

# SAMSAR

*"So others may live"*

## Standard Operation Policies

### CHAPTER ONE

#### **Introduction to Southern Arizona Mounted Search and Rescue, Inc. (SAMSAR)**

SAMSAR, Inc. is an all volunteer, non-profit mounted search and rescue unit serving Pima County and surrounding communities. It is the sole provider to the Pima County Sheriff's Department for mounted search and rescue services.

SAMSAR was created by and from members of an already existing unit with over 85 years of combined service to the Pima County community for the sole purpose of providing a well-trained highly efficient mounted unit dedicated to searching from mule/horseback. Each member owns and maintains his/her own animals and equipment and stands ready for duty when called upon. SAMSAR has eight (8) founding members and invitations are extended to other potential candidates demonstrating proficiency and the skills necessary for a top quality mounted unit.

SAMSAR officially incorporated as a non-profit volunteer group in December of 2010.

SAMSAR officially was admitted as a component group of the Search & Rescue Council, Inc. (SARCI) in February 2011 to better serve the Pima County community and to support the other SARCI component groups such as canine, divers and SARA ground search and rescue.

In addition to providing a community resource for emergencies, SAMSAR is dedicated to providing community education and awareness training. The organization devotes a significant part of its time to demonstrations and public presentations throughout the year at different functions and activities.

#### ***Considerations in applying for Membership:***

**1. COMMITMENT LEVEL.** As a non-profit volunteer organization, SAMSAR requires that each member "donate" a certain amount of time and skill to our cause. SAMSAR is a very active volunteer organization, however, and its success depends greatly on the high level of commitment and effort put forth by each and every team member. A minimum activity level standard is set by the organization which must be maintained for each category of membership in order to be considered "Mission Ready." In addition to extensive field trainings, there are many "behind the scenes" jobs to do. Public relations, membership drives, fundraisers and public education also comprise part of being a SAMSAR team member.

**2. FINANCIAL INVESTMENT** - Being a SAMSAR volunteer also requires a moderate financial commitment. Each member is responsible for purchasing and maintaining his/her own equipment including horse/mule and a reliable safe trailer. A substantial portion of the funds

SAMSAR receives as donations or profits from fundraisers goes toward the equipment for field operations of the group, e. g., radio equipment, search and rescue equipment, medical and first aid supplies.

**3. RISK AND LIABILITY-** As with any outdoor activity, there a level of risk associated with this type of work. SAMSAR assumes no responsibility or liability for any loss or damages incurred to persons, animals and equipment while participating in any function of the group. Indeed, SAMSAR encourages members to purchase adequate and appropriate liability insurance to protect themselves.

Persons and horses/mules participating in any training or search and rescue mission under the authorization of the Pima County Sheriff's Department may be covered in certain situations, but all members and guests are required to sign the SAMSAR Statement of Membership, prior to participation in any training activity or rescue mission with SAMSAR. Members are never required to perform in any situation in which they are not competent and comfortable. In fact, SAMSAR encourages it's members to stay within their skill level for their own safety and that of other team members.

**4. STATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP –** All members will have signed SAMSAR Statement of Memberships on file with the Secretary. This statement includes and is not limited to Code of Ethics and policy concerning confidentiality of missions.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CALL OUTS FROM OUT OF PIMA COUNTY**

1. Occasionally, SAMSAR may be called to provide search and rescue services in assistance to law enforcement agencies in counties other than Pima County.
2. SAMSAR will respond and provide search and rescue services only in conformance with the requirements of the Arizona Volunteer Protection Act.
3. SAMSAR will not respond to a request to provide search and rescue services outside of Pima County unless a specific request is made by a law enforcement agency through the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit.
4. When SAMSAR provides such search and rescue services outside of Pima County, such services shall be provided only under the supervision of a designated Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue officer and only after a mission number is issued by the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit.
5. In no event will SAMSAR provide search and rescue services to any agency outside of Pima County without an explicit documented request and a mission number issued by the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit.
6. The designated Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Officer may delegate supervisory authority over SAMSAR to non-Pima County law enforcement officer if such delegation is properly documented.

