

SEARCH AND RESCUE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

RESPONSIBILITY/JURISDICTION TRAINING

SAR TEAM/FIRE DEPARTMENTS MISSION REPORT

RESPONSIBILITY/JURISDICTION

- 1) Who has responsibility for Search and Rescue (SAR) operations on DCNR State Park or State Forest lands?
DCNR Bureau of Forestry or Bureau of State Parks is responsible for conducting all SAR operations on State Forest or State Park land. The Department may occasionally delegate some responsibilities to cooperating agencies/organizations but DCNR is ultimately responsible for SAR.
- 2) Does DCNR have jurisdiction for Search and Rescue activities across the Commonwealth?
No. Act 18, which created DCNR in 1995, ensures DCNR provides for the safety of its visitors on State Forest or State Park lands. No references to conducting SAR activities, programs or trainings outside of DCNR lands exist in the Act.

TRAINING

- 3) Does DCNR administer SAR Courses/Training for non-Commonwealth employees?
No. Other providers may be contacted for courses/training sessions. DCNR may provide Information regarding Department policies, procedures, etc. during a training session but will not conduct or lead trainings specifically for non-agency personnel. The following is a list of partner organizations that offer SAR Courses to the private sector:
NASAR <http://www.nasar.org/>
Bucks County Community College
PSARC <http://www.psarc.org/>
Civil Air Patrol
There may be additional sources for training not included on this list.
- 4) Do state certified courses or training exist for SAR?
No. Because state laws regarding SAR do not exist, no single agency in the state has the authority to certify land-based, wilderness SAR courses or training.
- 5) Where can I find a study or curriculum guide for the Field Team Leader (FTL) or Field Team Member (FTM) tests?
Curriculum or study guides do not exist for Field Team Leader or Field Team Member tests. Those interested in becoming a FTL or FTM should become familiar with the FTL/FTM Performance Expectation Guidelines before taking the test. For a detailed explanation of FTL Guidelines visit:

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/ucmprd1/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_008978.pdf

For a detailed explanation of FTM Guidelines visit:

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/ucmprd1/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_008980.pdf

6) **Where can I take the FTL or FTM tests?**

The best time to take an FTL or FTM test is during the PA Search & Rescue Council's "SAR-EX" event held at the end of April/beginning of May every year. DCNR-approved evaluators hold testing sessions at this event. Should you desire to take the test at a different time of year, please contact the Bureau of Forestry or Bureau of State Parks SAR Coordinator. Usually evaluators will hold a session when an adequate number of students express an interest and agree upon a suitable date and time. Additional information on SAR-EX can be found by logging on to: PSARC <http://www.psarc.org/>.

7) **Where can we receive instruction for SAR courses?**

Various agencies/organizations conduct SAR courses when given enough advanced notice and an adequate number of students. PSARC, NASAR, Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and various community colleges offer SAR courses throughout the Commonwealth.

8) **How do you become a DCNR Evaluator to proctor FTL or FTM tests?**

DCNR has developed standards to become a DCNR-approved evaluator. The standards appear on the Bureau of Forestry's internet page under "Recreation". Click on the "Volunteer" section to view the standards.

SAR TEAM/FIRE DEPARTMENTS

9) **How do I start a new SAR team?**

Numerous SAR teams operate throughout the Commonwealth under the umbrella organization of the PA Search and Rescue Council (PSARC) and numerous SAR teams operate independently. Please contact PSARC or an independent SAR team for further guidance on developing a new SAR team.

10) **How do I join a SAR team?**

Most private SAR teams have certain standards, skill levels and experience that members must possess. Please contact the specific team you may have an interest in joining for further information. See the PSARC website listing of Member Teams at the following link:

http://www.psarc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=36&Itemid=15

11) **Are there opportunities for my SAR team to "practice" (including mock searches) with DCNR employees?**

Forest Districts and Parks often conduct mock searches to practice coordinating SAR efforts. Non-DCNR agencies/organizations should contact their local Forest District or Park to determine opportunities for SAR teams to participate in mock searches and training exercises. A list of State Parks contacts can be found by logging on to:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/contactus/park/index.htm>. State Forest Contacts can be found by logging on to: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/stateforests/index.aspx>.

13) **How can my Fire Department be better prepared to assist DCNR with searches on DCNR lands?**

DCNR desires to use trained personnel on all DCNR searches. Please encourage any fire department member interested in search and rescue to have basic search and rescue training and Field Team Member or Field Team Leader certification. Please contact your local forest district or park office for additional information.

MISSION REPORTS

12) Should my SAR team or organization fill out a mission report form if we were involved in a search operation?

Yes. Please refer this task to team leaders or chiefs. Only wilderness SAR missions should be submitted.