



Search & Rescue Dog Association of Alberta

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Revised- December 2019(ii)

Revised – May 2018

Revised – May, 2013

Revised – January, 2013

Revised – November, 2012

Revised – April, 2012

Revised – January, 2010

Revised – December, 2009

Original – March, 1999

Search and Rescue Dog Association of Alberta Standard Operating Procedures

The purpose of this document is to provide SARDAA Members with an overview of the operating procedures.

1) HISTORY

SARDAA was officially formed in November of 1989 when it was registered with the Companies Branch of the government of Alberta under the Societies Act. Charitable Organization status under Revenue Canada was obtained in July of 1991. There were six original members of SARDAA – Kevin George, Barb McLeod, George Hart, Mike Andresen, Michelle Limoges and Bob Wynnyk.

2) MISSION STATEMENT

SARDAA's mission is to provide authorities with properly trained, competent search dog/handler teams in the province of Alberta, and Canada.

3) GOALS

SARDAA's goal is to provide SAR-dog and Field Tech instruction, training and information so as to develop well-trained teams for search and rescue purposes; and, where ever possible, to provide a minimum of two dog/handler teams to authorities when requested.

4) PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is to assist others, and to preserve life using well-trained dogs. SARDAA members do not freelance; our teams respond to official agencies only.

5) OBJECTIVE

SARDAA's objective is to develop teams in all the skills required for them to provide professional support to aid agencies in locating evidence, lost or missing persons. Handlers will have working knowledge of SAR techniques, SAR management, evidence preservation, courtroom procedures, navigation, survival, first aid, and other specialized training as required. Members of SARDAA are expected to follow guidelines set out for training, participate in team training exercises, demonstrate a team-oriented attitude and train themselves and their dog to the best of their ability in order to ensure that the 'potential survivor' has a well trained and highly competent team working towards his/her rescue.

6) MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Voting –

Field Tech Teams

- Field Tech
- Active Field Tech

Dog Teams

- Supporting Associate
- Associate
- Active
- Active Accredited

Non-Field Response

- Active Administrator

Non-Voting –

- Friends of SARDAА
- Life

7) MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DO we even have this in here since it is only SARDAА members that get this document? I think we could take out the blue stuff.

7.1 Inquiries are answered by the Secretary via email, including detailed information on the organization, criteria for dogs and people plus the commitment expected. Detailed information on membership requirements is also located on our website.

7.2 Potential members are invited to make an appointment for a pre-evaluation of their dog. All potential dog applicants must satisfactorily complete the pre-evaluation. Obviously, this pre-evaluation is not required for Field Tech members or Friends of SARDAА.

Dogs over the age of one year will not normally be considered; exceptions will be reviewed by the Executive should a special case present itself.

7.3 Application for membership must be submitted on an application form provided by the organization.

7.4 All existing member's new dogs are to submit to the dog pre-evaluation.

7.5 In support of responsible dog ownership, we strongly recommend that all SARDAА canine members be spayed or neutered by 30 months of age. SARDAА does not allow member female canines to be bred. Females whelping puppies result in the canine being out of service for six months.

8) A CONSENT form regarding photographs, video and audio recording will be provided to each member. The member is free to agree or disagree with being photographed or recorded.

9) CONFIDENTIALITY

Information may not be shared outside the organization with regard to SARDAAs activities, unless authorized by the Executive. Examples – training protocols, training sessions, call outs, other activities involving tasking agencies may not be shared. Information on social activities or fundraisers may be shared. For additional information see SARDAAs Social Media Policy.

10) PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

SARDAAs Personnel Handbook is contained in a separate document available from D4H and the web site – www.sardaa.ca

The Personnel Handbook was designed to aid in the development of all SARDAAs personnel. The goal is to provide qualified, team-oriented personnel to perform most types of search and rescue. The handbook will guide members in training by defining objectives and tracking progress. General SARDAAs requirements will be learned as well as skills from the Wilderness/Urban Profile. This document covers personnel training expectations in more depth than the Standards manual and SOP manual but does not replace these manuals. This handbook was not intended to include dog training.

All SARDAAs members will successfully complete the Field Tech evaluation before they become Active members. The skills acquired from the handbook will allow any member to act as a Field Tech when needed. For dog handlers, this would be expected within the first 18 months of joining the association. Field Tech category members will be expected to complete the requirements and perform the test within 14 months.

