WASHINGTON STATE ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM

POLICY NO. 4
OPERATIONS POLICY

REVISION: A

Approval Date: November 1, 2017

/s/_____   /s/_____
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REVISION RECORD

Revision	Release Date	Description	Affected Sections
Original	2/5/14	Initial Release	All
A	11/1/17	Redefined roles of OLs, TLs, STLs, & TFLs; added requirement for members returning to base camp to be accompanied; deleted provision for WASART to perform euthanasia; added requirements for deployment of WASART equipment	2.0, 3.1; added new Section 3.2 & renumbered succeeding sections; 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.4.3, 3.5, 4.0, 4.2, 5.0, 6.0, 8.0, 9.0

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This document establishes the policies that govern the operations of the Washington State Animal Response Team (WASART) as it conducts its business in accordance with its mission. In all cases, WASART shall carry out its operations in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS) of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The definitions contained in the ICS shall apply to WASART's operations.

2.0   DEFINITIONS

- Activity: any deployment, training event, meeting, work party, public outreach, conference, etc.

- Activity Time: time expended by members on any WASART activity. Includes reasonable transit time to and from the activity.

- After Action Report (AAR): a report summarizing the events of a deployment or training exercise. An AAR is required for each such activity in which WASART participates, and shall be prepared by the Operations Leader in Command for that activity.

- Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ): the individual or set of individuals with authority and responsibility to manage an incident. Unless WASART is deployed solely at the request of a private individual, it will operate under the direction of the AHJ.

- Call Coordinator: a member of the Duty Officer (DO) roster designated by the DO that has received the request for assistance and decided to deploy WASART in response. The Call Coordinator collects information regarding members' availability to deploy, provides the members with necessary information about the deployment, and serves as a communications link between the DO, Operations Lead for the deployment, and deploying members.

- DEM or Mission Number: a number issued by the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), authorizing an incident deployment. When a DEM number has been issued, State Emergency Workers properly signed in for the deployment are covered by the State's insurance against personal injury, property loss or damage, and liability. WASART's credentialed members are all registered as State Emergency Workers.

- Deployment: a "mission" or "call-out;" a distinct assignment of personnel and equipment to achieve a set of tasks related to an incident, emergency, evidence, disaster or search and rescue operation that occurs under the direction and control of a local authorized official or in response to a request for assistance from a private citizen.

- Duty Officer (DO): a WASART member trained to receive requests for WASART assistance from a Requesting Party and make decisions about whether to deploy WASART resources in response to the request

- Incident Commander (IC): the individual in overall command of the response to any incident, as defined by the Incident Command System (ICS). The Incident Commander will frequently be from a government agency, but may also be a member of a non-government organization. For small-scale incidents in which WASART responds at the request of an individual animal owner, the IC will be the WASART STL in command of the deployment unless a representative of the government jurisdiction in which the incident occurs assumes the IC role.

- Operations Leader (OL): an active member that has completed Operations Leader training as developed by the Board of Directors and has fulfilled the requirements established in Policy No. 4, *WASART Operations Policy*. OLs serve as Strike Team or Task Force Leads for WASART deployments, and may serve as Incident Commanders under appropriate circumstances

- Requesting Party (RP): any government agency, non-government organization or private citizen that requests WASART's assistance

- Strike Team Leader (STL): an Operations or Team Leader designated to lead a WASART deployment consisting of a team to address a single emergency: rescue of one or more animals at a single rescue site, or operation of a single emergency animal shelter

- Task Force Leader (TFL): an Operations or Team Leader designated to lead multiple WASART strike teams and/or single resources

- Team Leader (TL): an active member that has fulfilled the requirements established in Policy No. 4, *WASART Operations Policy*. A TL assists Operations Leaders in checking team readiness and equipment, serves as a communications contact between base operations and the team in the field, and may serve as leader of a WASART Strike Team.

- Training event: a planned, non-emergency activity for the development, maintenance or upgrading of emergency worker skills.

