Saskatoon Search and Rescue
Policy & Procedure #3
Membership Commitment

I. Policy Statement

Saskatoon Search and Rescue (SSAR) is committed to being an organization of highly trained search and rescue professional volunteers that agencies having jurisdiction, our Search Managers and other team members can depend on to perform their duties to the highest standards. Participating in training and attending search activations is essential for developing and maintaining the skills and knowledge necessary to serve our community to the best of our ability and in the safest manner possible.

We acknowledge that, for a variety of circumstances, it is not always possible to sustain a high level of commitment to SAR. The goal of this policy is to establish expectations, for the benefit of individual members and the entire team, with respect to training, operational activity, and administrative commitments.

II. Scope and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all members of SSAR. Each member is personally responsible for ensuring their ongoing training, certifications and administrative commitments meet the requirements outlined in this policy and the applicable CSA standards (i.e., searcher, team leader, search manager). Of note is CSA standard 4.2.1 which addresses commitment: *"Respond to GSAR missions and be in a state of readiness and willing to put in the time to attend training and maintain proficiencies."*

The Secretary, the Membership and Training Directors have responsibilities to this policy which are outlined in detail below.

III. Definitions

Search-Ready Member: A member who regularly attends scheduled training and search activations, keeps their skills and abilities current, and assists with other aspects of the organization as needed.

Inactive Member: A member who has not attended training regularly or been involved in administrative aspects of the organization or has taken a leave of absence. These members will be considered inactive, will be removed from the active members distribution list, and will not be considered for callout.

Support Member: There may be SSAR members who are not interested or capable of being active searchers. These members are still a valuable part of the organization and may contribute in other ways such as administrative duties, command post support, logistics, etc. If required, these members

may be called out to active searches in a non-search capacity. A Support Member is defined in the SSAR Bylaws: *"Support members shall agree to maintain a minimum level of training, knowledge, and participation to be effective in assisting with the activities of the organization they have indicated interest in. Support members will not participate in search activities although they may be asked to assist with administrative, logistical or transportation needs."*

IV. References

1. SSAR Bylaws
2. SSAR Policy & Procedure #9, Support Members
3. CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standards for ground search and rescue operations: Searcher, team leader, and SAR manager. 2015-05-01

V. Training Commitments

1. To be a search-ready member for the purpose of search activations, a member must attend training on a regular basis, ensure their certifications are up to date, their skills meet or exceed CSA standards for their level of training (i.e., searcher, team leader, search manager), and they maintain familiarity with SSAR specific equipment and procedures.
   a. Members shall ensure their training hours include Project Lifesaver equipment, scenarios, and re-certification, as this is a major portion of SSAR activations and a commitment we have made to our clients and agencies having jurisdiction.
   b. Members shall strive to attend 50% or more of regularly scheduled training hours per year.
   c. "Regularly scheduled training hours" refers to the monthly classroom sessions and field days designed for the entire membership and do not include specialized training or courses.

2. Support member requirements and commitments are further outlined in SSAR Policy & Procedure #9, Support Members.

VI. Specialized Training Opportunities

1. Consideration for specialized training opportunities may be based on a member's commitment to training, administrative and/or committee work. (Example: training offered by other agencies, training for which there is a monetary cost to SSAR and/or specialized training in which numbers must be limited.)

2. Consideration for specialized or trainer level courses may also be based on the member's ability and commitment to being a trainer for SSAR and/or sharing their knowledge and experience with other members.

3. The Training Committee is responsible for determining who will be considered for specialized training.
   a. In situations where space is limited, the Training Committee may ask eligible and interested members to submit an application for the training. The application, combined with the member's efforts in the chapter, will be used to help the Training Committee reach a decision.

VII. Administrative Commitments

1. All search-ready and support members shall strive to contribute a minimum 30 hours per year to either committee or administrative duties. Committees, or administrative areas needing assistance, may include but are not limited to Operations, Communications, Logistics, Fundraising (including various fundraising activities), Training, Membership, Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR), and Project Lifesaver.

VIII. Members' Responsibilities to this Policy

1. All members are responsible for documenting their hours of SSAR-related activity in Volunteer Rescue and monitoring their training commitment hours.
   a. The onus is on each individual member to ensure they are meeting the required number of hours to maintain eligibility for activations and, if necessary, to discuss their eligibility with the Training Director.
   b. Members shall ensure their hours are updated quarterly and at the end of the calendar year to assist SARSAV (Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers) in reporting to SARVAC (Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada).
   c. By February 28 of each year, the Secretary shall provide each member who qualifies for the Search and Rescue Volunteer Tax Credit (SRVTC) with a letter confirming their qualifying hours. The Secretary will also provide modified SRVTC letters upon request to members who don't have enough hours but who wish to record them or combine them with eligible hours from another organization.

2. If there are concerns about a member's attendance, a review of attendance records shall be conducted by the Membership and Training Directors.
   a. If the review shows that a member's attendance has fallen to where they have not maintained skills or SSAR familiarity, the Membership or Training Director shall consult with the Operations Committee and, if approved, advise that member they will be removed from the activation call out list until such time as they have satisfactorily demonstrated sufficient proficiency.
   b. A member who wishes to appeal the decision removing them from the activation call list may contact the SSAR President and request to have the decision reviewed by the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

3. Members who have questions or concerns about this policy shall contact the Training Director for clarification.

IX. Activation or Reactivation of Search-Ready Member Status

1. Support members who have never been search-ready members must take the Searcher course and meet all other requirements to be a Searcher.
2. If a member or former member's search-ready member status has lapsed for 3 years or more, and they wish to become search-ready again, they will be required to re-take the Searcher course.
3. If their search-ready status has lapsed for less than 3 years, they must prove competency as per CSA standards. The timeframe to do this may vary based on the person's current knowledge and

skillset and they must attend enough training to be reintegrated with the team, processes, and other members before being added to the activation call out list.

4. Members transferring from other SAR teams must prove competency as per CSA standards and attend enough training to become familiar with the team, processes, and other members before being added to the activation call out list.
   a. They must also provide a list of their applicable qualifications, copies of certifications, and other information relevant to their search experience.

5. The Training Director, along with the Training Committee, will be responsible for monitoring progress and ensuring competency of all members is met.

X. Review and Approval of Policy

1. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and updated as required.
2. This policy and its revisions are to be approved by the Board of Directors. The approval date is the effective date.

First Effective Date: January 1, 2016
Updated: August 30, 2022 (Complete re-write of policy as there were major revisions to "Training Commitment" and "Members' Responsibilities" sections; added Scope and Responsibilities and Definitions; added "Activation or Re-Activation of Search-Ready Member Status"; updated wording to "Review and Approval of Policy" section.)

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