RHODE ISLAND CANINE SEARCH AND RESCUE INC.



Operations Manual

Revised: December 31, 2017

Approved: December 31, 2017

Distribution: All Members

RICSAR General Operations Manual (GOM)for all members of the organization.



General Operations

Manual

Letter of Introduction

Membership Roster and Call out Tree

1-GO-17 Membership Requirements

2-GO-17 Elected Positions

3-GO-17 Member Discipline

4-GO-17 Equipment Acquisition, Training and

Education

5-GO-17 Team Uniform

6-GO-17 Training Requirements

7-GO-17 Certification Requirements

8-GO-17 Policy on Media

RICSAR Organizational Chart

RICSAR Forms

12/31/2017

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12/31/2017 001.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 1-GO-17

**Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Membership

**Index As:** Membership Requirements

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Membership Requirements**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the types of membership available through Rhode Island Canine Search and rescue (RICSAR), and the standards by which a member will be held including requirements for maintenance of membership.

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legality of the organization.

**II. Definitions**

**A. Operational Member** – Any person who has completed all requirements for this membership and has been voted in by the standing body, as such.

**B. Supporting Member** – Anyone not meeting the requirements for operational member who has the intention of assisting RICSAR in a number of mission and organizational supporting roles.

**C. Probationary Member –** Any person seeking membership, who has not yet been associated with RICSAR for 6 months and whom has not completed the requirements for either the Operational or Supporting Member status.

**D. Visitor** – Any person wishing to attend a RICSAR training or event, but not seeking membership in any capacity.

**III. Operational Members**

Operational members with RICSAR are those members who handle a certified canine in a predetermined discipline(s). Additionally, this member has met the requirements listed below and has been voted into their position by the standing membership.

Operational members must be 18 years or older at the time of application and must submit a Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) background check with the application. Additionally, members must submit to a background check when requested by the Rhode Island State Police. Typically the background check is required annually.

All members must complete the following courses:

Rhode Island Emergency Management (RIEMA)

* 2 day basic Search and Rescue
* 2 day Land navigation
* 1 day Night Land navigation (This course is highly recommended although non-mandatory.)

Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) courses

* ICS 100
* ICS700

Note: Although, non-mandatory, team members are encouraged to complete additional SAR oriented ICS courses, both on-line and classroom style.

Additionally

* A basic human first aid/CPR course
* A canine first aid/CPR course
* A Blood Borne Pathogens course
* All canine handlers must pass a canine proficiency certification test in the handler/canine’s discipline i.e. live wilderness, cadaver, trailing etc. before being deployable
* All canines must pass the American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Good Citizen (CGC) test before taking part in public events i.e. meet and greets, demos, etc.
* All members (Operational and or Supporting ) who will be vessel operators for the team vessels, must take a RIDEM or US coast Guard sanctioned Boater Safety course). This training is highly recommended for all team members.

The following equipment will be required for and.or operational member to be considered “deployable”:

* A radio
* A hand held global positional satellite (GPS) unit
* compass
* Water bottle/s
* The appropriate RICSAR uniform. (Tan uniform shirt, Blue BDU’s and Dark colored work boots).

At the time of any training or mission, if the operational member appears to be unable to safely navigate the terrain due to physical fitness issues, is poorly equipped for the terrain and/or weather, or it is determined that the member is a safety concern to themselves, others, or the mission, they will be deemed “not deployable” and either asked to leave the scene or appointed another job within the search will be found for them (within reason).

An operational member must make 2/3 of the scheduled training days set forth for the year. Attendance is determined on a rolling calendar basis.

An operational member must make 1/2 of team sanctioned scheduled days for demos, and the team’s annual seminar

SAR focused seminars and canine training seminars are counted toward an operational members attendance.

Requests for absence shall be made in writing to the President and Vice President at least 24 hours prior to the training. Text messaging or phone conversations are not acceptable forms of request, e-mail is the required method.

One 6 month leave of absence shall be permitted per operational member every three years. Requests for said leave shall be made in written letter form and mailed to the President and Vice President.

Military and all First Responders will be excused from regular training attendance for deployments and work shifts when requested. The request must be made within 48 hours of the absence.

A leave of absence is not an automatic status. The leave of absence must have been reviewed and accepted by the President or Vice President prior to being granted.

