



"So Others May Live"

Whatcom County Search and Rescue Council Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

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Revised 2/1/25
Approved 3/5/25

Section 1 Purpose of SOP's:

In addition to the Whatcom County Search and Rescue Council (WCSARC) bylaws, these SOPs are intended to improve council processes, procedures, and communications between Units.

This SOP defines the roles and responsibilities within WCSARC Units to:

- Manage jointly owned facilities and equipment.
- Coordinate activities affecting all Units such as fund raising, universal, and publicity.

Section 2 Security

Building Access

- **Main Entry Door:** Minimum security.
Access to classroom, mailroom, and bathrooms.
- **Equipment Bays:** Minimum security.
Access to vehicle bays and equipment in the bays.
- **Council Equipment Room:** Minimum security.
Access to SAR council equipment in this room.
- **Office:** High Security.
The office will have the highest security. Access is intended only for the presidents, secretary, one Training Officer of each member Unit in the council and all Council Executive Board members. SAR coordinators will also have access to this area.
- **Radio Room:** Medium security
This room is secured by keypad and follows electronic key protocol.

Distribution of Keys

A team of two council appointed members will be responsible for issuing the keys. These two people will be responsible for managing key system.

- Procedure for requesting and authorizing keys.
- Request in writing from the Unit president to the council. Include the level of access desired in the written request.
- Once approved, the member must pay the Council approved deposit and sign Key Policy form in exchange for the key.
- Keys may be turned off at the discretion of the WCSARC Executive Board.
- Notification of turned off keys will be sent to the president of the member's Unit via email.

Logons and passwords

Account logons and passwords related to WCSARC operations must be made available to the security designee within 30-days of creation or change. Said logon information will be stored in the designated platform in a secure location.

Section 3 Meeting Room Use

Procedures for reserving and use of the meeting room

The SAR building is used by Units and personnel that belong to the Whatcom County SAR Council.

Reservations are for the meeting room only. Units and Members shall have access to the office, bays, and equipment at all times.

Scheduling the use of the meeting room is on a "first come first serve" basis withing active SAR Units. That reservation will include date, time (beginning and end, including set up and cleanup) and Unit annotated on the Council Meeting Room Reservation Calendar in the Council Approved Online Format

Any mission or emergency has priority use of the building and supersedes any scheduled event.

If another Unit/member has the meeting room reserved and you need to use the restroom, office, or equipment room, be courteous and do so with minimum interruption.

The building is owned by WCSAR Council and use by any partner agencies is by permission only.

Mission Numbers

The SAR Building is available for all Units to use for meetings, training, maintenance of Unit equipment, etc. (Please see schedule for availability).

To use the building or do any of the above (on or off site), you MUST have an active mission number filed with the State through the Whatcom County Division of Emergency Management. cdjohnso@co.whatcom.wa.us and WCDEM@co.whatcom.wa.us.

All mission numbers require a properly completed sign in sheet.

After each meeting or event, a signed copy of the sign-in sheet MUST be sent to the DEM, within 48 hours. File the original in accordance with the Unit's polices and email a copy to the WCSAR Council at Council.Secretary@wcsar.org.

Violation of these procedures could result in the offending Unit's keys being turned

off. Section 4 Fuel Cards

Fuel cards are provided by the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) access to these cards is regulated by the Sheriff's Office. Use in accordance with the most current fuel card agreement form. Access to these cards is limited to Council Chair, Vice Chair, President of each SAR Council Unit, and up to four additional Unit members in good standing approved by the Unit president and Council. Fuel cards will be in a lock box or safe secured in the equipment room. Each authorized member will be granted access after signing the WCSO/WCSAR agreement. The authorization and agreement will be renewed annually.

Section 5 Equipment Decontamination Procedures

After a mission or training, members should follow OSHA decontamination procedures as outline at <https://osha.gov/hazardous-waste/decontamination>.

Section 6 Meeting Process

Meetings will start on time with a safety brief.

Meetings will be led by the Council Chair or designee.

Meetings will follow the agenda.

Voting will be held in accordance with bylaws.

Topics on the agenda and raised at the meeting will be discussed as time allows and rescheduled as appropriate.

Minutes will be disseminated to Unit Leaders and Delegates and published on the council designated platform in a timely manner.

Section 7 Member Unit Training Categories & Requirements

The Sheriff's Department expects a base level of training and skills when Search & Rescue members respond to a SAR mission. This document outlines the minimum requirements for each member of the SAR Council. Units are free to add additional requirements depending on the tasks and skill set each Unit expects of their members.

Unless otherwise noted, each item must be renewed every 5 years.

Novice:

Members achieving Novice level training are only allowed to attend meetings and trainings. On very rare occasions when the deputy asks for more manpower, Novice members will qualify for the 'All Call' requests.

- Background check complete.
 - WCSO requirement
 - 5-year cycle
- DEM number issued by the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management.
 - Washington State Emergency Management requirement
 - 5-year cycle (coincides with background check)
- Physical & Mental Fitness class and acknowledgment.
 - WAC Requirement
- ICS 100 certificate.
 - WCSO requirement
 - Renewal is not required
- IS 700 certificate. (NIMS)
 - WCSO requirement
 - Renewal is not required
- Unit orientation to training pipeline and callout procedure.
 - SAR Council requirement
 - Per each Unit of membership

Support: (On scene operations support)

Members achieving Support level training are allowed to respond to missions and provide support at mission base. Support members are not qualified for field work, including spotters, windshield surveys, and remote relays.

- Novice requirements.
- Base Camp Orientation.
 - WAC requirement
- SAR Radio Communications training.
 - SAR Council requirement
 - Per each Unit of membership
- First Aid, CPR (including AED) certificate from a nationally recognized provider.
 - WAC Requirement
 - Renewal cycle is based on issuing organization.
- Blood Borne Pathogens class and acknowledgement.
 - WAC Requirement
- Basic Helo class.
 - WAC Requirement
- SARGAR

Field:

Members achieving Field level training are allowed to respond to missions and deploy to the field within the boundaries of each Unit's specific training. Only field qualified personnel can leave base.

- Support requirements.
- Survival.
 - WAC Requirement
 - Practical exercise per each Unit of membership.
 - Survival training is unique to each Unit's field of work and Unit expectations.
- Navigation.
 - WAC Requirement
 - Practical exercise including Map, Compass, GPS and SARTopo, per each Unit of membership.
 - Navigation is unique to each Unit's field of work and Unit expectations.
- Search Techniques.
 - WAC Requirement
 - Classroom and practical exercise per each Unit of membership.
 - Search techniques is unique to each Unit's field of work and Unit expectations.
- Rescue Techniques.
 - WAC Requirement
 - Classroom and practical exercise per each Unit of membership.
 - Rescue techniques is unique to each Unit's field of work and Unit expectations.
- Crime Scene.
 - WAC Requirement
 - Classroom and practical exercise per each Unit of membership.
- Items that indicate "per each Unit of membership" means each Unit should define the applicable objectives for that category for their Unit. For example, survival for a BMR member is different than survival for a 4x4 member or a Dive member (which wouldn't have anything applicable to wilderness survival). The Unit specified objectives and training criteria shall be written and available for review by the Council and Sheriff's Office to ensure they meet safety standards.

Because each Unit may have different criteria and objectives for these courses, multi-Unit members must participate in each Unit's course to qualify for that credential. For example, a member that is a 4x4 and STS shall take survival with the 4x4 Unit criteria and also take survival with the STS criteria.