

MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER DEFENSE FORCE

Section 1, Administration.

Latest Revision:
13 October 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution.

SUBJECT: Search and Rescue (SAR)
Administration and Operations, SOP 200.

1. REFERENCE:

- a. Fundamentals of Search and Rescue, most recent edition, National Association for Search and Rescue.
- b. Incident Command System (ICS).
- c. ADRP 5-0, The Operations Process.

2. GENERAL:

This SOP describes the procedures used for brigade SAR.

3. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this SOP is to establish procedures and methods used in the administration and execution of Search and Rescue (SAR) operations.

4. SCOPE:

This SOP is applicable to all VDF personnel who participate in VDF-SAR, or are in command of those who do.

5. RESPONSIBILITY:

Commanders and staff are responsible for assuring compliance with this SOP. Day-to-day administration of this SOP is the responsibility of the Brigade S3.

6. STANDARDS:

Section 1, Administration.
Section 2, Requests & Deployment.
Section 3, Personnel, Generally.
Section 4, Qualifications.
Section 5, Equipment.
Section 6, Physical Standards.
Section 7, Public Information.
Section 8, Instructors and Evaluators.
Section 9, Radio Communications.
Section 10, Notes.
Section 11, Updates & Implementation.

1.1 Applicability

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) applies to non-state/volunteer deployments.

1.2 Exclusive Brigade Jurisdiction

Search and rescue (SAR) operations will be handled by brigade staff similar to RSS and RSO.

The Brigade S3, or their designee, has exclusive jurisdiction over all search and rescue operations conducted in the State of Michigan on behalf of the MI-VDF. Battalions will not conduct their own search and rescue operations without written permission of the Brigade S3 (SAR training operations do not require approval—only actual SAR operations). If there is a question about whether an operation constitutes a search and rescue operation, and thus under the jurisdiction of the Brigade S3, the decision of the Brigade S3 as to jurisdiction is final.

1.3 Incident Command System

The defense force recognizes the Incident Command System (ICS) as the governing system for managing emergency services. Additionally, the VDF recognizes the methods and ancillary information compiled by the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) as instructive materials.

To the extent practical in light of our level of involvement in a SAR Operation, VDF will follow the standards and practices as stated in ICS.

Section 2, Requests & Deployment.

2.1 Requests for Assistance

Requests for SAR assistance received by any battalion should immediately forward the request to the brigade S3, or their designee. The S3 will forward the request for assistance to the brigade commander for approval.

2.2 Potential SAR activities

Any VDF member may notify the Brigade S3 *directly* of any SAR, or potential SAR, activity taking place anywhere in the State of Michigan. Sometimes communities do not publicize the need for SAR personnel very well, and we need to be vigilant.

2.3 Brigade SAR Team

All personnel who possess a current VDF Form 201 Qualification Card are eligible for call out on a brigade mission, and are considered members of the brigade SAR team. Call-outs for a brigade SAR team are made directly by the OIC using the list of VDF personnel who currently hold a valid F201. Like the RSO program administration, brigade will deal directly with the qualified personnel. *The purpose of this direct deployment is to decrease deployment time.*

Battalion Commanders must give approval for their personnel to join the Brigade SAR team (See Section 2.6). Battalion Commanders will sign the F200 upon initial application for a qualification card. Renewals and Updates of the qualification card do not require battalion approval; however, a Battalion Commander may have one of their personnel's qualification cards revoked—ending their participation on the Brigade SAR Team.

2.4 Personnel Participation & Assignment

The OIC, or their designee, will determine what personnel will be called for a mission. Duty assignments are to be assigned by the OIC, or their designee. *VDF personnel are not to show-up for an operation unless directed to do so by the OIC, or their designee.* The OIC can order any VDF personnel off the mission, and to return home, at any time. The OIC is responsible for all aspects of the mission including personnel safety.

2.5 Attachment & Detachment

When operating in a VDF/SAR Operation, all SAR personnel are automatically detached from their assigned unit and are attached to the brigade SAR team for the duration of the mission—as long as their battalion commander has not prohibited them doing so.

2.6 Battalion Commander Consent

All members of the brigade SAR team are deemed to have their battalion commander's permission to participate in brigade ES activities. If a battalion commander does not believe that a particular person should be permitted to participate in SAR activities—the battalion commander may contact the brigade S3 and have their F201 Qualification Card revoked.