An operational member with canine must reach and maintain a certified live find canine, as the state needs our ability to perform live searches first and foremost.

An operational member with canine must pass an in house wilderness test annually which is a 40 acre area of woods with at least one and up to two subjects. The member will perform the search as a single resource. Member will have two forms of communication, a cell phone and a radio. Incident command will contact the member every 15 minutes and ask for coordinates of the member’s current position. IC will track the member’s position within the IC trailer. The member will have 2 hours to locate the subject and the canine must perform the trained indication. i.e. a bark, re-find, etc. and clear the sector.

Operational members with technical skills (i.e. canine related certifications, radio communications certifications, veterinary medicine certifications) are required to maintain said skills and the appropriate documentation. They will be allowed to operate within their skill level only.

All operational members have voting privileges.

**IV. Supporting Members**

Supporting Members are persons who are 18 years of age or older, who do not meet the criteria for Operational Membership and have a skillset that will be an asset to the team. Typically they do not handle a canine during deployments.

Supporting members must be 18 years or older at the time of application and complete a background check.

Supporting members are encouraged to attend 8 of the scheduled trainings per year and be willing to take part in those training in the role of “search victim”, navigator, or radio communications operator.

In order for a Supporting member to be deployable, they must have a skill or certification relative to the mission in question. Further, skill and certification documentation must be in their training file. For example, an active Commercial Driver’s License, a boat operator’s license/course, rope rigging or maintenance etc.)

All Supporting members who will be vessel operators for the team vessels, must take a RIDEM or US Coast Guard sanctioned Boater Safety course. This training is highly recommended for all team members.

At the time of any training or mission, if the supporting member appears to be unable to safely navigate the terrain due to physical fitness issues, is poorly equipped for the terrain and/or weather, or it is determined that the member is a safety concern to themselves, others, or the mission, they will be deemed “not deployable” and either asked to leave the scene or appointed another job within the search will be found for them (within reason).

A Supporting Member has no voting privileges unless they become an Operational member.

**V. Probationary Member**

A probationary member is a person aged 18 years or older, who has stated their intention, in writing, to seek membership at either the Supporting or Operational level.

The probationary period shall be 6 contiguous months in duration totaling 24 trainings. The probationary member must be present for 2/3 of these trainings totaling 18. This means that the probationary member has 6 absences to use at their own discretion.

Any probationary member who fails to meet the attendance requirement will be notified in writing and dismissed from the team and consideration of membership.

Any probationary member who expects to miss between 7 and 30 days during their probationary period may apply for a leave of absence. Leave while on probation may be granted for duration no longer than 30 days. Approval is subject to a vote by the executive board. If the leave is approved, the time spent away from the team will not count towards the completion of probation. If denied, the member will be asked to leave. It is up to them if they would like to come back at a later date. However, if they chose choose to come back at a later date, they will have to re-apply and begin probation over again.

At the time of any training or mission, if the probationary member appears to be unable to safely navigate the terrain due to physical fitness issues, is poorly equipped for the terrain and/or weather, or it is determined that the probationary member is a safety concern to themselves, others, or the mission, they will be deemed “not deployable” and either asked to leave the scene or stand down for the duration of the event they are attending.

**VI. Visitor**

A visitor is a person, 16 years or older, who is not seeking membership and is wishing to audit a RICSAR training. They shall be required to state their intentions and complete a RICSAR waiver of liability prior to the start of the event. Any visitor that is under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult for the duration of the training event. The adult guest must fulfill all of the visitor requirements.

Visitors must sign in on the team attendance sheet for the event that they are attending.

At the time of any training or mission, if the visitor appears to be unable to safely navigate the terrain due to physical fitness issues, is poorly equipped for the terrain and/or weather, or it is determined that the visitor is a safety concern to themselves, others, or the mission, they will be deemed “not deployable” and either asked to leave the scene or stand down and not participate until the end of the training session.

**VII. Elected Positions**

These positions are filled through election within RICSAR. Rules of election, position, descriptions and responsibilities are found in 2-GO-17 Elected Officials

**Per Order of the President:**

**James Rawley, President RICSAR**

**Date of Issue Effective Date Policy#**

12/31/2074 12/31/17 002.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 2-GO-17 **Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Membership

**Index As:** Elected Positions

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Elected Officials**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the elected positions within Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue (RICSAR), the standards by which an official will elected, and their tasks.

