

SECTION 15 – SEARCH AND RESCUE

I. SEARCH AND RESCUE-GENERAL

This guideline defines and describes the working relationship (individual and collective responsibilities) of members of the Shelby County Search and Rescue and the Shelby County Coroner's Office when death appears to have occurred (or has been verified) in cases in which the SCSR has declared that a mission exists.

II. NOTIFICATION AT TIME OF MISSION COMMENCEMENT

When facts indicate that an individual is missing, under the guidelines of SCSR, the mission for search and rescue will commence. Within a 24-hour period of establishing the activity, the SCSR field coordinator or mission initiator of the search activity will notify the on-call C/DC and relay that a search is in progress and the Coroner's Office may be required to respond. That C/DC, being so notified, will assure that each C/DC within that jurisdiction is made aware of the situation.

The C/DC will be provided with basic information that is available at the time, such as; subject of the search, circumstances, next of kin, and location of next of kin. Further, the C/DC will be provided with the location of the base camp, the names of the SCSR field coordinator, the law enforcement agency of jurisdiction and given appropriate contact information. If the subject of the search is found alive, the C/DC is to be advised.

III. NOTIFICATION AT TIME OF DISCOVERY

When the subject of the search has been located and death is obvious, the on-duty C/DC is to be dispatched. The C/DC, when contacted, will provide a realistic ETA. Further, the C/DC will be provided specific directions to the base camp or the scene, a contact telephone number for the base camp and will be advised as to conditions of weather and terrain in order to be prepared.

IV. SECURING THE SCENE

No touching of the body, searching or movement of any sort shall occur until contact is made with the C/DC. The field coordinator of the mission or the ranking law enforcement official present will assume control of the scene and will prevent any contamination of the body or the area surrounding the body that may yield materials, evidence or artifact of the fatal event. The C/DC is responsible for taking custody of the body and anything in the surrounding area that relates to the fatal event.

If exposure of the body is causing grief or consternation to those present, a light cover may be placed over the body. The individual designated to be in control of the scene will assure that the scene is held until the arrival of the C/DC. Under no circumstances can any designated official leave such a scene without control and supervision.

V. ACCESSING THE SCENE

The C/DC has sole discretion as to whether he will proceed to the location of the decedent. When there is difficulty in reaching the body or hazards exist in doing a scene investigation that exceed the ability of the C/DC to handle in a safe manner without risk to life or limb to the C/DC or others on the team, the C/DC may authorize SCSR personnel to effect the removal of the decedent to the base camp or location specified. The C/DC must instruct SCSR personnel as to removal techniques, insure images of the scene and decedent are taken and provide normal supplies that may be needed by SCSR personnel. This responsibility rests solely with the Coroner's Office, but can be acted upon in conjunction with information provided by those in charge of the scene who can impart specific details such as dangerous toxins, active fire, cave-in or avalanche possibilities, etc.

VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The C/DC will draw upon resources designated by statute or regulation to provide assistance in the retrieval of remains and they will include: law enforcement of jurisdiction, AST, SCSR personnel, military, health care professionals, etc.