



SEARCH, RESCUE AND RECOVERY RESOURCES OF MINNESOTA

Basic Competencies for Mounted Search and Rescue Participants

Introduction. These Competencies are intended to provide guidance to the various city or county mounted posses regarding basic skills and experiences expected for Mounted Search and Rescue (“MSAR”) units being deployed into the field on search, rescue or recovery operations. In any case, the responsible Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) on scene (whether law enforcement, fire department or other) retains ultimate authority as to the utilization and qualification of all resources used in the search.

Scope. The Competencies are NOT to be regarded or referred to as a “certification,” qualification or licensure of any kind and are not a condition of membership in SRRRMN. They are strictly intended to represent skills that MSAR field units are generally anticipated to have before being deployed so as to ensure their ability to perform the MSAR mission assigned, to ensure the safety of the horses and riders in the field, and to assure common training and experience among mounted units from different posses who will be working together in the field as circumstances dictate. Mounted resources are expected to be members in good standing of a recognized posse (sheriff’s office, city, county, state or federal law enforcement).

The Competencies may be tested or confirmed annually as each individual posse determines for their particular horse and rider combinations in question, and a record kept by such posse. It is recommended that posses providing mounted resources annually maintain a list of their riders/horses that have satisfied the Basic Competencies, but each posse may make changes to their lists during the year as warranted.

Recommended Competencies/Best Practices.

The expected Competencies are:

- Equitation and Equine Competencies
 - Able to mount horse in the field, without a block
 - Controlled walk, trot, canter
 - Stop and Stand
 - Rein back
 - Side pass (left and right)
 - Close order formation riding (with unfamiliar horses)
 - SAR line station-keeping (with unfamiliar horses)
 - Horse able to stand calmly when tied to trailer (or similarly-secured arrangement)
 - Horse in sufficiently good medical/physical condition to remain in field at least 6 hours
 - Horse must exhibit calm demeanor and ability to work with unfamiliar horses and in unfamiliar sensory situations
 - Minimum age of horse: 4 years old
 - Negative Coggins test within 12 months
 - Stallions are excluded



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Basic Competencies for Mounted Search and Rescue Participants (cont.)

- Obstacle Experience
 - Mud/water/soft terrain surfaces
 - Slicker/rain gear distractions
 - Sled pull
 - Transit through brush, forest, high grass
 - Changes in footing (wood, tarmac, gravel, rock, grass, etc.)

- Sensory Acceptance
 - Fire, flares
 - Pungent smoke
 - Colors, streamers, flags, police tape
 - Unusual, loud noises and proximity (helicopters, dogs barking, ATVs)
 - Sirens, horns honking, bright lights

- Rider Competencies
 - Understanding of and respect for scene preservation, and scene safety
 - Land navigation skills (able to use map and compass, GPS, etc.)
 - Able to use a field radio
 - Has and maintains gear, tack and equipment appropriate to the conditions (to protect both horse and rider) and MSAR mission
 - Understands Incident Command (IC) and MSAR field team organization structure, and adheres to search assignments and organizational discipline
 - Willingness to adapt to changing circumstances and assignments as the rider's MSAR field unit, the search situation or the IC requires

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