

Annex F. ASRC Safety Officer Responsibilities and Protocols

F. 1 Conference Safety Officer position - The Conference Safety Officer position is put in place for the purpose of centralizing responsibility for safety aspects of Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference . The goal is to have a person dedicated only to safety issues across the conference. The assignment of a Safety Officer is also intended to aid the conference and member groups in complying with all laws and regulations related to work place safety.

F.1.1 Conference Safety Officer Training Level -

- F.1.1.1) The ASRC Safety Officer shall be an active member fully qualified to function as the Safety Officer within the ICS.
- F.1.1.2) The ASRC Safety Officer should be a person trained and certified to the level of Field Team Leader (FTL) or above and trained in the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- F.1.1.3) Ideally the Safety Officer should be a Rescue Specialist or be competent and familiar with the aspects of technical rescue operations in order to properly monitor those operations.
- F.1.1.4) In addition to field operations, the conference safety officer shall be responsible for obtaining and maintaining a level of familiarity with state and federal health and safety regulations.
- F.1.1.5) When the conference Safety Officer is not able to fulfil all aspects of aspect of this position, or when the size and scope of an issue exceeds the ability of one person to meet all the responsibilities of the position, deputies can and should be designated.

F.1.2 Assignment - The ASRC Safety Officer should, when available, be considered part of the overhead team and respond as part of any such limited dispatch. When available, the ASRC Safety Officer may, at the discretion of the Incident Commander (IC), be assigned the functions of Safety Officer within the ICS.

F.1.3 Training Responsibilities - He/she shall coordinate with the training committee to insure that Incident Staff (IS) candidates are trained to be able to function as the ICS Safety Officer. He/she shall assist the Training Officer with the establishment of the standards for such training. He/she shall also work with the Training Officer to insure that the appropriate level of safety training is included and accomplished in the Field Team Leader (FTL) and Field Team Member (FTM) training.

F.1.4 Investigative Panel Responsibilities - The ASRC Safety Officer shall be a member of any investigative panel, board or committee established within the ASRC to investigate line of duty injuries.

F.1.5 Investigative Responsibilities- He/she shall conduct any preliminary investigation of such injuries and report the findings of such preliminary investigation to the Chair of the ASRC as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours. He/she shall report to the Board of Directors (BOD) in writing, at its next regular meeting, any such injuries and the results of any investigations.

F.1.6 ASRC BOD and Group Reporting - In the event that injuries to ASRC personnel are determined to be the result of unsafe practices, such unsafe practices and corrective measures shall be reported to the BOD and to all member groups as quickly as possible in order to prevent repeat incidents.

F.1.7 Claims Forms - The ASRC Safety Officer shall insure that applicable injury reports and claim forms are submitted by or on behalf of any ASRC member injured in the line-of-duty.

F.2 Incident Safety Officer

F.2.1 Incident Safety Officer position - The Incident Safety Officer position within the Incident Command System (ICS) is a responsibility that can be assigned concurrently with other functions. As soon as possible during the establishment of the mission base, the ASRC Incident Commander (IC) should give consideration to assigning this function to a qualified member as their sole responsibility. Before allowing ASRC personnel to participate in a technical operation the IC **SHALL** make such designation(s). Before ASRC personnel depart a search, a Safety Officer should be freed of any concurrent duties in order to screen departing personal for sleep deprivation.

F.2.2 Incident safety officer responsibilities during a search - The responsibilities of the Incident Safety Officer during a search are concurrent with those of the Operations Section, and as such may be more effectively handled as a collateral duty, except for F 4.3.9, (see F 4.1).

F.2.2.1 Insure that teams are properly staffed; correct manning level for task, competent leader, radio operator and medic.

F.2.2.2 Insure that specific hazards for task are properly identified during the team briefings (Environmental i.e.: weather, Man-made i.e.: social conditions, situational, etc).

F.2.2.3 Insure that any newly discovered or reported hazards are reported to affected (or possibly affected) teams, both in real-time and in subsequent briefings.

F.2.2.4 Verify that teams are properly equipped for task, equipped to spend the night out if necessary and trained in the necessary survival skills. (clothing, foot wear, first aid kit, etc.)