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legally.

**II. Definitions**

**A. Executive Board** – A body of persons comprised of the following elected officials: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

**B. Elected Position** – Any of the following positions which can be held by voting RICSAR

members: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Trainers, Medical Officer, and Communications Officer. Added Safety Officer

**C. Board of Directors** – A board comprised of the members on the Executive Board and all trainers.

**D. Meeting** – A meeting of the members of RICSAR who have completed their probationary period, regardless of voting status.

**III. Elected Positions**

Only voting members of RICSAR may fill elected positions within the organization. Voting on the officers within RICSAR will occur at an annual meeting. At a meeting one month prior to said meeting, nominations will be proposed.

Positions shall be held for one (1) calendar year. At the conclusion of a term, if a consecutive term for the same person does not occur, an orderly transition of materials relative to that position shall occur.

In the event an officer has taken an approved leave of absence, the President shall determine a temporary designee to fill that position. In the case of the President taking a leave, the Vice President shall be the appointing officer.

The following elected officers will serve RICSAR: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Medical Officer, Safety Officer, Trainers, Communications Officer and Public Information Officer (PIO)

**IV. Executive Board**

The executive board will be comprised of 4 elected officials: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The President is responsible for making sure that Quarterly meetings occur accordingly and preside over said meetings. He/she is responsible for overseeing all RICSAR operations and establishing goals for the organization. He/she shall be responsible for maintaining up to date memorandums between RICSAR and Rhode Island Emergency Management (RIEMA), law enforcement agencies, or any other agency if applicable. The president is responsible for giving counsel to subordinate officers, bringing forward relevant ideas and issues, and concerns forward, and to be the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

The Vice President assists the President in any way and shall assume the President’s duties if needed. He/she shall oversee training. This includes the implementation of the training schedule, chair of training meetings, keeping training records for each member (submitted to them by the trainers) as a master file, and attendance of members at weekly training for the purposes of membership status.

The Secretary is responsible for scribing and maintaining the minutes of each meeting and monitors the insurance and liability policies. The Secretary handles all group correspondences, preparation of reports on missions/deployments to be submitted to the Executive Board and requesting outside agencies, maintain equipment inventories and the hard-copy training certifications; specifically, CPR/AED/first aid, Immunizations, and blood borne pathogens. The Treasurer is responsible for the maintenance of the non-profit status paperwork as well.

The Treasurer is responsible solely for the maintenance of the financial status of RICSAR. This includes the ledger for all accounts with financial institutions, preparation of taxes, tax forms, and audits. The treasurer shall collect the annual dues and provide a report as to the membership dues status to the Executive Board.

**V. Elected Positions**

Elected positions within RICSAR are those included in the aforementioned Executive Board as well as a Medical Officer, Communications Officer, Safety Officer, Public Information Officer (PIO) and Trainers.

The Medical Officer shall be a person whom has medical training at a level higher than the basic level required for membership and preferably have experience working within their certification. They are responsible for human medicine only however, having knowledge of emergency veterinary medicine as well is preferred.

The Communications Officer shall be responsible for ensuring that communications equipment is maintained and operating appropriately. Further, he/she shall be responsible for ensuring that members are aware of how to use it and of the radio/communications policy.

The Public Information Officer (PIO) shall be the RICSAR representative for the media and/or public interactions. The PIO is responsible for generating and executing press releases and other forms of media address.

The Safety Officer is responsible for the general safety and welfare of the team during both trainings and deployments. The Safety Officer prepares a pre deployment safety briefing report which is distributed electronically to all members prior to trainings and deployments. Information to include but not be limited to: hazards, general preparedness guidelines, any special instructions and emergency contacts.

There shall be a minimum of one trainer per discipline within RICSAR, for each working dog discipline applicable for the dog teams present on the team. In the event another discipline shall surface, the body will vote to accept an additional position and, accordingly, another trainer. The three approved disciplines currently are: Wilderness Live Find (Air Scent), Human Remains Detection (Urban, Wilderness and Water), and Trailing.

**VI. Board of Directors**

The board of directors shall be responsible for providing guidance in the development of policy and/or policy changes. See 3-GO-17 Discipline.

The board will meet once a year or at the President’s direction.

