



## CARDA Backgrounder

### Search & Rescue

Search and rescue (SAR) is an operation mounted by emergency services, often well-trained volunteers, to find someone believed to be in distress, lost, sick or injured either in a remote or urban environment.

### Standard Operating Procedures for SAR in California



In all jurisdictions in California, except in the City and County of San Francisco, the Sheriff, as Chief Law Enforcement Officer for the county, retains the responsibility for the search and rescue (SAR) of lost individuals and for missing or downed aircraft occurring in that jurisdiction. In the City and County of San Francisco these responsibilities are charged to the Chief of Police. However, this does not relieve municipal governments, special districts, and other political subdivisions of the State, either by law or by inference in the Government

Code, of the responsibility to conduct initial SAR investigative actions or actual field operations when persons are reported either lost or missing. Furthermore, to define responsibility and to hasten the state's response, additional legislation enacted a few years past, required special attention be afforded to lost or missing juvenile subjects and victims. The law was later broadened even further to include all subject categories.

In some specific areas of the State where exclusive law enforcement jurisdiction is exercised by the host authority, i.e., National Parks, some military bases, and other federal lands, the host law enforcement authority retains the responsibility for SAR operations. Usually, the law enforcement authority of these

exclusive jurisdiction areas will call upon the sheriffs of adjoining counties for assistance in SAR operations. Such assistance has been routinely provided over the years but may be further based upon written Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or informally based upon daily working relations. Other areas of non-state lands, such as national forests and other military bases, share the law enforcement responsibility. In these areas of concurrent jurisdiction SAR responsibility may be shared; but, in most instances, SAR operations are conducted by the Sheriff of that county. The role of the host is usually that of





support to the Sheriff's field operations. [CalOES Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Search & Rescue Annex]

## California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)



The system for mutual aid in California is an outgrowth of California's Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement (1950) and the Governor's Executive Order, both signed by Governor Earl Warren.

The concept of mutual aid is simply neighbor helping neighbor during emergency conditions. This assistance is done on a voluntary basis and is usually without cost to the requestor. In SAR, such assistance is usually provided with sheriff's volunteer forces that are trained by the department for suburban, rural, and back country search and rescue operations. In California, a SAR event is considered an emergency.

### A. Local

SAR operations conducted within incorporated areas of the state are usually the responsibility of the chiefs of police where such departments exist. The resources within that police department would be committed to a SAR incident and could also include civilian volunteer personnel from within the incorporated community.

### B. Operational Area (County)

When the magnitude of a SAR incident exceeds the capabilities of the local



police department, that department may and should request SAR assistance from the County Sheriff, the Operational Area Law Enforcement Coordinator. All SAR resources within that county (operational area) could then be committed by the Sheriff to the SAR incident. The sheriff's resources would likely include salaried deputies, other county agencies and their employees, and/or registered civilian volunteers who are affiliated with the sheriff's department. Locally situated state agencies could

also be requested for resources support such as the CHP with its rotary and fixed winged aircraft.

### C. Region

Within the regional concept of mutual aid, several counties may have already initiated mutual aid agreements to assist each other in SAR operations. These agreements, formal or informal, have evolved mainly through necessity. The errant direction of travel of lost persons and aircraft in trouble are not restricted by jurisdictional boundaries. The need for expanded SAR training has also fostered the regional concept of mutual aid for SAR volunteer units in California.



Scheduled training seminars and exercises provide many opportunities for cross training individuals and units in deployment for joint operations. Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Search and Rescue Annex 23

***In all instances where intercounty or regional assistance is provided in SAR, the overall responsibility for the management of resources and the conduct of the search is retained by the requesting jurisdiction.***

#### **D. State**

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services Law Enforcement Branch has the responsibility of coordinating mutual aid in SAR for the State of California. This coordination responsibility extends to the fuse of both State or Federal resources and the deployment of other resources from adjoining regions. This role is prescribed in the state's Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan and is conducted in much the same manner as in other Law Enforcement Mutual Aid activities. *Search is an Emergency* in life threatening circumstances. For this reason, wider latitude in the mutual aid system is permitted in the evolution or escalation of support for SAR incidents. [CalOES Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Search & Rescue Annex]

#### California Government Code 3. Section 26615 - Directory of Specially Trained Dogs:

The Sheriff shall maintain, or cause to be maintained, a directory of specially trained dogs with proven ability in search and rescue operations as one of the possible methods to be used under the authority of Section 26614. The directory shall include the location of the dogs and a list of their previous experience.

