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### Technical Rescue Personnel Guidelines

**SUMMARY:** The Technical Rescue Personnel Guidelines are intended to be a guideline for team members of Technical Teams and/or for personnel that are intending to join a Technical Team. It contains basic information to help new members and IC's that have little or no experience on technical rescue missions and is provided as a guide to benefit all involved. Each team provides training and this document is not intended to guide team policy or procedures. Training, safety, content, methodology and proficiency are defined by the teams themselves.

**SAFETY FIRST:** Each member of the TEAM is responsible for his/her own safety as well as that of other team members and the patient/subject. The Team Leader shall resolve any conflicts in opinions or procedures. The **(IC)** Incident Commander may appoint a Safety Officer who would have direct responsibility for overseeing the safety aspects of the mission.

**TEAM:** A Technical Search Team should consist of two or more team members and their equipment. A Technical Rigging Rescue team should consist of a minimum of two Technical Search Teams.

**TEAM LEADER: (TL)** The Team Leader should be a skilled and trained person who has experience in outdoor environments, SAR and is a good leader for those who will be working under his/her direction.

**RESCUE LEADER: (RL)** In the ICS structure, this position may be titled the Rescue Branch Director or Rescue Director. The ICS director in this position, working in the field may be called the **RL**. For the purpose of conformity, this position will be referred to as the **RL**. Close communication between the Incident Base **(IB)** and this person is imperative.

The **RL** should be a highly skilled and trained person who, in addition to meeting the above requirements, has extensive experience in rope & rigging work, mechanical advantage systems, system loading and safety factors of rigging systems. He/she should have the ability to lead and organize people in extreme conditions and be an efficient problem solver. This person should have experience in Mountaineering, Rock Climbing or Caving. When search and recovery takes place in areas that are subject to Avalanche danger, the **RL** should have experience working in avalanche conditions, Avalanche Level 1 Training preferred. Any personnel change in the **RL** shall be communicated to the **IB**.

**RESCUE TECHNICIAN:** The rescue technician shall have met the individual requirements of their team for basic proficiency in technical rescue (see training below).

**OPERATION:** Designation of the **RL** will take place in the field when multiple teams converge to effect a technical rescue/evacuation. The **IB** will request that a **RL** be designated at this time and the **IB** should be notified as soon as a **RL** is assigned.

There may be **TL's** assigned to each search team, however only one **RL** should be assigned to the recovery portion of any mission. The **RL** should report frequently to the **IB** and make recommendations based on the terrain, time and weather conditions. Remember, if things are not going well, for any reason, the **IB** should be made aware of any change in status of the teams in the field.

To ensure proper command and control of the technical portion of the mission, once contact with the subject has occurred, multiple agencies or teams working together shall render operational command to the **RL** in charge of the recovery. All aspects of the recovery of the subject shall be coordinated by the **RL**. There may be times when the Litter Tender or other team members take operational control of the extraction. Safety is one situation where anyone may take control of the scene.

Consideration should be given to the urgency of the subjects' need to be extracted relative to the safety of the teams.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Technical teams in the field may use tactical frequencies during technical operations. Frequencies should be provided in advance to the **IB**. State SAR frequencies shall remain monitored at all times by the technical teams in the field.

**TRAINING:** Technical Rescue Personnel should have enough training to provide self-arrest and extrication from elevated or confined locations and have basic skills that are required to safely & proficiently extract others from such locations. These skills are to include, but are not limited to: Knots, Anchors, Patient Packaging, Belay, Haul Systems, Personal Protective Equipment, Safety and Avalanche Awareness.

**SEARCHING:** While search techniques will vary greatly in extreme terrain, care should be taken in order to protect team members from hazards that exist in the vertical environment.

Team members should maintain contact with other team members, either visual, audible or by radio. No area should be searched that would compromise the searchers safety. In order to maintain safety, areas that are subject to hazards should be searched using proper equipment or by optional available methods.

Searching is a matter of getting an assigned area thoroughly searched. Team members should be familiar with the various search techniques such as sound sweeps and critical separation.

