

GUIDELINES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR SNOWMOBILE SEARCH TEAMS

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. Any differences on procedures that can not be resolved by the TEAM LEADER should be resolved by the Incident Commander.

TEAM. A TEAM shall consist of not less than two people and their snowmobiles

TEAM LEADER. Before leaving the Incident Base a TEAM LEADER will be appointed. This can be changed only by the Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader to report frequently to the Incident Base and make recommendations based on the terrain and weather conditions. Remember, if things are not going well, for what ever reason, discuss with the Base. DO NOT become part of the problem.

GEAR. Teams will not go out without the minimum PACE gear, radios, GPS units, maps, and compass as well as necessary repair gear for the units. It is recommended the teams have all the gear as shown on the attached equipment list. All members will wear helmets. Be sure to have snacks, matches and knife in your pockets.

SEARCHING. As snowmobiles are somewhat noisy they can be heard by lost subjects but conversely with the units running the searchers cannot hear a subject calling. Frequent stops to listen and look for tracks and other sign are very important. Searching is not a matter of speed but rather a matter of getting an assigned area thoroughly searched for the subject(s).

Team members should be familiar with the various search techniques such as sound sweeps and critical separation.

Search teams will not split up into groups of less that two and then only with the advance permission of the Incident Base.

Use trail tape with the team number, date, time and direction of travel. to mark your trail. (a Sharpie works fine for this) Do not use white trail tape.

LOCATING SUBJECT. When a subject is located, immediately notify the Base. Give what necessary medical aid you are prepared to offer then give the Base a complete report on the subject's condition, the exact location, weather and terrain conditions. You will probably be asked about evacuation and any nearby helicopter landing zones. If you are not familiar with helicopter requirements the Base can help.

If the subject appears to be deceased, notify the Base, using the predetermined death code. But remember that severe hypothermia can slow down all the body functions so it may be necessary to follow standard hypothermia treatment depending on the circumstances. Regardless, the Incident Base will get properly trained people to your location as necessary.

HIKING OUT. The odds of this happening are very slim but if it is necessary make sure you take your day/fanny pack with your emergency supplies. Before you start out make sure you notify the Incident Base your position and the route you plan on taking. It may be that the Incident Base can figure a way to have you transported. If hiking out, make sure you mark your route with trail tape marked with team number, direction of travel, date and time.

INJURIES/ACCIDENTS Report all injuries and accidents to the Incident Commander immediately. The Base can usually be part of your solution.

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BASIC GEAR FOR SNOWMOBILE TEAM MEMBERS

(BASIC PACE REQUIREMENTS)

Boots appropriate for season. Not athletic shoes

Extra Clothing as appropriate for season including;

Head cover

Gloves or mittens

Extra socks

Poncho or rain jacket with hood

Extra layers for cold (middle layer)

Non-cotton inner layer

Note; Clothing must follow the three-layer system. Cotton is not appropriate for any layer except for some cases in the summer time only and then not for the inner or outer layers. Polar fleece or wool is the best.

Food for 24 hours

Minimum of 2 quarts of water

Knife

Pack

Fire starter

Compass with 5-degree accuracy

Whistle

Signal mirror

Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries

Personal first aid kit

Space blanket

Pencil or pen and paper

10 feet on 1" nylon webbing

Leather work gloves (for working with ropes and a litter)

Watch

These items are those required for PACE Certification for Ground Searchers. Most all are applicable for members of snowmobile teams. There should be a good reason for not including any of the above in your personal gear. Some items may be duplicated in the following list.

ADDITIONAL SNOWMOBILE SEARCH TEAM GEAR

(A Team consists of two persons and two snowmobile units)

GPS with Instruction book	One per Team, almost mandatory
Radio with 155.160 capabilities. person. or use a great asset. participate with	With extra battery, A must. One per Must be compatible with helmet speaker mike. HAM radio is a Teams WILL NOT be allowed to out a radio.
FRS Radio, good for intra-team use	For Each Person*
Tools and Repair Parts	As appropriate for each unit
Small Day or Fanny Pack	One per person
Snowshoes	One pair per person
Snow shovel	One per team
Tow Strap	One per unit
Extra Fuel and Oil	One per team*
Large Spot Light	One per team*
Small Propane Stove, Pot and Fuel	One per team *
Insulating Pad	One per unit
Tarp Style Space Blanket 6' X 8'	One per unit
Tree Saw	One per team*
Maps, Forest and USGS Quads for area	Set per team, with map case
Emergency Food for 24-48 Hours	One per person
Trail Marking Tape	One roll per unit
Emergency Flares (highway type)	3 per Unit
Helmet, with insulating liner and face shield	One per person
Heavy Gloves or Mitts	2 nd pair per person
Snowsuit or Bibs and Jacket	Each persons choice
Goggles	Compatible with helmet
Webbing, 25ft. of 1 inch	One per unit*
Gaiters	Will depend on pants or snow suit
Flashlight	With extra batteries * optional items

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EQUIPMENT FOR RECOVERY / EVACUATION TEAM

(aka Mule Team)

Sled	One per "mule team". For evacuation of subject or for taking in an EMT or Ropes and technical gear.
Technical Rescue Gear	Rope pack with gear and harnesses, if team qualified in this skill
Come-A-Long	Cable and/or recovery strap, snatch block etc.
Bivouac Gear	4 man tent, sleeping bags, blankets
Medical Gear	Trauma pack, oxygen as per teams qualifications.
Stokes Litter,	With shield, straps, tarps, blankets etc.
Bow or Tree Saw	
Chain Saw	With fuel, oil, tools and extra chain
Miscellaneous	Avalanche probes, extra snowshoes, shovels, fire extinguisher

NOTES

Not all teams will necessarily utilize the Recovery/Evacuation Team format. However each SAR Team must keep in mind how they might transport these items when called upon to do so. One contributor in the northern part of the State has one team remain at the Base with this equipment ready to go as needed. Others stated that they could return to Base to pickup the gear. Each team should recognize the differences and write their SOPs according to their own capabilities and preferences.

All contributors agreed that with snowmobiles, weight is a significant factor. Teams should have all the itemized equipment available and adjust what is carried on a specific assignment by what might be required by the terrain, weather and assignment.

This information has been prepared by a Committee of recognized New Mexico Snowmobile SAR Team members and the New Mexico Emergency Services Council. This is to be considered only as a guideline to assist teams in developing their own Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Equipment requirements. Different areas of the state might require different standards; consequently the responsibility of the SOP and Equipment requirements rests upon each team