11) DISASTER FIELD TECH HANDBOOK

A separate document covering the extra requirements for a Disaster Field Tech can be located on D4H.

12) SARDAAs TRAINING STANDARDS

SARDAAs Training Standards are contained in a separate document available on D4H or from the web site – www.sardaa.ca

SARDAAs Training Standards include the following profiles -

- Wilderness/Urban (Air Scent)
- Wilderness/Urban (Tracking)
- Disaster
- Human Remains Detection
- Water

13) LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Leave of Absence will be granted to a member upon written request to the president. Leaves of absence will be granted for a term not more than one year for Active members, six months for all other membership levels, with the possibility of an extension upon written request to the President.

- Active members on leave will not be called out on searches unless specially called by the president back to active duty.

- All Members on leave will return any radios, GPS and other equipment issued by SARDAА to the equipment chair.
- All Members on leaves of absence forfeit any privileges provided by SARDAА, such as seminars, equipment funding, etc.
- Membership fees shall be waived during Leave of Absence.
- On return from a leave of absence, Active members will be on a three-month evaluation period and must successfully complete a callout evaluation before being reinstated for call outs.

14) TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

A member may terminate membership in SARDAА at any time by submitting a letter of resignation and or a verbal acknowledgment of termination of membership in SARDAА to the president. The president will acknowledge the resignation by letter. Non-payment of dues will constitute resignation.

Members who breach the SOPs may have their membership terminated under the terms of the SARDAА Bylaws.

All SARDAА property will be returned promptly. Membership fees will not be refunded.

15) FUNDING

Funding is obtained through membership fees, sale of commemorative items (t-shirts, pins, decals, ball caps etc.) and through donations from organizations and individuals. SARDAА also participates in AGLC casinos and runs fundraising events throughout the year. Our members organize our fundraisers without the assistance of outside paid fundraising organizations. All members are expected to attend these events. All members, family and guests are invited to attend and participate.

16) BUDGET/FINANCIALS/CRA STATUS

SARDAА has Charitable Organization status through Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CRA) allowing tax receipts to be issued to eligible donors, following strict CRA guidelines. Registration # - 889593463RR0001. To be valid, receipts must be signed by a member of the SARDAА executive.

Tax receipts are issued as described by Canada Revenue Agency for donations and other contributions to the organization. A financial statement is compiled following the end of the fiscal year - September 30.

Canada Revenue Agency offers a \$3000 tax credit for SAR activity volunteer hours. Using hours logged on D4H, SARDAА will provide a letter to all members who qualify for this credit prior to February 28 each year.

17) INJURY REPORTING AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE

SARDAА has an Injury Reporting System document located on D4H. This procedure must be followed if a member is injured during training or on search incidents. Members are covered by WCB in case of injury through the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Procedures must be followed to ensure coverage.

18) OFFICERS

Officers are elected by the voting membership for a term of one year with no restriction on the number of terms a position may be held. Officers are - President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Training Director. The responsibilities of each position are detailed in the ByLaws.

19) CALL-OUTS

19.1 Procedures

- The emergency call-out phone number is **780-405-6084**; One of Active or Executive members is designated, on a rotating basis, to respond to a callout 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The on-call person will respond to the call evaluate the call and if appropriate contact the Active team members to respond to the incident. Advice to eligible team members will be by phone, text or email depending on the urgency of the incident.
- Only those on the Active Accredited* Team or Active Field Tech will be deployed to call-outs. No other team member will respond unless called under extraordinary circumstances.
- Active team members must respond to 50 per cent of eligible* search call outs in each calendar year. Failure to do so will result in a membership review by the SARDAAs executive.
- Active team dog handlers will follow all directions of on-site senior dog handler without question unless that response will jeopardize the safety of the dog/handler team. Objections will be reviewed at a de-briefing after the call-out is completed. Members not prepared to comply will be removed from the call-out by the senior dog handler and stood down.
- Active members who will be on holiday or away and unavailable will put themselves 'off call' on D4H.

*Eligible search call out means a search request for which the dog/handler team are accredited.

* Accredited means a dog and handler team that have passed the Active level evaluation in any individual search profile.

