

FIELD TEAM OPERATIONS

(In a nutshell)

The Mega-Macroscopic (Really, really big) View- The United States of America

Who is in charge of all inland SAR? _____

The Macroscopic (Sorta-big) View - Virginia's resources

VDEM Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- Mark Eggeman (Our boss!)

Trained	Ground	ASRC
	Dog Teams	Other ground teams
	Signcutting/Tracking	Dogs East
	Horse	SARTI
	Boat	(usually swamps)
	Military	CAP
	Mechanized	4-wheelers/Dirtbikes
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Semi-trained	Police	
	Ambulance	
	Fire	
	Aerial	Helicopters/Fixed Wing
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Untrained	Volunteers	(Most common)

Quick break for terminology - Hats, Tasks, and Men

Personnel are actual people, usually referred to by their training level.

Tasks are jobs that need to get done, or teams assembled to do that job.

Hats refer to jobs on a team that *must* be assigned to a person. A person can wear more than one hat, that is, a person can be assigned more than one of these jobs, but every hat must be filled by someone.

Other terms I couldn't find anywhere else to put:

PLS – Point Last Seen

LKP – Last Known Position – Not the same as the PLS!

POD – Probability of Detection – How well did you search?

The Microscopic (Rather tiny) View - At the search

A search's personnel are divided into two groups: Base and Field.

Base's personnel are usually IC's or IS's. Sometimes an FTL might be field promoted.

Base's Hats: (At least, the ones you need to know!)

- IC
- Debriefers/Briefer
- Communications
- Base radio operator
- Others

Base does not use tasks.

Instead, you might think of them all working on one task- Running the show!

Field – People, Tasks, and Hats

Personnel	Tasks	Hats
(Ground) FTLs FTMs CQs Fire/Police/Medical/Military Volunteers	(Standard) Sweep Hasty Closed-Grid	(Always) FTL – Field team leader Medic Radio operator
(Mobile) Horse Mechanized Pilot	Containment Rescue Reflex Investigative Survey/Recon	(Sometimes) Rescue specialist Safety officer
(Specialists) Dog-handler Sign-cutter Tracker	(Specialized) Dog-team Sign-cutting Recon Other	(Other) Navigator

Tasks in more detail!

Sweep – Standard line search.

Hasty – Quick search along a linear feature.

Closed-Grid - Line search with large teams. Spacing between searchers is minimum.

Very good PODs, but usually destroys any clues missed.

Containment – Prevent subject from crossing a linear feature unnoticed. Usually done on roads, rivers, open fields and sometimes trails.

Rescue – Save a life! (Remember your 3 kinds: Non-, Semi-, and Full technical)

Reflex – Term applied to the most obvious tasks to do, given the subject's profile.

Examples include searching the subject's house, favorite haunts, etc.

Dog-team, sign-cutting – Allowing the specialist to do their thing.

Recon/Survey – Comparing base's maps with reality.

Investigative – Going door to door, asking questions.

The Mini-Micro-Scopic (Really ridiculously tiny) View – Role of the FTM

On a standard ground team, you are the sergeant/chief engineer of the boat!

You have almost the same technical knowledge as the FTL- Use that to track technical things, like navigating and handling the radio, and leave the FTL free to focus on leading the team.

Be aware, even if he doesn't ask for it. Know your position, know where you're going, have a map, have a watch. Know how long the team has been without a break. Know what time the team is to check in. And still find time to search.

Know your limits! If you cannot navigate well or do not understand a technical issue, speak with the FTL. Even if the problem is too difficult for either of you individually, pooling your knowledge can yield pleasant results.

And realize that the FTL will rely on you as a trained and skilled searcher, who can accomplish a technical goal with limited supervision. You might not be watched, so your mistakes may go unnoticed. So don't make mistakes!

On a specialized team, you are a private!

Your status as FTM has given you the opportunity to work on this team. But you are not trained in their techniques! Don't pretend to be the boss.

The specialist may not be good at land-nav, radio protocols or medical abilities, even if he says he is. If you are uncomfortable wearing these hats, consider carefully before joining this team. But remember, the specialist is always the FTL.

In general, sign-cutters want near-absolute silence. Turn your radio down and do not chatter. Do not follow too closely, and be aware of where you're walking, so you don't walk over the tracks he's following. Follow the exact same path the sign-cutter has made, especially if he walks through the thickest path possible.

Dog handlers are often the opposite. Feel free to talk, but don't lose focus. It's very easy to lose your location or miss a radio call (or a call from the subject!) if you're gabbing.

Before going on a recon mission, make sure you understand not only what you are looking for, but why. Talk with base or your FTL carefully.

If you are field promoted, do not panic!

A FTL doesn't have much more technical training than an FTM, usually just more practice and polish on difficult tasks. Remember that you can do your job, and the people want to follow you. Don't be afraid to rely on another FTM just like your FTLs would, but double check their work! Don't search- Your job is to watch your team. Use common sense and rely on your experience (or call base), and you'll be fine.

Technical tips- (You should know these from CQ, but as a reminder...)

When you arrive:

Take a moment to breathe. Sign in, call your dispatcher, and head over to the staging area. Relax... You'll be worked up by now, but calm down and get ready.

On task:

Remember your radio and land nav skills. Use them.

Attraction is important- Yell for the subject occasionally, and then stop and listen!

Remember your 3 laws of robotics... err... searching.

- 1) First your safety.
- 2) Then your team's safety.
- 3) Then the subject's safety.

Be professional at all times! We can't search if people don't call us out, and they won't if they see anything other than professional search and rescue heroes.

Remember your critical spacing and alignment! Keep the other person's shoes in sight, and adjust as necessary when the terrain changes.

Remember your flagging tape protocols:

- 1 flag = temporary boundary
- 2 flags = permanent boundary
- 3 flags = clue

If a clue is found, shout "STOP!" and stay put. The only people who ever approach a clue are the FTL and a sign-cutter, if present.

After task:

Consider your PODs. Don't just give the FTL a number, give him a reason. Also, remember anything unusual that happened on task, and remind the FTL.

Grab some food, go to staging. Don't go back into the field until you're ready. But don't hang back, either.

Going home:

<<<ARE YOU AWAKE ENOUGH TO DRIVE?>>>

Sign out, call dispatch. Once home, find some way to unwind. Searches are stressful, so know what relaxes you. And be proud: You've done your part as a search and rescue worker.