

GUIDELINES

TSAR SWIFTWATER RESCUE UNIT

The TSAR Swiftwater Rescue Unit (SRU) is a specialty Unit of Taos Search and Rescue (TSAR), a 501(c)(3) all-volunteer organization based in Northern New Mexico. TSAR works under the auspices of the New Mexico State Police to aid sick, injured and missing individuals. TSAR is dispatched by the New Mexico State police and works with Taos country law enforcement and emergency response agencies. A memorandum of understanding outlining operations with the Taos field office of the Bureau of Land Management was established 2020. (Appendix C.)

Mission Statement

The Mission of the TSAR Swiftwater Rescue Unit furthers the Mission of Taos Search and Rescue by providing a specialty resource of Swiftwater certified and trained rescuers to act as an on-call resource for rescue/ recoveries that occur within river-based environments in New Mexico. Our goal is to decrease response times by having rescue boats staged on a trailer ready to be deployed. Agencies training together will improve efficiency, increase safety, improve ground coordination and communication for search and rescue efforts on off-road lands and within bodies of water.

Swiftwater Missions:

1. Any mission that is in or near Swiftwater environments includes but not limited to:
 - a. Missions in river/ creek/ arroyo drainages.
 - b. Missions in flood related areas and flood control channels.
 - c. Missions in involving finding lost or injured subjects and extrication of subjects within Swiftwater environments.

Swiftwater Environment:

1. Swiftwater is defined by moving water in which you are unable to control your movements. It involves water over 2 feet deep that is flowing at a rate greater than 1.15 mph (1 knot).
2. Swiftwater intensity is determined by velocity and the river bottom. The risk is rated by American Whitewater Affiliation River Classification System; Class I-V.

Level of Membership

Note: Any reference to “Swiftwater Missions” is described in the section above. This must be taken into consideration before attending any missions with the TSAR SRU. Training Missions are different exercises with different rules from Missions.

1. Swiftwater Rescue Unit Trainee

- a. TSAR SRU Trainees are prospective members of the TSAR Team. Applicants and Trainees shall work to full certification by completing requirements of the TSAR Team. They may train with the TSAR SRU while learning the specific skills & knowledge in Appendix A.
- b. TSAR SRU Applicant and Trainee shall attend 50% of all unit trainings.

- c. TSAR SRU Trainees must not attend any Swiftwater missions on the water.
 - d. TSAR Swiftwater Trainees may assist on mission on the bank if they have the TSAR SRU Awareness Level training. They can run shuttles, ground support for the SRU teams on a mission, etc..
- 2. Swiftwater Rescue Unit Mission-Ready**
- a. TSAR SRU Mission-Ready Members are Trainees who have completed the “Mission-Ready” requirements of the TSAR Team.
 - b. TSAR SRU Mission-Ready Members shall attend 50% of all unit trainings.
 - c. TSAR SRU Mission-Ready Members can attend Swiftwater Missions on the water, with a current Swiftwater Rescue Level II certification or equivalent.
- 3. Swiftwater Rescue Unit Full Member**
- a. TSAR SRU Full Members are members who have completed all requirements of the TSAR Team.
 - b. TSAR SRU Full Members shall attend 30% of all unit trainings.
 - c. TSAR SRU Full Members can go on Swiftwater Mission on the water, with a current Swiftwater Rescue Level II certification or equivalent.
- 4. Swiftwater Rescue Unit Auxiliary Members**
- a. TSAR SRU Auxiliary Members are highly experienced members who are outside of TSAR Team who possess advanced Swiftwater skills and knowledge (often specific to locations or sections of waterways) and serve at the discretion of the TSAR Board of Directors.
 - b. SRU Auxiliary Members shall attend 30% of all unit trainings.
 - c. SRU Auxiliary Members can go on Swiftwater missions on the water, with a current Swiftwater Rescue Level II certification or equivalent.

General Guidelines

1. Members of TSAR SRU will acknowledge and respect the potential danger that is inherent in working in and near Swiftwater, and pledge to keep themselves and their teammates safe.
2. Members of TSAR SRU will never be required to perform an action that they feel unqualified, or that otherwise makes them feel unsafe.
3. Members of TSAR SRU must respond to Swiftwater missions in a minimum two boats or other watercraft with a minimum of 2 teammates on a mission. It is preferred that 5 or more individuals total are involved in the rescue/ recovery effort.
4. Members of the TSAR SRU must participate in unit trainings in groups of two or more.
5. A full member must be present on all missions.
6. Members of the TSAR SRU must carry all required Swiftwater rescue equipment as outlined in (Appendix B).
7. Member of the TSAR SRU must not go on missions, until water and ambient air temperature conditions have been assessed by both the SRU team leader and the incident commander. These assessments must adhere to common knowledge and practice.
8. Members of TSAR SRU must have previous experience with specific river sections and levels to attend a mission on a specific section or water level.
9. Members of TSAR SRU must adhere to the most experienced teammates limits on high or low water levels.

