

California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association



Policies and Procedures

Revision November 2018

1. POLICY ON REGION MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

The CRMRA Board of Directors meets three times per year, on the 3rd Saturday in the months of May and September and the Saturday proceeding the Martin Luther King weekend in January.

2. POLICY ON RE-ACCREDITATION OF CRMRA UNITS

Each Member unit must re-accredit in Search and Tracking, Technical Rock, and Snow and Ice. Each Associate member unit must re-accredit only in those disciplines for which they have previously accredited. Re-accreditation must be achieved by the Member unit successfully passing a test with at least six of their field members in a scheduled region re-accreditation.

2.1 SCHEDULE AND ROTATION

The region's re-accreditation is held on the first Saturday in March of each year. Each year, one discipline must be re-accredited by member teams; the following year the second discipline is re-accredited and the next year the third discipline is re-accredited.

This rotation continues every fourth year. The order of rotation will be: Search and Tracking, Technical Rock, and Snow and Ice. If a region re-accreditation test is canceled, the discipline to be tested will be moved to the following year.

If constraints associated with the selected venue require it, the host team may elect to run the problems in two shifts: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. If absolutely necessary, and if the officers committee agrees, the host team may run the reaccreditation over two consecutive days: the regularly scheduled Saturday and the Sunday immediately following. Members of teams that have completed their problem (or if their problem has not yet started) may observe other teams who are being evaluated, but only to the extent that the observers do not cause interference with the evaluation process. Observers may share observations and/or opinions with the evaluators after completion of the problem, but only the recommendations of the assigned evaluators will be considered regarding the initial assessment of whether a team passed or needs to retest.

2.2 HOST TEAM

Each year a host team volunteers to host and organize the re-accreditation. The host team will be considered re-accredited for the host discipline unless they have not previously re-accredited in this discipline. The host team cannot host the same discipline consecutively.

2.3 DOCUMENTATION OF TEAM'S STATUS

A list showing the re-accreditation status of member units is maintained by the Region's Vice Chair and submitted to the MRA Membership Chair bi-annually.

2.4 FAILURE TO RE-ACCREDIT

Failure to accredit by non participation or by failing the scheduled re-accreditation test will result in a retest. A member unit will have a goal of 12 months to re-accredit; with the maximum period of 24 months to re-accredit. The make-up test must be proctored by minimally 2 evaluators from at least 2 different teams, preferably from different counties. The make-up test must be similar to the scheduled re-accreditation test and must be approved by the Region's vice chair. A chief evaluator must be appointed and standard test documentation must be submitted. Failure to re-accredit within this period or failure of the re-accreditation test will result in recommendation to National MRA Board for change in status to Associate Member, pending region vote. Re-testing successfully will reinstate status to Full Member.

2.5 FINAL DECISIONS REGARDING PASS/RETEST

The evaluators shall make the initial call regarding whether a team passed the reaccreditation exercise or has to retest. If the two evaluators disagree on whether a team passed, the observing region officer(s) shall also fill out an evaluation form. A team is regarded to have passed unless a majority of the observers indicates that a retest is required. If the reason for retesting is an isolated skill, and if time permits, the evaluators have the option to allow the team to retest in that skill at the conclusion of the problem.

If a safety issue arises, the evaluators are to stop the problem and assume command of the situation until the hazard has been mitigated.

A team may dispute the initial decision of the evaluators at the next regularly scheduled region meeting. If a team chooses to dispute the decision, they must let the region officers know in writing or via e-mail at least 1 month prior to the meeting so the cognizant evaluators can make arrangements to attend the meeting. After arguments are made, the region board shall vote on the issue. A simple majority is required for a decision to retest to stand. If 1-month notice is not given or if the decision to retest is not disputed, the decision to retest stands by default.