7. Any SAMSAR member providing search and rescue services will provide services only the level of his/her training. All services, however, must be provided only under the supervision of Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Officer or a designated non-Pima County officer.

### **Call out procedure**

Call outs are initiated by the Pima County Sheriff's Department. Family members or friends of lost, injured or ill persons usually contact the Sheriff's Department. The call is referred to the Field Operation Officer, who may request a volunteer response. The Field Operations Officer usually acts as a liaison between search and rescue and the Sheriff's Department, families or other counties, wherever assistance is requested.

SAMSAR may receive notice through the SARCI paging system. The 911 paging system receives reports of missing and overdue persons, hiking and mountain climbing accidents and other accidents in rural and wilderness areas. The MEDS system will normally dispatch Fire/Medical units, and may request S&R resources through the Sheriff's Department. The Search and rescue coordinator will determine which volunteer resources may be needed. If Search and Rescue Council volunteers are needed, whether it be all qualified groups or a limited specialty, appropriate groups are paged: i.e., search and/or rescue personnel; SAMSAR, etc. The SARCI message number (PCSD AUDIX system) provides callout information. The AUDIX phone number is 295-4554.

Pages for callouts are initiated as required by designated SAR personnel, first by updating the AUDIX message with information relevant to the call, such as SAR assets requested (SAMSAR, Search People, Rescue People), rendezvous location (see rendezvous list) and location, and information pertinent to the current mission, then by sending a text message to the ALERT address. These text messages should be brief, particularly at the start of a callout when little information may be available. The ALERT system includes addresses for members with alphanumeric pagers, cell phones with text messaging. The text messaging limits of some devices is short, particularly on cell phones. Messages are condensed to include relevant details without including extra or long words.

The first item in an email page will normally be a digital code: "4554-mmm". The first four digits are the suffix of the AUDIX phone number. The last three digits are coded as follows:

000	Information Page
111	Rescue
222	Search
333	Other
444	Code 4 (No further assistance required)
555	Dog Team/Canine

666 SAMSAR  
777 Test Page  
888 Divers  
999 (not used)

For example, a page for a search would include “4554-222”, followed by some details.

Note that combinations of the above codes may be used, such as:

“4554-777-0000” Test page and Information page

“4554-555-2222” Dog team call with request for support personnel

Typical examples of callout messages are:

“4554-222 Meet Catalina & Tanque Verde, missing child, LDS Camp, Organization Ridge”

“4554-111 Meet Tanque Verde/Tanque Verde Loop, fall victim, TV Falls”

“4554-444 All out of field

### **Page Authorization**

The SARCI Communications Committee is responsible for maintaining a list of persons authorized and trained to maintain the AUDIX message and to send callout messages.

### **Call out Procedures**

When you are notified of a call out, you may call AUDIX (295-4554) for additional information. Remember that you are a volunteer. If you are qualified and wish to respond to a call, or decide not to, it is up to each member.

Call out information may allow you to plan for special conditions (cold or hot weather, extended time, possible haul of equipment or injured person etc.) and get to a rendezvous location by a specified time. Members are responsible for preparing his/her equipment for the operation, and for arranging transportation to rendezvous. The callout message will ideally include the following:

**Who** male, female, child, elderly, mental, ...

**What** search, rescue, body recovery, ...

**Why** fall victim, overdue hiker, missing camper, ...

**Where** general area or rendezvous location, ...

**How** ready to help with in YOUR limits of training experience, equipment and available time

## **Rendezvous Procedures**

Upon receiving a call, respond to the location specified by the callout message, unless you have been requested to meet at another location. **Obey all traffic laws** while in route! You have no authorization to disregard any regulations. Members who disobey traffic laws may be cited.

Members are encouraged to call AUDIX for further information that has been updated since first transmitted. The progress of a call may be included on the message, as well as the conclusion of the call.

