



# Saskatoon Search and Rescue

## Volunteer Information Package

Dear Volunteer,

We are very pleased that you have decided to consider becoming involved in Saskatoon Search and Rescue. As friends, family, neighbours and community members, you have ideas, talents and time to share with Saskatoon and area.

Saskatoon Search and Rescue is a unique volunteer opportunity; it is the chance to make a very valuable, hands-on difference in the life of a missing person and their loved ones. Search and Rescue volunteers are also given the opportunity to participate with other needed emergency functions with Saskatoon Emergency Measures Organization if requested.

The purpose of the information package is to give you an idea of what Saskatoon Search and Rescue is, what we do and what is involved in volunteering. The application process is explained and you will receive the application package when you come to a training meeting or meet with a member of the executive.

Please read through this material carefully. It is designed to give volunteers much of the information necessary to make your experience rewarding. If you have any questions, please let us know. Contact information is at the end of the package.

Thank you for devoting your time to this worthy endeavour.

Sincerely,

Saskatoon Search and Rescue

## **History of Saskatoon Search and Rescue**

Saskatoon Search and Rescue was formally established as a member of Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers on December 15, 2007. It was formed to meet the needs of Saskatoon and area residents for a search group to assist the Saskatoon City Police, R.C.M.P, and Saskatoon Emergency Measures Organization as needed.

SSAR began with a core group of volunteers who received Basic Day 1 training in December. By the end of December 2007, volunteers were ready and able to participate in a search should one have been called.

By the end of January 2008, several members had attained Team Leader status, and were then able to lead other searchers, expanding the capabilities of our group further.

Our group has continued to grow since then, both in membership and training. We are continuously evolving as a group, adding members, capabilities, and skills.

## **Who We Are**

Saskatoon Search and Rescue members are from all walks of life and occupations. What is common to all of our members is a love of the outdoors and a desire to volunteer their time and effort to support their community and be there to make the difference in the unfortunate event that someone goes missing or our assistance is required in some other emergency.

## **Our Mission**

Saskatoon Search and Rescue's mission is to support the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Saskatoon Police Service, Saskatoon Emergency Measures Organization or designated authority in their efforts to locate lost persons; or to assist in other related emergencies such as evidence recovery, door to door notification, and in severe weather activities within our community or other surrounding communities in the province of Saskatchewan.

## **Search Activations**

SSAR is activated by four organizations only: Saskatoon or Provincial EMO (Emergency Measures Organization), Saskatoon Police Service, the RCMP or via SARSAV (Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers) on behalf of the agencies of jurisdiction. SSAR volunteers do not attend private search efforts organized by family or communities of people searching for missing persons.



Once activated, SSAR uses text messages and e-mail to initiate the call out to our certified searchers. It is essential that members reply to the message when it is received so that Command knows who is responding and who is unavailable. At this point, a conventional phone call is not the initial form of communication to our volunteers about a search. After the initial activation, further information will be texted or emailed to all searchers as well as personal phone calls may be made.

## Training

Training is an essential component of becoming a volunteer member with Saskatoon Search and Rescue. SSAR considers all our members to be trained professionals and therefore demand a certain amount of time and effort from all members in training. Any individual who is not certified to at least a Basic Searcher level or who does not have a current Standard First Aid/CPR-C is not permitted to participate in any activation. As well, any volunteer who has not attended training sessions and who has not demonstrated their capability may not be tasked during an activation, regardless of whether or not they are certified.

Training usually this consists of one evening and one weekend day per month. Currently, training meetings are held at 7pm on the first Thursday of each month and training days are normally held on Saturdays. Usually training is put on hold throughout July and August, however the growing number of volunteers and need for more skill development may change this. A schedule will be provided to all volunteers.

Training is provided to volunteers in all aspects of search skills. The Basic Searcher (provided by SSAR or equivalent from other chapters) course as well as Standard First Aid / CPR-C (minimum standard) training are required of all members to be certified search capable. The monthly training sessions are in addition to these two courses and provide opportunities to further expand and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to perform search tasks. All other certification training may be taken at the choice (and cost) of the member – it is beneficial but not required.

Our training sessions are always free to volunteers, however you are responsible for any textbook or certification costs. Few books are required; the most these may cost are around \$15-35 and of course make excellent resource material that is yours to keep.



## **Saskatoon Search and Rescue Volunteer Duties and Expectations**

The SSAR volunteer's performance directly affects the quality of life and morale of Saskatoon and area families under stressful situations. SSAR relies on the volunteer's judgment, dependability, and positive attitude in accomplishing the goals of the search.

