

# Field Team Ops

Things you should take away from this class:

- How to be an effective Field Team Member and assist your Field Team Leader.
- The types of field tasks and your role on each of them.
- Be aware, be professional, and be safe.

What are the three things to remember always and forever when you are at a search?

What will happen when you get to a search?

**Sign in.** The first thing you want to do when you get to a search is sign in. If we don't know you're there, we can't put you on a field team.

Then you will be put on a field team.

**Field Team:** A group of people who are working together on a field task to search for a missing person.

## **Members:**

Field Team Leader. Usually an FTL or a field promoted FTM. The person responsible for the field team and instructing the team members.

Radio Operator. Usually an FTM, this is the person who communicates with base while on a task.

Medical Officer. Usually the person with the highest medical training, this is the person who will attend to the subject with the FTL if a find is made.

Rescue Specialist. Usually an FTL or experienced FTM, this is the person in charge of coordinating a rescue effort.

Now that you are on your team, the FTL will show you a map that may contain the:

**PLS:** Point last seen. This is the last actual visual sighting of the subject.

**LKP:** Last known position. This may be different from PLS. This is the last place the subject was known to be. Although this can be the same as the PLS, sometimes the last known position is where a clue relating to the subject is found.

### **Types of field teams:**

1. Attraction: Trying to have the subject come to you. Tactics include calling their name, blowing whistles, using sirens, flashing lights, sitting by fires. Can be combined with the other types.
2. Containment: Building a wall around the search area to avoid search expansion. Usually done by driving around the search area. This is done early on in a search. Consider trails and camp-ins.
3. Survey Search: Looking at an area from above or a distance. This may be from an airplane, a peak, etc...
4. Reflex Task : This is the first type of field team that goes out. This is usually a small group (3-7 people) who search high probability areas based on subject profiling.
5. Hasty Search: Small group of people searching a linear feature.
6. Sweep Search (Open Grid): This is a medium sized group (5-15 people) who search in a line in the search area. They are usually spaced fairly wide apart (50 feet or so). This is done throughout the search.
7. Closed Grid: This is only used towards the end of a search as a last resort. A line search can be destructive but has a high probability of detection.
8. Investigative: A door to door search of only about 3 people who try to gather information on the subject and let the community know that there is a search in progress in their area. You may be asked to pass out flyers.

9. Dog Team: The dog handler is the FTL, while you do the land navigation and operate the radio.
10. Signcutter: The signcutter looks for signs of passage while you do the land navigation and operate the radio.

Things to keep in mind when on a task

**Critical Spacing:** The distance apart that field team members should be spread in order to achieve the desired POD. Generally, you should never spread so far apart that you can't see the shoelaces of the people next to you. Your FTL may want you to stand closer together though, depending on the POD he/she is trying to achieve.

**Align yourself with the person at the end of the line.** If the border of your search area is to the right of the line, you should adjust yourself according to the person to your right. If they turn to the left to follow the side of a stream, everybody needs to turn and maintain their critical spacing.

**Clue awareness.** There is a much higher chance of finding a clue than finding a subject, but clues are usually much smaller and harder to find than a subject. Clues are very important because they may lead to the subject or greatly reduce the search area. Therefore, when we search, our focus must be on looking for clues. Look up, down, side to side, behind you.

**Flagging tape.** We use flagging tape to mark clues, search boundaries, and other significant things. Different pieces of tape have different meanings:

1. Temporary boundary
2. Permanent boundary
3. Clue

After the task is complete:

- **POD:** Probability of detection. This is really divided into three parts: the probability of finding a) a responsive subject, b) an unresponsive subject, or c) clues in a search area. This is easy to visualize in thinking, "If there were 10 subjects (or 100 milk cartons for clues) in our search area, how many do you think we would

have found?" Your FTL will ask you what you thought of your POD after a task.

- **Sign out:** So we will know that you have left.

Final thoughts:

- **Field promotions:** You may be asked to be an FTL on a search before you have achieved this level of training. It's very important to consider if you are ready for this beforehand (Am I confident? Do I know what to do? Am I well rested? Am I prepared?). You can decline if you feel at all uncomfortable with this responsibility.
- **Getting home: Do not get in a car with a tired driver!!!!** If you or your driver is too tired to drive, it is much more important to find somebody who can drive for you or to take a nap until you are rested. Please respect this and look out for your fellow searchers



# Field Team Ops

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Things you should take away from this class:

- How to be an effective Field Team Member and assist your Field Team Leader.
- The types of field tasks and your role on each of them.
- Be aware, be professional, and be safe.

What are the three things to remember always and forever when you are at a search?

*awareness*

*professionalism*

*safety*

I. What will happen when you get to a search?

- *CALL DISPATCH*--they need to know you are there safely.
- *Sign In*: As soon as you arrive at a search, sign in! If we don't know you're there, we can't put you on a field team. You will then be put on a field team.
- *Safety*: are you prepared for your task? It's YOUR call if you are up to the task.
- *Field Promotions*: are you confident and prepared?

About Field Promotions: You may be asked to be an FTL on a search before you have achieved this level of training. It's very important to consider if you are ready for this beforehand. Are you confident? Do you know what to do? Are you rested and prepared? You can decline if you feel at all uncomfortable with this responsibility.

II. Who is on your field team?

- Field Team: A group of people who are working together on a field task to search for a missing person.
- Members:
  - **Field Team Leader**. Usually an FTL or a field promoted FTM. The person responsible for the field team and instructing the team members.
  - **Radio Operator**. Usually an FTM, this is the person who communicates with base while on a task.
  - **Medical Officer**. Usually the person with the highest medical training, this is the person who will attend to the subject with the FTL if a find is made, but mostly is responsible for injuries on the team.  
Note: This person may be the one who has had the most recent first aid class, so be prepared.
  - **Rescue Specialist**. Usually an FTL or experienced FTM, this is the person in charge of coordinating a rescue effort. Not a regular member of every field team.

