

# CHARLOTTESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Note: This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer's liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by the Charlottesville Police Department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

Type of Directive: GENERAL ORDER	Number: 123-00
<b>SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS</b>	Date: December 11, 2019
VLEPSC Number: OPR.05.01	Manual Number: 538.10
	Effective Date: 12/11/2019
Authorization: Chief R.M. Brackney <i>Rm Brackney</i>	Follow-up Date: As Needed

## I. POLICY

The Charlottesville Police Department shall have primary responsibility to coordinate all search and rescue (SAR) operations.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish operational guidelines to conduct SAR operations.

## II. DEFINITION

Hasty search – This is a quick and efficient search by small SAR teams that travel quickly to the identified search area. A hasty search is generally the first tactic used in the early hours and days of a search.

## III. PROCEDURES

### A. Search and Rescue Generally

A SAR response must be immediate, rapid, and effective. The missing subject may be in danger, need emergency medical care, or unable to protect him or herself from the environment. Time and weather destroy clues and an urgent response and deployment of resources may reduce the size of the area that must be searched. SAR Teams shall:

- a. respond urgently;
- b. search at night;
- c. mobilize quickly and keep searchers in the field; and
- d. create a sustained atmosphere of positive urgency.

## B. Search and Rescue Operations

1. The initiation of a SAR operation shall be approved by the Chief of Police or his designee.
2. After receiving a situational brief by the lead investigator the SAR Coordinator shall:
  - a. Make an initial estimate of the situation.
  - b. Develop and initiate a "hasty search" plan using all available local assets and personnel.
  - c. Pursue all immediate courses of action, isolate the search area, and attempt to locate the victim prior to requesting external support teams.
  - d. Determine whether or not assistance from outside SAR agencies (dog teams, aircraft, boats, etc.) is required and brief the lead investigator accordingly. The criticalness of the situation and the decision to request external support shall be driven in large part by the age, health and physical condition of the victim, the existing weather conditions, and any extenuating circumstances surrounding the missing subject's disappearance.
  - e. Upon determining outside assistance is required, contact the necessary agencies and develop a detailed search strategy and establish a logistical support plan and staging area to accommodate an extended SAR operation.
  - f. Appoint a team leader for each search team and provide the team members the following information:
    - i. Team leaders will report directly to the SAR Coordinator.
    - ii. Each team leader will receive an assignment and he/she will communicate that assignment to their respective team members.
    - iii. Each team leader will maintain a team roster and is required to be aware of the location of his/her entire team as the search progresses.
    - iv. All searchers are required to be trained and equipped for the task assigned. Searchers who are not properly dressed and equipped will not be permitted to participate in SAR operations.
    - v. All searchers are expected to register upon arriving at the command center and before leaving the search area to ensure all individuals are accounted for at all times.
3. Before any SAR operation is discontinued or suspended, the SAR Coordinator shall contact the Chief of Police or his designee for approval.

## C. Mutual Aid Requests

1. Upon receipt of a request for mutual aid, the SAR Coordinator shall obtain the following information:

- a. The circumstances of the incident; and
  - b. What resources the requesting agency is seeking.
2. The SAR Coordinator shall determine what resources can be allocated to the request for mutual aid based on current police department/sheriff's office operational needs.
3. The SAR Coordinator shall relay the pertinent information regarding the circumstances of the request and the available resources to be contributed to the Chief of Police/Sheriff or his designee. The SAR Coordinator shall obtain the approval of the Chief of Police/Sheriff or his designee prior to allocating resources to fulfill requests for mutual aid.
4. The SAR Coordinator shall notify the requesting agency of the available resources.