There are no set physical requirements for SSAR, but people should be aware that searches can and often do occur in bad weather, rough terrain and searchers will need to be able to walk and carry equipment with them. Volunteers need to be aware of what they can do and what their limits are and need to be able to express that.

Not all volunteers need to be "boots on the ground" in the event of a search. We need people in the command area as well to handle logistics, communications, operations and more. That being said, all members are required to be trained at least to the Basic Searcher level.

While the chapter has some equipment that we provide at exercises and in the event of a search, most of the equipment is provided by the member. This does not necessarily mean a large investment in outdoor equipment as we find new members who have spent time in the outdoors have a lot of what is required, but you need to be aware that there may be some costs involved to equip yourself with the proper clothing and equipment. If you have any questions or concerns with this, or any of the duties and expectations, please contact any of the individuals listed in the contact section and we'd be happy to explain this in more detail and address any concerns you may have.

### **The SSAR Volunteer's Role is to:**

- Search for missing persons as requested by Saskatoon EMO, Saskatoon Police Service, the RCMP, and SARSAV.
- Perform other non-search duties as requested by Saskatoon or Provincial EMO (ex. Logistics functions during emergency situations, perimeter security, door to door notification, severe weather activities, etc.)
- Maintain confidentiality

### **The SSAR Volunteer's Role is NOT:**

- To perform search functions without the support of the SSAR
- To act as a counsellor to family and friends of the missing person
- To act as a media liaison unless delegated that role
- To misuse the position for control or power.



### **Saskatoon Search and Rescue expects all volunteers:**

- To perform their duties to the extent of their training and not beyond
- To participate in the chain of command and follow the Incident Command System
- To provide opinions and feedback to leaders and persons in command centers, however, to follow their leadership at all times
- To be open and honest about their capabilities and what they are willing and able to do
- To maintain communications with all members
- To remember that we are “unpaid professionals” and to act accordingly
- To observe confidentiality and follow our Code of Ethics at all times

### **Members/Searchers Screening Policy**

It is our policy to admit as Saskatoon Search and Rescue Members/Searchers, those who qualify under a number of criteria. As we deal with crisis situations that may be accompanied by a variety of emotions and problems, we must be extremely careful to provide both the subjects of a search and their loved ones with respect and sensitivity.

For this reason, Search and Rescue Members/Searchers are screened carefully. While we have a need for all kinds of volunteers, it has been our experience that not all who apply are suited to this complex type of work. Here are the criteria we use to certify individuals to become members of Saskatoon Search and Rescue:

1. Has completed the Pre-Screen Form fully and honestly. References will be contacted.
2. By attending training sessions as an observer and pre-application participant:
  - a. Has shown the capacity for sensitivity and empathy to persons in vulnerable situations.
  - b. The ability to understand and properly apply the material in the training manual.
  - c. Is able to remain calm, show clear thinking, respond appropriately {i.e. empathy vs. assertiveness} and maintain a sense of balance while under great pressure, particularly during crisis situations.
  - d. Has demonstrated that they have the qualities that will make them a good fit for Search and Rescue.
  - e. Does not let personal attitudes regarding meaning, purpose and existence {of life}, death and dying, or other moral/ethical controversial issues interfere with ability to help the person in need.
  - f. Follows the SSAR Code of Ethics at all times.



## Equal Opportunities Policy in Recruitment and Selection

Our volunteer recruitment processes are carried out in a way that ensures that individuals are selected purely on the basis of their ability to do the role for which they have applied. No volunteer will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, age, sexual orientation, religious belief or political opinion or be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which are not justified or relevant to the role. The sole criterion for selection is the suitability of the applicant for the role. We are committed to ensuring that every applicant applying for a volunteer role within SSAR is treated fairly.

### Becoming a Volunteer Member with SSAR:

1. Has completed the Screening Process as stated above and ***is requested by SSAR*** to continue on with the Application Process.
2. Has completed the Application Form fully and honestly.
3. Has signed all necessary documents including the Waiver and the Code of Ethics.
4. Has signed the Media Release Form (optional).
5. Has obtained a Criminal Record Check and does not have a record of offences which Saskatoon Search and Rescue deems inappropriate for interaction with persons in high need situations.
6. Has successfully completed the SSAR Basic Searcher training course as well as Standard First Aid/CPR if necessary.
7. Has paid their Membership Fees.