2.6 TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each team must supply 2 qualified evaluators. (See appropriate policy for qualifications.)
2. Each team must supply a minimum of 6 field members capable of performing the re-accreditation scenario.
3. Each team may need to supply a patient for the re-accreditation.
4. Each team must supply all personal and team equipment necessary to perform the re-accreditation.
5. A maximum number of team representatives may be set by the host team based on the test area limitations.
6. Each team must provide a unique radio frequency for their team's operation.

2.7 EVALUATOR RESPONSIBILITY

1. Meet the qualifications as outlined on the region web site.
2. Attend a mandatory evaluator training to be scheduled by the host team prior to the re-accreditation.
3. Be knowledgeable of evaluator expectations as outlined on the region website.
4. If a team is performing poorly and may receive a failing score, the evaluators shall call in available region officers to observe the team in question.
5. Provide feedback to the team they evaluated after completion of the problem.

2.8 REGION RESPONSIBILITY

1. Review the host team's progress.
2. Provide support and assistance to resolve issues as necessary.
3. Provide up to \$200 toward expenses to the host team.
4. Maintain the evaluator forms on the region website.

2.9 HOST TEAM RESPONSIBILITY

1. Organization for the re-accreditation.
2. Contact previous hosts for input, if needed.
3. Update the region teams at region meetings prior to the re-accreditation.

4. Provide a location to support all region teams.
5. Provide similar test scenarios for all region teams.
6. Obtain permission from local jurisdiction or authority for the use of the location.
7. Provide parking.
8. Advise of campgrounds, lodging in the area of the re-accreditation.
9. Provide directions to re-accreditation location.
10. Provide a time schedule for the day of the re-accreditation.
11. Provide personnel for registration at the re-accreditation location.
12. Assign re-accreditation areas to teams, randomly.
13. Assign evaluators to the teams being tested, randomly. Evaluators must be from two different teams and must not evaluate their own team. If possible, evaluators should not evaluate teams from their county.
14. Provide an evaluator meeting location as scheduled by the host team.
15. Provide for medical emergencies should they occur.
16. Assign a dedicated emergency radio frequency for the re-accreditation.

3. POLICY ON MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The primary purpose of a mountain rescue unit is to save lives in terrain too hazardous for untrained and ill-equipped persons. Each CRMRA unit must be technically competent to handle rescue operations in its own area. Additionally, CRMRA units should be able to assist each other as needed.

Member units of CRMRA must also be members of the Mountain Rescue Association. Inquiries and applications should be addressed to:

MRA
P.O. Box 880868
San Diego, Ca. 92168-0868

CRMRA provides for four categories of membership: Regular, Ex Officio Certified, Ex Officio (non-certified), and associate. Regular membership is open to volunteer mountain rescue units. Ex Officio membership is open to governmental agencies and groups. Associate membership is provided for units working toward Regular membership.

3.1 REGULAR MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

3.1.1 Organization

The unit must be a volunteer, non-profit, public service organization. It must be self-governing with elected officers. The unit must be an organized search and rescue unit, recognized by an agency having search and rescue jurisdiction, such as a county sheriff or state/national park chief ranger. The unit must have at least five rescue members and at least two operation leaders. The unit must agree to support the MRA and CRMRA Constitution and By Laws.

3.1.2 Mountaineering

Unit members must have a good knowledge of local mountains and of wilderness skills. The rescue members must be competent mountaineers able to climb the mountains of their own area. Mountaineering skills expected of unit members include: knots, belaying, climbing, partner rescue, rappelling, jumaring,

glissading, ice axe arrest and belay, crampon use, route finding, and knowledge of dangers due to rock fall, avalanche, and weather.

3.1.3 Search

Unit members must know search techniques, such as tracking, sign cutting, witness interview, grid search and use of ELT locators.

3.1.4 Rescue

It is essential that MRA units be capable of rescuing a victim on any technical terrain in their own area. Litter lowering and raising on technical terrain and in any weather, day or night, must be practiced regularly. Rescue skills expected of unit members include: litter rigging, victim and attendant tie-in, litter lowering, raising and traversing, anchor systems, brake systems, mechanical advantage systems, use of natural and artificial anchors, use of ascenders, and helitac rescue techniques.

