

## Unit Order #23 - Search and Rescue Responses

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

CRESCENTA VALLEY STATION

UNIT ORDER #23

### SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSES

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this order is to establish uniformed call out and response procedures for the Montrose Search and Rescue Team. Whenever the team is called into service, supervision by a Level I-reserve deputy sheriff or full time deputy sheriff is required, due to the fact that all of the members of the search and rescue team are Level 2-reserve deputy sheriffs or volunteers. This Unit Order is a guideline only, as not all situations and circumstances can be anticipated.

#### **Definitions:**

**Call Out** – Anytime search and rescue team members are requested to respond to an incident. Incidents can include but are not limited to: persons that are lost, injured, vehicle over the side and persons missing under unknown circumstances. (On-call Coordinator and Reserve Operations Leader will respond)

**Searches** – Whenever search and rescue team members respond to a location and deploy to search an area for a person or property related to a call out. (On-call Coordinator and Reserve Operations Leader will respond)

**Rescues** – When search and rescue team members locate and assist a person to safety that is related to a call out. (On-call Coordinator and Reserve Operations Leader will respond)

**Recovery** – When search and rescue team members respond to a known location solely to assist with the recovery of a dead body, property, etc. (Reserve Operations Leader will respond, On-call Coordinator will normally not respond)

**Law Enforcement Support** – Search and rescue teams are available and equipped to support a variety of law enforcement functions that include but are not limited to: critical missing persons, power outages, traffic control, evacuations, fires, floods, article searches, station special events, etc. (Note: The station also has uniformed reserves and volunteers on patrol that should also be called).

**Scene Preservation** – When it has been determined that an area or location such as a structure, open area, or vehicle is required to be preserved as evidence or essential for an ongoing search and/or rescue operation. Normally this will be accomplished by search and rescue personnel during the search; however, scene preservation is the responsibility of patrol personnel, especially if they scene is required to be preserved during an extensive operation where the team would need to rest to sustain their efforts (i.e.: get sleep for the next day).

**Call Out Procedures**- When a situation occurs and the search and rescue team is being considered as an option to assist, the information shall be presented to the on duty watch commander immediately. The watch deputy shall initiate a call out page to the team members. The operations leader will call the watch deputy to confirm they received the page and obtain any information. The on-call coordinator will also contact the watch deputy and watch commander to discuss all details and issues related to the incident.

**On-Call Coordinator** – Full time deputy or sergeant responsible for evaluating the criteria for call out and responding with and supervising the team. They will coordinate with the incident commander and watch commander, as well as prepare a rescue report when applicable after each call-out. The on call coordinator name will be on white board next to cash register at desk.

**Search Operations Leader (OL)** – Rescue team member who holds the rank of reserve sergeant and is responsible for coordinating with search and rescue team members and running the search and/or rescue aspect of an incident.

**On-Call Coordinator:**

- Upon receiving a call out page, call the desk and confirm the page.
- Obtain abbreviated information from the desk regarding the nature of the operation.
- Contact the watch commander and advise them you will be responding and an ETA.
- Supervise the team, request additional resources, etc.
- Update the watch commander and desk on the progress of the rescue.
- If the search is extended, request the desk to notify the D.O.C. Duty Sergeant.

**Search Team Operation's Leader:**

- Upon receiving a callout page for a search and rescue operation, the operation's Leader shall immediately:
- Call the Crescenta Valley Station desk and confirm the page.
- Obtain preliminary information from the desk regarding the nature of the operation.
- Once at the station, contact the desk again for any new information received from the informant (Fire, US Forestry, CHP, Citizen, Etc).
- Advise the desk of how many team members are preparing to leave and an estimated response time from the station.

- Run the call once teams leave the station until completion, cancelled, or relieved.

### **Responding Rescuers / Responding Code 3:**

Search and Rescue teams are authorized to respond Code 3 to any medical rescue request and shall adhere to all Departmental procedures relating to emergency driving.

Since responders will be responding at various times, they will likely dispatch from the station in waves of smaller teams so as to allow some members to get to the incident as fast as possible.

### **Call Out cancellations:**

Call outs shall only be canceled at the direction of an **on scene** rescue unit.

On scene patrol units **shall not** cancel the responding team members unless the victim, patient, or suspect, is: in the ambulance on the roadway or in the helicopter being transported to the nearest medical facility. If medics are with the patient on the hillside, this alone is not justification for cancellation. The responding team members shall continue to respond until the patient is transported and any search and/or recovery is complete.

### **Patrol Deputy Duties:**

Patrol deputies will be assigned and will have the handle on all law enforcement calls within their jurisdiction. Should they desire to utilize the services of a search and rescue team, the call out guidelines of this unit order will apply. Accordingly, all first reports and overall responsibility to include incident commander will be that of the handling patrol unit until that unit is officially relieved of those duties by a patrol supervisor.

If the team is needed solely to recover a dead body or property, a patrol unit will not only be responsible for preparing a first report, making notification, but they will also coordinate with and supervise any search and rescue team members that respond to assist. Search and rescue team members can be required to prepare supplementary reports: however, they should not be assigned the responsibilities of handling in these types of

situations, nor should they be required to write first reports.

The on call coordinator shall contact the watch commander and advise them if they are responding or not. Normally under this type of situation the on-call coordinator would not be necessary and the on scene patrol deputy would act as the supervisor of the search and rescue team.

**External Rescue Requests (Out of County):**

**The Search Operations Leader shall:**

Contact the on call coordinator. Advise them of the circumstances, how many are requested, how many will respond, and approximate duration of call.

**On Call Coordinator shall:**

Contact the Crescenta Valley Operations Lieutenant and advise them of the request including the intended response of the team, the location of the rescue, the requesting agency or county, and person authorizing the response (Emergency Operations Bureau Sergeant).

Prior to leaving the station supply the desk with a list of personnel responding, and vehicles being taken.

Notify the watch commander so they can note this activity and names of those responding in their log, and to request a gas card if needed.

**WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL THEM OUT**

By adhering to this Unit Order, it will ensure that rescue personnel are promptly and safely dispatched to all

rescues. It will also allow a communication flow regarding the nature of the call-out, the response, resources responding, progression of the operation and a record of the activity.

Todd D. Deeds

Crescenta Valley Station

Date Approved

(Revised 09/19/2018) db  
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