Members are not authorized to respond to a possible operation before volunteers are requested. Workman's Comp and House Bill 10 cover volunteers responding to an official request from the Sheriff's Department, and they do not cover people responding when a request has not been made.

A rendezvous will usually be either an Operations location at a trailhead near town or a meeting place for transportation away from the metropolitan area. See Rendezvous List.

An orange cone will be placed at the designated rendezvous possibly on the top of a car a note will be placed inside the cone with further information and location of operations closer to the scene of the search and or rescue.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Patient Hauling**

SAMSAR members may be asked to haul injured patients out of the field. Hauling patients requires a special "team" to perform this task and is highly specialized and not every team can or will be asked to perform this duty. The team will be previously approved to perform this specialized skill. Members seeking to haul qualify their animal will first be observed several hours in the field and will be judged on consistent quietness and calmness of animals, and strong capable handlers.

Once the decision is made to haul a patient out of the field, a transition of responsibilities must be made. Patient care should remain with the Medical Team but the SAMSAR Team that will conduct the haul will assume control of the evacuation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Training a Horse/Mule**

Training a horse/mule for the Search & Rescue purposes requires a great deal of skill and dedication. It is a type of training distinct from all others and demands a very intense training

program from the animals and members, as well as the assist and support teams. Each member is a key link in producing the final product of each and every animal. Without the additional support of the assist teams and back-up personnel, the SAMSAR training program would not be possible.

In order to produce a top quality horse/mule, members should train every day to some extent whether in actual search training or simple behavior modification directed at search and rescue. Training times can vary from only a few minutes to several hours. Regardless of the amount of training time involved, however, it is critical that the highest level of training intensity be exercised. Each training session be guided by a formal written lesson plan. It is also imperative that the training schedule is consistent and challenges the skill level of both the member and the animal. As a horse/mule owner, realistic goals should be set for the rider and his/her animal.

Once those goals have been attained, new goals and milestones should be set to give the rider and animal a goal towards which to strive. The learning process never stops regardless of the skill level one attains. The entire SAMSAR unit is involved with producing each rider and animal partnership and SAMSAR's input and support is invaluable.

Each member and his level of training holds an equally important position. Three key factors must be present in order to produce a successful mounted search and rescue team:

A. A SOUND RELATIONSHIP between the horse/mule, member, and assist allows both to train under optimal and comfortable conditions. The horse/mule must possess a strong desire to work for the member and the member must work equally well with the assist.

B. Just as important is RESPECT; from team members towards each other, from the animal to his owner, and the owner to his horse/mule. Each must work together as a true "team."

C. Finally, the third critical factor to a successful team is TEAM WORK: The handler cannot function without the horse/mule and the horse/mule cannot function without its handler.

The absence of any one of these three factors makes impossible and effective and successful mounted search and rescue team.

Members must work with their animals consistently and frequently to ensure a well-conditioned calm animal which might be called upon to work hard for many hours then delicately and safely haul an injured subject out of the field.

Members also must exercise good judgment and know and demonstrate the ability to say "No" or "pull" the animal out of any situation where the horse/mule is demonstrating anxiety and/or stress. **Each owner must learn to know and read his horse/mule.**

The animal training program is on-going and difficult. It is designed to produce the highest quality and safest horse/mule rider teams. At times, the training may be confusing, difficult, or even redundant, but it has a purpose. Only when members give 100% and comply with the regimen will they be rewarded with a successful final product. It won't happen overnight and it

requires much patience, perseverance and dedication. Each member must be committed to give maximum effort to ensure success and productivity of the team!

### **The Training Program:**

SAMSAR's Member Training Program sets only a minimum standard. The amount of time members actually train will greatly affect each member's individual success in any category of membership.

All SAMSAR personnel must complete minimum training requirements to become "Mission Ready." Mission readiness testing can be done at any time during the year. In order to go into the field as a trainee, new members must successfully complete:

- OFC – Outdoor First Care,
- CPR for the Professional,
- NIMS 100 – 700
- Sheriff's Department Orientation on the NIMS System (aka NIMS-138)
- SARCI Orientation
- Ham Radio License (not mandatory, but **STRONGLY** suggested)

The training program is administered by the SAMSAR training committee with the approval of the organization. Any concerns regarding the training program should be addressed to the Training Committee first. The Committee reserves the right to conduct all trainings in accordance with the materials in this manual as deemed appropriate for the enhancement and productivity of the group.

