



Applicant Handbook



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San Jose Search and Rescue

About the Team

San Jose Search and Rescue (SJSAR) was founded in 1968, and quickly evolved into an all volunteer, ground search and rescue resource in Northern California. SJSAR later incorporated as a tax exempt non-profit in 1969. From that point forward, SJSAR has offered its services to the City of San Jose through cooperative agreements with the San Jose Police Department, San Jose Fire Department, and City Office of Emergency Services. SJSAR has also responded to mutual aid requests to assist other agencies throughout the State of California.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, SJSAR is funded entirely by donations, grants, fundraising events, and membership dues. The City of San Jose supports the Team with surplus vehicles, fuel, training facilities, and a headquarters building when space is available.

Through continuous service to the Community since 1968, SJSAR has responded to hundreds of emergency requests including locating downed aircraft, flood evacuations, searches for missing and kidnapped persons, technical rope rescues, evidence searches, body recoveries, medical support for special events, and swift water rescues.

A unique focus on comprehensive training and specialized equipment has allowed for safe and effective operations. SJSAR is committed to public service.

SJSAR is organized with a (3) person Board of Directors and corporate officers including a President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Field Operations Officer. In addition, a Membership Committee manages human resources responsibilities. The Field Operations Officer oversees all operational activities, public information, agency representation with San Jose Fire / OES and San Jose Police, training, communications, and support services.



Membership

Minimum Qualifications for Membership:

To be considered for membership, applicants are required to meet the following qualifications (Applicants shall provide documentation validating these qualifications):

1. At least 21 years of age at the time the Application for Membership is submitted.
2. Possess a valid California Class C (or higher) driver's license.
3. Have the ability to maintain ongoing membership and field readiness requirements as outlined below.

Eligibility for membership is not based on education, training, certifications, or experience beyond the minimum qualifications. However, SJSAR is always seeking applicants who have a combination of experience, knowledge, and skills that relate to emergency services. Please let us know if any of the following applies to you:

1. Possess a National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) certification.
2. Possess a current and valid State of California EMT-B or EMT-P certification.
3. Possess a current and valid National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians EMT-B or EMT-P certification.
4. Possess a State of California or Federally recognized certification for Incident Management, Disaster Services, or Technical Rescue.
5. Possess a Bachelors degree (BS or BA) from an accredited College or University.
6. Possess an Associate's degree (AA or AS) degree from an accredited College.
7. Public safety employment experience (Fire, Police, Ambulance, Emergency Services, etc.).
8. Public safety volunteer experience (Volunteer Fire, Community Response Team, Red Cross, etc.).
9. Military service.
10. Bilingual or multilingual.

Application Process:

1. Submit a completed Application for Membership.



2. Attend a minimum of (3) SJSAR meetings / trainings.
3. Submit a current DMV driving record (2-year history). **Estimated Cost: \$5.00**
4. Undergo a background investigation which may include verification of identification, employment history, and criminal history.
5. Interview with the Membership Committee.

Selection of New Members:

New members are selected and accepted to the team (4) times each year during the months of January, April, July, and October. SJSAR does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnic origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Once accepted, new members will be required to pay their first year **annual dues of \$30** (or a prorated amount based on the date of acceptance), and pay a **one-time \$15 processing fee**.

Membership will not be granted if any of the following circumstances are discovered:

1. Fraud in the procurement of any certification.
2. The commission of any fraudulent, dishonest, or corrupt act that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of emergency personnel.
3. Violating any federal or state statute or regulation which regulates narcotic, dangerous drugs, or controlled substances; addiction to, the excessive use of, or the misuse of, alcoholic beverages, narcotics, dangerous drugs, or controlled substances
4. Registration as a sex offender under Penal Code section 290 involving force, duress, threat, or intimidation.
5. A conviction during the preceding seven years of any offense relating to the sale, use, possession, or transportation of narcotics or illegal drugs.
6. A conviction during the preceding seven years of any felony, including but not limited to situations involving force, violence, threat, or intimidation, or has been convicted of theft during that period.
7. Two or more misdemeanor convictions within the last seven years.
8. Failure to disclose any convictions.

