

-
- I. Purpose
 - II. Introduction
 - III. Policy
 - IV. Procedures
 - V. Search and Rescue Team
 - VI. Mutual Aid & Call Outs: Out of Bi County/Region Search Assistance
 - VII. Roles and Responsibilities of M-NCPP Communications Section

- I. Purpose

To provide Maryland-National Capital (M-NC) Park Police Officers with guidance and understanding on handling requests for search & rescue services and conducting search and rescue deployments.

- II. Introduction

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission operates in both Montgomery County and Prince George's County. This Directive will provide search and rescue protocol for the Montgomery County Division. The total jurisdictional property for the Montgomery County Division covers over 37,000 acres of land. Parks and properties throughout Montgomery County include 4 lakes, 490 miles of streams, 251 miles of paved and natural surface trails, 273 playgrounds and much more. Search and rescue services would encompass all park types and will range from incidents such as: critically missing children and adults, lost hikers/bikers/campers, mentally or physically disabled patrons. Search and rescue services also may be utilized when trying to locate criminals who are attempting to avoid capture and arrest. The Montgomery County Division's search and rescue services will provide services to our communities and allied agencies all over the national capital region.

- III. Policy

When requested or notified, M-NC Park Police Search and Rescue (SAR) team members will participate in search and rescue missions to recover lost persons, property, evidence, or fugitives.

- IV. Procedures

- A. Initial Patrol Response

1. A search is an emergency. It is time critical when searching for a missing person. The prompt actions of the first arriving patrol officers are critical for a successful search.
 - a. First arriving officers must complete the Search Urgency Form (Attachment 1) and the Missing Persons Checklist (Attachment 2).
 - b. The shift supervisor or watch commander will evaluate the situation and initiate a SAR response if required. This will include priority analysis following the guidelines in the Search Urgency Form (Attachment 1). The senior officer on the scene will assume the duties of the incident commander until relieved by the shift supervisor, command staff, or search and rescue coordinator.

-
2. A search is an investigation. Until any criminal elements are ruled out, officers should be mindful that missing persons may be a result of a criminal act. If criminal elements are determined, Investigative Services will be notified.
 3. Searches have the possibility of expanding into large scale operations. Complete and thorough initial responses will assist with search operations. Until located, the possibility of the victim being injured, sick or in need of prompt help must be recognized. Do not discontinue a search because it is dark, this is a crucial time when the victim will typically remain in one location, and therefore, may be easier to find. Time and weather make any search an emergency as they decrease the survivability factors and destroy clues that may lead to the victim's location.
 4. Officers should take a systematic approach when arriving on the scene of a critical missing/ missing person. The following actions should be taken:
 - a. Conduct a complete initial interview of all witnesses and complainants.
 - b. In the case of a missing child, determine if the incident is an abduction and warrants an Amber Alert.
 - c. Document the date and times of actions taken.
 - d. Determine and secure the point last seen or the point last known of the victim. Secure and protect the scent from being destroyed.
 - e. Conduct initial searches of the scene.
 - f. Request the SAR coordinator, if not already requested
 - g. Request a SAR canine
 - h. Request any available aviation assets to search the area when appropriate.
 - i. Secure all scent articles that were touched by the victim/ missing person.
 - 1.) Always use gloves.
 - 2.) Keep articles separated and do not allow them to be cross contaminated.
 - 3.) Place inside of a clear plastic or brown bag.
 - j. Canvas neighborhood.
 - k. Contact any family and/or friends to determine a potential location.
 - l. Check areas that may be of interest/frequented by the victim/missing person.
 - m. Determine if the victim/missing person drives or utilizes mass transit.

-
- B. Search and Rescue Operations
1. Upon notification of a missing persons, the SAR manager or SAR coordinator will provide guidance until a determination is made to deploy [i.e. investigative search, missing persons or critical missing search]
 2. SAR management team/rescue coordinator will deploy as a team. If search coordinator or manager can't deploy, they may be able to assist remotely via MDT (operating mapping software, etc.)
 3. Search and rescue coordinator will be aware of all search and rescue assets to include status and deployment readiness levels.
 4. Upon arrival, an incident command post will be established, and search managers/SAR coordinator will run the search in accordance with best practices and training. Park police resources, allied agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO) may be called in to assist during the search. (Only official NGO's may be used under Natural Resource Police (NRP) and Maryland State Police (MSP) lists)
 - a. Resources may be used from both Park Police Divisions.
 - b. Park Police resources can include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.) Search and rescue managers/coordinators
 - 2.) K-9 teams
 - 3.) Mounted units
 - 4.) Drone teams
 - 5.) ATV's
 - 6.) Boats
 - 7.) SAT/SERT members
 - 8.) Mobile command post
 - 9.) Park Rangers/Park Police Volunteers
 - 10.) Bike patrol
- V. Search and Rescue Team
- A. Each deployable member of the SAR team will be trained in the following areas:
 1. Day and night land navigation
 2. Wilderness survival

-
3. Search tactics
 4. National Incident Management System Incident Command System (NIMS ICS) 200
 5. Search resources
 6. Tracking awareness
 7. Search philosophy
 8. Crime scene preservation
 9. Personal safety
 10. First aid- Basic Life Support (BLS) and/or Advanced Life Support (ALS)
- B. Training may be law enforcement or civilian based training regarding search and rescue. Training will be in according with the best practices for search and rescue.
- C. Canines may be designated and trained accordingly to best standardized practices:
1. Lost/missing person
 2. Air scent
 3. Trailing/tracking
 4. Missing person recovery
 5. Human remains detection (HRD)
 6. Water recovery
 7. Water search
- D. Mounted Units will be designated and trained accordingly to mounted searches best standardized practices.
- VI. Mutual Aid and Call Outs: Out of Bi-County/Region Search Assistance
- A. Any request for mutual aid outside of the Montgomery and Prince George's County Divisions will be routed through the Chief, Park Police Division or designee. All personnel deployed to assist in a mutual aid response will be responsible to properly equip themselves for sustained field operations. When feasible, all responding units/officers will travel in a convoy or meet at a designated location.
- B. Upon arrival at the staging area, team members will remain with their vehicles and equipment under directed otherwise. The SAR Officer in Charge will obtain information and direction from the incident commander or establish incident command if not already established.

- C. Upon release from the incident and prior to departure, all Division equipment will be inventoried. When feasible, all SAR units will travel in a convoy for the return trip, to ensure the safety of all staff. Staff may delay departure from the incident to facilitate a safe return.
- D. Documentation - All paperwork will be retained in a case file by the SAR commander and/or Investigative Services.
- E. Roles and Responsibilities for M-NCPP Communications Section - Upon notification of a search incident, Communications will work in conjunction with officers on the scene. This will include:
 - 1. Assisting in contacting aviation resources
 - 2. Broadcasting to allied agencies in the area where the individual went missing or the suspect was last seen.
 - 3. Obtaining updated lookouts, medical conditions etc.
 - 4. Ensure proper CAD notes are taken.
 - 5. Handling normal dispatch requests during the SAR operations.
 - 6. The Communications Section will also handle any database entries per State/Federal law and direction of policy.

Attachments:

- 1. Search Urgency Form
- 2. Missing Persons Checklist
- 3. Missing Person Questionnaire
- 4. Search and Rescue Team Operations Chart



Issuing Authority: _____
Chief Darryl W. McSwain
Maryland-National Capital Park Police
Montgomery County Division

End of Directive