### To become a Qualified Basic Searcher you must:

1. Successfully complete the SSAR Basic Searcher Training course or have previous training approved.
2. Complete First Aid/CPR-C training or provide proof of equivalent / advanced emergency medical training

### Membership Fees

Registration and Membership fees are:

- Students: \$10
- Regular Members: \$20
- Family Membership: \$30

*\* First year fees are not pro-rated to reflect the date you join.*

Your initial membership fee includes the following:

- Free Volunteer criminal reference & vulnerable sector check



- Access to free training sessions held monthly
- Your first year's membership in Saskatoon Search and Rescue (expires Dec. 31 annually)

We regret that our budget does not allow us to provide all materials and services free of charge. We feel our training benefits all aspects of your personal and professional lives/not just on our searches. We require the non-refundable fee, to be paid upon acceptance of your application. After your first year, you will be required to pay the fee as an annual membership fee in order to maintain your status as a member of Saskatoon Search and Rescue.

## Leaving SSAR

A SSAR volunteer may leave SSAR at any time without repercussion. We understand that circumstances change and people may wish to move on. In this case, he or she should write a simple letter of resignation and submit it to the Membership Director.

## Other Committees within SSAR:

- **Training Committee**
  - The Training Committee is responsible for planning the monthly training sessions. Training goals are set by this committee based partially on the needs of the current membership and future tasks SSAR could be faced with.
- **Membership Committee**
  - The Membership Director is responsible for all aspects of maintaining Membership Records as well as any documentation needed for new and existing members. In addition to maintaining member contact information, the Director is also involved in search activations by initiating the call-out to searchers. The need for new volunteers is ongoing, therefore the Membership Committee may initiate projects to recruit volunteers or promote our organization to the community. As well, the Membership Committee continuously strives to retain current members and may organize social events as the need arises for group morale.
- **Preventative SAR (PSAR) / Educational Outreach**
  - The PSAR committee works in collaboration with the national AdventureSmart Canada program dedicated to encouraging Canadians and visitors to Canada to



“Get informed and go outdoors”. The goal of the targeted outreach is to try and reduce the number and severity of Search and Rescue incidents. Presently, PSAR trained SSAR members deliver “Hug-A-Tree and Survive” to children as well as “Survive Outside” to youth and adults. If you are interested in finding out more or to get involved with PSAR please contact the SSAR PSAR Director.

- **Fundraising**

- The Fundraising Committee plans events and other fundraising efforts in order to help the chapter raise funds for yearly operational costs as well as the procurement of specialized gear. This committee, in conjunction with other committees, organises opportunities for SSAR to attend trade-shows and other public events to help further our presence in the community.

- **Communications**

- The Communications committee is active with promoting SSAR through various media and social media outlets. The Communications Director is also responsible for any media relations in relation to searches or events that SSAR hosts.

- **Logistics**

- The Logistics Committee is responsible for procuring and maintaining SSAR equipment. As well, this committee generates a list of contacts for extraordinary equipment needs during a search as well as personal needs of the volunteers active in that search. Since obtaining a Command Trailer, this committee also takes care of the trailer, its contents, and the use of it.

## Privacy Policy

Saskatoon Search and Rescue respects the privacy of all members and all of those who have expressed interest in Saskatoon Search and Rescue. We have developed a Privacy Policy in accordance with the federal Privacy Act and full details on how we use, store and dispose of information can be obtained by contacting our Privacy Officer. The Privacy Officer can be contacted by email at: [saskatoonsearchandrescue@gmail.com](mailto:saskatoonsearchandrescue@gmail.com) or by mail at: Saskatoon Search and Rescue, Box 28077, Westgate PO, Saskatoon, SK S7M 5V8.





Any personal information you provide to us is protected under the federal Privacy Act. Your information will not be sold to or shared with any other organizations. Information will be retained and disposed of in accordance with our chapter policies which can be requested by contacting the Privacy Officer.

## **Saskatoon Search and Rescue – 2012 Code of Ethics (Version 1.0)**

*\* The Code of Ethics document must be signed by all volunteers and will be provided as a separate document for you to do so.*

### **Preamble**

This Code of Ethics of the Saskatoon Search and Rescue (also referred hereinto as “SSAR”) volunteers is intended to credit all members and affiliated parties with the ability to exercise discretion when deciding and acting in the best interest of themselves, fellow members, affiliated parties, the subjects of searches, and charges these groups and individuals with the responsibility to do so.