Probationary Period:

The first six months to a year of membership is critical to both you and the Team. All new members will undergo a minimum six month probationary period of basic training, attendance, and performance evaluations.



Within the first month of probation, new members must complete the following requirements to achieve "probational readiness":

1. Attend a New Member Orientation training.
2. Obtain a complete Field Uniform Type 1 (F-1) and Field Uniform Type 2 (F-2). **Estimated Cost: \$200.**
3. Obtain a complete SJSAR Urban Pack. **Estimated Cost \$260.**
4. Obtain a current edition of the Thomas Guide map book for Santa Clara County (Thomas Guide: Santa Clara County). **Estimated Cost: \$22.**
5. Obtain a current edition of the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) Fundamentals of Search and Rescue (FUNSAR) manual. **Estimated Cost: \$45.**
6. Obtain an SJSAR pager, issued by the team. A **refundable deposit of \$25** is due at the time pager is issued.
7. Obtain an SJSAR photo identification card, issued by the team. This cost is included in the \$15 processing fee paid at the time of acceptance.

New members must complete the following additional requirements within the minimum six month probationary period to achieve "field readiness":

1. Attend a minimum 50% of all meetings and trainings.
2. Obtain a complete NASAR 24-Hour Ready Pack. **Estimated Cost (additional amount added to the cost of the SJSAR Urban Pack): \$240.**
3. Successfully demonstrate a series of skills including, but not limited to, water operations, search tactics, navigation, vehicle operations, basic life support medical, ropes and knots, and technical rope rescue.
4. Successfully demonstrate a basic level of fitness by hiking (4) miles over flat terrain carrying a (10) lb pack within (1) hour and (20) minutes.
5. Obtain or show evidence of a current California Title 22 First Aid (or higher) certification. **Estimated Cost for T22 First Aid Cert: \$150.**
6. Obtain or show evidence of a current CPR certification (American Heart Association BLS CPR or American Red Cross CPR Pro). **Estimated Cost: \$75.**
7. Obtain or show evidence of a current NIMS Incident Management IS-100.a certification. **Estimated Cost: FREE**
8. Obtain or show evidence of a current NASAR SAR TECH III certification by passing an on-line written exam. **Estimated Cost: \$50.**



Ongoing Membership Requirements:

As a volunteer organization, SJSAR is sensitive to the demands on its member's time and budget.

To maintain membership in the organization, annual dues shall be paid no later than the beginning of each fiscal year – July 1. **Cost: \$30**

To participate in operation activities such as emergency call-outs or other events, we require a certain level of participation from everyone on the team. We operate equipment, vehicles, and boats – often in extreme conditions. To ensure that you perform your duties in a safe and professional manner, you are expected to meet field readiness requirements which include fitness, SAR related skills, personal equipment, uniform, attendance, and certifications. These field readiness requirements will be evaluated annually for all members during a comprehensive qualification weekend. The field readiness qualification weekend will be offered twice a year to accommodate member's schedules.

1. **Fitness:** Successfully demonstrate a basic level of fitness annually by hiking (4) miles over flat terrain carrying a (10) lb pack within (1) hour and (20) minutes. Fitness testing will be offered as part of a comprehensive qualification weekend offered twice a year.
2. **SAR Skills:** Successfully demonstrate a series of skills annually including, but not limited to, water operations, search tactics, navigation, vehicle operations, basic life support medical, ropes and knots, and technical rope rescue. Skills testing will be offered as part of a comprehensive qualification weekend offered twice a year. Members are required to attend one weekend qualification each year.
3. **Equipment:** Maintain a complete NASAR 24-Hour Ready Pack. Pack inspections will be conducted as part of a comprehensive qualification weekend offered twice a year.
4. **Uniform:** Maintain a complete F-1 and F-2 uniform. Inspections will be ongoing.
5. **Attendance:** Attend 50% of all meetings, trainings, and planned events. Attendance will be evaluated every 6 months.
6. **Certifications:** Maintain Title 22 first aid (minimum level), BLS CPR, IS-100.a, and SAR Tech III certifications.

