**Boy Scout Search and Rescue (SAR) Training Exercise**

**SAR? What is that?**

Think of these situations:

- You're out hiking with friends and the group splits up. One of your friends doesn't make it back as expected and is still in the mountains as it gets dark and weather moves in.
- A young boy gets lost while at a family picnic and is gone an hour before someone figures it out.
- A young woman goes running by herself in a “Safe” mountain park but slips and breaks her ankle, with no cell phone or water, she needs help quickly.

These are several common scenarios where experienced Search and Rescue teams arrive and, using the Incident Command System (ICS) and with their own wilderness experience, organize and conduct a manpower intensive operation to find, provide first aid and rescue a lost or injured subject.

This training is custom designed by highly experienced mountain search and rescue instructors and paramedics to provide the scouts of the three invited units initial training and exposure to this exciting field. Did you know that over 90 percent of the SAR teams in America are all volunteer? Maricopa County relies on its extensive network of SAR volunteers to protect our citizens. One of the top desert tracking units is a Boy Scout Troop!

The training session will begin with the all hands safety briefing at 4:45 PM. What makes this exercise so different from the usual merit badge university style class is that we will actually have emergency medical situations involving live actors in the field. Searchers (Scouts) will have to locate, treat and rescue the injured parties from the field. Due to the time constraints with this training, the scenarios will be able to resolve quickly in order to allow for debriefing and wrap up training. We will end this training no later than 10 PM.

We constructed this training opportunity to provide some traditional outdoor experiences for the Scouts and Venturers based on our own Mountain Search and Rescue experiences in Maricopa County dating back over the last thirty years. We realize that everyone has tight schedules and that this nighttime activity presents another challenge in an already full week. As parents and scout leaders, we hope you will encourage your Scout/Venturer to participate in the SAR training for their benefit. We also hope that you will come out and observe the training to see what really happens behind the scenes. In this holiday season, events like this really show the good side of our society as teams work together to help someone they may not know out of some difficulties. We spend a lot of time saying a Scout is Helpful. Searching for a missing person is a great way to apply that spirit and your scout wilderness experience.

**Merit Badges**

Those that participate in this exercise will complete approximately half of the Emergency Preparedness Merit Badge requirements. The remaining requirements can be completed in less than a few hours.
The Command Post is circled in the photo above (as seen on Google Maps). We will meet in the ramada at the end of the road at 5:30 for sign in and assembly. The all hands safety brief will begin at 5:45 PM. Every attempt to make this training as realistic as possible has been made. Your active participation in this will make this a true success.

Scouts will be divided into search teams with an instructor and receive an assignment as they would in an actual search operation. We will have an Operations Leader /Mission Commander from the Mountain Rescue community managing the training operations. Scouts are encouraged to bring their equipment as listed below and GMRS/Family Radios. We will be communicating between Command and the various teams on the radio channels specified below. Parents are encouraged to come along and listen in. Senior Patrol Leaders and Venture Crew Officers may be asked to assist in the management of the SAR operation.

**Radio Communications:**
GMRS/Family Radio: Channel 1 Sub Tone 18. (you should see a “1 18” in the typical radio display. Command Post will be available on this channel as “Pima Canyon Command” or “Mountain Rescue Command” during the training session.

**What will I get to do?**
Scouts and Venturers in attendance will be divided into teams and assigned a radio call sign (i.e. Team 1). Each team will receive an assignment and an area to search. Once you depart the parking lot, this is as real as it gets as your team must locate and assist the missing, and perhaps injured, parties. Your positive attitude and ability to work together will make this a great success. Each team will get to participate in an actual phase of the SAR operation so working quickly and following directions is important. The instructors are there for safety purposes but will allow your team to function as an individual unit.

**This isn’t just another lecture class is it?**
Oh no. This is a very practical exercise where your team will be hiking at night by flashlight/headlamp to find your missing subject and render the appropriate aid.

**How close is this to the real thing?**
This is actually modeled after the annual recertification exercises that all mountain rescue teams must complete to maintain their certification in the Mountain Rescue Association (www.mra.org).
What should I bring?
Plan on hiking no more than 2.5 miles in the dark with a light pack. SAR teams typically travel with a 24 hour pack and/or a 48 hour pack. (In other words, enough equipment to survive in the expected weather conditions for that period of time). At a minimum, you should have the following equipment

- Sturdy pair of hiking boots
- Two quarts water
- A light jacket as it will be cool when you stop hiking.
- A head lamp
- At least two other sources of light.
- Personal first aid kit.
- (Optional) GMRS/Family Radio transceiver(s)
- Rain Gear

We've kept this list short as we want you to be able to travel light and fast. You should be able to fit what you need into an average day pack or Camelbak style pack. Please check your batteries in your lights before the exercise.

Driving directions:
The site selected for this night training session is based on several factors common to night time rescue operations. We chose this site as it is close to town and provides easy access to and from for all scouts. In general terms, the main site for this training is located just west of Tempe in the east end of South Mountain Park (within the city of Phoenix).

- Head North on South 48th Street from Elliot (in Ahwatukee).
- Guadalupe Road is one mile north of Elliott.
- Turn Left onto Pima Canyon Road as shown below and follow it till it ends. You will be entering the city park.
- Map

If you are familiar with the area, you can take Guadalupe Road west from Tempe and look for the turn off on South 48th Street after crossing over I-10. From the intersection of South 48th Street and Guadalupe Road (one mile south of Baseline), follow the highlighted route to the end. The Command Post for this evening’s event will be in the Ramada Shelter at the end of the road.