- F.2.2.5** Screen team members to insure that they are up to task at hand. (Physical condition, properly rested, etc.)
 - F.2.2.6** Coordinate with local resources to insure that medical assistance is available.
 - F.2.2.7** Screen returning team members for injuries/aliments, insure that proper treatment is provided and documented for the Search Manager.
 - F.2.2.8** Verify condition of members returning from task and insure that they are fit before allowing them to participate in another task. (Physical condition, rest, food and water).
 - F.2.2.9** Screen conditions of members departing search to insure that they are fit for the drive home and make arrangements for rehab of those who are not. (Properly rested and fed, back-up drivers, etc).
- F.2.3 Incident Safety Officer responsibilities during a technical rescue** - The Safety Officer responsibilities during any technical rescue evolution , (or "Semi-tech"), are of such importance as to require the designation of a person (on the scene), with this position as their sole responsibility.
- F.2.3.1** Insure that all equipment required is in safe, usable condition before it is employed.
 - F.2.3.2** Insure that extra equipment is carried in for the patient.
 - F.2.3.3** Verify that participants are trained to at least the level at which they are to function in the rescue evolution.
 - F.2.3.4** Require competent person not involved in the evolution (safety officer or designee) to double check all rigging and anchors prior to loading. (part of a redundant system of safety checks).
 - F.2.3.5** Require proper use of all appropriate safety equipment by all members participating in evolution. (Harnesses- tied in if working near the edge. Helmets being worn.)
 - F.2.3.6** Insure that all safety precautions, belays etc. are maintained until the subject and all team members are clear and safe of the slope, grade or other danger area..
 - F.2.3.7** Observe operation for any lapses in safety procedures and/or unidentified hazards.
 - F.2.3.8** Take necessary action to keep all personnel not actively involved in the evolution at a safe distance and in a location where they will not interfere with or obstruct the evolution.

F.2.3.9 Insure that unused equipment is staged so as to be available, remain undamaged and not in a position to obstruct operations, or become a missile.

F.2.4 Authority of a Safety Officer during Search Operation - The designated Safety Officer on any ASRC search shall, in conjunction with the Operations Section, have the authority to:

F.2.4.1 To hold a team at base until they are properly composed and equipped for the assigned task.

F.2.4.2 To prohibit individual members from participating in a task for which they are not properly equipped or not physically capable (lack of rest etc).

F.2.4.3 To recommend to the IC that teams be pulled in from the field upon discovery of hazards for which they are not prepared, (flash flood warning, etc).

F.2.4.4 To report to the membership for action any members who insist upon driving home from a search in spite of a level of fatigue which the Safety Officer considers unsafe.

F.2.5 Authority of a Safety Officer during Technical Rescue - In a technical rescue evolution the function of the Safety Officer is so critical that he/she shall have the absolute authority to:

F.2.5.1 To order equipment removed from use if it is discovered to be unsafe or if its safety is suspect.

F.2.5.2 To refuse to allow a member to participate in an operation for which he/she is not properly trained or qualified.

F.2.5.3 To order an operation halted upon discovery of an unsafe condition until such condition can be corrected, even to the extent of reducing the scope of an operation until proper personnel and equipment are available on site to carry out the operation within established safety guidelines.

F.2.5.4 To order a member removed and replaced for violation of established safety procedures.

F.2.5.5 To report back to the ASRC for appropriate action, any member who engages in conduct that endangers personnel.

F.3 Compliance with Safety Officer - All members of the ASRC are expected to comply with the Safety Officer(s), and failure to do so should be reported to the membership for appropriate action. The designation of a Safety Officer in no way absolves all members from the obligation to do all in their power to insure that all operations conducted by the ASRC are done so with safety as a paramount consideration.

F.4 Group Safety Officer

F.4.1 Group Safety Officer Position - Each member group of the ASRC shall designate a Group Safety Officer. This member shall be responsible for safety training and enforcement of safety standards within their group and in group activities.

F.4.2 Claim Assistance - When a group member is injured, the Group Safety Officer shall assist that member with injury reports and claims, and report their completion and submission to the ASRC Safety Officer.

F.4.3 ASRC Safety Officer Assistance - The Group Safety Officer(s) shall report to, assist and otherwise coordinate with the ASRC Safety Officer as requested.

F.4.4 Qualifications - The Group Safety Officer should meet all the qualifications for ASRC Conference Safety Officer as set forth above, including qualification as Field Team Leader (FTL).