

Maine Association For Search And Rescue

Meeting Minutes

3 October 1999

Attendees:

John McDonough	Brad Rounds	Randy Armour	Robert Baribeau
Steve Hudson	David Buccello	Dave Martin	Phil DuPerry
Greg Lusk	Chris Lee	John Lee	Al Martin
Bill Libby	Art Cleaves	Annie Roy	Deb Emblar
Rick Grant			

The meeting was brought to order by John McDonough at 1600hrs. The new director of MEMA, Art Cleaves, Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Bill Libby, and the new Acadia National Park supervisor Dave Buccello were introduced to the attendees. We also welcomed Annie Roy and Deb Emblar of Mid Maine Equine Search and Rescue to the SAR community.

Mr. Libby and Mr. Cleaves presented information concerning the possibility of covering the SAR volunteers for worker's compensation through MEMA. Bill stated that he thought it was a possibility if the individual groups would contact the local EMA office but he was waiting to hear from his staff attorney on his research. When it has been completed he will mail a copy of the opinion to John McDonough.

Secretary's Report

Accepted as published without modification.

Treasurer's Report

Accepted as published without modification.

The subject of funding came up and John stated that it is his intent to apply for an Outdoor Heritage Fund grant for the purchase of a trailer to act as the "sign in/ sign out" staging area that Dirigo has done in the past. Although the trailer would be owned by MASAR it would be loaned to Dirigo through a written agreement to provide the same services they now supply with assistance from other MASAR members.

Committee Reports

Education

The fall exercise was discussed. Overall, the attendees felt that it provided a good change of pace type of training exercise but that attendance was down. There were some deployment/utilization issues with some of the Warden and canine personnel. The technical rock rescue exercise was discussed and overall it was felt that it went well but could have included more of a carryout involving some of the other participants. This might have helped solve some of the under-utilization issues and would have provided a more realistic scenario.

A summary of the comments received by the fall exercise participants was handed out and is included in its entirety at the end of these minutes.

A lengthy discussion concerning the number of training sessions held by MASAR was held with no final decision since there was no Warden Service representative present. John relayed some information

from Mike that the Warden Service liked the idea of having two sessions but other members of the group felt that there is a great deal of work involved in putting on a good training exercise and that two per year might be too much. This issue will be tabled until the December meeting when the Warden Service's position can be discussed with them directly.

Standards

The standards committee met for several hours prior to the general meeting for the purpose of reviewing the technical sub-committees' work thus far. Steve reported that work was continuing. No other activity was reported.

EMS

No report.

Communications

The use of the ID cards was raised. It is/was MASAR's intent to have the ID card provide information on the qualifications of the individual responding to a search as well as provide a means of a "T" card. John asked Al Martin to look into some form of bar code software that could be part of the Heritage Fund Grant Application.

Old Business

John provided a clarification of the "Maine Lead Rock Rescue Team" to the attendees. This clarification came as a result of concerns raised by Wilderness Rescue. John explained that there was a misunderstanding in the memorandum that accompanied the agenda for the training exercise. Essentially, the concept was that the members of the various technical teams that attended the exercise would work as one team during the exercise to accomplish the mission in much the same way that would be done in an actual mission. Because of the misunderstanding that occurred in this instance and to preclude similar problems in the future, John directed members of committees and sub-committees to refrain from disclosing their deliberations before a final report has been issued.

A discussion of a regional team concept was presented whereby it would be better to utilize existing teams better through funding, workers compensation, notification, etc. instead of trying to establish more teams. It was felt that we needed to be called more often even it was to be put on stand-by. Further discussion will be deferred until a Warden Service representative is present.

John stated that agreement was reached to meet with the Warden Service SAR Committee sometime during the 2nd week in December.

Phil DuPerry announced that Wilderness has LifePack 5 defibrillators available to a team who can use it. It requires EMT-Intermediate. They also have some surplus supplies available.

MASAR SECRETARY NEEDED. The position is an integral part of the origination because it serves as the important communications link to the Maine SAR community. Please poll your membership and solicit volunteers. If attendance to all meeting is a problem, arrangements can be made to have some take notes and forward them to the Secretary.

MOTION: Made: Rick Grant, second: Steve Hudson
Adjourn meeting. 1808 Unanimous

MASAR Fall 1999 Training Exercise Comments of Attendees

General Comments on Radio Silence Exercises

Radio silence wasn't necessary, just better communications discipline. The reduced use of their radios caused teams to solve their problems in the field instead of asking the CP for help.

General Comments by Wardens

They were impressed by the technical competency of the SAR personnel, especially in the areas of technical rescue, medical assessment, and patient care.

They would like to see a staging area for all SAR personnel so area around CP is kept clear. Only team leaders would be called to the CP for briefing; they would brief their own team members. This idea was also suggested earlier in the exercise by MASAR search management people.

General Comments by MASAR Management Personnel

T Cards should indicate whether dog team is certified or not.

The CP went undermanned due to a lack of knowledge of the SAR management abilities of the people available.

Additional copies of the scenario to hand out to teams would have been useful. This would have been solved if there was a copier available in the MASAR CP. Handing out written information to the team leader makes team briefing better and a lot more accurate, and it makes it easier for the CP personnel to see what they know and to document what they're telling the teams.

Holding the rescue teams in the staging area until they were needed was not a good idea. In a real operation they would be utilized as searchers until needed for their other skills, and teaching the wardens to deploy and recall people would have been much more useful in this exercise.

The wardens didn't know how the MASAR check-in and T card procedure worked, and as a result didn't understand that they only had to ask for a team and we would send it to them. This was resolved to everyone's satisfaction after a brief period of confusion.

Problem 1 - Rescue of Stranded Climber

The leader of the rescue team, which was made up of members of 3 units, noted that the team worked well together despite no previous joint training.

The warden observing helped to clear up communication issues between the rescuers and the CP.

Both the warden on the scene and the team leader felt the teamwork was excellent.

Problem 2 - Litter Evacuation

The team lacked maps of the area in which they worked - the briefing warden didn't issue any and the team leader forgot to request them.

The team forgot to take a litter face shield and also regretted they didn't have a 40'-50' static line for short belays. They also wished they had a litter wheel as they were working mostly on woods roads

Swapping off the litter handlers worked well.

The warden observing the exercise was impressed by the team's medical assessment and application. He also felt that the team leader managed the team well, which made the evacuation a success.

Problem 3 - Missing Hunter

The drop-off point was hard to find as the flagging shown on the maps wasn't always visible in the field. In addition, the end of the flagged line was hard to find; the team missed it initially, then found it. The flagged line defining one boundary of their area did not appear to be on the bearing indicated on the map.

Radio silence forced this team to work more closely and solve their problems in the field. Normally some of the questions they had would have been passed to the CP for an answer.

The lack of a scale and indication of magnetic North on the map were a problem for this team.

Problem 5 - Child Wandered Off From Campsite

The bloodhound sent to cover this area was unable to locate the victim as the victim had entered the area just south of this. However, the handler tried using the dog in a semi air scent mode, something she had not done before, and found that it was successful in proving the area was clear.

Problem 7 - Missing Alzheimer's Patient

The flagging for this area didn't appear to follow the bearings indicated by the map. In addition, part of the boundary was unflagged due to a change after the flagging was in place. The yellow and black flagging used was very hard to see. The team was unable to find the flagging marking the east end of their area. Hanging flagging instead of wrapping it around a tree makes it very hard to find.

The maps lacked a scale and grid north, which made map use difficult.

There were no clues in the area; the victim thought someone else was going to place them.