### **Why SSAR chooses to have a Code of Ethics**

- to define accepted/acceptable behaviors;
- to promote high standards of practice;
- to provide guidelines for members to use for self evaluation;
- to establish a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities

### **What are Ethics?**

- the principles of conduct governing an individual or group;
- a system or philosophy of conduct and principles practiced by a person or group;
- the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation;
- A set of moral principles or values.

### **A Code of Ethics discusses ethical values. These are values we as SSAR volunteers hold.**

- We are responsible for our own behavior and the consequences thereof;
- We accept and strive for excellence through our thoughtful, responsible behavior.



## **I. RESPONSIBILITY OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **Preamble**

The commitment to confidentiality fosters open communication and is essential to effective Search and Rescue work. Concerns about privacy and confidential matters may arise at any point during the search and rescue process and need to be observed carefully.

### **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

1. I will disclose information about fellow SSAR members, affiliated parties, the subjects of searches and any other parties associated with a search only when authorized to do so or when obligated legally to do so, such as if necessary to prevent a crime or to prevent individuals from doing harm to themselves or to others.

## **II. RESPONSIBILITY TO SELF**

### **Preamble**

In private life or professional activity, an individual SSAR Volunteer's behavior reflects upon the profession as a whole.

### **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

1. For my own and other's safety, I will strive to know my medical, physical and emotional limitations.
2. I will accurately identify my qualifications in writing.
3. I will avoid claiming or implying any personal capabilities or professional qualifications beyond those one has actually attained.
4. I accept full responsibility for the consequences of my actions and decisions and I am accountable for them.
5. I accept personal responsibility for my continued search and rescue competency, using ongoing self-evaluation, peer support, consultation, supervision and/or continuing education to evaluate my strengths, limitations, biases or levels of effectiveness as a Search and Rescue Volunteer; always striving for self-improvement in my professional knowledge, and my skills and abilities.



### **III. RESPONSIBILITY TO GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS**

#### **Preamble**

SSAR Volunteers recognize their primary professional responsibility under all circumstances is to the groups and individuals they are serving.

#### **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

1. I will work to ensure that appropriate boundaries and safeguards are established with each group and individual.
2. I will maintain the dignity of all persons, including those who are unlike me. I will not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of unjust discrimination. I will also respect others' rights by refusing to engage publicly in demeaning descriptions of others, including jokes or other remarks which reflect adversely on the dignity of others.
3. I will abstain from all forms of harassment.
4. I will refrain from sexualized behaviors and intimate and sexual intimacies and relationships with individuals while involved in a rescuer/rescuee relationship.
5. I will be open, honest, trustworthy, responsible and non-judgmental. I will remember the "Golden Rule"
6. I recognize that competence for a particular task may require advice or collaboration with experts in other professional fields. I accept that it is professionally ethical to obtain this advice in such instances, and to give advice under the same circumstances as appropriate.

### **IV. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE VOLUNTEER GROUP**

#### **Preamble**

SSAR Volunteers are accountable and responsible for the efficient performance of their duties to the group.

#### **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

1. I will co-operate with SSAR policies and procedures. I am aware that from time to time changes in policies and procedures need to occur, and I will agree to pursue such changes where appropriate.
2. I will refuse to participate in unethical practices.
3. I recognize the need and value of working co-operatively as a team, and I respecting the unique contribution of myself and of each member.



4. I understand that this Code will be reviewed on an annual basis; any necessary changes will be made to ensure that the Code reflects the true spirit and intent of the SSAR.

## **V. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION**

### **Preamble**

The Search and Rescue profession has a public responsibility to provide competent search and rescue services. Therefore, individual Saskatoon Search and Rescue Volunteers are encouraged to support and uphold ethical standards and behaviors.

### **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

1. I accept responsibility and am accountable for the quality of my performance. I will encourage and support other members to do the same. I will contribute one's ideas and share my personal expertise and education with other SSAR Volunteers.
2. I will support other Search and Rescue Volunteers in their adherence to this Code.

## **VI. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY**

### **Preamble**

As Search and Rescue Volunteer are viewed as role models in the communities in which they live and serve, their integrity and behavior reflect upon the profession as a whole.

### **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

1. I will work to resolve any conflict between my personal values and the laws of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
2. I will help to ensure that advertisement and other public notices and information relating to SSAR is accurate and truthful. I will avoid using misleading claims and promises.