Section 3, Personnel, Generally.

3.1 Officer-In-Charge (OIC)

The Brigade S3 will appoint an Officer-In-Charge (OIC) to oversee any emergency service operation. The Brigade S3 can remove and replace the OIC at any time, if desired.

3.2 Officer-of-the-Day (OD)

The OIC may elect to appoint an Officer-of-the-Day to handle security of equipment and materials—if needed.

3.3 Personnel Participation & Assignment

The OIC, or their designee, will determine what personnel will be called for a mission based on the mission requirements. The OIC will also determine the physical fitness category minimums that apply to the mission. Persons that do not meet the physical fitness category required for the execution of a safe mission cannot be called.

3.4 Availability

Personnel who wish to participate in defense force emergency services must be willing to accept email, phone calls, texts, etc., 24 hours-a-day concerning mission information. This does not mean that a person must be able to drop everything and immediately go to an incident location, but rather, is willing and able to take phone calls 24 hours-a-day. If a person is called and are not available—they only need to say so—and we will move on to the next person.

3.5 Brigade Roster

The email and phone numbers that the brigade emergency services team will use is the information contained on the brigade roster. Personnel should update their information on the brigade roster whenever their contact information changes.

3.6 Medical Information Form

All personnel shall have a medical form completed with current medical information, including emergency contacts, in the pocket under the US flag located on their uniform blouse.

Section 4, Qualifications.

4.1 Introduction and Purpose

Personnel who are deployed into an emergency situation must have the experience or know-how to execute certain tasks, and must also be physically fit to the degree required to complete the task safely. A person's qualifications and physical fitness category are recorded on the qualification card (Form 201).

4.2 Qualification Cards

The Defense Force Qualification Form (F201) is requested by filling out a F200. The F200 is a longer version of the form that documents your training and experience that is required in order to obtain the F201 card.

Again, personnel complete Form 200 that outlines their experience and training. The form is sent to the brigade S3, or their designee, who then verifies the information contained on the F200, and then a 201 card is issued.

All VDF ES ratings and specialty ratings will be recorded on a Form 201 which is issued by the brigade S3. Battalions are not authorized to issue SAR certifications. The ES team member will present this card to the designated VDF personnel when signing into a mission.

The F200 expires when either: 1) the person's qualifications have expired, *or* 2) when their medical certification has expired.

4.3 Overview of Qualifications

Those who plan to participate in VDF SAR will first need to obtain the rating: Emergency Services Level 1. This rating covers VDF SAR Standard Operating Procedures, general IC principles, and discusses general legal principles.

After the Emergency Services Level 1 rating is obtained personnel can pursue a specialty rating. The specialty ratings are:

- a. Incident Commander
- b. Ground Team Leader
- c. Ground Team Member
- d. Communications Officer
- e. Public Information Officer
- f. Liaison Officer
- g. Safety Officer
- h. Medical Officer

- i. Chaplain
- j. Other Specialties

4.4 Emergency Services Level 1

The purpose of the Emergency Services Level 1 is to give a starting point for personnel who are new to search and rescue. The test is an overview of IC principles, and VDF standard operating procedures. *The field experience required for this level is low because we want to encourage entry level participation.* However, even advanced personnel must take the Level 1 exam because it tests on the material in this SOP.

In order to receive an Emergency Service Level 1 rating, personnel must complete the following:

a. Must have 15 hours of search and rescue time logged in either a simulated or real-world SAR environment. Hours obtained during official Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT) training can be counted towards these hours. Time logged must have been received within the last 12 months.

b. Must pass the Defense Force online Emergency Services Level 1 Exam with a score of at least 75%. (VDFT 250)

c. Must have all required items of the 24-hour pack. All items on the list are required. An email, or letter from the Battalion S3, or their designee, constitutes documentation for certification purposes.

d. Must be available to receive a deployment call 24 hours-a-day.

e. The Emergency Services Level 1 expires 12 months after issuance unless the person has received continuing education and experience. In order to renew the Emergency Services Level 1 Rating past the expiration, the person must accumulate:

15 hours of actual or simulated SAR experience.
10 hours of SAR approved classroom training.

