Search and Rescue Program**



## Initial Response to Search and Rescue Incident Guide



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## Initial Response Actions for Missing Persons

- Interview reporting party for pertinent information using Missing Person Questionnaire.
- Complete Form(s) for entry into NCIC / VCIN Amber or Senior Alert may apply
- Complete Search Urgency Determination
- Consider possible scenarios:
  - Lost
  - Despondent
  - Abduction
  - Evasive / Mobile / Immobile
  - Criminal
  - Responsive / Unresponsive
  - Overdue
  - Stranded / Trapped
  - Medical
  - Investigative (cellular, financial records, tracking devices)
  - Trauma
- Determine if a physical search is warranted
- Locate, secure, and preserve the following:
  - Place Last Seen (PLS)
  - Last Known Position (LKP)
- Determine Initial Planning Point (IPP)
  - **Treat as a crime scene.**
  - **Do Not Tow Vehicle**
- Contact Shift Supervisor or SAR Coordinator and request additional Resources
- Establish Command post / Staging area away from PLS/LKP/IPP** (Consider Public Safety Building, nearby church, or large parking area.)
- Search Immediate Area (1000ft/300m) regardless of previous efforts or scenario
- Continue Investigations
- Secure Scent Article – Allow handler to collect if possible.
- Request Tracking/Trailing Canine
- Secure and preserve tracks at PLS/LKP/IPP
- Prevent unnecessary entry
- Request Visual Trackers
- Search residence and grounds if applicable
- Utilize available public safety resources to conduct hasty searches of all linear features (roads, drainages, trails, power line easements, and fence lines) near the IPP.
- Minimize use of untrained volunteers.
- Request additional trained SAR Resources (see initial response package on back)  
The Search and Rescue Duty Officer will help you determine an appropriate response and may be able to offer advice on initial search tasks.

**SEARCH IS AN EMERGENCY!**

## Search Urgency Determination

NOTE: This assessment tool is intended to be used as a resource for law enforcement. This assessment tool does not supersede any existing assessment tools, general orders, policies, or procedures.

The relative urgency of a reported SAR situation should be established - if it is not immediately apparent - during the first notice and interview phase.

**Children, elderly, persons with Cognitive Disorders like Autism or other Developmental Disabilities, persons with Alzheimer's or dementia and other high risk categories qualify for high urgency/emergency response action.**

### RELATIVE URGENCY RATING FACTORS

Factor Profile	Factor Value
<b>AGE</b>	
Very young	1
Very old	1
Age factor a moderate concern	2
Age factor a minimal concern	3
<b>MEDICAL CONDITION</b>	
Known illness, injury, mental, or memory problem	1
Suspected injury or illness	2
Healthy	3
Known fatality	3
<b>NUMBER OF SUBJECTS</b>	
One alone or all children or cognitive problems	1
More than one (separation suspected)	2
More than one (separation not suspected)	3
<b>SUBJECT EXPERIENCE PROFILE</b>	
Not experienced, does not know area	1
Not experienced, knows area	2
Experienced, not familiar with area	2
Experienced, knows area	3
<b>TERRAIN AND HAZARDS PROFILE</b>	
Known hazardous terrain or other hazards	1
Few hazards or terrain somewhat hazardous	2
No hazards or terrain not hazardous	3
<b>WEATHER PROFILE</b>	
Recent past or existing hazardous weather	1
Predicted hazardous weather, 8 hours or less	1
Predicted hazardous weather, more than 8 hours	2
No hazardous weather predicted	3
<b>SUBJECT PREPAREDNESS PROFILE</b>	
Inadequate for environment / weather	1
Questionable for environment / weather	2
Adequate for environment / weather	3

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Note: The lower the value, the more urgent.*

## Search Urgency Determination

### Response to Assessment

Note: The **LOWER THE VALUE** of each factor and the sum of all factors, the **MORE URGENT** the situation.

While a factor sum can be obtained with this assessment tool, it is important to consider other factors that can affect the relative urgency level, such as considerable elapse time from when the subject was reported missing and the political sensitivity.

### APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO URGENCY RATING

Factor Sum	Response
07 – 13	Emergency Response
14 – 18	Measured Response
19 – 21	Evaluation and Investigation

**Emergency Response:** Immediate response of all available personnel including full activation of search and rescue resources.

**Measured Response:** Focused search of primary area utilizing road patrols, neighborhood canvassing, K-9s, and air support and consult with SAR Coordinator.

**Evaluation Response:** Continued investigation to determine the viability of a physical search effort. May consult SAR Coordinator for further suggestions.



Call VDEM to speak with a Search and Rescue Coordinator or to request resources  
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