3.0   OPERATIONS

3.1   Operations Leadership

All WASART deployments shall be conducted under the leadership of a WASART Strike Team or Task Force Leader. In accordance with the ICS, the Strike Team or Task Force Leader in Command of WASART operations may be the Incident Commander, depending on the circumstances of the deployment. Unless it is absolutely necessary because insufficient resources are available otherwise, the STL or TFL shall *not* be a hands-on participant in the deployment activities. The STL/TFL shall remain at the Command Post and maintain overall command and control of WASART's activities. If the STL/TFL has expertise that is essential for the activity, and must therefore assume a more hands-on role, he or she shall transfer the leadership authority to another WASART OL or TL, and announce the transfer of command to the WASART responders.

3.2   Strike Team Leader (STL) and Task Force Leader (TFL)

STLs and TFLs have the following responsibilities:

- Act as the main contact for his or her team, coordinating the flow of information between the team and the Command Post (CP)

- Designate Acting TLs (ATLs) if needed

- Make assignments as necessary to maintain a record of member assignments and participation, hours and mileage for that deployment and a log of WASART radio communications

- Debrief WASART personnel and document comments/concerns

- The WASART STL or TFL must be present at the CP whenever WASART members are in the field, or, if circumstances require his or her presence with a team away from the CP, the STL/TFL must designate a TL or ATL to assume leadership of WASART personnel at the CP. At the conclusion of the deployment, the STL/TFL shall not leave the CP until all WASART members have returned from the field, signed out on the unit roster log, and left the area

- STLs/TFLs or their designees shall submit a written After Action Report (AAR) and roster to the President or his/her designee within 13 calendar days of completion of the deployment or training event. The AAR shall include the decision of whether the deployment met the criteria for a "Qualifying Deployment" as defined in WASART Policy No. 3, *Training Curriculum*.

3.3   Team Leader (TL)

Team Leaders will be chosen based on their training and deployment performance, field experience, demonstrated leadership ability, communication skills, personal interactions, administrative abilities, attendance at General Meetings, participation in WASART activities, and the ability to make sound decisions in a timely manner.

3.3.1   Team Leader Qualifications

To qualify as a Team Leader, candidates nominated after the release date of this policy:

- Shall have completed 12 months of membership with WASART

- Shall have completed all Basic Training categories; i.e., Core, Transport, Field Response and Sheltering

- Within 12 months of appointment as a TL, shall have successfully:

    - Completed ICS 300

    - Obtained his or her Amateur Radio Technician license

If qualifications are not completed within the prescribed time frame, the individual will revert to his or her previous status.

The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, approve TL candidates based on alternative qualifications and/or previous training and experience

3.3.2   Team Leader Responsibilities

- Before being deployed as a Strike Team Leader, each WASART TL is responsible for ensuring his/her team has a fully-functioning radio that can send and receive communications with base camp as well as a back-up battery pack

- Check with team members prior to leaving base camp to ensure they have the proper gear for the deployment and to ensure that they have no conditions that may affect their health or safety in the field

- Serve as a WASART Duty Officer to field requests for assistance from Requesting Parties

3.3.3 Acting Team Leader

An STL or TFL may assign any qualified member as an Acting Team Leader if there are insufficient TLs available for the number of teams needed. This is a temporary assignment for that mission or event only.

3.4   Operations Leader

3.4.1 Operations Leader Candidates

OL candidates shall be nominated in accordance with Policy No. 2, *Administration Policy*. The President shall notify candidates of their nominations; if they accept, they shall be confirmed at the December BOD meeting. OL candidates' selection will be based on the candidates' demonstrated leadership, communications and decision-making skills, and performance as a Team Leader. OL candidates shall have the personality, command presence and confidence to assume the position of WASART Incident Commander, Task Force Leader or Strike Team Leader when the need arises. OL candidates will also have shown interest in higher leadership levels by organizing recruiting, fundraising or training events and will have preferably taken advanced training in pertinent courses.