3.1.5 Medical

Each rescue member must hold a current American Red Cross (ARC) advanced first aid certificate and current ARC cardio-pulmonary resuscitation certificate or equivalent as a minimum. Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification is highly recommended. Further training in wilderness emergency medical techniques is recommended.

3.1.6 Equipment

Each unit will determine its own equipment needs. Litters, ropes, medical gear, and radios are necessary items. Radios should be capable of sending and transmitting on the emergency frequency 155.160 MHz used by the MRA. The unit must set individual equipment requirements for members based on operational needs. Helmets are an essential safety factor in rescue work. Each unit shall adopt a uniform to be worn by all members on all operations.

3.1.7 Activity

CRMRA Units are expected to maintain proficiency through regular training activities. The Region Board evaluates the proficiency of member units based on operational reports, training plans, unit rosters and attendance and participation in Region activities and joint operations. Unit recertification requirements are set down elsewhere.

3.2 EX-OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Ex-officio membership is provided for governmental agencies and units that cannot meet requirements 3.1.1 above. Ex Officio members may be either Certified or Non Certified. Certified Ex Officio units must meet all requirements for Regular members, except they need not be volunteer, self-governing organizations.

3.3 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Associate membership is open to search and rescue units within California, working toward certification as Regular members. Associate member units must be organized, volunteer, active search and rescue units, recognized by an agency having search and rescue jurisdiction. Field members must hold current ARC certification as a minimum with EMT certification being preferred. Associate units must be proficient with search skills.

4. PROCEDURE FOR NEW MEMBER QUALIFICATION

4.1 APPLICATION

Application for membership in CRMRA should be sent to the MRA Membership Chairman. The following information is required:

1. Unit name and address
2. Callout procedure
3. Name of agency having SAR jurisdiction, recognizing unit.
4. List of members and capabilities
5. Unit membership requirements
6. Unit By Laws
7. List of unit equipment
8. Operations and training activities for past two years
9. Application for MRA membership with first years dues.

4.2 SPONSOR

Upon receipt of an application, the CRMAR Vice Chairman will designate one CRMRA regular member unit to sponsor the new unit. The sponsor will assist the applicant in training its members to fulfill MRA and CRMRA admission requirements.

4.3 CRMRA VICE CHAIRMAN

The CRMRA Vice Chairman will keep informed as to the progress of all applicants and see that they are invited to meetings, workshops and seminars. Upon request of the sponsor, he will schedule field certification tests to determine the proficiency of the applicant. Field tests must be scheduled at the prior CRMRA Board of Directors meeting with at least thirty (30) days notice.

4.4 CHIEF EXAMINER

When a field test is scheduled, the CRMRA Vice Chairman will designate a qualified examiner to be Chief Examiner for the test. The Chief Examiner is responsible for overseeing test set up, conduct, and scoring. He conducts the critique and writes a test report to the CRMRA Board.

4.5 EXAMINING COMMITTEE

An Examining Committee, consisting of one or two examiners from each certified (Regular or Ex Officio) unit, will conduct the field test. The Chief Examiner is chairman of this committee. A minimum of five (5) qualified examiners, representing at least three (3) different units, is required to conduct a test. A list of Examiners should be recognized experts on their respective teams in the skill being tested. This list of qualified examiners may be updated at any CRMRA Board meeting.

4.6 FIELD TESTS

Applicants for Regular and Certified Ex Officio membership must complete three (3) field tests:

1. Technical Rock
2. Snow & Ice
3. Search and tracking

4.7 TEST CONDUCT

The Chief Examiner is responsible for overseeing the conduct of the test to ensure that CRMRA guidelines are followed. Any examiner may suspend the test if he observes an unsafe situation likely to result in injury. The Chief Examiner will determine whether to continue the test or, with the concurrence of a majority of the examiners, declare the test failed and terminate it. The Chief Examiner may dismiss any examiner whose conduct compromises safety or fairness of the test.

