



National Search and Rescue School

U.S. COAST GUARD TRAINING CENTER

YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA 23690-5000

(757) 856-2273, fax (757) 856-2242

E-mail: TCY-PF-InlandSAR@uscg.mil

Inland SAR Planning Course - Sponsor Requirements

While the Inland SAR Planning Course is offered at no charge, it is a traveling course and the faculty requires a good deal of assistance from local sponsoring agencies. Some of which may involve minor costs to the sponsor. In order to provide the best class possible, the sponsoring agency must fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. Help fill class quotas. The course is most effective when students are a mixture of all types of SAR agencies: local, state, law enforcement, emergency services, CAP, military, etc. (see attachment 1). Since the sponsor is most familiar with SAR requirements in the local area, he/she should be the primary individual responsible for determining and soliciting the agencies and people who would most benefit from the course. (see attachment 2) The sponsor and the faculty will then coordinate in making final attendance selections 40 days in advance of the class start date.
2. Locate/reserve facility/classroom space as well as assist with classroom set up. (see attachment 1)
3. Locate/reserve audio-visual/electronic equipment as well as assist with set up. (see attachment 1)
4. Provide lodging recommendations for students/instructors, work block reservations/group rates if possible.

Note: If the class is being held in a hotel or at a training facility with attached lodging, reserve an appropriate number of rooms for the class (generally 25 students and 2 instructors, minus local students who want to commute to class).

5. Provide written arrival instructions the faculty can send to students in an e-mailed "Welcome Package." Instructions should include clear maps (electronic maps are preferred) and written directions to the facility/classroom, as well as any clearances required and check-in or special instructions i.e., parking restrictions.
6. Provide a single point of contact (POC). This POC must:
 - a. Provide faculty with contact phone numbers (office/cell).
Note: A reliable weekend phone number must be provided by the POC in case the instructors' arrival is delayed or the classroom set-up time needs to be changed.
 - b. Be readily available to solve problems and make last-minute adjustments, especially during the 2 weeks immediately prior to class and on the day of instructor arrival/classroom set-up.
 - c. Provide shipping address for the course materials:
Note: Two 50 pound book boxes and two 2' x 2' x 1.5' hard cases will be shipped via FedEx.
 - d. Establish a time to meet the instructors at the classroom for set-up (generally in the afternoon the day prior to class start date).
 - e. Bring all shipped materials, room keys, required equipment to the classroom at the pre-designated set-up time and assist the instructors with classroom/equipment set-up if necessary.
Note: Set-up generally takes about an hour and includes arranging the classroom (tables, chairs, projection screens, white boards, etc.), laying out course materials, testing the laptop-projector connections, testing/learning classroom systems (lights, projection, sound, etc.).
 - f. Provide the following for class use:
 - 1) Modest supplies
 - 2) Access to a copy machine
 - 3) White Boards or easels/chart paper, etc. appropriate for the classroom and exercise break-out rooms (see attachment 1)
 - 4) Arrange for coffee or other refreshments daily for class

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Attachment 1 – Facility and Equipment Requirements

Facilities are required 0730 – 1730 daily, Monday thru Friday and for approximately 1 – 1.5 hours on the Sunday prior to class start date. Single-use rooms are preferred so that students may leave items overnight without worrying about security.

Mon – Wed (Classroom Days)

Room Size – Large enough for:

- 24 – 28 students to be comfortably seated with sufficient table space to use maps concurrently with reference and note-taking materials (3 students to a standard 8' folding table is tight but adequate),
- 2 instructors with a table full of reading materials/handouts, and
- Presentation aids and audio/visual equipment listed below.

Room Configuration:

- Tables arranged in rows with a front-to-back aisle between adjacent tables works well.
- Sufficient space between student tables is needed for instructors to move around the room during class and to monitor student and small-group work.
- Sufficient depth (from front to back) is needed so projected materials can be easily read by all without the projectors blocking students' view or drowning out instructor voices.

Projection/Presentation Requirements:

- Digital projector (instructors bring laptop to connect to), SVGA capable (800x600 resolution) or better with high lumen capability so the graphics can be seen even while lights are on for note-taking. (If no projector available, school will ship portable projector.)
- Projection screen large enough to be easily read by all students.
- A combination of chart board easels (with paper), white boards, etc. (equiv. to 2-3 chart boards minimum).
- Extension cords, power strips, connecting cables for the above equipment, with at least two remaining outlets for instructor computers.

Thurs – Fri (Practical Exercise Days)

Students are split into 4 – 6 groups, 4 – 5 students per group. Each group needs:

- Table space for map plotting and materials (minimum equiv. to 2 large desks or an 8' table);
- Floor space for each group: 12' x 12' minimum, 3 – 4' on each side of table for easy movement;
- Physical separation from other groups so they do not interfere with each other verbally or visually. Note: Experience shows that groups need at least 12' x 12' each, depending on the size of the tables provided, and about 12' laterally between any groups in the same room. As all groups are working with the same scenario, but each proceeds differently, it is vital that the groups be separated far enough to not be distracted by each other. Chart board easels and moveable white/chalk boards can also be used to separate groups.

Best: 1 – 2 rooms, large enough so the groups do not interfere with each other visually or verbally.

Plus an additional small room for 5 – 7 people to conduct a simulated telephone interview, Thursday only.

Note: If the main briefing room is used for some of the small groups, we will need an additional small room for 5 – 7 people on Thursday morning until noon: chairs-only is sufficient.

Considerations:

- Each instructor “controls” 2 – 3 groups, so rooms should be sized accordingly. Note: All rooms must be close together so the instructors can move quickly between them to monitor and control the exercise, and the students can move quickly between their small groups and the main briefing room.
- Occasionally throughout the 2 days, the entire class is pulled back together for short periods; often the original classroom works well as one of the exercise rooms.
- About 30' x 30' seems to be needed for 3 groups, 30' x 60' for all six.