3.4.2 Operations Leader Qualifications

To qualify as an Operations Leader, candidates nominated after the release date of this policy:

- Shall have been a Team Leader for at least 12 months

- Shall be selected by a majority vote of the Board of Directors after consultation with current OLs

If OL requirements are not completed within the prescribed time frame, the individual shall revert to his or her previous status

3.4.3   Operations Leader Responsibilities

- Attend a minimum of two WASART General Meetings per calendar year

- On a regular basis, participate in WASART deployments

- Serve as a WASART Duty Officer to field requests for assistance from Requesting Parties

- When serving as DO, gather information on the deployment, directions to base, type of terrain, and weather conditions, DEM number and type of WASART members needed

- When serving as DO, coordinate deployment response: designate Call Coordinator and STL/TFL; advise requesting agency on process to obtain DEM number if not previously assigned

- When serving as Call Coordinator, communicate number of members responding, and estimated time of arrival at the designated shelter or base camp location

3.5 Members' Participation

No WASART member shall deploy until authorized by the Duty Officer, Call Coordinator or STL/TFL of the deployment.

3.6 Specialized Technical Teams

WASART may establish specialized technical teams consisting of members with advanced technical training in specific rescue specialties. Each team shall have a designated coordinator.

Each team shall develop its own qualifications and performance standards, to be approved by the Board of Directors.

3.7 Requests for Assistance

Any member other than a trained Duty Officer that receives a personal request for assistance from a law enforcement agency or officer, Department of Emergency Management or any authorized agent thereof, or any other Requesting Party shall immediately contact a WASART Operations Leader for review and possible response.

4.0 DEPLOYMENT POLICIES

Specific procedures for authorizing and executing WASART deployments, including injury and accident reporting, are documented in WASART Operating Procedure No. 5, *WASART Deployment Procedures*. Deployments within Snohomish County must always be authorized in advance by the Snohomish County Search and Rescue Coordinator, in accordance with the procedures established in Operating Procedure No. 4, *Procedure for Obtaining a DEM Mission Number by a Government Agency or on Behalf of a Private Citizen*.

4.1 Prohibited Conduct

Conduct prohibited of WASART members is defined in Policy No. 2, *Administration Policy.*

4.2   Additional General Rules

- No WASART member shall deploy from base camp alone

- Should it be necessary for any team member to leave the team and return to base camp for any reason, he or she shall not return alone, unless specifically authorized to do so by the STL or TL. Unless so authorized, another team member must be detached to return with the member that is turning around, and shall remain with that member all the way to the base camp. Likewise, no member shall remain alone at base camp; if it is not possible for more than one person to stay at the base, then all WASART and members' vehicles shall be secured, and all responders shall proceed to the Command Post, or beyond, if so directed by the STL/TFL.

- Only members who are fit for duty for which they are credentialed shall deploy. The WASART STL/TFL has ultimate authority to restrict a responder's deployment

- A Member shall not deploy if he or she has consumed alcohol as specified in WAC 118-04 and RCW 38.52 or any medical prescription or drug that would render him or her impaired

- Each responding team shall carry a first aid kit when on deployment or in training

- All teams must have radio communications capability:

  - Field response teams shall carry at least two modes of communication capable of communicating with base camp. It is recommended that each member of the field response team carry an FRS radio

  - Communications checks shall be performed before leaving base and every 30 minutes, or as determined by the base STL/TFL or designee

- If a member has a firearm in his/her vehicle and responds to a deployment, the firearm is to be unloaded and stored out of sight in a safe and approved manner. The WASART STL/TFL shall be notified that a firearm is so stowed

- It is each member's responsibility to sign in and out on the sign-in roster and keep track of the transit time and mileage to and from all WASART-sanctioned activities, portal to portal, and to report this on the sign-in roster.