The hours logged above must have been received in the 12 months before expiration of the rating. These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

4.5 Ground Team Member (GTM)

In order to receive a Ground Team Member rating, personnel must complete the following:

a. Must have received an ES Level 1 rating, or qualify for a waiver. *See section 4.10 (Waivers).*

b. Must have 20 hours of actual search and rescue on-scene experience (documentation required). These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

c. Must have 20 hours of simulated search and rescue experience and/or approved classroom instruction (documentation required). These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

d. Must pass the Defense Force online examination "Ground Team Member" with a score of at least 75%. (VDFT 251)

e. Must have current first aid, CPR, and BBP certification—which must be maintained in order for the ground team member qualification to be valid.

f. Must have all required items of the 24-hour pack. Battalion S3s, or their designee, are responsible for doing a pack inspection. All items on the list are required. An email, or letter from the Battalion S3, or their designee, constitutes documentation for certification purposes.

g. The Ground Team Member rating expires 18 months after issuance unless the person has received continuing education and experience. In order to renew the Ground Team Member Rating past the expiration, the person must accumulate:

20 hours of actual SAR experience, and
10 hours of simulated experience, and
10 hours of approved classroom training.

The hours logged above must have been received in the 18 months before expiration of the rating. These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

If a person's ground team member qualifications have expired, they do not need to retake Emergency Services Level 1. They merely need to have satisfied the continuing education requirements listed in Part G (this section), and

must complete any new requirements that apply to ground team members.

4.6 Ground Team Leader (GTL)

In order to receive a Ground Team Leader rating, personnel must complete the following:

a. Must have received a Ground Team Member Rating.

b. Must have 40 hours of actual search and rescue on-scene experience (documentation required). These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

c. Must have 30 hours of simulated search and rescue experience (documentation required). These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

e. Must have current first aid, CPR, and BBP certification—which must be maintained in order for the ground team leader qualification to be valid.

f. Must have all required items of the 24-hour pack, and has a 72 hour pack at the ready. All items on the list are required. An email, or letter from the Battalion S3, or their designee, constitutes documentation for certification purposes.

g. Must pass a practical examination covering the following 6 topics:

Topic #1: Land Navigation: Use of topographic maps and compass. Candidates complete a course over terrain commonly encountered in the operations area in a specified time frame, not to exceed 600 meters.

Topic #2: Tracking: Candidates identify and mark a footprint track left by the evaluator and follow the track to its end.

Topic #3: 24-hour Pack: Candidates demonstrate the ability to possess and pack the required SAR equipment and supplies efficiently.

Topic #4: Rope Skills: Candidates demonstrate the ability to tie four basic knots and a harness with supplied rope and webbing.

Topic #5: Route Search: This station entails locating and labeling clues in a given area

demonstrating the ability to detect 50% of the clues using a route search tactic.

Topic #6: Area Search: This station entails locating and labeling clues in a given area demonstrating the ability to detect 50% of the clues using an area search tactic.

h. The Ground Team Member rating expires 18 months after issuance unless the person has received continuing education and experience. In order to renew the Ground Team Leader Rating past the expiration, the person must accumulate:

20 hours of actual SAR experience, and
15 hours of simulated experience, and
15 hours of related approved classroom training.

The hours logged above must have been received in the 18 months before expiration of the rating. These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

If a person's ground team leader qualifications have expired, they do not need to retake Emergency Services Level 1, or ground team member. They merely need to have satisfied the continuing education requirements listed in Part H (this section), and must complete any new requirements that apply to ground team leaders.

4.7 Communications Officer

In order to receive a Communications Officer rating, personnel must complete the following:

a. Must have received an Emergency Services Level 1 rating.

b. Must have 20 hours of actual search and rescue on-scene experience in the communications field.

c. Must demonstrate the ability to conduct a net in a proficient and lawful manner. (Sign-off required).

d. Must hold at least an FCC Technician license.

g. The Communications Officer Rating expires 18 months after issuance unless the person has received continuing education and experience. In order to renew the Communications Officer Rating past the expiration, the person must accumulate:

15 hours of actual SAR experience, and
10 hours of simulated experience, and
10 hours of related approved classroom training.

The hours logged above must have been received in the 12 months before expiration of the rating. These hours cannot have been used towards prior ratings.

4.8 Advanced Position Ratings

The accreditation required to hold any of the following positions will be outlined in a separate attachment to this SOP, titled "Advanced Positions". Note: These positions and ratings are not yet available. These will be added at a future date.