It is critical that you stay in contact with the team and have transportation to and from meetings, trainings, emergency call outs, and events. All members must possess a motor vehicle in good working condition (with proof of current registration and insurance), and have reliable access to an email account and phone. Members must also submit a DMV driving record every two years.

Termination of Membership:

Membership may be restricted or terminated upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

1. Voluntary withdrawal from membership by written notice delivered to the Membership Committee.



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2. A determination by the Membership Committee that a member has engaged in conduct materially and seriously prejudicial to the interests or purposes of the Organization.
3. Failure to pay dues or fees on or before their due date.
4. Failure to meet minimum ongoing membership requirements.



Team Functions

Meetings:

The Team meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month at the San Jose Fire Department's Bureau of Field Operations Campus (BFO Campus) located at 255 S. Montgomery Street in San Jose. This is also the location of the Fire Department Training Center or "TC". However, the location may change with email or pager notice. The meetings start at 1830 hrs and finish at 2130 hrs. The BFO Campus offers classrooms, training facilities, men's and women's restrooms, and soda / vending machines.

The first meeting of each month includes a formal Membership Meeting to discuss general issues affecting the team, followed by a short training.

1830 hrs – 1900 hrs: Membership Meeting, discussion of upcoming events.

1900 hrs – 1915 hrs: Break

1915 hrs – 2115 hrs: Training

2115 hrs – 2130 hrs: Debrief and demobilization

The second meeting of the month is focused on training.

1830 hrs – 2115 hrs: Training

2115 hrs – 2130 hrs: Debrief and demobilization

Training:

In addition to the monthly meetings, additional training is offered on weekends and various weekdays in between normally scheduled meetings. The team conducts training exercises and performs vehicle and equipment maintenance that aren't practical to accomplish during the Wednesday meetings. Members will be required to demonstrate the skills and knowledge taught during these regularly scheduled trainings on an annual basis during a comprehensive qualification weekend. The field readiness qualification weekend will be offered twice a year to accommodate member's schedules.

Planned Events:

The team participates in a number of planned events throughout the year, some of which are fundraising activities. These events include medical standbys for local triathlons, parades, and public safety displays. It's vital that we have enough team members to perform these operations safely and effectively. Since they can be scheduled far in advance, we ask that each member participate in at least 50% of the planned events each year.



Emergency Call Outs:

This is why we plan, prepare, and train – to respond to emergency search or rescue requests by the City of San Jose or other agencies. As emergency and non-emergency calls come into the San Jose Fire or Police dispatch center, the need for search and rescue resources is evaluated and a call goes out to the team via pager. Emergency calls are unexpected and often come at inconvenient times. You may be at work, asleep, and out with friends. Despite those inopportune moments, your participation is always needed.

Optional Team Functions:

Maintaining the Team's inventory of equipment and vehicles takes a lot of work. On many weekends you'll find team members at our warehouse facility working on one project or another. Notices are sent out via email asking for volunteers to help clean vehicles, restock supplies, etc... These activities are optional, but your participation is greatly appreciated!

Get Fit Program:

This program is designed to help build fitness, prepare team members for the annual fitness qualification, and promote familiarity with local parks and trails. This program is optional, but highly recommended to maintain field readiness. Team members meet at a different park or trailhead on selected weekends. The hikes vary in distance and difficulty. There are no requirements to go the entire distance or keep the same pace as others in the group. This is a fun way to get to know team members, break-in new hiking boots and equipment, and build fitness.

Notice is sent via email or page prior to the hike detailing the location and directions. Unless specifically requested by the fitness hike organizer, there is no need to sign up in advance – simply show up if you're interested. Bring clothing appropriate to the weather / location and enough water/snacks for the distance and difficulty. Some hikes may require parking / day-use fees.

San Jose Fire Department Ride-Along Program:

As members of SJSAR, we have a great opportunity to ride-along with San Jose Fire Department engine, truck, and USAR Companies. This gives everyone a chance to interact with Fire Department personnel and see how that agency operates. The ride-alongs are typically eight (8) hours in length and usually hosted by Station 18. This activity is optional.