

ASRC AO Lesson Plan

October 22, 1993

11/31/93
(S.M.M.)
1400 - 600

Lesson I. Introduction

- A. Alert Officer characteristics (AO procedures)
- B. AO qualification requirements (training standards)
- C. AO role and responsibilities

AS PART OF
MSO CURS
OFFERED BY
BRMFG.

Lesson II. The Alert Process

- A. Virginia
 - 1. DES
 - 2. Direct
 - 3. Local Citizen/Group
- B. Maryland (MOU)
- C. Pennsylvania (DER agreement, PSAR documents)
- D. Typical process (Appendix B ASRC Ops manual.)

ALSO TO
BE OFFERED
AT MSO
CURS HOSTED
BY M/SAR
IN MARYLAND

Lesson III. Interfacing with the Responsible Agent/Requestor

- A. Collecting information (AO procedures)
- B. Providing Suggestions (MSO and lecture material)
- C. Passing information to Dispatch Supervision.

IN JANUARY 1994.

Lesson IV. ASRC Missions and Policies that affect Response.

- A. Conference resources
- B. Conference policies
 - 1. Appendix B. Operations manual
 - 2. Alert/Dispatch Policies
 - 3. Annex 1-AA
 - 4. VA DES MOU
 - 5. MD MOU
 - 6. ASRC Operational Requirements
 - 7. Applicable sections of Operations Manual

Lesson V. Levels of Response

- A. Definitions of level of response
- B. Response level considerations
- C. Operational considerations of levels.

Lesson VI. Interface with Conference Dispatch

- A. Passing information to Dispatch Supervisor.
- B. Dispatch Officer training.

Lesson VIII. Specific Situations

Lesson IX. General Background

- A. Pager network
- B. Pager Codes
- C. Other

Lesson X. Practical testing

Incident Command System

as it applies to SAR in Virginia

The **Incident Command System** is based on command structures developed over a period of time by federal fire protection agencies to deal with forest fires. Today's ICS can be used to manage all types of emergencies, as it is applicable to large, complex incidents as well as day-to-day occurrences.

Principles and Concepts

The ICS is designed to be extremely versatile. The important concept to remember is that certain functions must be provided, the ICS makes allowances for these functions to be provided to the extent necessary for the completion of the mission.

Think Functions – Not People

The primary functions of the ICS are:

Coordination, Search Management, Investigation, Support Services, Plans, Operations, Communications

The ICS has *Eight Critical Components* that support its functions.

- 1) **Common Terminology** - members of the search community must be able to communicate with each other. This means knowing what is expected of the person filling a specific function, what to expect from each resource type, and having common, predetermined names for facilities. The ICS establishes common terminology for functions, resources, and facilities.
- 2) **Modular Organization** - the organizational structure develops to meet the requirement of the incident. A small search may have an overhead team of one or two persons. A large search may require officers for each functions and perhaps even divisions or branches within a function to handle the resources in use.
- 3) **Integrated Communications** - the use of a common communications plan and an on-scene communications center is vital if the search is to be effective. All communications should be in plain English, with no codes. This ensures that all resources will understand each other. (The ASRC makes one exception to this rule -- the status codes used to identify the condition of the subject when he/she is found.)
- 4) **Unified Management Structure** - this means simply that all agencies having jurisdictional responsibility at a multi-jurisdictional incident contribute to the process of:

- * determining search objective.
 - * selecting strategies.
 - * ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities will be accomplished.
 - * ensuring that integrated tactical operations are conducted.
 - * making maximum use of resources.
- 5) **Search Action Plan** - a plan for locating the lost subject. It may or may not be written, depending on the size of the incident, the number of jurisdictions involved, the expected duration of the incident.

The Search Action Plan must be dynamic and must be updated for each operational period.

- 6) **Manageable Span of Control** - safety factors and management requirements dictate span of control requirements. In general it ranges from three to seven, with five being the optimum for most cases.
- 7) **Designated Search Management Facilities** - predefined facilities established for use in the emergency incident.

Search Base - location of management and support activities.

Command Post - location from which search operations are directed, including planning and communications. May be located with Search Base if communications requirements can be met.

Camps - locations where resources may be stationed to better support search activities. May be relocated as necessary.

Staging Areas - temporary location of resources on short notice.

Helibases - places where helicopters can be parked, maintained and refueled.

Helispots - temporary landing areas to load or unload resources.

- 8) **Comprehensive Resource Management** - maintaining an up-to-date and accurate picture of resource status. (This boils down to staging for ASRC.)

