

TAOS SEARCH & RESCUE OHV UNIT GUIDELINES

Purpose

The purpose of the OHV Unit is to act as a resource for searches and rescues that occur on or near roads and trails that are legally navigable by off-highway vehicles, such as ATVs, motorcycles, snowmobiles and four-wheel drive cars and trucks. The OHV Unit will be knowledgeable in safety procedures pertaining to rescue under all conditions, including mud, rain, snow, ice and water crossings. The OHV Unit will maintain a basic knowledge of medical emergencies common to search and rescue missions and OHV-related injury, and will acknowledge and respect the potential danger that is inherent in all missions and pledge to keep themselves and their teammates safe.

Members

All members of TSAR, including Full Members and Trainees, may apply for participation in the OHV Unit. OHV team members only need to be "base" qualified - that is, they do not have to pass the 4-hour endurance hike. All applicants to the Unit must attend one 2-hour--minimum trail ride with the Unit Leader and/or Assistant Unit Leader and do so with their personal off-highway vehicle to ascertain their off-road skills and experience. Auxiliary membership may be offered to individuals outside of the organization who possess knowledge of search and rescue techniques and who attend trainings with the TSAR OHV Unit, at the discretion of the TSAR board. Members of the OHV Unit will be expected to attend regular trainings both in the field and in the classroom, pertaining to OHV safety and rescue techniques.

Safety

OHV unit members recognize that off-highway vehicle use is inherently dangerous, and perhaps one of the more dangerous disciplines of search and rescue. Reckless driving will result in expulsion from the unit.

All members of the OHV unit must demonstrate their commitment to safety by the following:

- * Motorcycle or ATV: Complete the online ATV Safety Institute course at <https://atvsafety.org/atv-ecourse/>.
- * 4WD automobile: Read "Mark A. Smith's Guide to Safe, Common Sense Off-Road Driving" on the unit Basecamp and prepare a short, 5-minute presentation for the Unit on what you learned.
- * Snowmobile: Have and maintain a New Mexico Snowmobile Safety Certificate.

This requirement must be completed within 1 year of joining the Unit. It may be made a

precondition of mission readiness at the discretion of the Unit Leader.

Team

A team shall consist of not less than two persons and their vehicles. Teams may consist of only one vehicle and two SAR persons (one driver, one passenger), but are advised to have two vehicles on a team where road conditions may require a vehicle recovery/ winching.

Trainings

The OHV Unit will train as a unit in the field and/or classroom on a monthly basis and weather permitting. The OHV Unit will train at least once a year with the Technical Rescue Unit, the K9 Unit, the Drone Unit, the Base Unit and the Medical Unit and be available as required by the TSAR Training Officer for regular TSAR Team trainings. The OHV Unit will be expected to learn how to perform hasty searches, how to perform containment assignments, how to transport members of other units to assigned locations and how to conduct evacuations with the participation of other units.

Equipment

OHV Unit Members use their own personal vehicles on training and missions. OHV unit members are not covered by the team insurance policy when operating their personal vehicles. OHV unit members acknowledge that they are not covered by most Good Samaritan laws if they cause injury while operating their personal vehicle. Unit members SHOULD acquire their own personal insurance policy on their vehicle, whose policies are left to the discretion of that unit member.

All OHV Members will be expected to know and understand the limitations of their vehicles and will operate all vehicles with the utmost in care and safety. Members shall maintain their vehicles at all times, including oil levels, tires, brakes and any and all safety equipment. Members will provide their own additional equipment, such as helmets and goggles, and will wear such equipment at all times as appropriate for their type of vehicle.

All OHV Unit Members will bring complete packs to all missions and training exercises unless directed otherwise. Depending on conditions and possible transportation of fellow team members, packs may be reduced in size or combined with other team member's packs.

In addition to the TSAR-standard pack requirements, OHV unit members must carry:

* A radio, with either an earpiece, helmet-mic or other appropriate equipment for safe radio operation while their vehicle is moving. 4WD automobile members may use a radio mount and a handset microphone.

* A rear-facing mirror. A mirror is important for situational awareness of other unit members in the field.

- * Working headlights and rear lights. When on a mission or training, headlights must be on at all times.
- * If using an open-cockpit vehicle (ATV, motorcycle, snowmobile, SxS, etc), members will wear a DOT-approved helmet at all times. Unit members SHOULD carry goggles, gloves, and protective, long-sleeve clothing. ATVs or side-by-sides which are designed to carry more than one occupant should carry extra helmets for additional occupants. NO passengers may be carried without a helmet in an open-cockpit vehicle.
- * A hands-free mount for their chosen GPS device. Most members choose a RAM mount and "X-grip" cellphone holder. You must have a way to visually check your navigation device in a hands-free manner.
- * Basic field-repair gear for your vehicle.
- * Recovery gear, such as a shovel, winch, tow strap, etc.
- * Necessary registration with the State for the type of vehicle you are using.

As per state guidelines, SAR responders are not authorized to use emergency lights or flashers when responding to SAR missions. You may, however, use emergency lights or flashers as an attraction technique while on a search assignment.

Searching

OHVs are generally fairly noisy. During a search, frequent stops to turn off your engine and listen for the subject, sound signal, and look for tracks and clues will be common. OHVs are advised to maintain slow speed when actively searching for a subject, and will always maintain a speed that is safe for all the vehicles in the team.

On a search assignment (anywhere you may encounter the subject or a clue of the subject), OHVs will travel no faster than 20mph. 10-15 mph will be preferred.

You must know the fuel range of your vehicle. Do not accept any assignment which will take you outside of your fuel range.

Other assignments that the OHV team may carry out include transportation of teams to and from Incident Base, serving as a radio relay, containing the subject to a given area, and transporting supplies and equipment.

OHV teams may also sometimes make use of a passenger in a spotter or observer role to increase probability of detection. These passengers may or may not be a regular part of the OHV team.

Positions and Responsibilities

Unit Leader

Maintain a roster of unit members with their proficiencies and certifications

Take attendance at trainings

Act as liaison between the OHV Unit and the TSAR Board

Manage Unit budget and purchase equipment as needed

Facilitate communication both within the Unit and with other TSAR Units
Determine a training schedule and training topics
Maintain safety awareness amongst the Unit
Maintain comradery amongst the Unit