10. Member of TSAR SRU must wear PFDs and helmets while working within 30 feet of the water's edge.
11. Members of the TSAR SRU must not operate outside of their scope of practice and will adhere to their current Swiftwater Rescue Certification Level II training or equivalent.
12. Members of TSAR SRU must adhere to strict standards of professional conduct. Loss of temper or a poor or negative attitude will be a cause for immediate review and possible dismissal from TSAR SRU.
13. The Incident Command System (ICS) will be followed and respected by all member of the TSAR SRU.
14. All participants in both missions and training missions are subject to approval or exclusion by the SRU team leader or TSAR board.
15. All mission call outs will be announced on basecamp and call multiplier.

Small exceptions can be made to these guidelines, only if approved by the Swiftwater Rescue Unit Leader and the TSAR Board of Directors.

Positions and Responsibilities

Unit Leader: Kelly Grossetete

- a. Maintain a roster of Unit Members with their proficiencies and certifications.
- b. Take attendance at trainings.
- c. Act as liaison between the SRU and the TSAR board.
- d. Determine Unit budget and purchase equipment.
- e. Facilitate communication both within the Unit and with other TSAR Units.
- f. Determine a training schedule and training topics.
- g. Maintain safety awareness amongst the Unit.
- h. Maintain comradery amongst the Unit.

Training Officer: Kelly Grossetete

- a. Organize field trainings, including selecting locations and determining what equipment will be necessary.
- b. Review content for field and classroom trainings, including finding and distributing training materials.
- c. Assist Unit Leader in coordinating trainings with other TSAR Units.
- d. Assist Unit Leader in coordinating trainings with external organizations (e.g. Bureau of Land Management, local volunteer fire departments, recreational rafting companies).
- e. Assist Unit Leader in coordinating Swiftwater Rescue Certification course for TSAR SRU Members.
- f. Develop a checklist of skills and qualifications needed for Unit Members to participate in Swiftwater rescue missions.

Equipment Officer: John Fullbright

- a. Maintain current inventory of TSAR Swiftwater Unit's gear and equipment and provide a copy of current inventory and any updates to the TRSA Equipment Director.
- b. Periodically check equipment for quality and condition
- c. Maintain records of gear owned by Unit Members and gear needed/borrowed.
- d. Research equipment to purchase.
- e. Sets up pro-forms- discounts on gear.
- f. In charge of gathering equipment orders.

Safety Officer: Nathan Oswald

- a. Keep a head count of the team.
- b. Looks for safety Issues.
- c. In charge of radio communications.
- d. Ensures that Swiftwater safety protocols are followed at all times.
- e. Reserves the power to call off or stop missions or training missions at any time for failure to adhere to established safety protocols.

Trainings:

- a. Will have a monthly schedule and reminders be announced on basecamp and call multiplier.
- b. Are open to all TSAR SRU, TSAR Team and Auxiliary members.
- c. Classroom trainings will take place once a month in December, January, and February.
- d. Field and/or classroom every other week from March to November, TSAR SRU Unit leader and training officer.
- e. TSAR SRU will use the Swiftwater Rescue Unit's Syllabus to review, practice and team build to Swiftwater Rescue Level II standards.

Equipment Maintenance and Care:

1. All TSAR Team and SRU equipment used must be inspected thoroughly after each use, (training or mission), and returned in working order.
2. All TSAR Team and SRU equipment used must be put back where you found it after each use (training or mission).
3. All TSAR Team and SRU equipment (including and equipment belonging to the BLM or any other coordinating agency) used that is not in working order (or becomes damaged or otherwise unsuitable) must be marked and the SRU leader or equipment officer must be informed.
4. TSAR SRU equipment must be signed-out on the SRU Equipment Sign-Out Sheet found in the Shed for Training & Missions.

Termination of Membership

1. Any member of the TSAR SRU may be terminated at the discretion of the SRU Leader and TSAR board for inappropriate behavior and/or actions. This includes, but not limited to:
 - a. Drug and/or alcohol use on trainings and/or missions.
 - b. Failure to carry proper equipment on trainings and/or missions.
 - c. Failure to adhere to TSAR SRU General Guidelines.

- d. Responding to River-based mission as a sole individual.
- e. Lack of professionalism and poor conduct during trainings and/or missions.
- f. Misuse of TSAR SRU or BLM equipment.

Appendix A (Swiftwater Rescue Unit's Syllabus): Attached

Appendix B (Personal Equipment):

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Life jacket | 9. 25 ft Tubular webbing | 14. Wag bags |
| 2. Throw Bag | 10. 2 Prusiks | 15. Personal dry bag |
| 3. Work Bootie | 11. Dry Suit or 5 mm full wetsuit | 16. Water purification |
| 4. Helmet | 12. Waterproof flash light | 17. Firestarter |
| 5. Whistle | 13. Strobe light | 18. CPR Microshield (to be carried on person at all times) |
| 6. Rescue Knife | | |
| 7. 3 Carabiners | | |
| 8. 2 Pullies | | |

Note: that Appendix B is an evolving list and may change often, also that equivalent brands, models, or types of required items are acceptable.

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