

Comments on ops manual – By Carl Werntz Jan 5, 2004

1. Move all of the administrative drivel for pertaining to the document (authorship, maintenance, priority, etc) to one place, right now it is spread out in several places. This will allow most readers to avoid this minutia, while getting the main points across. For example, sections 1.4, 1.7, and 1.8, 2.5.1, Agreed, in fact there is way too much administration in the ops manual generally, It is proposed to move much of this material to the admin manual where it belongs.
2. This document make it fairly clear in section 2 (last paragraph in section 1, 5.2.1) that ALL responses are as the ASRC, not as teams. However, in section 6.3 it provides rules for non-ASRC responses. How do these two jibe? Does this apply to all responses, or just searches? How does this apply to teams that have MOUs directly with Responsible Agencies? My underlying question is should the ASRC be an operational entity or a conference of interoperable local Groups? My understanding is that we are interoperable groups. The only operational function of the conference is on respect to providing a dispatch capability, but this can be provided by any individual qualified to do so across the conference.
3. 5.1.1 states that the ASRC does not provide primary cave rescue response. MARG does provide coordination assistance, and is the primary notification mechanism for the ER-NCRC for cave rescues in Northern WV, at the request of the ER-NCRC. All these issues will be addressed in the new manual.
4. 5.2.1, and other sections which describe an ASRC-only response are problematic. Groups need the freedom to respond to incidents at the request of their local authorities. Delaying response whilst awaiting permission is ill-advised as we would then not be treating a lost person as the emergency we wish others to understand it to be. In the face of a valid request from local or state authorities for assistance with a lost person incident, I cannot imagine a situation where an ACA would refuse such a request. I want to encourage group response to be the first level of the conferences response which is subsequently backed up with other conference resources as the requirement develops.
5. The term “Incident Commander” should NOT be used for several reasons. I prefer the term “Search Manager” to describe a training level, although there might be another term that would be better.
  - a. In the ICS system (which we purport to use) IC is an operational title, not a level of qualification. It is confusing to others for us to have multiple people on a scene with a label of “incident commander” when none of them is, in fact, THE incident commander. In appendix Q, this conflict between training levels

and operational levels is referenced, why do we persist in an activity that confuses (and sometimes enrages) our RA's (who may not have read appendix Q in their bathroom reading). I agree, whether we can convince enough people to make this change or not remains to be seen. This is like having a military rank and appointment under the same name set it is very confusing.

- b. All our use of that term can do is aggravate the local agencies we are working with. Even though they have asked us to run the search for them, they still think they are in charge (and they are).
  - c. Even within the Ops Manual, the IC term is specifically applied to the command of SAR resources, not the whole incident (which could extend beyond SAR). For example section 5.5.1. This and many other issues to be clarified.
  - d. I have not undertaken to remove the term from the ops manual as that would be an exhaustive task (and there are folks out there who disagree, owing to their integration with the VA system, which uses the training title.)
6. Section A4 lists a whole bunch of stuff that constitutes an operations kit. We use about a quarter of this stuff as listed, and have substituted SAR-specific forms for about another quarter of the stuff. The balance we don't have and seem not to have needed. (VA specific stuff, mostly) Plus, how about the WV topographic atlas. I will look at our ops kit the next time I am at the trailer and list what we actually are using (most are the PSARC forms, but a few are from other SAR teams (BASARC comes to mind for their lost person data form. (I have a updated list of forms which is much more modest as well. Specifically we need to have a statement that allows some flexibility for the different state groups e.g use the term or equivalent.
7. D9 places the burden upon the FTL to ensure that they are not taking anyone into the field who is carrying a firearm. I am not sure that they are the best person to risk a confrontation with an armed person. Being responsible for and confronting a person bearing arms should be seen as entirely different items. I would think it appropriate for the FTL to approach the IC to ask for help from the RA in such a circumstance
8. I have attempted to re-write appendix F to more clearly delineate the difference in the duties between the conference safety officer and the incident safety officer. Please see the attached document for that revision. will put to ops committee for review.
9. To date, this has not been vetted by others. I did not make any substantive change to the safety-related issues, and most of the other changes are an effort to make the ops manual reflect the reality outside of Virginia. ok

Hope this is helpful.

Carl Werntz