Now that you are on your team, the FTL will show you a map that may contain the:

**PLS**: Point last seen. This is the last actual visual sighting of the subject.

**LKP:** Last known position. This may be different from PLS. This is the last place the subject was known to be. Although this can be the same as the PLS, sometimes the last known position is where a clue relating to the subject is found.

### III. Types of field teams:

- **Air Ops:** A plane or helicopter that surveys a large task area.
- **Dog Team:** The dog handler is the FTL, while you do the land navigation and operate the radio.
  - 3 types:
    - **tracking**--follows subject's scent on ground
    - **air scent**--follows any human scent upwind
    - **trailing**--combination. "cuts corners"
- **Signcutter:** The signcutter looks for signs of passage while you do the land navigation and operate the radio.
- **Ground team:** An FTL leads a team of searchers on foot.

### IV. Some tasks that base may assign to a ground team. . .

1. **Reflex Task :** This is a task that covers high probability areas based on subject profiling. (Alzheimer's patient who likes golf might be on the nearby golf course)
2. **Hasty Task:** Any task designed to be done quickly. Often a small group of people searching a linear feature (trail, ridge, road, stream) early on in the search.
3. **Containment:** "Building a wall" around the search area to keep subject from straying further afield. Usually done by driving around the search area. This is done early on in a search. Consider trails and camp-ins.
4. **Investigative:** A door to door search of only about 3 people who try to gather information on the subject and let the community know that there is a search in progress in their area. You may be asked to pass out flyers.
5. **Survey Search:** Looking at an area from above or a distance. This may be from an airplane, a peak, a boat, etc...
6. **Sweep Search :** Also known as "open grid" search. This is a medium sized group (5-15 people) who search in a line in the search area. They are usually spaced fairly wide apart (critical spacing determines the actual distance, see below). This is done throughout the search.
7. **Closed Grid:** This is like combing the search area with a fine-toothed comb. The spacing between searchers is drastically decreased as you sweep the area. This is only used towards the end of a search as a last resort. A grid search has a high probability of detection, but destroys the area for clues and scent-trails.

### V. Things to keep in mind when on a task

- **Attraction:** Trying to have the subject come to you. Tactics include calling their name, blowing whistles, using sirens, flashing lights, sitting by fires. Can combine types.
- **Critical Spacing:** The distance apart that field team members should be spread in order to search most effectively. Generally, you should never spread so far apart that you can't



see the shoelaces of the people next to you. Your FTL may want you to stand closer together though, depending on how thoroughly base has instructed your FTL to search the area.

- **Align yourself with the person at the end of the line.** If the border of your search area is to the right of the line, you should adjust yourself according to the person to your right. If this person turns to the left to follow the side of a stream, everybody needs to turn and maintain their critical spacing.
- **Clue awareness.** There is a much higher chance of finding a clue than finding a subject, but clues are usually much smaller and harder to find than a subject. Clues are very important because they may lead to the subject or greatly reduce the search area. Therefore, when we search, our focus must be on looking for clues. Look up, down, side to side, behind you. Remember what you learned at the CQ workshop: look in negative space, look for linear features (uncommon in nature), think small.
- **Clue protocol "STOP!"** Tell your FTL you've found a clue. Don't descend upon the clue with the voracity of ravenous vultures. Determine location. Call into base. Follow instructions.  
--which may include flagging. Clue locations are marked with 3 looooooong flags.
- **Flagging tape.** We use flagging tape to mark clues, search boundaries, and other significant things. Different pieces of tape have different meanings:
  - Temporary boundary (1 strip)
  - Permanent boundary (2 strips)
  - Clue (3 strips)

#### VI. After the task is complete:

- **Debriefing** the FTL will review the task and ask if there's anything more you remember. This is the time to mention ANYTHING you may have forgotten (clues, hazards, unsearchable areas)
- **POD:** Probability of detection. Your FTL will ask you what you thought of your POD after a task. This is really divided into three parts: the probability of finding a) a responsive subject, b) an unresponsive subject, or c) clues in a search area. This is easy to visualize in thinking, "If there were 10 subjects (or 100 milk cartons for clues) in our search area, how many do you think we would have found?"
- **Staging:** After a task and before you head home or head out on another task you need to re-fuel, re-hydrate and rest. This is the time to nap and eat. Many people bring a base-bag to searches in addition to their field pack. The base-bag contains extra dry clothing, a sleeping bag and more food. Don't forget to plan for recovery time at home (i.e. a big test that needs a well-rested, well-fed, well-studied citizen, or an important meeting . . . )

#### VII. Before you go

- **CALL DISPATCH**--they need to know you are in transit.
- **Sign out** So we will know that you have left.

**Getting home: Do not get in a car with a tired driver!!!!** If you or your driver is too tired to drive, it is much more important to find somebody who can drive for you or to take a nap until

you are rested. Please respect this and look out for your fellow searchers. Do not hesitate to alert the safety officer if someone attempts to drive who is exhausted. The ONLY BRMRG member to ever die in the line of duty was an IC who got in a car while tired and crashed into a guard rail driving home. Take fatigue seriously.

**Stress:** Searching is a very effective way to become stressed. Remember that it's your decision to go to a search or not. We hope you'll search when you can, but nobody's asking you to search when you have to take care of other stuff. If you think you're going to miss class or be unprepared for it, professors tend to be more understanding if you explain to them ahead of time what's going on. Lastly, if you're feeling overwhelmed, let someone know.