19.2 SEARCH REPORTS

- Search reports - SARDAAs four-part search report form allows the searcher to write their report on site; Searchers will turn in one copy to the search manager, retain one, hand one copy to their Field Tech, and forward the remaining copy to the SARDAAs secretary
- Ideally, search reports should be completed and turned in to the team leader at the completion of the search incident before leaving the site. If they are not turned in on site, they must be submitted to the SARDAAs secretary within 24 hours of a search; it is important to file reports on time in order to maintain accurate, up-to-date records.
- Reports not filed within seven days may result in the team's removal from call-out duty.

20) PUBLIC RELATIONS (MEDIA)

The members of the media should be considered as friends of searchers, not as enemies or adversaries. The job of the media is to provide information via radio, television and print to members of the general public; they will do this any way they can that is within the law. Anything you say to the media, before, during or after an interview or in casual conversation, can be used by the media in a story; there is no such thing as 'off the record'! Do not express opinions or provide any information to persons at or near the search site whom you do not know.

Always be courteous to the media but **DO NOT** answer any questions or offer any information or opinions of any type. **REMEMBER** - all enquiries must be referred to the **onsite Agency** media liaison person or to the search manager; and, failing any of these people being available refer enquiries to the SARDAA senior dog handler on site.

21) PR Events

SARDAA requires that team personnel attending a search or taking part in a public function on behalf of the organization wear the team uniform of a red SARDAA shirt and black pants.

22) FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE VICTIM

Common sense, compassion and good judgment should of course be exercised when and if team members have occasion to become involved with the victim's family. Do not offer false hope, opinions on what you think happened to the victim, or on how the search is being handled.

On most searches, the agency will act as a buffer between the family and the searchers. In some situations, our teams will have occasion to meet members of the family. Focus on your job as a dog handler and what your role is and how you plan to cover your search area. You are qualified to answer questions about your role and about you and your dog's training, capabilities and limitations.

We have found that the experience of having members of the family at the search site is stressful to our teams. SARDAA executive and senior dog handler on site will be tasked with taking a lead role in acting as a buffer between the family and the handlers. Where possible and if necessary, Victim Services can be engaged to assist SARDAA teams with relations with the victim's family on site.

23) DE-BRIEFING PROCEDURES

Immediately following each search incident, or when practical, a de-briefing will take place away from the search site for all team members involved in the incident. If required, within one week of the incident a formal de-briefing may take place with a facilitator; all team members involved must attend this de-briefing.

SARDAA also maintains members who are trained in Critical Incident Stress debriefing; all members are encouraged to make use of this expertise.

24) REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEMBERS ATTENDING CALL-OUTS

Active Team members who are called by the SARDA Executive to attend official searches shall be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, e.g. fuel, meals. Reimbursement may originate with the official agency responsible for the search incident, or in some cases by SARDA itself. A SARDA expense form shall be completed by each team for each call-out, signed by the individual. The expense form is available on D4H or from the treasurer.

25) D4H is a web-based system provided to search and rescue teams in Alberta by the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC). SARDA members are obliged to enter their training time in the system regularly. SARDA D4H 'editors' will promptly approve entries within 20 days, as required by OFC policy. Detailed instruction on the use of the D4H system will be provided to new members at their in-take meeting. All D4H entries must be entered weekly.

26) TRAINING LOGS

SARDA Team members may keep **written** and/or **electronic** records.

Electronic records can either be generated by -

- a) Filling out, printing and initialing the sample **log book sheets** (contained on D4H/Documents). You are still required to enter your training time in D4H if you wish to be credited for tax purposes.
- b) OR, by recording details on **D4H**. Entries must be printed off immediately, initialed, and kept in a binder/file.

If D4H is used alone, the information must include all relevant info that is on the sample log book sheets.

Electronic logs (log book sheets or D4H entries) should be printed off immediately, initialed, and kept in a binder/file.

Hand Written logs - If you wish to maintain written log books, the books must be bound and all pages numbered.

You are still required to enter your training time in D4H if you wish to be credited for tax purposes.

Teams must always keep in mind that their logs (in which ever form) could be requested by attorneys if an Incident happens to go to court in future.

Logs will be reviewed from time to time by SARDA trainers. The Training Director will continue to review and approve D4H entries.

SARDAА VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Please complete and forward to the SARDAА Secretary.

I _____ hereby declare that I have an understanding of the Search and Rescue Dog Association Bylaws, Standards, Personnel Handbook and Standard Operating Procedures manual. I hereby accept the responsibility as a member to ensure my obligations are being met.

Name: (please print) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____
