

# Mission Response

Once you receive a page to respond to a mission, evaluate whether you are able to respond. There are times when you may be uncertain whether you should respond. Unless requested to do so, DO NOT CALL THE ODC to discuss or indicate future availability. The initial stages of a mission are hectic and such calls may compromise the response of the entire team. You may have a definite commitment that you cannot break later in the day. In this case, you should respond and let the IC know that you will have to leave at a specific time. There are always jobs that you can do that will allow you to leave when you need to. If you have been consuming alcohol, you should not respond if you're impaired. Err on the side of caution when alcohol is involved; it will degrade your performance at best and potentially finish your SAR career. A DUI/DWI conviction will require you to turn in your Sheriff's Office ID, and you will not be able to serve as a member of the team. If you have health problems, consider your abilities and impact on the team. Do not agree to tasks that are presently beyond your ability.

Once you have made the decision to respond, follow the instructions on the page. If the page requests that you call the ODC for a limited response, please do not leave a message. Checking and returning messages is cumbersome, especially while other members may be calling in. If you don't get through, hang up and call back.

Member preparation remains the most significant factor in response time. Your gear should be packed and stored in your vehicle so you can respond from anywhere without having to return home. Do some preplanning with your family so that when you are paged for a mission, you can leave as quickly as possible.

You must obey traffic laws during response, PERIOD. The fact

that you are responding to a search and rescue mission is not a valid excuse for exceeding the speed limit. If you are stopped for a traffic violation while responding to a mission, do not try to use your response as an excuse. Realize that you represent the team while responding; drive carefully and show courtesy to other drivers. You may not use lights and siren on your personal vehicle without prior authorization. Such authorization is granted to only a few key team members. Avoid having to stop for gasoline by keeping your vehicle always more than half full.

A mobile or hand-held radio is a valuable tool during response. (The topic of Communications is covered more thoroughly later in this manual.) Once the IC (usually identified as "Command") comes on the air, you should call in as responding. Keep this transmission brief, and do not expect a response due to IC workload. A simple "Rescue XX responding" is sufficient. Only add other comments if they are pertinent to the mission. The IC will make every effort to put additional response information out over the paging system as some members do not have radios, but you will get it sooner if you have a radio. Do not ask questions during response unless absolutely necessary.

You will have the opportunity to ride in a team vehicle or carpool if you respond to RB. Response in a team vehicle has several advantages: the use of lights and siren as appropriate; in cases of heavy/stopped traffic, this may reduce your response time significantly. Riding with other members allows you to discuss mission information, safety, and perhaps assign tasks or equipment prior to arrival at rescue base. If parking is limited at staging, it simplifies logistics.