**LOCATING SUBJECT:** When a subject is located, the **IB** should be notified immediately. An assessment of the subject's condition should be made, then whatever necessary medical aid you are prepared to offer should be administered. As soon as possible a complete report on the subject's condition and an extrication plan, weather and terrain conditions should be communicated back to the **IB**.

**INJURIES/ACCIDENTS:** Report all injuries and accidents to the **IB** immediately.

**EQUIPMENT:** Teams should not go out without the minimum PACE gear, radios, GPS units, and maps. All technical team members should have their own personal equipment. (see optional gear list for technical team members) This equipment shall have approval ratings. Each team member must have proper training and education to use this equipment.

**Approvals:** Personal rescue equipment used in the field should be approved for its use by a recognized testing and approval agency such as CE, EU, UIAA, ANSI or ASTM.

**Examples:**

UIAA: Union Internationale des Association d'Alpinisme

EU: European Union

CE: Consultants Europe

ANSI: American National Standards Institute

ASTM: American Society for Testing and Materials

Equipment that is used by technical rescue teams on technical rescues should have some type of listing or labeling identifying it for its intended use. Soft material such as webbing and cordage will not be labeled but will have specifications available by manufacturer that will identify its minimum breaking strength. Equipment should be used in an appropriate manner and in its intended application, not to exceed the listed ratings of any equipment or materials. It is necessary to understand your team's safety factors, and how to properly implement them in the field.

**GEAR FOR TECHNICAL TEAM MEMBERS**

This equipment is in addition to the basic PACE equipment list.

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:**

Harness

Rock Helmet

Leather Work Gloves

Personal Ascenders: Prusiks or Mechanical Ascenders

Rappel Device

#5 Personal Locking Carabineers

#2 Non Locking Carabineers

Extra Webbing or Cordalettes. 25' Minimum 50' is Better

Sunscreen

Radio: With 155.160 and team frequency capabilities and extra batteries.

Must be compatible with helmet or use a speaker mike.

FRS or GMRS radio (optional but good for intra team use)

Location: GPS

Forest and USGS maps of area

Small stove with fuel and pot

Sunglasses/Goggles

Trail marking tape. Marking the trail for support teams, remove after mission or on exit.

Gaiters (optional depending on season and other equipment)

Tarp style space blanket 6' X 8'

## WINTER GEAR FOR TECHNICAL TEAM MEMBERS

### From Ski / Snowshoe SAR Guidelines Individual Winter Gear and Clothing

Boots – Winter weight providing warmth and stability  
Head Cover – several layers (coat should have a hood as well)  
Extra Socks – Layering system with extras  
Gloves or Mittens – Layering system with extras  
Wind/Snow Shell – top w/hood and pants  
Middle Insulation – be sure to have extra  
Inner wicking layer  
Hiking Poles  
Whistle – not metal  
Tarp style space blanket (not thin foil except as an extra)  
Pencil and paper – pens freeze in the winter  
Parachute cord – 25 feet  
Insulating pad – at least large enough to sit on  
Field repair kit – for bindings & poles etc  
Snowshoes – w/ice cleats or Skis w/climbing skins  
Snow Shovel – 2 per team  
Litter (capable of snow use) and sleeping bag available at base

**Warm food, drink and clothing should be considered for subjects.**

Snow travel gear needs to be strong and large enough to support the weight of the searcher and heavy pack in soft snow. Boots should provide solid ankle support. Either skis w/climbing skins or snowshoes are acceptable, but the searcher should be **proficient** in their use.

## WINTER GEAR FOR ENTERING AVALANCE AREAS Required For All Participants

Avalanche Beacon  
Search Probes  
Snow Shovel

Optional: Avalungs

This equipment is specialized and requires specialized training to properly & effectively use when locating a buried subject.

Note:

**REMEMBER:** THERE MIGHT BE THE OCCASION YOU MIGHT HAVE TO SPEND THE NIGHT OUT WITH THE SUBJECT. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE PROPER SURVIVAL GEAR.

Not all team members will necessarily utilize this format. However, SAR Team members must keep in mind how they might transport these items when called upon to do so.