### **Training Guidelines and Procedures:**

1. All candidates must attend the mandatory BASIC TRAINING SESSIONS.
2. To receive credit for training, you must attend the entire training.
3. All trainings will have a rendezvous site where the team will meet prior to going to the training area. It is important that everyone arrive on time or you may get left behind!
4. A message cone will be left at the rendezvous site with directions and information pertaining to the training.
5. SAMSAR reserves the right to video tape any training for its own use.
6. All vehicles should be parked in a designated area so as not to interfere or compromise the training area.
7. Proper identification and equipment will be utilized at all functions.
8. Each member is required to keep a safe distance from bystanders and/or other horse/mule rider teams
9. Owners will assume responsibility for their own animals at all times.
10. Any member or animal observed to cause an unsafe or detrimental situation to the group may be excused from the training and/or receive a warning or suspension as determined by the Board of Directors. **A member's inability to control his/her animal will not be tolerated.**
11. Drugs or Alcoholic Beverages are strictly prohibited at ALL SAMSAR functions.

## **Injuries to Members and their Animals**

During a mission it is highly possible an injury to member and/or their mount can occur. A member's injury will be addressed and treated on the spot. The member will determine his or her ability to continue with the mission. If the member cannot continue the mission, the team will radio into operations/incident command and inform them of the intent to remove themselves from the field. In the case of serious and or life threatening injury, team member will call into operations/incident command and immediately report the injury. This incident now becomes a secondary mission and standard extrications and procedures will apply.

### **Training Progressions/Levels:**

Trainees:

- I. OFC – Out Door First Care
- II. CPR – for the Professional Rescuer
- III. Orientation

Field Skills Training:

- I. OFC hands on skills test
  - a. Rapid Trauma search
  - b. Taking and monitoring vitals
  - c. Communication to team members as well as Incident Commander or Operations Coordinator
  - d. Map and GPS training

In-the-Field Training:

- I. Trainee rides along with Full Qualified members
  - a. Trainee needs to be observed in action with hands on, or observing actual rescues, participate in some way, getting to the operations or trailhead does not count as qualified experience
  - b. Trainee must exhibit minimum requirements
  - c. Trainee must exhibit good judgment skills at all times

Evidence Training:

- I. Trainee must attend Line search training in order to perform in the field
  - a. Trainee must show he/she can control horse and maintain proper position within the line
  - b. Demonstrate the ability to determine and communicate when evidence is located
  - c. Demonstrate the ability to use GPS to call in location of evidence found



## CHAPTER FIVE

### EQUIPMENT AND GEAR

I. SAMSAR personnel are required to carry certain minimum equipment into the field. A random check of this equipment may be performed before allowing member entry to the field.

II. Equipment list:

To include but not limited to:

Ham Radio, Rescue Radio, Cell phone, Knife, Whistle, Pencil/Paper, Compass/GPS device, Comb/Hemostats, Rain Gear, Waterproof matches/lighter, Blanket (reflective), Flashlights/Light sources (min. of 3 sources with extra batteries), Reflector/Mirror, Folding Hand Saw, Maps, Twine/Cord/String, Duct Tape, Measuring Device, Tweezers, First Aid Kit (personal and horse/mule), Blood pressure device, Stethoscope, gauze, Scissors, Antiseptic/Antibiotic, Bute, 4-5 pads of 4" gauze, Sams Splint, Personal protection Equipment (non latex gloves) Vet Wrap (3 rolls) Flagging Tape

III. SAMSAR personnel must also be responsible for their own animals' care and necessities in the field.

These can include and are not limited to:

- a. Easy boot or equivalent
- b. Tube for use in case of snake bite
- c. Vet wrap
- d. Healing ointments