4.8 SCORING

Each test is scored on a standard test report form, established by the CRMRA Board. Each test item is scored from 0 to 3.

- 0 Dangerous – failure
- 1 Poor- below standard
- 2 Acceptable
- 3 Excellent – above standard

Examiners must score only those test items they personally observe. A passing score is two-thirds (2/3) of the maximum possible score. The test is passed if two-thirds (2/3) of the examiners give passing scores; otherwise the test is failed. A zero score on any item is an automatic fail by the examiner giving the zero score, and should cause suspension of the test.

4.9 REPORTS

The Chief Examiner must submit a written report describing the test and giving the score results to the CRMRA Vice Chairman within thirty (30) days of the test. Any examiner may submit additional reports. These reports are entered into the CRMRA files as received and are summarized at the next CRMRA Board meeting.

4.10 ACCEPTANCE

The CRMRA Board will review the test results and may request additional information relating to the applicant's capabilities. The Board may accept or reject the Chief Examiner's report. When all tests have been completed, the board may by two-thirds (2/3) majority, vote to approve the application and to recommend the applicant for membership in the MRA. Or the Board may require further training and testing before voting to approve. Approved applications are forwarded to the MRA Executive Secretary, along with the complete file, including test reports, for action by the MRA Board of Directors.

4.11 GUIDELINES FOR CRMRA FIELD TESTS

The California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) has established three tests for admission into MRA by prospective rescue teams:

1. A Technical Rock test
2. A Snow and ice test
3. A Search and tracking test

These guidelines describe the tests in order to assist applicant teams in passing them.

4.11.1 When is a Team Eligible to Take the Tests?

Prospective member teams are evaluated by the CRMRA Vice Chairman and the sponsor team to determine their competency to take a test. Teams must first meet the current basic requirements of MRA, which relate to the number and technical ability of its members. If these are met, the Region will then determine if the applicant is an operational unit within its home area and is recognized by a local agency

having search and rescue authority. Also the applicant must have the basic organization, resources, personnel, and strength to provide continuity.

CRMRA assigns one of its member teams to sponsor the applicant team. The sponsor assist the applicant and reports to the CRMRA Board on the applicants progress toward admission. The sponsor recommends the applicant for a field test when it feel the applicant is ready. Or the applicant may request a test via the CRMRA Vice Chairman.

Tests may be taken in any order. If the total time span between passing the first and third tests is more than three years, the CRMRA Board may require the applicant to retake previous tests in order to assure continued competency.

4.11.2 What is Tested?

The purpose of the field tests is to assure MRA that the applicant teams, and its individual members, are able to carry out search and rescue operations in their own local area and are also competent to participate in joint operations with other CRMRA teams anywhere in California or neighboring areas.

Some SAR skills are not included in these tests. Heli-rescue techniques, ELT search, and river crossings are some examples. Where these skills are important in evaluating the applicant team's capabilities, the Examining Committee may require the applicant or the sponsor to provide evidence of training or other competency.

4.11.3 How is Testing Done?

When a test is requested, the CRMRA Vice Chairman designates a Chief Examiner and sets a test date agreeable go the CRMRA Board.

The test location is usually near the applicant's home area, but may be located elsewhere to take advantage of weather conditions or suitable terrain. Applicant teams should be prepared to travel some distanced, to operate in unfamiliar surroundings, and to adapt to conditions different than they are used to.

All field tests are conducted in similar fashion. Applicant teams know only the location and date of the test (and which test it is). A hypothetical search or rescue problem is set up by the examiners. Realism is stressed, including providing a reporting party to be interviewed, actual victims with simulated injuries, and scenarios based on actual operations. The applicant team must respond to the situation as if it were a real operation, simulating only those actions which require special clearance, equipment, or cost (for example, helicopters, ambulances etc.) and only after permission from the Chief Examiner.

