



## Sitka Mountain Rescue

330 Harbor Drive  
Sitka Alaska, 99835

Dear New Search and Rescue Team Member,

Welcome to the Search and Rescue / Mountain Rescue Team. You will find that this team is comprised of a group of people who are dedicated to saving lives and serving our community. We are committed to providing for the highest level of response readiness to any wilderness emergency within the City and Borough of Sitka and Southeast Alaska. We are pleased that you are joining us and look forward to serving with you for years to come. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our Sitka Search and Rescue / Mountain Rescue Team.

Our team is made up of volunteers, like you, and provides four resources within our team. Our team has a full Command Staff that specializes in land based search management, a K-9 resource that provides track/trail as well as air scent dogs, a Mountain Rescue group that specializes in technical rescue and is capable of operating in extreme environments, and clue aware ground searchers that have been trained in all aspects of Search and Rescue. The team has earned full accreditation in the Mountain Rescue Association by being evaluated in wilderness search, technical rock rescue and snow and ice rescue. Our primary response area is the City and Borough of Sitka, including, Baranof Island and the south half of Chichagof Island. We also provide responses to all areas of Southeast Alaska. Our team has traveled to other communities and operated for multiple days on missions.

We train twice a month on SAR topics throughout the year. We ask that you maintain 50% attendance at training sessions in order to remain on the active status callout roster. We understand conflicts between jobs and our training schedule, just try to do your best and attend as much as you can. When you join the team you are joining the Search and Rescue team. If you choose to specialize in Command Staff, K-9, or Mountain Rescue you must also maintain a minimum of 50% attendance at those additional training sessions to be considered as an active part of those resources. We do encourage members to participate in all training sessions that peak your interest. It is great to be familiar with the different resources even if you are not an active member of that resource. All training is open to all members.

When a call for assistance is received, the engineer on duty at the Fire Department will notify the Director of the SAR team. If it is an urgent mission like a plane crash it may be paged out for all members to respond immediately. Members can acquire pagers from the Director of the SAR team. This aids in notification when there is a call. You may hear the search and rescue command staff being paged to respond to the fire department

which serves as our command post. This will be your clue that a mission is beginning. If you are a field resource and hear the command staff being notified you may want to start preparing for a response. You are welcome to get geared up and respond to the fire department when you hear the command staff being requested but realize that field resources may not be needed yet. When field resources are needed a dispatch tone by pager for SAR field resources to respond will be made. We also follow up with telephone notification of active members at the start of a mission. When you receive notification of a mission we ask that you get prepared for the field and respond to the Search and Rescue command center, which is located in the Fire Department at 209 Lake Street. Prepared for the field means properly dressed in suitable outdoor clothing and a 24- hour pack with the required contents per our team listing. If you do not have clothing or equipment make sure that the Logistics officer is notified and our team can help acquire some of this for you. When you arrive at the SAR command center there will be a check in list by the door for you to sign your name on. This list will be utilized for building teams and assigning tasks, be sure to put your name on it so we know that you are available. We also use this for tracking hours expended on missions so log your time in and out on this same form.

Our team has been highly successful in the past due to the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. We strive to be professional in all of our activities and responses. We ask that every member be honest about all issues including personal limitations. Every member is important and everyone has a place on the team no matter what your strengths or limitations may be. We want members to be comfortable with the tasks assigned. Being comfortable means that you will be more effective and efficient adding to the success of the mission. We are all representatives of the team and being supportive of each other is our goal. There are times when we have fun and there are times when things are very serious. At times we find ourselves at the edge of nowhere in the middle of the night working as a team to accomplish a mission. When you are the one clipped in to the business end of a rope, out at the edge, you must have trust in your team. Every member counts! There is a lot of satisfaction gained when you can be a part of a team effort and make a difference in someone's life. It makes all the time and effort that you dedicate to this team worth- while.

Once again welcome to the team and we'll see you at the next training session or mission.

Don Kluting,  
Director, Search and Rescue/ Mountain Rescue Team