At the discretion of the board of directors, an auxiliary board may be formed. Said board may be comprised of persons who, based on their background or expertise, can benefit RICSAR in some fashion i.e. fundraising, or grant writing. These persons will not have voting privileges.

In the case of dissolution of RICSAR, the board of directors will seek out and choose another non-profit search and rescue organization to which the remaining funds and equipment shall be donated. This will happen after all debts are cleared.

**VII. Meetings**

Team business meetings will be held quarterly.

A special meeting can be called at any time by the President. The reason for the meeting must be stated ahead of time and no regular business may be discussed at the special meeting.

Attendance of 1/3 of the Operational membership is needed for a quorum in order to conduct new business of RICSAR. 2/3 majority of the Operational membership is needed to pass a vote.

The order of the meeting shall be: Call to order (presiding officer), Reading of minutes and correspondence (Secretary), and Presentation of financial report (Treasurer), Old business, New Business, motion to adjourn.

Robert’s Rules of Order shall be used in situations not covered in this General Order.

E-mail votes shall be allowed with special permission from the President. The same voting rules shall apply. However, this shall apply to Operational Members only; it shall be confidential and read by the President. The total votes and the results (aye or nay), will be delivered to the Secretary for recording and maintenance. One e-mail will be sent with the overall results.

**Per Order of the President:**

**James Rawley, President RICSAR**

**Date of Issue Effective Date Policy#**

12/31/2017 12/31/17 003.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 3-GO-17 **Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Membership

**Index As:** Member Discipline

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Discipline Policy**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the course of action taken by the executive board of Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue (RICSAR) to address acts of misconduct or illegal activity by a member.

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legally.

**II. Definitions**

**A. Discipline** – Punishment inflicted by way of correction and/or training.

**B. Misconduct** – Any act performed by a RICSAR member that is deemed improper, wrong, or in violation of any official RICSAR policy.

**C. Illegal Activity** – Any act performed by a RICSAR member that violates Rhode Island

General Laws (RIGL), the laws of any other state, or the federal government.

**III. Scope of Authority**

Members are to understand that they represent RICSAR at all times. Their actions represent this organization simply because of their membership.

If a member’s acts are considered to endanger any personnel, animal, or capital property or to compromise the integrity, sanctity, legality or professional reputation of the team during a training session or mission, it shall be reported to a RICSAR official.

The RICSAR board of directors shall review any complaint brought before them by a member of the public or a public official regarding potential wrongdoing of a member or misrepresentation of RICSAR within 30 days of being filed. RICSAR board of directors shall forward potential criminal matters to the Rhode Island State Police via the State Police Headquarters.

The member will be notified in writing if the complaint has merit and schedule a date listen to the member’s defense.

The board of directors shall be responsible for issuing the following sanctions only regarding its members: letter of reprimand, suspension, or termination.

The member has the right to appeal which must be given in writing to the Board of Directors forthwith.

A report of the findings shall be forwarded to the President.

**IV. Progressive Discipline**

Discipline within RICSAR shall be progressive. That is, a letter shall be issued first, progressing to a suspension, then termination. The type of discipline applied to each offense will be determined by the board of directors however, there are certain types of misconduct that warrant a minimum sanction. See Below.

All disciplinary action will be documented by the President in writing and maintained in the member’s permanent file.

Any member who appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol while at a training session and/or a mission shall be suspended and remain suspended pending a review by the executive board.

Any member that self-deploys under the auspices of the team’s mission with or without a canine without prior written or email notification to the Team President or Vice President shall be suspended and remain suspended pending a review by the board of directors.

Any member that is arrested or has a negative interaction with any police agency must immediately notify the RICSAR board of directors. The board of directors must inform the Rhode Island State Police search manager within 24 hours.

Any member who is found to be in violation of RIGL, the laws of the state in which RICSAR is operating at the time, or federal law, shall be suspended and remain suspended pending a review by the board of directors.

**Per Order of the President:**

**James Rawley, President RICSAR**

**Date of Issue Effective Date Policy#**

01/31/2014 12/31/14 004.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 4-GO-17 **Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Training

**Index As:** Equipment acquisition, Training and Education

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Equipment Acquisition, Training and Education**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the types of equipment issued to members by RICSAR, the procurement of team equipment, and the allocation of funds to members for training in an attempt to broaden the knowledge of the team itself.

