

# Fact sheet

## POTOMAC VALLEY SEARCH & RESCUE GROUP

The Potomac Valley Search and Rescue Group is a volunteer organization trained to provide land, cave and river search and rescue services upon request to appropriate government agencies and organizations.

ORGANIZATION -- Formed in 1970, the Potomac Valley Search and Rescue Group is the Washington-area unit of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, a non-profit corporation chartered in the State of Virginia. Based in Washington, D.C., the Group's primary area of coverage is the Potomac Valley, the northern region of Virginia, and the southern, southwestern and western region of Maryland. In conjunction with the Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group, a second unit of the ASRC based in Charlottesville, Va., the Group also responds to outdoor emergencies in southern and western Virginia and in West Virginia.

PURPOSE -- The purpose of the Potomac Valley Search and Rescue Group is to support and cooperate with existing agencies which are responsible for managing and conducting search and rescue operations. The Group specifically does not operate independently from or replace the established services or authority of law enforcement agencies, fire departments, rescue squads or river patrols. A secondary purpose of the Group is to provide program assistance and training opportunities to other organizations and agencies concerned with outdoor safety, *and has established cooperative relationships with area civil air patrols and search and rescue dog associations.*

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATION -- Potomac Valley Search and Rescue Group members are trained and certified under standards set by the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference. Upon completion of training, candidates are qualified as basic members. Each has one or more outdoor skills, such as rock climbing, canoeing and caving, and also one or more specialized skills, such as medicine and communications.

All basic members are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians or hold current American Red Cross Advanced First Aid and CPR certificates. Basic training includes land, cave and river rescue theory and techniques, survival skills, land navigation, wilderness medicine, rescue ropework, communications, transport of injured, and search and rescue management.

CAPABILITIES -- The Potomac Valley Search and Rescue Group is available for volunteer assignments on short notice 24 hours a day. The Group provides its own surface transportation, specialized equipment, support facilities and communications during an operation. Each member is self sufficient for an outdoor stay of at least two days. Depending on the nature of the emergency, a Group alert officer will institute a general call-out of members or dispatch a quick-response team. The team or general call-out of members will be directed to the emergency location and the official in charge, designated by the requesting agency. Once in the field, Group members function as team units or join other established teams at the discretion of operation officials.

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