Remember

*You are working for the lost subject,
the potential survivor.*

The ICS designates five positions from which all incident functions are conducted.

- 1) **Command** - overall management of all incident functions
- 2) **Operations** - all tactical operations
- 3) **Planning** - strategy including investigation, brief/debrief, and staging
 - What has happened.
 - What is happening.
 - What is likely to happen.

"Plans" should be 12 hours ahead of everyone else.

- 4) **Logistics** - all support services including communications
- 5) **Finance** - establishes all costs

Most SAR teams use modified ICS staff positions.

- 1) **Incident Command (IC)** - overall management.
- 2) **Operations (OPS)** - tactical operations including communications (commo), brief/debrief, developing and assigning tasks. (May include staging.)
- 3) **Plans** - strategy formulation, 12 hours ahead, includes investigation (and sometimes staging).
- 4) **Logistics** - all support activities, food, sleeping facilities, personal hygiene, transportation, medical, supplies and equipment.
- 5) **Finance** - rarely, if ever, used.

Base Operations as applied to SAR in Virginia

Base is the collective term that most Virginia SAR personnel use for Command Post and Search Base. By the ICS, **Command Post** is where search operations are directed and **Search Base** is where management and support activities occur. SAR operations often do not become so large as to require separate facilities for these operations.

The typical search base will utilize the following functional units:

Sign In: This should be the first place you go (and first thing you do) upon arriving at base. By signing in the search management personnel are able to account for all of its personnel on the scene. When the search is over, you must sign out so the search managers will know you are out of the field and headed home. (A function of Staging.)

Staging: This is the area in which resources are pooled and from which they will be deployed. The staging officer is in charge of keeping an up-to-date record of the personnel available, their status (assigned, available, out-of-service), and of assigning them to tasks. (This is a function of OPS.)

Communications: This unit (COMMO or base radio) handles all radio traffic to and from base. All traffic is carefully logged and pertinent information passed to the decision makers. Often, this unit will oversee deployment of radio equipment to the field. (A function of OPS in SAR.)

Logistics: This unit provides for the physical needs of the search/searchers. It orders resources (people, dogs, helicopters, food, tents, etc.). Often the equipment cache, including radios, will be monitored and deployed by this unit.

Plans: This unit sees to the long-term needs of the search. It decides what resources will be needed, monitors the progress of the search, and plans for the next shift.

Operations: The tactical operations of the search are developed and assigned by this unit (OPS). Task assignments are developed, teams are deployed, information gathered from the field, resources in the field are tracked, etc. The immediate decisions about how the search is run are made by this unit.

* In search management, OPS and Plans are often combined in a single unit (PLOPS). This modification is necessitated by the often limited number of initially responding resources and the time-critical nature of most searches.

Incident Commander: The IC is in charge of all aspects of the search. All other units/functions fall under his/her authority. There will always be an IC on an ASRC incident, and should be on every incident.

Investigations: Investigation is used to collect, review, and present background information on the subject or to follow up on leads developed during the search. If this function is assigned to an individual, Investigations will report directly to the IC unless otherwise directed.

Liaison: The Public Information Officer (PIO), of Press Liaison, deals with the media and other individuals/agencies to assure the organized dispersion of information in a manner that will jeopardize neither the subject's right to privacy nor the success of the search. (Under the direct control of the IC.)

Clues: Maintains a record of clues and tracks the follow-up actions taken. By the ICS this is a function of Plans, but in SAR it is handled by OPS.

Brief/Debrief: As the interface between OPS and the field resources, this unit/person assigns tasks, explains objects, warns of hazards, etc. Resources returning from the field debrief to pass information in an organized manner to the OPS section. (Brief/Debrief is considered a function of OPS.)

Note 1: With the exception of the IC, all of the preceding descriptions are of functions. They may or may not be assigned to a specific individual or team (thus becoming a functional unit). Functions not specifically assigned remain the responsibility of the IC. Either way, the functions are always filled. Search management uses this dynamic system (ICS) to allow it to tailor its size and complexity to meet the incident at hand, and to meet its changing requirements with the most efficient level of staffing.

* In most cases, you (as a searcher) will see these functions assigned and will treat them as units. These are not the only functional units that may be utilized on a search, the ICS has many different functional units that may be employed under specific sets of circumstances, but for SAR these are the most common.

Note 2: The job of managing a search can be very difficult and always demands a high level of concentration from the unit (section) officers. Unless you are instructed to do so, do not interfere with the mission officers, especially the IC, the OPS officer, and the Plans officer. You should remain in the staging when possible and always inform that officer of any change in your status.