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legally.

**II. Definitions**

**A. Equipment** – Tools or supplies acquired by, used, leased to, or issued to, Rhode

Island Canine Search and Rescue (RICSAR).

**B. Education** – The act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills.

**C. Training –** To make proficient by instruction and practice as in some profession.

**III. Equipment Procurement**

Generally speaking, members of RICSAR are to provide their own equipment. That is, anything that may be needed to become deployable, or needed to work their dog.

If RICSAR intends to purchase a piece of equipment or other expenditure for the team, and the projected cost is more than $150.00, a vote must be taken among the operational voting membership. This equipment or service must be of a nature so as to support or improve RICSAR functions and general welfare.

Equipment shall be stored in a place determined by the Executive Board. All equipment will be recorded on a log. The equipment log shall be maintained by the Secretary.

RICSAR equipment will not be loaned to members for recreational use under any circumstance. Further, prior to being loaned to another organization, membership approval must be obtained and notification made to the President.

RICSAR equipment must be maintained and returned to the appropriate equipment storage location in good and operational condition. Any issues regarding the status of equipment must be brought to the attention of the Team President to enable the equipment to be brought to an operational status as quickly as possible.

**IV. Training and Education.**

* Training will encompass all types of outdoor terrain including disaster type situations i.e. rubble piles, vacant building etc.
* Training will take place in all kinds of weather hot, cold, rainy, etc. RICSAR may cancel or move training due to weather dangers such as lightning, high winds, etc.
* Some training scenarios will require the handler to be in the woods alone while working their dog or being a subject for a canine. All members are required to have a cell phone and a radio before going into the woods. Members locations and communication will be tracked by Incident Command

Members are expected to incur the cost of any and all training and education related to RICSAR. This includes the required courses a member needs to be deployable.

In the instance of specialized training courses or seminars, RICSAR **may** pay the cost of tuition up to $200.00 per year per operating member, provided the course is relevant to RICSAR functions. This is subject to a vote by the body, and is contingent upon funds based on the latest financial statement. A request for this service must be made in writing at a regular meeting or by the President’s discretion. Each member who attends RICSAR subsidized training will be required to provide one training topic for the group within the following year.

**Per Order of the President:**

**James Rawley, President RICSAR**

**Date of Issue Effective Date Policy#**

12/31/2017 12/31/17 005.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 5-GO-17 **Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Training

**Index As:** Team Uniform

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Team Uniform**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the team uniform for members under all weather conditions and operational status.

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legally.

Operational members and supporting members must wear the uniforms as described below in order to participate in any team event.

**II. Definitions**

**A. Dress Uniform** – An identifying outfit or style of dress worn by members of a given organization to searches or public events

**B**. **Training Uniform** – uniform worn to trainings

**III. General Considerations**

In an effort to maintain professionalism and uniformity, RICSAR has defined a uniform to be worn by its members. This allows members to be clearly identifiable while training or on a mission.

In the instance of public demonstrations, trainings and missions, unless otherwise directed by the President, the dress uniform shall be worn.

Any garment worn by a RICSAR member that isn’t outlined in this policy shall be grey in color with the RICSAR logo embroidered on the left front breast and the RICSAR K9 screen printed on the back.

**IV. Training Uniform**

All members are required to obtain the dress and training uniforms within 90 days of being voted on the team as either an operational or supporting member. Operational members will not be allowed to test for certifications if they do not have the required uniforms. Operational or Supporting members are not allowed to participate in public events including searches if they do not have the required team uniforms.

The shirt shall be grey in color. On the shirt, the RICSAR logo will be screen printed or embroidered on the front left breast. The back of the shirt shall be RICSAR K9 either screen printed or embroidered.

The pants shall be a military/law enforcement style battle dress uniform (BDU) cargo pant, dark navy in color. The pants may be bloused into the footwear at the member’s discretion.

Footwear shall be black or dark navy in color and be a military/law enforcement type working boot. The boot shall be water resistant but, as it is summer, it need not be insulated.

Headgear shall be a baseball style cover with the RICSAR logo on the front, either screen printed or embroidered. At the member’s discretion, their name may also be on the hat as well. The cover shall be dark navy or black in color.