The examiners may set boundaries for the operation or establish imaginary obstacles or constraints. These will be clearly marked and identified. The basic problem will not be changed during the test except by agreement between the Chief Examiner and the leader of the applicant team.

Examiners are selected as the most competent and experienced persons in the subject of the test. Each certified CRMRA member team may send one of two examiners to each test. A minimum of five examiners, including the Chief Examiner, representing at least three different CRMRA member teams, constitutes the Examining Committee. Examiners are assigned by the Chief Examiner to watch specific portions of the test. Examiners from two different teams should be present at any location where a significant task is preformed. Examiners use score sheets to evaluate the applicant team's performance. Examiners may not offer advice or assistance, except when an emergency arises. The Chief Examiner has the authority to stop or cancel any part of a test, or the entire test, if he feel it is too dangerous to proceed.

4.11.4 General Requirement for All Tests

Teams should report to the test site on time, prepared and ready to go. Applicant teams must field at least three-fourths (3/4) of their full members on each test. Trainees may also participate. Members should wear team uniforms. Personal equipment must be adequate for the circumstances of the test and sufficient for three days of unsupported operation. Team equipment, including litters, ropes, hardware, radios and first aid gear, should be portable and suitable to the situation and compatible with MRA recommendations. Examiners may ask to examine both personal and team equipment.

Region examiners will look for certain tangible and intangible characteristics that mark an effective rescue team. While it is understood that applicant teams probably will not have the competency for more experienced MRA teams, it is expected that new teams will be able to integrate into joint search and rescue operations without friction or serious mistakes.

The following general guidelines are observed on all CRMRA tests:

1. **Organization:** It must be evident that the team has established an internal organization for the conduct of operations. Functions should be divided among those members present. It must be clear who does what function and how it fits into the overall operation.
2. **Leadership:** Strong, capable leadership should be evident, from Operation Leader to Field Crew Leaders. Generally, the operation Leader should refrain from direct participation in the operation and confine himself to management, control, planning and direction. Orders should be clear and unequivocal.
3. **Discipline:** Members should respond to leaders and their orders quickly and efficiently. Dissension, arguing, and controversy are signs of unprofessional conduct and lack of team discipline.
4. **Operation Plan:** Each test requires the Operation Leader to formulate his operation plan and transmit it to the field crews. The plan may arise out of circumstances and the leader's response to them, or it may be part of team standard operation procedure. However, it must be clear to the examiners what the leader intends to do and how he intends to do it. Questions may be asked to elicit this information.
5. **Communications:** Good communications between crews, members, and base camp is essential for effective SAR operations. This means not only good equipment, but skill in the use and evidence that leaders realize the need for all members to understand what is going on at all times, within limitations established by the problem. For example, experienced teams will link radio use when their standard operating procedures cover certain aspects of the operation. However, examiners will be looking for evidence of consistent feedback and communication between all crews and base camp. Radio procedures should be consistent with MRA practice, except where it is required to interface with non-MRA units, such as a sheriff.
6. **Conditioning:** Team members must be physically and mentally able to carry out the operation. Teams lacking the physical ability to perform their operational functions will be penalized by the examiners.
7. **Medical:** All field tests include a simulated serious medical problem that must be handled by the applicant team. It is advisable for teams to be prepared to treat any kind of injury or illness that would occur under the circumstances of the problem. Attention to the psychological need of the victim will also be scored.
8. **Time:** Time is a critical factor in SAR operations. Operations should proceed without delay, consistent with safety. Teams will be penalized for delays caused by technical errors, lack of proper equipment, wrong or confused decisions and lack of team coordination. Teams will not be penalized for delays caused by bad weather, technical difficulty, or unforeseen circumstances. A smoothly run operation, where all members participate and where several tasks are handled simultaneously is a sign of a well trained, coordinated rescue team.

