

# Search and Rescue (SAR)

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# Search and Rescue

## Lecture Objectives

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- Discuss current Search and Rescue practices (Ground and Air)
- Discuss Search versus Rescue and how a Search will sometimes become a Rescue
- Discuss how to avoid being the objective of a SAR mission in the first place
- Discuss what to do and what not to do if things do not go as planned
- Discuss helicopter safety issues
- End with any Questions

# Ground Assets

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- Most SAR teams are staffed by volunteers that respond when needed to a search and rescue mission. Most of these volunteers have full time jobs. Once activated, the volunteers must respond to the command post before they can be deployed. This process takes time.
- If you are the subject of a SAR mission, patience is critical. The SAR teams are very professional, but response times vary. Sit tight. They will find you.
- Nationwide 63% of subjects are found by searchers on foot. In Los Angeles County that number is probably 75%. The volunteer SAR teams are the backbone of the SAR community.
- Los Angeles County volunteer SAR teams responded to over 500 activations in 2013. A volunteer makes one dollar per year.





# Air Assets

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- Air assets in Southern California are readily available if needed, but are very expensive to operate. If needed they can fly day or night. They usually will not fly when clouds are close to the ground or during fog.
- Air assets are requested when needed to conduct a search, or to rescue an injured or stranded subject in areas where it would be dangerous or impossible for ground assets to complete the mission.
- The use of air assets, although convenient, add an extra level of danger to the victim needing rescue, the rescuers and the air crew.
- Victims and rescuers die every year during SAR missions.



The retired H-3 Sheriff's Air Rescue 5 helicopter over the Angeles National Forest looking for a lost hiker.

# Search versus Rescue

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- Most calls start out as a Search, but become rescues if the subject is found injured or stranded.
- Every search is treated as an emergency, because the reason the search is needed is not known. On the other hand, every rescue is not an emergency, especially when all of the facts become known.
- Discuss specific occasion when the subjects made poor decisions that led to the mission being a rescue when all it should have been was a search.
- Discuss 85 year old rescued from the north side of Baden Powell. Why he survived.....



# How to avoid being a SAR Subject

## Trip Research / Planning

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- Get as much information about the intended hike as possible. Is the hike within the capabilities of the weakest member of the group?
- Buy or make good quality maps. Study the map features in detail. Get written details of the hike if possible from reliable sources.
- Talk with others that have been on the same trail. This source can be invaluable if the individual has recently been on the same trail or stayed at the same camping areas.
- Talk with rangers, SAR personnel and other professionals about the dangers involved in conducting the hike (Trail conditions, steep cliffs, animals, stream crossings, altitude dangers).