Authorized rain gear include a law enforcement patrol style rain jacket, either ankle or waist length. It shall be reversible with one side being black and the other being high visibility (High-Vis) yellow. On the High-Vis side, RICSAR K9 shall be screen printed on the back of the jacket.

The spring jacket authorized shall be dark navy in color and is waist length. The RICSAR logo shall be embroidered on the front and RICSAR K9 screen printed or embroidered on the back. It is the recommendation of RICSAR that this garment be water resistant as well.

**V. Dress Uniform**

The only authorized summer uniform to be worn by RICSAR members is described in this policy. All other uniforms are prohibited.

The shirt shall be the short or long sleeve khaki RICSAR uniform shirt that can be obtained from the RICSAR uniform supplier, “Rhode Island Uniform” or an equivalent. supplier. This shirt shall have the RICSAR logo embroidered on the left breast, the member’s name embroidered on the right breast. On the right shoulder shall be a patch of both the state and American flag and the left shoulder shall have the letters RICSAR. The back will have the characters K9 embroidered. All lettering will be dark navy in color.

The pants shall be a military/law enforcement style battle dress uniform (BDU) cargo pant, dark navy in color. The pants may be bloused into the footwear at the member’s discretion.

Footwear shall be black or dark navy in color and be a military/law enforcement type working boot. The boot shall be water resistant but, as it is summer, it need not be insulated.

Headgear shall be a baseball style cover with the RICSAR logo on the front, either screen printed or embroidered. At the member’s discretion, their name may also be on the hat as well. The cover shall be dark navy or black in color.

Authorized rain gear include a law enforcement patrol style rain jacket, either ankle or waist length. It shall be reversible with one side being black and the other being lime high viz green. On the lime high viz green side, the RICSAR K9 shall be screen printed on the back of the jacket.

The spring jacket authorized shall be dark navy in color and is waist length. The RICSAR logo shall be embroidered on the front and RICSAR K9 screen printed or embroidered on the back. It is the recommendation of RICSAR that this garment be water resistant as well.

The winter authorized winter jacket shall be a law enforcement style winter parka. The RICSAR logo is to be embroidered on the left front breast and the RICSAR K9 embroidered on the back.



**Date of Issue Effective Date Policy#**

12/31/2017 12/31/17 006.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 6-GO-17 **Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Training

**Index As:** Training Requirements

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Training Requirements**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the training requirements for members of Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue (RICSAR).

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legally.

**II. Definitions**

**A. Canine** – A dog that is trained or in training within a discipline of search and rescue with the intention of being used by RICSAR.

**B. Handler** – A RICSAR member who has procured and currently works a canine.

**C. Canine Team –** The combination of one handler and one canine.

**D. Training** – To make proficient through instruction and practice as in some profession or work.

**E. Team Training** – A gathering of RICSAR members at a given location where training of canine teams occurs within their desired discipline.

**F. Training Log –** A written record of the instruction, events and performance that the canine team performed on a given date, time or at a team training.

**III. Team Training**

Team training will be held every Sunday of each month unless otherwise noted by the President. Time, location and other subjects specific to the training for that particular day shall be forwarded to the member’s sufficient notice.

All communication relative to team trainings between Members of the executive board and the members shall be done through email. Additional notification methods may be used to augment the sharing of information. This will foster accountability and attendance at meetings.

Notification of the training time, location and specifics will be sent from one of the board members.

**IV. Training Requirements**

The ultimate goal for each member is to get their dog certified in a specific SAR discipline and be able to be deployed with RICSAR on missions.

Each team is expected to show progress towards their goal over the course of the year. A trainer may meet with members approximately halfway through the year and discuss progress, issues, and accolades as well as to ensure that the member is on the right path to success.

Each member will be responsible for completing a training log for each training session. This log will then be made available for review by a trainer or certifying official at the following training for inspection.

Intentions to obtain a certification will be made to the Board of Directors so that the appropriate arrangements may be made.

See 7-GO-17 Certification Standards for specifics regarding the certification process.

**Per Order of the President:**

**James Rawley, President RICSAR**

**Date of Issue Effective Date Policy#**

12/31/2017 12/31/17 007.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 7-GO-17 **Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Training

**Index As:** Certification Requirements

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Certification Requirements**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the certification requirements for members of Rhode Island Canine Search and rescue (RICSAR) and their canine partners.