SAMSAR requires each team to carry minimum supplies for certain situations, but each SAMSAR member is responsible for determining how much extra gear to carry for unforeseen circumstances and situations. Minimal supplies may be adequate in an urban or "in-town" residential search where reinforcements are only a radio call away. In a wilderness or other remote area, however, a seemingly short search ride can quickly and easily turn into an over-night expedition. **Always pack for the most demanding conditions in the field, you can down-scale your packs as needed and indicated when you arrive on-scene.**

#### CLOTHING:

Ordinarily, clothing to be worn on a mission includes white UV protected shirts which can be special-ordered at a discounted price for SAMSAR member only from Royal Robbins. Pants can be the choice of the rider, either comfortable jeans or loose-fitting pants. **SHORTS ARE PROHIBITED.** Hats or helmets are required and are part of the uniform. Rain gear should be

available in case of inclement weather. Heavy duty work gloves with an extra pair are recommended and wise to carry.

### **UNIFORM:**

SAMSAR patches should be sewn onto shirt ¼” above left breast pocket and a name patch with first initial and last name should be sewn 1/4” above right side pocket. Fully field qualified members will have the “search and rescue” rocker sewn ½ inch from the top of the sleeve seam. The official SAMSAR patch should be sewn on to both arms of shirt fro 1/4” from the bottom of the rocker or 1 ½ “from the top of the sleeve.

### **FOOD SUPPLY:**

SAMSAR personnel will need to sustain themselves in the field from six to eight hours and occasionally up to 24 hours. Members are required to carry nutritious food/snacks.

Food, water and clothing sufficient to sustain oneself and be effective for 24 hours in the field is also probably enough to share with another person until help arrives. High carbohydrate high energy foods are good and won't readily spoil in your pack. Fruits and vegetables are great boosters for use when riding as well as jerky and protein bars, but be sure to have foods with a long shelf-life. Meals Ready To Eat (MRE) have a shelf-life of about three years. Many of them don't taste too bad either. When are starving in the wilderness, these foods can be very satisfying and tasty. Individual diets and favorites are acceptable, as well.

### **WATER:**

**The most critical item in your supply pack is a good water supply!!** SAMSAR member are required to carry a minimum of 1 gallon of water. In extreme situations or conditions, members may have to share their water supply with their animals. If a member has extra room in his/her supply pack, a couple of extra liters of water is a wise idea. **ESPECIALLY IN THE SUMMERTIME!** Anytime a person overheats, extra water is always needed to rehydrate them and cool them down.

### **SURVIVAL NECESSITIES:**

Surprisingly, very few supplies are needed to survive in the field. All of these items are required in your search pack. However, they will not all be used on each call out. An adequate back pack is needed that will suit the search task at hand.

A helmet, ear plugs, and goggles should always be carried for protection when working around the helicopter. A hat and good hiking boots as well as work gloves for Stokes and rope handling are a must. A space blanket can protect you and/or your animal from the elements as well as provide a make-shift tent in the wilderness. You should always have a note book and pencil as well as trail flagging tape to mark your path or leave notes. Whistles should be carried so when radio contact is impossible, someone may hear the whistle. A pocket knife and/or

“bushwhacking” tools are used to make trails more accessible. A map, compass, signal mirror, and radio should always be kept on your person so you are able to tell others your exact location.

Waterproof matches, rain gear, and two large trash bags will sustain you in wet weather. And lastly, a good first aid kit to handle any medical emergencies. See Required Equipment list.

In addition to carrying the above-described equipment and supplies, SAMSAR personnel may be called upon to carry other medical care equipment such as blankets, oxygen tanks, back boards or medical packs for other rescue workers. This will require a member and his mount to be prepared, by training and disposition, to perform such duties.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **EQUESTRIAN EMERGENCY FIRST AID & MEDICAL MAINTENANCE**

#### **Routine Care and Inspections:**

Daily inspections are highly recommended for the horse/mule. Horse/mules should always be inspected before and after a training or call out. During inspections, check each part of the animal's anatomy for signs or symptoms of illness or injury. Each member should know how his/her horse/mule looks and acts when healthy, what is normal for the animal, how the animal looks, frequency of bowel movement, and eating habits. If treatment begins early, the animal's recovery is more rapid!