5.0   WASART EQUIPMENT POLICIES

- All equipment purchased with WASART funds or donated to WASART becomes and remains the property of WASART. No equipment with a residual value of $50.00 or

greater, belonging to WASART, may be disposed of or encumbered in any way by any person(s) without the consent of the WASART Board of Directors. Items with a residual value less than $50.00 may be disposed of at the discretion of the Chair of the Equipment and Inventory Committee

- WASART equipment shall not be loaned to other parties. Any deployment of WASART equipment shall be accompanied by at least one WASART member fully familiar with its assembly, setup and use. The accompanying member is responsible for returning the equipment to its original location, and notifying the Inventory and Equipment Committee chair of any issues with its condition upon its return.

- WASART accepts responsibility for the routine maintenance and repair of equipment owned by the organization, and which also may be in the custody or control of a member. WASART members are responsible for any repairs or replacement costs of damaged or lost WASART equipment that results from acts beyond normal or ordinary use occurring in a non-WASART situation.

- WASART shall assist members whose personal equipment is damaged in the course of a deployment covered by a DEM Incident Number in seeking reimbursement from the State Emergency Management Division. WASART shall also maintain its own insurance coverage to indemnify members for personal equipment damage not reimbursed by the State EMD or the member's personal insurance.

6.0   OBTAINING MISSION NUMBERS FOR DEPLOYMENTS

WASART intends that all its deployments be sanctioned by the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), and that the deployment be covered by a Mission Number (also known as a DEM number) issued by the EMD through local Requesting Parties, to indemnify WASART and its members for losses incurred as a result of the deployment. Procedures for obtaining DEM numbers are contained in WASART Operating Procedure No. 4, *Procedure for Obtaining a DEM Mission Number by a Government Agency or on Behalf of a Private Citizen*.

A DEM number can be obtained after a deployment has begun, but it is desirable to obtain it as soon as possible, preferably at the time the decision to deploy is made. However, it is not WASART's intent to allow an animal to suffer or die simply because it was not possible to obtain a DEM Number. The decision to deploy in such a situation is left to the judgment of the Duty Officer.

7.0   COMMUNICATIONS

Communications procedures are detailed in Operating Procedure No. 3, *WASART Communications Procedures*.

8.0 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

- At a deployment, training opportunity, recruiting event or presentation, etc., all requests for information concerning the event shall be referred to the WASART STL/TFL, the WASART Public Information Officer (PIO) on duty, or the AHJ's spokesperson.

- If the requesting agency asks WASART to address the media specifically concerning WASART operations, all statements will be made by the WASART STL/'TFL, WASART PIO on duty, or another member specifically designated and authorized by the STL/TFL.

- Except as authorized above, no WASART member shall make comments concerning an event in progress at any time to any member of the media.

- Routine media requests for information concerning WASART (aside from deployment operations) are to be referred to the WASART PIO, President or Vice President.

- WASART members, other than the WASART PIO, shall never post comments or discussion of a deployment in progress on either their own social media accounts or on WASART's.

9.0 AFTER ACTION REPORTS (AARs)

The President or his/her designee shall forward AARs, via fax or email, to the following entities:

- To King County Office of Emergency Management and the emergency management agency in the county in which the deployment occurred, within 15 days of completion of deployment or a WASART training event

- To WASART BOD

- To WASART membership, except as noted below

Due to the confidential nature of the information contained in After Action Reports, they will not be distributed to the WASART general membership if there is a possibility of the AARs being used in a legal action. However, the general membership will be notified that a request for assistance had been received, to which some WASART members did, or did not, deploy. The WASART Board of Directors and Operations and Team Leads, as well as the agency requesting WASART's assistance, will receive these restricted AARs. The current deployment process is not affected by this rule. However, WASART members involved in such

deployments are to maintain strict confidentiality about the deployment details until the legal action, if such occurs, is resolved and either the President or the WASART STL/TFL on that particular deployment releases the participants from this obligation.

The general WASART membership will continue to receive AARs from deployments that are not likely to result in legal action against the animal's custodians or deployment personnel.

AARs should be written as concise, factual reports. They should not editorialize or draw conclusions as to medical condition, responsibility for the animal's situation, or success or failure of the deployment. Personal opinions should be omitted.