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legally.

**II. Definitions**

**A. Canine** – A dog that is trained or in training within a discipline of search and rescue with the intention of being used by RICSAR.

**B. Handler** – A RICSAR member who has procured and currently works a canine.

**C. Canine Team –** The combination of one handler and one canine.

**D. Certification** – A certificate attesting the truth of some event.

**E. Certificating Body** – An accredited organization charged with the duties of establishing certification standards by which teams may attempt to complete with the intention obtaining said certification.

**F. Search and Rescue Discipline** – Any number of specific duties a canine team may be trained and certified in, in the attempt to locate or recover missing persons or their remains, during a mission.

**G. Wilderness Air Scenting Canine** – A canine trained to detect live human scent in moderately large unstructured areas of varied terrain.

**H. Disaster-Canine**– A canine trained to detect live human scent in areas of confined spaces and/or urban disaster situations.

**I. Human Remains Detection Canine** – A canine trained to detect human remains in varying states of decay/decomposition.

**J. Trailing Canine** – A canine trained to follow the track of the source of a specific odor.

**III. General Considerations**

All new canine handlers are required to obtain a certification in Wilderness Live Find before attempting any other canine SAR disciplines. RICSAR’s primary mission is to provide highly trained handlers and canines in Wilderness Live Find.

Canine teams must meet certification standards from a major certifying body in the United States prior to being deployed. Certification must be in one of the following disciplines. Some of the disciplines may have specializations that also are permitted. For instance, human remains detection has several categories including land and water certification. Canine teams must be certified in one of the following: Wilderness air scenting, urban air scenting (disaster), human remains detection (land and/or water), or Trailing.

There are several certifying organizations available to RICSAR canine teams, all of which offer a form of SAR certification. These organizations include the International Police Work Dog Association (IPWDA), North American Police Work Dog Association

(NAPWDA), and the American Mantrailing, Police and Work Dog Association (AMPWDA).

Handlers will be responsible for having knowledge of certification requirements as well as certification maintenance requirements, and catering their training goals and plans so as to complete and maintain certification.

RICSAR members are required to take, and successfully pass, the RICSAR readiness proficiency test in their discipline annually prior to taking the annual certification required by the Rhode Island State Police.

Members will maintain a binder/s with all canines records i.e. certifications, vaccinations, training logs, etc. This/these binders also serve as a resume for you and your canine as well as important information if your canine needs to be rushed to a vet. RICSAR will maintain documentation of all certifications either in a manual file or on a document management software.

**IV. International Police Work Dog Association**

RICSAR canine handlers are encouraged to attain certification through IPWDA in any of the following available areas: basic air scenting, advanced air scenting, basic cadaver detection, advanced cadaver detection, Water cadaver detection, article searches, urban search and rescue (disaster) certification and trailing.

Each area may be broken down further into more specific facets of the type of search conducted. For example, cadaver detection is tested on land and water with source odors being hidden in different areas and manners based on the examination.

**V. North American Police Work Dog Association**

RICSAR canine handlers are encouraged to attain certification through NAPWDA in any of the following available areas: Search and Rescue Area Search, Trailing, and Cadaver search.

**VI. American Mantrailing, Police, and Work Dog Association**

RICSAR canine handlers are encouraged to attain certification through AMPWDA in any of the following available areas: Trailing, Human Remains Detection, and Disaster Canine certification.

The complete list of certification options and their standards are attached to this policy.

**VII. Rhode Island State Police**

In accordance with the Rhode Island State Police and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Association, teams must pass the Rhode Island State Police Search and Rescue K9 certification standards, to be deployed in a search.

The complete list of certification options and their standards are attached to this policy.

**VIII. National Search Dog Alliance**

RICSAR canine handlers are encouraged to attain certification through the National Search Dog Alliance in any of the following available areas; Area Search, avalanche search, back tracking, land human remains detection, water human remains detection, and wilderness trailing 1 and 2 (with or without evidence).

The complete list of certification options and their standards are attached to this policy.

**Per Order of the President:**

**James Rawley, President RICSAR**



**Date of Issue Effective Date Policy#**

12/31/2017 12/31/17 008.00

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

**General Order:** 8-GO-17 **Distribution:** All Members

**Subject:** Operations

**Index As:** Media

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Policy on Media**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish written documentation defining the guidelines for the release and dissemination of public information to news media agencies and/or their representatives.