If an injury occurs to a member's animal during a mission, the member should assess the injury and treat the injury and determine if the animal may still participate in the mission. If it is determined the animal cannot, the member will radio into operations and inform them of the injury and the intent to remove the animal from the mission.

#### **EYES:**

It is important to check the eyes often of the horse/mule. Especially when “bushwhacking” during a search. An injury to the eye is an emergency. Eyes should be bright and clear. An eye that is running, seeping or partially closed is an indicator something is possibly wrong. The eyelashes of a normal horse should be outward, if the eyelashes are turned downward this is a sign of a possible injury. Mule eyelashes are normally turned downward. Rapid blinking is often an indication of irritation or an injury. Check for discoloration of the membranes and whites of the eyes, paleness of the membranes, white or yellow discharge or other discolorations of the clear portion of the eyes. Note any puffiness in the lids or whether the lids are partially or completely closed. Note if the third eyelid covers more than the normal surface of the eye.

## EQUINE VITALS;

### **Normal Heart rate -**

Some searches can be stressful especially in the heat. A normal heart rate should be between 36-44 BPM. Heart rates can be taken with a stethoscope behind the left front leg and on the mandibular artery (on the inside of the cheek bone) Front feet (digital pulses) Any heart rate above *80 BPM* should be considered **serious** and seek immediate veterinarian attention.

### **Abnormal Heart Rate –**

Lower than 36 BPM

This can occur for the following reasons:

- Shock – serious injury
- Bleeding
- Hypothermia
- Heat Exhaustion
- Stress
- Pain
- An animal presenting with these symptoms should be immediately removed from the field and seek medical attention.

### **Temperature**

**Normal:** Temperature should be between 99.5 and 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit

**Abnormal:** Lower than 99.5

This can occur from the following reasons:

- Shock
- Hypothermia

Higher than 102.5

- Infection
- Pain
- Heat Stroke
- Stress

### **Respirations:**

**Normal:** 8-10 Respirations per minute. Count the sides moving, can also put your hand over nostrils and feel the air moving in and out.

**Abnormal:** Over 20 per minute

- Indication of pain

- Upper respiratory issues
- Stress  
Under 8 breaths per minute
- Shock

#### **Dehydration:**

- Check by pinching the skin – does it stay “pinched”
- Eyes sunken in

It is important to give electrolytes prior to hard work, especially in the summer time. You can add electrolytes to your horse’s water on a daily or weekly basis.

You can also check to see if your horse is stressed by pressing on the gums. Gums should be pink and moist. To check for normal capillary refill time, press on gums for 2-3 seconds, and then count how long it takes to return to normal. Normal refill is within 2 seconds. If it takes longer than 2 seconds to “fill” in the white spot where you thumb or finger is there could possibly be a problem.

Possible issues:

- Shock
- Bleeding
- Dark Gums
- Toxins

## **HOOVES**

Your mount's hooves should be protected at all times from all kinds of terrain. This can be done by either shoes or easy boots. If your animal becomes lame from no protection while in the field it will require that team to leave and possibly jeopardizing the mission.

#### **Hoof Protection**

- **Easy Boot** – measure across the widest part of the hoof and from heel to toe
- **Thick Leather** - Draw an outline of the hoof on the leather. Cut it out. This can be duct taped to the hoof to be a temporary replacement of a shoe
- **Rubber** - **Same as above**

## **GROOMING**

Grooming is an important part of inspection for potential problems when preparing for training or a mission. Although grooming and inspections are different procedures, a lot of the inspection can be done while grooming your mount. Next to feeding, grooming and inspection are the most important events in a day in the life of a working horse/mule. These activities are essential and

helpful to the relationship between the mount and the rider. During such activities, a psychological bond of trust develops between a horse/mule and his rider.