## **VII. Complaint Resolution Guidelines**

### **Preamble**



Should a SSAR Volunteer, participant or other concerned member of the public have a concern with the ethical behavior of a Search and Rescue Volunteer; the following procedure will be used. If the complaint is of a criminal nature, it must and will be reported immediately to the proper legal authorities.

### **Making a Complaint**

1. If you perceive the behavior of a Search and Rescue Volunteer to be outside the acceptable Code of Ethics as adopted by the membership of the SSAR, then:
  - a. Reference the Code of Ethics policy and seek advice and/or guidance as necessary from any member of the SSAR Board of Directors or the Ethics and Standards Complaint Resolution Council (also herein called the "Complaint Resolution Council" and "Council");
  - b. Initiate discussion with the Search and Rescue Volunteer with whom you have a personal concern about their professional ethics and behavior to clarify, confront and resolve the situation as soon as possible;
  - c. If unable to confront or resolve the situation, a written complaint may be sent to the SSAR Board of Directors and the Council. At the same time, a copy of the written complaint must also be provided to the Search and Rescue Volunteer against whom you are registering a complaint. Such complaint of an alleged breach of ethics must be formally initiated no later than six (6) months after the situation occurred.
2. Confidentiality is to be strictly adhered to by all individuals involved in the complaint resolution process and subsequent review and investigation (including the complainant, the defendant, members of the Council and the SSAR Board members) to ensure a factual, fair and effective review and investigation and to promote the dignity of all involved.
3. Upon receipt of a written complaint, a meeting of the Council must be called by the Chairperson within thirty (30) days of receipt of same. If the complaint is of a criminal nature, it will immediately be forwarded to the proper legal authorities.
4. After the Council's first meeting regarding a written complaint, a letter indicating the names of Council members, the names of the people involved in the complaint, and the dates pertinent to the issue must be sent to the people involved and to the members of the SSAR Board of Directors. The letter will also describe the Council's initial plan of action and/or decisions, and information on Appeal procedures.

**There are two (2) acceptable actions only that will be taken by SSAR:**



- i. Conduct an investigation;
- ii. Refer the matter to a more appropriate agency or individual for resolution;

1. Should the Council decide to conduct an investigation, it will be reviewed and conducted in a timely manner. This will include speaking with the person initiating the complaint and the SSAR member against whom the complaint is made. Other people may be interviewed and evidence may also be sought as deemed appropriate by the Council. All such contact and review will be documented in writing.

2. Upon completion of the investigation, the Council will issue a written notice of the findings, including any action to be taken to the complainant, the defendant and the Board of Directors.

3. The Council members and all involved in a complaint resolution procedure have the right and to call upon advisors for the purpose of gathering information or seeking support of legal or other counsel.

### **Appealing a Decision**

1. The Appeal procedure is the same as set out for the original complaint. Notice of the Appeal must also be sent to the other party. An appeal by either party must be received or postmarked no later than sixty (60) days from the date the original ruling was issued by the Council.

2. Upon receipt of a request for an appeal, the Council will review the Appeal and any additional information brought forward in the Appeal. If deemed necessary further investigation may be undertaken. A final ruling on the complaint, binding on both parties, will be issued to both parties and the SSAR Board of Directors no later than ninety (90) days after receipt of the Appeal.

3. Where a case is resolved against a Search and Rescue Volunteer s/he may, depending on the circumstances and the gravity of the charge, be suspended from the SSAR membership or be subject to some other condition of social or natural consequence as may be deemed appropriate. It is intended that **the focus will be towards resolution rather than reprimand.**

### **Complaint Resolution Council Membership**

1. At least one (1) member of the Council will be from the SSAR Board of Directors.

2. All other members (minimum of 3) will be elected or appointed from the Membership. These members will be elected or appointed at the general meeting following receipt of the written notice of complaint. General membership will not be informed of the nature of the complaint to preserve confidentiality of the involved parties.



3. The position of Chairperson shall be elected or appointed by the Complaint Resolution Council members at their first meeting.
4. The quorum for the Complaint Resolution Council will be three (3) members present, including a Director.
5. Should a Council member discover any conflict with the complaint situation, he/she must report any conflict and voluntarily remove him/herself from the Council. If necessary, persons will be nominated randomly to provide the necessary number of persons in order to hear and resolve the complaint.

*Thank you for your interest in Saskatoon Search and Rescue  
and we look forward to seeing you soon!*