4.11.5 Critique, Analysis, and Scoring

Following completion of each test, the Chief Examiner will assemble the examiners to critique and score the test. Applicants will be scored according to the currently adopted scoring method, and the overall performance of the applicant team will be analyzed. Finally, examiners will be asked to vote pass-fail. Two-thirds (2/3) of the examiners must vote to pass in order for the applicant to pass the test. The Chief Examiner will then involve the applicant team members in a general critique of the test and inform them of the vote by the examiners. The Chief Examiner prepares a written report to the CRMRA Board including any recommendations by the examiners for additional training or retesting.

If the applicant team is prevented from completing the test through no fault of its own, say by an actual operation, by severe weather, or by interference from examiners, the test should be scored as far as it went. If the consensus of examiners is that the applicant team would have successfully completed the problem, the Chief examiner will report the test as passed.

4.11.6 CRMRA Board Action

The report and recommendation from the Chief Examiner will be presented at the next CRMRA Board meeting. Normally, the CRMRA Board will vote to accept the pass-fail recommendation of the Examining Committee. In unusual circumstances the CRMRA Board may vote not to accept the test report. The Applicant team may petition the CRMRA Board to waive a failed test. This may be granted subject to satisfactory participation by the applicant team in a Region workshop. In any event, the test report is entered into CRMRA files as submitted, and is forwarded to MRA as part of the applicant team's file at the time the team is recommended for membership in MRA.

4.12 TECHNICAL ROCK TEST

The Technical Rock Test is designed to test the candidate team's ability to reach an injured person, give medical care and evacuate the victim from a steep, rugged environment. The victim will be an actual person, usually a CRMRA field member who may also serve as an examiner. The victim will be placed on a cliff under an overhang, or other high-angle place requiring the rescue team to approach by use of rappel or technical rock climbing, and to evacuate the victim using technical rescue procedures and equipment. The victim may be on a ledge or hanging from a rope as in a simulated fall. Multiple victims may be placed. The team is usually directed to the victim, but the Examining Committee may present a short search to precisely locate the victim.

The rescue leader is expected to evaluate the situation, plan the rescue, and assign tasks and conduct the rescue within a reasonable period of time. In the course of the rescue, the team may be directed to perform a litter raising, a lowering, or both. The team should be able to handle multiple pitches, which could include extra stations or adding rope to the system. The team should be able to demonstrate one or more types of man-powered mechanical advantage raising systems. It is assumed that helicopters are not available; however mechanical equipment normally carried and used by the candidate team can be used EXCEPT power winches.

In addition to the concerns mentioned under General Requirements, the following points pertain to the rock test:

1. All personnel working on or near the face, or in any dangerous area, must wear helmets securely fastened, and must use safety lines or other protection.
2. All personnel must have adequate personal equipment to assure their own safety and to perform the rescue properly. Items which are particularly noted include rescue harness, carabineers, safety slings, booth, ascenders, descenders, belay anchor hardware, and protective clothing. Although the test will not be done at night, the examiners may request that the team show evidence of adequate night illumination, including head lamps with extra batteries.
3. Team equipment should be adequate to handle the problem. This includes radios, litters, litter harnesses, medical gear, ropes, anchors, and mechanical equipment. All equipment should be carried to the test site after the operation commences.
4. Anchors must be secure and properly placed. Separate anchors should be used for the main line and the belay line. Multiple anchors are preferred.
5. Raising and lowering systems should be simple and safe. Ropes should be protected by rollers or edge protection. Work areas must be clear of ropes and loose equipment.
6. The victim should be approached as rapidly as possible to evaluate his condition and to render medical care. In doing this, the approach must not be dangerous, either to the victim or to the rescuer. For this reason, rappelling down to the victim is not recommended. If rappel is used,

debris must not be kicked down on the victim. If climbing up, take care to protect the climber. Be prepared to anchor the victim to the rock or a belay line right away.

