===
Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group   BASIC MEMBER TRAINING COURSE
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INTRODUCTION

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SMRG--ASRC BASIC MEMBER TRAINING COURSE: INTRODUCTION

The Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group--Appalachian Search and
Rescue Conference Basic Member Training Course is an aid for
learning wilderness search and rescue, designed for new Trainees
of the Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (SMRG) and other Appala-
chian Search and Rescue Conference (ASRC) Groups, though we
welcome its use by others interested in wilderness search and
rescue. It is oriented specifically to wilderness search and
rescue as practiced by the ASRC in the middle Appalachians. The
Course covers the knowledge and skills necessary for ASRC Basic
Membership as set forth in the ASRC Training Guide, as inter-
preted by the SMRG Training Officer.

Basic Membership

To become a Basic Member of an ASRC Group, one must first
become a Trainee Member, and as a Trainee, complete at least 32
hours of field training with the Group, including 8 hours of
Basic-level mountain rescue and 8 hours of Basic-level search.
(Each Basic Member must meet this requirement for yearly recerti-
fication, as well.) The applicant Trainee must meet all require-
ments and standards for Basic Membership (described below). The
Trainee must then be elected to Basic Membership by the Basic
Members of the Group.

Before proposing a Trainee to the Group for election to
Basic MEmbership, the Training Officer will evaluate the appli-
cant's qualifications in five areas:

1. required personal equipment;

2. medical credentials (Advanced First Aid or First Responder:
   see the ASRC Training Guide for details);

3. a written test to evaluate search and rescue knowledge;

4. a practical examination to evaluate the ability to perform
   certain important search and rescue skills; and

5. a careful evaluation of the Trainee's overall common sense
   and ability to use the required skills and knowledge to
   carry out the tasks expected of a Basic Member. This will
   be based on an oral exam and on contacts with the Trainee at
   meetings, at training sessions, and on missions.

The Course sets out the information one needs to know for the
written test (and to function as a competent Basic Member),
provides some information on the skills associated with each
Module, and provides checklists to keep track of one's practical
training and personal equipment.

The Basic Member Training Course

For a new Trainee, even one with extensive outdoor experience, becoming competent at wilderness search and rescue is difficult. An ideal way to develop expertise is to work side-by-side with experienced Group members for a few years. However, the Trainee's time is limited, as is that of our experienced members, and on-the-job experience is limited by the frequency of searches and rescues. In order to speed up the education of Trainees and permit a Trainee to become certified within the allotted year, a more efficient way to train members is needed: thus, the Basic Member Training Course.

Since experienced SMRG instructors are always in short supply, we concentrate their efforts and teaching skills where they benefit Trainees the most: practical training sessions, thus we have few lectures, and there are many tidbits of wilderness search and rescue lore one learns from years of experience or from more experienced members. To speed Trainees learning of these, we have distilled the experience of many experts (ASRC and others) into a set of readings. If studied carefully, they will provide new members with the knowledge they need to become good Basic Members.

Using The Course: The Four Modules

A general principle of adult learning is that when one practices something, one will remember it well; when one hears about something, one will remember a fair part of it; but, when one reads something, one will remember only a fraction of it. Another way to look at it: experience involves making mistakes (or seeing someone else make them), and for this and other reasons, reading isn't nearly so vivid nor so easily remembered. That's the reason we believe our experienced members' time is best put into practical sessions.

If you go to the weekend practical training sessions and read the Course materials, you'll be able to perform 90% of the skills, but remember only 10% of the reasons for doing them. Therefore, you must do *more* than simply go through the Course readings, as intimidating as that alone might seem. You must use the knowledge, so not to lose it. Using the knowledge on a mission or training sessions is best, but it may take years for you to use all of the specialized knowledge in the field. Therefore, there are tests and problems interspersed throughout the Course, and it is essential that you use these to help you retain the material.

Here's how to start. Pick out one of the modules (you can do them in any order) and do the following:

1. Take the pretest, and grade yourself with the answer key near the end of the Module, to find out how much you already know and how much you still have to learn. Taking the Pretest may also help you to remember what you read.

2. Read through the Standards for the Module, to find out precisely what is expected of you. Thus you'll know what to search out and remember, and what you may ignore (if you wish).

3. Go through the Required Readings for the Module. These are selected for their close correspondence the depth and breadth of the standards.

4. Read the assigned Supplementary Readings, bound in the Module. These are comments on, and supplements to, the Required Readings.

5. If you wish, read the Recommended Readings, which are books covering the skills portion of the Standards for the Module.

6. Review the ASRC/SMRG standards to see if you have met them all.

7. Take the pretest again and compare with your first try.

8. Complete the posttest and bring it to the appropriate training session or to the Group Training Officer for grading.

9. Start working on the Skills Checklist (Appendix B) corresponding to the Module you've selected.

The Appendices, and a Note on the Standards

If you find you would like to learn more about these subjects than is presented in the Course, the Bibliography (Appendix A) lists good references, with comments about each; Basic Members of the Group should be able to provide guidance as well. To help you monitor your search and rescue skills education, Appendix B furnishes four Skills Checklists. Although members will require varying amounts of practice to learn the skills, the checklists are a good starting guidelines. Before becoming a Basic Member, you will be expected to turn in a set of completed skills checklists and a Basic Member Equipment Checklist (Appendix C-3). (The equipment checklist should be completed at one of the monthly evening training sessions.)

Although each ASRC Group has the option to impose standards in addition to those in the ASRC Training Guide, SMRG has thus far elected not to do so. However, there are certain skills and knowledge beyond the ASRC standards that the SMRG membership believes are important to the training of a well-rounded Basic Member. When you read through the standards in each Module and the items in the Skills Checklists (Appendix B), you will find these printed in italics. They will be included in the assigned readings, the Module Tests, and Group Training Sessions; however, SMRG Basic Tests will be based solely on the ASRC Training Guide, and will not include any of the additional material.