### **CalOES Canine Guidelines**

CalOES published guidelines for search and rescue canines in June 2003 (and amended in January 2005) The guidelines contain minimum standards for demonstrated proficiency through evaluation tests. CARDA meets or exceeds the criteria in the guidelines for all K9 SAR specialties.

#### CalOES Definitions of Canine Disciplines:

**AIR SCENT/AREA SEARCH DOG:** Is used to search a specific area. It is not expected that an area search dog will require a scent article prior to searching but a scent article may be used at the discretion of the handler. The air scent or area dog will generally work off lead and search for clues such as human scent in an area.

**TRAILING DOG:** Is generally used to identify one particular individual's scent from any other person. Trailing is the following of an individual scent trail from a



particular person. This dog is generally worked on lead, requires a scent article to begin searching, will follow the trail of the selected individual, and will identify the subject using an alert readable by the handler at the end unless the individual left the area. Trailing dogs are more appropriate for SAR missions than tracking dogs.

**CADAVER DOG:** Searches for and detects decomposing human remains.

**WATER DOG:** Searches for and detects human remains in water.

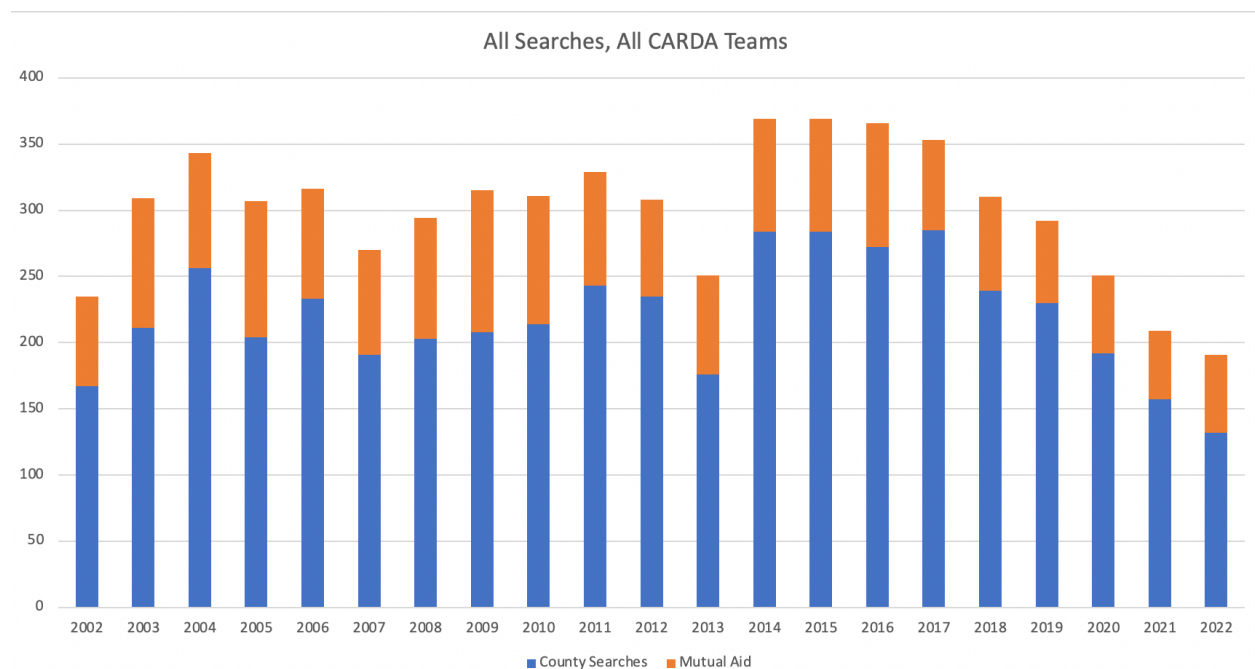
**AVALANCHE DOG:** Searches for and detects a subject recently buried under snow.

**DISASTER DOG:** Searches for and detects inaccessible subjects and indicates with an alert compatible with the typing of the dog.

## CalOES Canine Teams

CARDA is one of only three canine search and rescue teams recognized by CalOES as chartered to provide specialty resources for mutual aid search and rescue. CARDA is the largest of the three by numbers and by geographic locations. CARDA also covers all dog scent disciplines, whereas the other two organizations do not.

## Search response



CARDA teams typically respond to over 200 searches as year in the state.



## County Sheriff SAR Affiliations

CARDA teams currently serve on 28 of the 58 County sheriff search and rescue teams in the state of California.

### Alphabetical listing of country sheriff search and rescue teams represented by CARDA members.

Linked to Search & Rescue team websites, where available