This policy shall also define and guide the RICSAR members use of social media as it directly relates to RICSAR, its operations and/or its affiliates. .

The documentation of these standards lends to the creditability of the organization within the field and legally.

**II. Definitions**

**A. News Media Representatives** – Those individuals who are directly employed by agencies of the electronic or print media such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Freelance workers in this field are to be regarded as other members of the general public unless otherwise designated by the RICSAR President.

**B. Public Information Officer (PIO) –** An appointed RICSAR member whose job it is specifically to serve as a central source of information for release by RICSAR and responds to requests for information by the news media and community.

**C. Internet** – An international computer network providing e-mail and information from computers in educational institutions, government agencies, and industry, accessible to the general public via modem links.

**D. Social Network** – Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

**E. Social Media** – A category of internet based resourced that integrate user generated content and user participation. This includes, but not limited to, social networking sites such as Facebook, microblogging sites such as Twitter and Instagram, and photo and video sharing sites such as Flickr and Youtube.

**F. Web Page** – The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

**G. Speech** – Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

**III. General Considerations**

Professionalism, ethics and integrity are of paramount importance to RICSAR and the Search and Rescue community. To achieve and maintain the public’s highest level of respect, we must place reasonable restrictions on our conduct and appearance, and hold to those standards, at all times. A member’s actions must never bring the organization into disrepute, nor should conduct be detrimental to its efficient operation.

Social Media is a valuable training tool as well as an advertising and fundraising medium. It can be used for community outreach, community notifications, and even recruitment.

Members are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the extent that their speech does not impair working relationships of this organizations for which loyalty and confidentiality are important; impede the performance of their duties; impair discipline and harmony among members, or negatively affect the public perception of the organization.

Members are cautioned that speech made pursuant to their duties on the team is not protected under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the team. Members should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their position with the team and the team itself.

**IV. General Procedures**

The only members of RICSAR who is authorized to speak with the media regarding RICSAR business are the PIO and/or the President’s designee. Media releases shall be authorized by the Executive board and may cover anything from appointments to deployments and their results.

All media releases shall be in writing and a copy is to be kept on file by the secretary.

Members are advised to use good judgment when placing photographs or depictions of themselves dressed in the RICSAR uniform(s), or in any way directly or indirectly identifying themselves as a member of RICSAR.

Permission to post pictures or video of a team member must be obtained prior to posting said media on the internet.

At no time will members make mention of the use of human remains and/or “Cadaver” material in any post on social media sites. When describing the work of a dog that detects said material, it will be acceptable to use the terms “source”, “source odor” or the like. At no time will actual source material be photographed or videotaped, and posted on a social media site.

Members are reminded to exercise good judgment and demonstrate personal accountability when choosing to participate on social networking sites.

The President may authorize the dissemination of any information or the involvement of

RICSAR members in any public appearance/media address.

**Per Order of the President:**

**James Rawley, President RICSAR**

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue**

123 Main St. Richmond, Rl 01010

401-333-3333 [jim@ricsar.org](mailto:jim@ricsar.org)

*Example of an Organizational Chart*

President

Medical/Safety

**1-**

Officer

I I I

Secretary Vice President Treasurer

I I I

K9 4 K9 4 K9 4

**Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue Inc.**



***Example of a K9 Training Record***

DATE

HANDLER SUBJECT DOG FLANKER

**Environment**

**EXERCISE TYPE /Terrain**

W. LIVE LOCATION CADAVER WATER

DISASTER ARTICLE SEARCH

TRAILING TERRAIN

**Exercise Conditions**

START TIME END TIME WIND DIRECTION WIND SPEED PRECIPITATION CLOUD COVER TEMPRATURE GROUND MOISTURE **EXERCISE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES**

SINGLE SUBJECT SCENT DISCRIMINATION MULTIPLE SUBJECT SCENT ARTICLE USED FIND/RE-FIND ARTICLE SEARCH

**EXERCISE OUTCOME HANDLER COMMENTS**

SUBJECT FOUND SOURCE FOUND ARTICLE FOUND INDICATION

SEARCH AREA COORDINATES

SUBJECT LOCATION COORD.