



Montana Sheriffs & Peace Officers Association
PO Box 794 • Helena, MT 59624 • (406) 443-5669 • www.mspsoa.org

Search and Rescue Subcommittee

OPERATING PROCEDURES

1 – Functions

The overarching functions of the standing Search and Rescue Subcommittee are as follows:

- Conduct quarterly Search and Rescue meetings.
- Provide approval for mission, equipment, and training reimbursement. Details enumerated in the reimbursement requirements document.
- Provide training recommendations, assistance, and coordination.
- Liaison between established Search and Rescue Teams, the state Disaster and Emergency Services Division, elected Sheriffs, and the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association Board of Directors.
- Provide recommendations to the MSPOA Board regarding legislative changes to improve Search and Rescue functions and funding in Montana.

2 – Composition and Membership

2.1 – Eligibility

- All recognized Search and Rescue teams, per MCA -7-32-235, are eligible to attend meetings, participate, and vote.

2.2 – Chair and Vice Chair

- The Chair and Vice Chair shall be appointed by the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association President and Board of Directors.
- The terms are indefinite and at the discretion of the MSPOA Board, Chair and Vice Chair.

3 – Conduct of Meetings

3.1 – Frequency

- The standing Search and Rescue subcommittee shall meet four times per year on a regular, quarterly basis. If necessary, additional meetings of the subcommittee may be held, either in person or via remote means.

3.2 – Organization and hosting of meetings and meeting expenses

- The Chair will establish the dates, times, and locations of the quarterly meetings.
- The meetings of the Search and Rescue subcommittee may be hosted by an established Search and Rescue team or state DES, as requested by the Chair.
- When possible, both an in-person and a remote option will be available as attendance options.
- Members of the subcommittee are responsible for making their own arrangements for and covering any expenses related to, their attendance of the meetings of the standing subcommittee.
- Subcommittee meetings will follow Robert’s Rules of Order.

3.3 – Documentation

- All necessary documentation for the meetings of the subcommittee will be prepared and distributed by the Chair to the members. MSPOA administrative office will be available to assist with meeting notices, materials and minutes.
- Agenda – The draft agenda for the meetings shall be developed by the Chair, Vice Chair, and/or MSPOA administrative office and sent to members of the subcommittee prior to the meeting.
- Subcommittee members provide suggestions for agenda items, meeting topics, and emerging issues.
- Minutes – The minutes of each standing Search and Rescue subcommittee meeting shall be finalized in a timely fashion and circulated to the members of the subcommittee and the MSPOA Board.

3.4 – Attendance

- Attendance is necessary for decision making and voting.
- Quorum constitutes members present.

3.5 – Decision Making and Voting

- Voting – Each county with a recognized Search and Rescue Team is entitled to ONE (1) vote per team. The voting member does not have to be enumerated prior to the meeting.
- Dissention – Should there be disagreement between two members of an established Search and Rescue Team, the member representing the Sheriff’s Office shall supersede the volunteer member as all Search and Rescue teams operate at the behest of the elected Sheriff (MCA 7-32-235).

4 – State Reimbursement

4.1 – Account Balance

- The Chair shall report the current Search and Rescue Account Balances, Authority, and available reimbursement amount for the Motor Vehicle Account and the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Account, based on availability of information provided by state DES.

4.2 – Mission Reimbursement (MCA 10-3-801)

- Decisions will be made per statutorily defined requirements and the SAR subcommittee reimbursement criteria.
- Reimbursement requests, with proper documentation, must be submitted within 90 days of the mission.
- Reimbursement requests shall be submitted to Jake Ganieany via email (Jake.Ganieany@mt.gov), using the appropriate form ([available online](#)).
- Reimbursement requests will be voted on by members.

4.3 – Equipment Reimbursement (MCA 10-3-801)

- Decisions will be made per statutorily defined requirements and the SAR subcommittee reimbursement criteria.
- Reimbursement requests, with proper documentation, must be submitted by April 30 each year.
- Reimbursement requests shall be submitted to Jake Ganieany via email (Jake.Ganieany@mt.gov), using the appropriate form ([available online](#)).
- Reimbursement requests will be voted on by members.

4.4 – Training Reimbursement (MCA 10-3-801)

- Decisions will be made per statutorily defined requirements and the SAR subcommittee reimbursement criteria.
- Reimbursement requests, with proper documentation, must be submitted within 90 days of the training.
- Reimbursement requests shall be submitted to Jake Ganieany via email (Jake.Ganieany@mt.gov), using the appropriate form ([available online](#)).
- Reimbursement requests will be voted on by members.

4.5 – All voted on by members present.

State of Montana Responsibilities

MONTANA DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

There is an account in the state special revenue fund established in 17-2-102. The account must be administered by the Disaster and Emergency Services Division of the Department of Military Affairs exclusively for the purposes of search and rescue as provided in this section. The funds are used by Disaster and Emergency Services to defray the costs of local search and rescue units for search and rescue missions conducted through a county sheriff's office at a maximum of \$12,000 for each rescue mission, regardless of the number of counties or county search and rescue organizations involved. The remaining money in the account may be used by Disaster and Emergency Services Division for reimbursement of expenses related to the training of search and rescue volunteers, and to match local funds for the purchase of equipment for use by local search and rescue units at a maximum of \$12,000 for each unit in a calendar year. The cost-sharing match must be 35% local funds to 65% from the account.

SAR Best Practices

- Sheriffs are responsible for verifying qualifications and certifications of all SAR personnel used on a mission
- SAR committee encourages SAR personnel throughout Montana to obtain education and training
- SAR committee encourages SAR personnel to follow the standards used by the National Association of Search and Rescue and the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association