Incident Commander (Requires Current Ground Team Leader Certification)

Public Information Officer (Requires Current Ground Team Member Certification)

Liaison Officer (Requires Current Ground Team Member Certification)

Safety officer (Requires Current Ground Team Member Certification)

Medical Officer (Requires Current Emergency Services Level 1 Certification)

Chaplain (Requires Current Emergency Services Level 1 Certification)

4.9 Other Technical Specialty Rating

Specialty qualifications like HAZMAT, ropes safety, aeronautical, advanced driving qualifications, professionally licensed individuals, etc., can be submitted for placement on a person's F201 card. Ratings that have little or no relevance will not be added. Acceptance of technical specialty ratings is subject to the review and approval of the Brigade S3, or their designee. CERT credentials should be listed on the F201 card.

These technical specialty ratings are added to personnel who hold current SAR credentials (i.e. Level 1, Ground Team Member, Ground Team Member, Incident Commander, Communications Officer, etc.). Technical specialty ratings are not issued by themselves.

4.10 Level 1 Waiver

Personnel may skip the ES Level 1 requirements (except for the written exam), and apply for ground team member certification if they meet all of the other requirements. Again, the Level 1 written exam must still be passed.

4.11 Substituting Non-VDF Classes

Personnel who hold certifications from other organizations (i.e. SARTECH, CAP, etc.) may provide those in order to meet classroom educational requirements. Online training through Department of Homeland Security, etc., will only be considered if the training received is significantly relevant to field SAR. Please do not submit a huge pile of DHS certificates that are not relevant to field SAR.

4.12 Exemplary Qualifications as Substitute

Personnel who have exemplary qualifications may seek to have certain provisions of the educational requirements waived. However, the qualifications must be current—NOT EXPIRED. Proof of the same is required and may be verified by the S3 with the issuing agency/organization.

MEMS certifications do not meet any criteria for any waiver.

4.13 Revocation of Credentials

Mistakes may occasionally be made wherein credentials are granted based in error. In these circumstances, brigade will issue a new F201 card to affected personnel. The Brigade S3 may revoke, or restore, credentials as required to maintain the integrity of our credentialing.

Section 5, Equipment.

5.1 Prohibited Equipment

VDF personnel who have been directed to an operation shall not bring any weapons, animals, or large equipment unless doing so was requested by the OIC, or their designee. Personnel shall not show-up with trailers, large trucks, ATV's, etc., without the equipment having been requested or approved in advance by the OIC, or their designee.

5.2 Radio Equipment Operation

No VDF personnel shall operate any radio without the proper licensing. All personnel shall

keep their radio equipment charged and ready for deployment. Radio licensing requirements cannot be waived unless a call needs to be made by a non-licensed person in order to prevent immediate threat to life of property.

5.3 Minimum Standard Equipment

The minimum required equipment shall be stated in the operation order. However, all personnel shall show-up on site with the appropriate minimum standard equipment as shown on the attached document.

Section 6, Physical Standards.

6.0 Physical Fitness Standards.

Personnel must meet established physical fitness standards for specific hazards for incident assignments as set by brigade. The S3, or their designee, has the latitude to determine the fitness levels needed for all missions. In addition, the brigade S3 will determine the method of evaluating the physical fitness level of personnel. Whatever method is used, it must be a measurable evaluation process. A person's physical testing results expire every 18 months. The following four categories of physical fitness are established:

Category 1: Arduous

Duties involve fieldwork requiring physical performance calling for above-average endurance and superior conditioning. These duties may include an occasional demand for extraordinarily strenuous activities in emergencies under adverse environmental conditions and over extended periods of time. Requirements include running, walking, climbing, jumping, twisting, bending, and lifting more than 50 pounds; the pace of work typically is set by the emergency situation. Does not require any cane, or similar items, to assist with walking.

Testing: Pack Test. 3-mile hike with 45 pound pack in 45 minutes.

Category 2: Moderate

Duties involve fieldwork requiring complete control of all physical faculties and may include considerable walking over irregular ground, standing for long periods of time, lifting 25-50 pounds, climbing, bending, stooping, squatting, twisting, and reaching. Occasional demands may be required for moderately strenuous

activities in emergencies over long periods of time. Individuals usually set their own work pace. Does not require any cane, or similar items, to assist with walking.

Testing: Pack Test. 2-mile hike with 25 pound pack in 30 minutes.