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Attachment 2 – Selecting the “Right” Students

The Inland SAR Planning Course is aimed at the on-scene decision makers: the incident commander, planners, operations chief, and other personnel on and off scene who need to understand how the search decisions are made in order to build confidence and support the incident commander. Since such great responsibilities rest on the shoulders of these SAR leaders, it is important that organizations sponsoring local classes select the right students to get the best impact and improvement in their SAR operations. Thus, the sponsor must help select approximately two-thirds of the students. Broadcast advertising does not often generate the desired applicant; you should target the specific people, counties, agencies, etc. whom you know should attend. A course description is provided as attachment 3.

The ideal class size is 24 students:

- 14 – 18 (plus alternates) from the sponsoring state, diversely from:
 - State and county emergency services;
 - State police, county sheriff (often are the state responsible agent for missing persons);
 - Agencies who respond to missing aircraft searches;
 - Other SAR “first responders” – **IF** they have key SAR plan decision making roles;
 - State and national parks (NPS generally applies directly to the school);
 - Volunteer SAR team leaders with key SAR plan decision making roles; and
 - Neighboring states SAR organizations.
- 4 military and/or international students – quota returned to the state if not used.
- 6 Civil Air Patrol – must apply through their wing to CAP National HQ only.

Some factors to consider in selecting students:

- Target people who should attend; those who need and can use the materials. The course focuses on mathematically-based search planning tools to allocate limited resources on extended searches. Identify who has the most (or most potential for) searches that last beyond the initial response/rapid search phase.
- Select experienced SAR leaders, not people new to SAR: the course requires an existing knowledge of SAR and is not an introduction or orientation.
- Select people responsible for the on-scene decisions and daily search plans: the course focuses on tools to aid on-scene action plans and decision-making – where to search, how to allocate limited resources, etc.
- Select people with diverse backgrounds and experiences: much is gained from information cross-flow and networking between students.
- The course addresses search planning; it does not address the concerns of the average SAR team member (searching, but not responsible for planning) or FEMA response team (the technical aspects of rescue/recovery, disaster response, or urban SAR).
- Select people who can commit to attending the entire class: While real-world disasters take precedence, out-of-class appointments and calls/pages from the office distract both the student and the rest of the class and may lead to dismissal of the student.
- Select wisely: with only 10 – 12 classes per year, the course may not be able to return for some time.

You are not alone. In the weeks leading up to the class, the faculty can assist in balancing the mix of students and suggest student sources. Often, just talking with the faculty about the way SAR is organized and conducted in the state can help clarify which agencies to contact for students.

Not later than 60 days prior to the class start date, the school needs a firm commitment on quotas and, by 45 days prior, a commitment on student names so the acceptance and read-ahead packages can be delivered in time. One-for-one substitutions can be made up to the day class starts; but, these should be held to a minimum since read ahead materials and reporting instructions might not arrive in time.

If you have questions concerning student selection or have requirements not addressed here please don't hesitate to contact us at (757) 856-2273 or via e-mail at TCY-PF-InlandSAR@uscg.mil.

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Attachment 3 – Course Description

INLAND SEARCH AND RESCUE PLANNING COURSE (AFCAT 36-2223 course number E5AZG1C371-AAA)

The 5-day Inland SAR Planning Course is a comprehensive look at inland search theory and its application to land and air searches for missing persons and aircraft with a focus on wilderness, not urban, searches.

The course consists of classroom lessons and practical, tabletop exercises; the course does not incorporate field training. Course emphasis is on the planning tools necessary for effective area-type searching during an extended search, using Probability of Success (POS) rather than just a few elements of POC or POD to predicatively allocate limited resources to their best effect – in essence, what to do after the rapid/hasty search and specialty resources have not found the missing person or search object. Additional topics include search area development, effort allocation, an overview of the federal role in SAR and Catastrophic Incident SAR response, and related subjects. The course is not a comprehensive search management course and does not teach search tactics or technical procedures, as those are well covered from other readily available sources.

Aiming to “find the search object fast,” the course centers on tools to help SAR decision makers determine where to search, how to divide an area between limited search resources, and how to craft the overall search effort to gain the best increases in likelihood of success at each step. The tools are mathematically based and not for the faint of heart; they help quantify the uncertainties of the search problem to allow consistent application throughout a mission.

The course is directed toward SAR leaders in federal, military, state, and local emergency services and law enforcement, as well as Civil Air Patrol, international, and volunteer SAR agencies – those few people who are responsible for the planning and overall conduct of inland search missions. The target audience includes on-scene incident commanders and their planners, operations leaders, and up-channel reporting chain. The general searcher or search team leader, while arguably the most important part of the SAR team, would likely not find this course useful.

Classes begin promptly at 0800 on the convening date and graduate by 1530 on the fifth day.

Prior to class, students should review and be conversant on the following from their own agencies in order to make class discussions more useful and help integrate class materials with their own search environments back home:

- Search pre-plans,
- Decision making guidelines for where/when/how to search,
- Agreements and relationships with other SAR agencies,
- How their agency organizes on scene,
- Recent search missions

A firm grounding in SAR terminology and employment techniques, practical SAR experience, basic arithmetic and calculator skills, an understanding of local SAR mission management requirements, and an open mind are essential.

The National Search & Rescue School was established in 1966 as a facility devoted exclusively to training professionals to conduct search and rescue. The school is currently located at USCG Training Center Yorktown, Virginia, and teaches a variety of maritime and inland search planning courses. Graduates number over 14,000 men and women, civilian and military, including over 1,400 from 103 foreign nations.

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