

# COPY

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

**Virginia Department of Emergency Management**

and

***Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference (ASRC)  
(including affiliates)***

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to define the working relationship between the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and ***Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference (ASRC) (including affiliates)*** (hereafter referred to as "the group"). This group is a volunteer search and rescue (SAR) organization that conducts SAR activities within the Commonwealth of Virginia. They provide support upon request to various local, State and Federal government agencies.

### II. GUIDELINES

VDEM is the agency, within the Commonwealth of Virginia, responsible for the state-level coordination of search and rescue activities. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management designates a State SAR Coordinator to coordinate the Search and Rescue Program for VDEM and to coordinate overall state SAR operations and training for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Each locality may designate a local SAR Coordinator to act for that particular political subdivision. In the absence of an official designation by the local government, it is understood that the chief law enforcement officer of the political subdivision will be the local SAR Coordinator.

Volunteer groups provide services to, and come under the operational control of, the appropriate Legal Responsible Agent (RA). In the case of missing persons, it is most often the local chief law enforcement officer or his designee. In other types of search and rescue (i.e. known crashes, missing overdue aircraft or boats, ELT or disaster search) it is usually some combination of State, Federal and local government agencies. Even in this type of incident, local Emergency Services providers, like law enforcement, fire fighting, and emergency medical services are often the first responders on scene and would operate under their local RA as per their local protocols.

### III. TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING

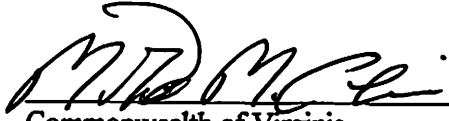
1. The group will provide VDEM with a copy of the following: 1) a current roster, updated annually, of all members in the group; 2) a copy of the group's certification and training standards (*for each discipline that is practiced in the group*); 3) the groups mission statement, charter or constitution and bylaws. If requested, the group should be prepared to show VDEM that its members meet or exceed all group standards either by demonstration or documentation. Such demonstrations will not interfere with scheduled training periods, but may consist of observation thereof.
2. The group may provide services to any agency, group or individual to whom it wishes to respond. The State does not assume any responsibility nor does it exercise any control in situations where a response is not at the State's request or with the State's authorization.
3. If the group wishes to be considered a "State resource" and operate under the auspices of the State when responding to a SAR incident, the following terms and conditions will be recognized.
  - a. Group performance standards must at least meet those provided by the state as a guideline and groups must not act out of the scope of their standards filed with VDEM.
  - b. If the group is requested to respond to an incident by anyone other than VDEM the group will notify VDEM of their intention to respond. If VDEM determines the request is appropriate and has the concurrence of the RA, a mission number will be issued authorizing the group to respond as an agent of the Commonwealth. VDEM will not preclude individual group participation in a search whether state sanctioned or not. In either case the dispatch of the search ready teams will not be delayed due to mission status issues.
  - c. When requests for specific units are received by VDEM, if those units can meet the requested need no additional units will be contacted. Additional units will be called out with the concurrence of the requesting jurisdiction once a determination has been made that additional resources are needed to fill the request. "Callouts" will be as equitable as possible between groups with equal skills; however, "quickest response" will continue to be a deciding factor of unit callouts.

- d. If the group is requested to respond to a SAR incident by VDEM, VDEM will issue a mission number, which authorizes the group to respond as an *agent* of the State.
- e. The issuance of a State mission number **does not** obligate VDEM for reimbursement of any expenses incurred by the group related to the response. This includes wages, travel cost and individual or group equipment used, damaged or lost during a search.
- f. Pursuant to Section 2.1-526.8 and 44-146.23 of the Code of Virginia, a volunteer member of the group enjoys protection from liability to the same extent as a State employee, provided that they act within the scope of their training and of the mission assigned by VDEM.
- g. Pursuant to Section 65.2-101 of the Code of Virginia, a volunteer member of the group has the opportunity to apply for worker's compensation for injuries received while responding to or participating in an authorized mission. For purposes of this code, volunteers search and rescue organization members will be considered employees of VDEM when responding to an authorized mission, and as such "their average weekly wage shall be deemed at least sufficient to produce *minimum* compensation provided by this title for injured workers and their dependents." **This means your compensation will be based and figured on minimum wage.**
- h. VDEM will notify the VDEM Regional Coordinators and Virginia State Police (VSP) in all cases where volunteer State resources are utilized. A State Deputy Coordinating Officer (DSCO) may be dispatched to the scene and may be responsible for assisting in the logistical coordination of State resources on scene and/or serve as liaison between VDEM and local authorities. The DSCO could be a representative of VSP, VDEM or from some other State agency as warranted. In lieu of an identified Incident Commander and staff, volunteers are encouraged to report to the DSCO for sign-in in order to ensure protection under 3.f and 3.g of this document.
- i. VDEM reserves the right to allocate State SAR resources to a particular incident based on availability, appropriateness and the resource needs of the incident that may be in progress or that may develop. The decision to reallocate resources from an incident in progress will be coordinated with the DSCO and with the agencies involved in the incident.
- j. The group agrees to comply with incident reporting requirements for all incidents where the group responds under a State mission number. The submission of After Action Reports will be within two weeks of the search

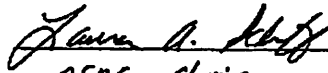
completion or suspension. Group are encouraged to use After Action Report forms provided by VDEM; however, format can be at the discretion of the group as long as the following items are included: State mission number, type of search, date/time started, date/time ended, location subject found (lat/long coordinates), number and status of subject(s), other participating agencies (if any), number of ground/staff personnel and number of canines/others participating, number of tasks completed, total estimated mileage for all participants, and brief description of task area.

- k. The group agrees, that if requested and if it is within its capabilities, it will provide technical support to VDEM related program development projects. This support will only be provided on a not to interfere volunteer basis and if applicable the standards of protection in paragraph 3.f and 3.g above apply.
4. This Memorandum does not preclude the group from participating in SAR activities in which VDEM is not a participant and, conversely, does not require VDEM to include the group in its SAR activities.
5. This Memorandum shall remain in effect until July 1, 2007, or until superseded or rescinded by either party.

IV. SIGNATURES

  
 Commonwealth of Virginia  
 Department of Emergency Management  
 Michael M. Cline, Coordinator

28 June 02  
 DATE

  
 ASRC Chair  
 Lauren A. Schiff

6/24/02  
 DATE

V. POINTS OF CONTACT

1. Virginia Department of Emergency Services

- a. Search and Rescue Program Coordinator (804) 674-2422
- b. Emergency Operation Center (VEOC) (800) 468-8892  
(804) 674-2400

2. Your Group

- a. ASRC Pager 434-972-7840  
 (Emergency Contact or Dispatch) (Telephone #) or  
 See attachment for detailed alert procedures (Pager #)
- b. LAUREN SCHIFF, CHAIR H: 703-528-5888 C: 571-213-4214  
 (Primary Contact) W: 703-558-7567  
 (Telephone #)
- c. RANDY FRANK, VICE CHAIR H: 301-601-29440 C: 301-452-4192  
 (Secondary Contact) W: 240-684-4016  
 (Telephone #)