Category 3: Light

Duties mainly involve office type work with occasional field activity characterized by light physical exertion requiring basic good health. Activities may include climbing stairs, standing, operating a vehicle, and long hours of work, as well as some bending, stooping, or light lifting. Individuals almost always can govern the extent and pace of their physical activity. Does not require any cane, or similar items, to assist with walking.

Testing: Walk Test. 1-mile hike in 16 minutes.

Category 4: None

Duties are normally performed in a controlled environment, such as an incident command post, base or camp.

Testing: Not a danger to self or others.

Section 7, Public Information.

7.0 Requests for Public Information

During emergency services operations the OIC will appoint a media experienced person to handle all media and public requests for information. The PIO shall not discuss the mission unless otherwise directed to do so. Generally, the PIO will only give information about the VDF, but not the mission it is currently participating in. Media questions concerning the specific mission should be directed to the person appointed by the IC to handle those questions.

No other persons shall speak with media or members of the public about the mission—or about VDF. Only the assigned Public Information Officer will speak about, or on behalf of, VDF.

Section 8, Instructors and Evaluators.

8.1 Approved Classroom Instructors

The Brigade S3 shall promulgate a list of instructors approved to teach, or certify the

teaching of, courses required under this SOP. This list will be available for download at www.mivdf.us under the Forms & Publications link.

8.2 Topic Evaluators (For GTL)

The Brigade S3 shall promulgate a list of evaluators approved to teach and/or certify the test results of the practical skills test required for the Ground Team Leader certification. This list will be available for download at www.mivdf.us under the Forms & Publications link.

8.3 Physical Fitness Evaluator

The Brigade S3 shall promulgate a list of evaluators approved to evaluate and certify the physical fitness level of personnel. This list will be available for download at www.mivdf.us under the Forms & Publications link.

CSMs may also evaluate and certify personnel physical fitness levels.

A VDF 202 must be completed and submitted for all persons who are on the Brigade SAR Team.

Section 9, Radio Communications.

9.1 Radio Nets.

If ARES, or any other group or person, is designated to run radio communications for a SAR then we will use their net—unless otherwise directed by the civilian IC.

We will not have our own net in addition to their net unless approved by the Brigade S3.

9.2 Radios with each team.

Each team, or sub-team, must have at least one radio in their possession. If a sub-team consists of unlicensed personnel then they must have an FRS radio. The next nearest amateur radio operator must carry an FRS radio as well, so they can communicate with the team that only has an FRS radio.

Section 10, Notes.

10.1 References to S3.

Any references made in this SOP to a/the S3 is referencing the Brigade S3, unless clearly stated otherwise.

10.2 VDFT/VDF.

VDFT refers to Volunteer Defense Force Test.

VDF refers to Volunteer Defense Force Form.

10.3 Classes before 01 January 2016 / Credit

Classes taken between 01 January 2015 and 01 January 2016 may be counted for credit towards the educational requirements regardless of whether the class was taught by an approved instructor. The class must have been a formal class and not an informal session. Documentation is still required.

10.4 Submission of Documents

VDF200, and supporting documentation, should be sent to the Brigade S3 via email. If you cannot email the documents they can be sent to the home of the S3 by mail. Email address and home address are located on the brigade roster.

10.5 Role of Battalions in SAR

Battalions are responsible for assisting their personnel with obtaining the required training and documentation pursuant to this SOP. Brigade will also assist with training from time-to-time.

Section 11, Updates & Implementation.

11.1 Updates.

The latest version of this SOP can be downloaded from www.mivdf.us site. Look under Forms and Publications link.

11.2 Implementation

The provisions of this SOP go into effect 01 January 2016. Early beta testing and early certifications may be issued before the effective date.

Personnel will be notified when early testing and registration are available.

OFFICIAL:

FOR THE COMMANDER
COL William Ewald



Michael E. Ewing
CPT, MIVDF.
BDE S3

DISTRIBUTION:

ALL BRIGADE PERSONNEL

ENCLOSURE:

ANNEX 1: ADVANCED POSITIONS
(NOT YET PREPARED OR ATTACHED)

ANNEX 2: REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
CARD, F200. (BEING REVISED, AGAIN)

ANNEX 3: QUALIFICATIONS CARD, F201.
(NOT YET PREPARED OR ATTACHED)

ANNEX 4: 24 HOUR EQUIPMENT LIST

ANNEX 5: F202 MEDICAL CERTIFICATION