7. Medical care is an important part of the rock test. The rescuer must be able to evaluate the victim's condition and to render appropriate medical care. Injuries will be indicated by written instructions, moulage, and/or verbal complaints of the victim. The rescuer should perform a complete field medical examination. Of critical importance is frequent monitoring of vital signs (pulse, respiration, temperature, & blood pressure) a second rescuer may be needed on complicated injuries. Since the entire purpose of the rescue is to save the victim's life, the rescuers should take only those steps needed to stabilize the victim's condition, taking into account all circumstances of the incident. The victim's condition and vital signs should be radioed to base camp.
8. It is expected that such treatments as bandaging, splinting, basic shock treatment, body positioning, and protection from heat or cold will be performed by the rescuers. No intrusive treatment will be performed including IVs, intubations, oral drug administration, and injections. These may be simulated, by qualified personnel, where possible. Do not perform chest compressions or actual rescue breathing where CPR is indicated, but simulate by getting into proper position and counting the motions. Oxygen administration may also be simulated. If it is indicated and rescuers have the proper equipment.
9. All raisings and lowering systems should be belayed. Belays should be adequate to hold the weight of victim and rescuer, should the main line fail, without danger to either. Belayers should be separately anchored or secured to safety lines.
10. The systems chosen for rising, lowering and belay are up to the candidate team, however they should be easily rigged and prepared so as not to endanger or delay the evacuation. The victim should be made a comfortable and safe as possible throughout the evacuation. Vital signs should continue to be monitored at intervals
11. A Tyrolean traverse, or horizontal suspension line, may be utilized if the situation allows it; however the time involved in rigging it must be weighed against other procedures.
12. A carry out over difficult scree, or over trail may be included.
13. Although the basic problem presented will not be changed be prepared for unforeseen problems or sudden changes to the situation. These may occur naturally during the test, or they may be introduced by the chief examiner at any time. The candidate team will be evaluated on how quickly they adapt their rescue plan to accommodate these new problems.

4.13 SNOW AND ICE TEST

The Snow and Ice Test is designed to test the candidate team's ability to reach an injured person, give medical care, and evacuate him from a winter environment involving snow and ice on steep terrain. In addition team members will be tested in personal skills required for long duration travel and self-rescue on various types of snow. It is not expected that every member will be an expert ice climber, but all members should be comfortable on relatively steep snow and ice normally found in the Sierra. At least one technical ice team must be able to reach the victim.

The Snow and Ice Test is normally conducted in the Sierra in the early spring or late fall. Because of the necessity of utilizing steep, snow-covered or ice-covered slopes far from the read head, it may be necessary for all involved to hike a considerable distance in to the test site. The candidate team should consider this fact in its rescue plan.

The victim may be placed in any of several simulated hazardous situations, including ice chute, crevasses, avalanche paths, or steep open snow slopes. The operation may involve a short search using avalanche beacons. The applicant team must reach the victim, treat the injuries, and evacuate the victim, often including raising, lowering, traversing, or carrying the victim long distances. In addition to the concerns mentioned under General Requirements, the following are related to the Snow and Ice Test:

1. Weather condition and the team's response to them figure prominently in judging the Snow and Ice Test. All personnel must have adequate, warm clothing for the conditions. All personnel should have skis or snowshoes for snow travel. Helmets should be worn on dangerous terrain. Ice axes and crampons are required for steep, hard snow or ice. Personnel should have personal anchors such as snow flukes, or be able to use ice axes as anchors. Sitting pads are advised. Team equipment should include snow litters, with Ensolite pad, snow and ice anchors and warming clothing and sleeping bag for the victim.
2. The victim must be approached as rapidly as possible, assessed, treated and evacuated. Treatment must include protection from the cold. Where it appears the victim is suffering from hypothermia, necessary medical attention should be provided. Vital signs should be recorded frequently and reported to base. All treatment must be done with due care and safety.
3. Evacuation procedures may be similar to rock evacuations, however all anchors must be on snow or ice. Anchors for the litter team are especially important and will be carefully checked by the examiners. As a safety measure, the chief examiner may permit the team to use rock anchors for main lines and belays, but only if adequate snow anchors are not available. Trees may also be used, where they are part of the test environment.
4. Personal skills which may be tested include:
 - a. Snow Shoeing and skiing.
 - b. Ice climbing.
 - c. Self-arrest, in the four basic positions.
 - d. Snow and ice anchoring
5. Team skills which may be tested include:
 - a. Avalanche search and rescue, including safety procedures, organization, the use of probes, and use of beacons.
 - b. Roped team travel, including crevasse and glacier techniques.
 - c. Crevasse rescue.
 - d. Multiple stations lowering or raising.
6. Simulated portions of the problem, such as simulated crevasses, will be clearly marked and will not be changed during the test. However, the team should be prepared for unforeseen problems and sudden changes to the test situation, such as simulated storms, which may be announced by the chief examiner at any time.

4.14 SEARCH AND TRACKING TEST

The Search and Tracking Test is designed to examine the candidates team's ability to organize and conduct a search for a lost person (or persons) proceeding on foot. Other aspects of search, such as ELT, air search, vehicle search, or underwater search, have specialized requirements and will not be included. The problem may include simulated interaction with other teams, government agencies, or specialized units, such as dog tracking teams. The following points should be noted:

1. Initial Phase. Team Operation Leader and assistants should acquire information from the reporting party or informant and prepare a search plan. Base camp should be set up at a location to take best advantage of radio transmissions, vehicle parking, and field team control. Base radios, maps, and control forms should be quickly set up and manned. Base camp personnel should be quickly assigned and proceed with their assignments, without the appearance that is has all been prearranged.
2. Assignment and Briefing. Functions and teams should be assigned, teams briefed, and victim information distributed. Reserve teams may be held back, if advisable. Examiners will be looking

to see if this phase proceed smoothly and if all field team members are thoroughly briefed on victim description and the search plan.

3. Search Phase. The ability of search crews to perform search procedures will be examined. The team should consider standard search techniques of containment, tracking, visual search, and attraction. The team may be directed to perform a line search or may incorporate that into its plan. Examiners will be looking for the following points:
 - a. Use of small, three-man tracking teams.
 - b. Logical search assignments and adequate coverage of assigned areas.
 - c. Good track description (if track is identified) and proper notes and records taken.
 - d. Use of step-by-step tracking and cutting ahead to intercept tracks (jump tracking)
 - e. Care in preserving Point Last Seen and the actual tracks.
 - f. Speed of tracking, considering tracking difficulty.
 - g. Use of proper tracking equipment, and rotation of tracking team personnel.
 - h. Proper sign (perimeter) cutting technique.
 - i. Reporting of team locations, search progress, clues, and unusual events.
4. Miscellaneous.
 - a. Returning teams should be debriefed, rested, and reassigned.
 - b. Base must maintain control over field units by map plotting, radio logs, T-cards, or other methods. It should be evident that the search leader confers with his staff during the search to consider new evidence and to re deploy his teams as the situation demands.
 - c. Resources should be effectively used. These include personnel, vehicles, radios, equipment, and terrain. Back-up or reserve teams are a legitimate use of personnel, where conditions warrant.
 - d. Prospective teams should expect the Examining Committee to present sudden changes to the problem as the test proceeds, because this often happens in the real situation. Erroneous information may be introduced that can only be revealed by good investigation. Problems may occur with weather, personnel, or equipment.. The leaders should be able to handle these anomalies with their search plan or to quickly make the necessary changes.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CHANGES TRACKING

<u>Date</u>	<u>Addition, Deletion or Change</u>
7/2004	Initial approval
9/2013	Replaced POLICY ON RE-ACCREDITATION OF CRMRA UNITS
2/2015	Renumbered paragraphs
11/2018	Para. 3.2: Change “1a” to “3.1.1”