

Considerations for Starting a Missing Person Search:

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When activated for a missing person search one's mind can be overwhelmed by too many thoughts, fueled by adrenaline.

Attached are three documents to help organize those thoughts and make sure all the important concerns are addressed.

The first document is entitled 'Starting Search Checklist'. It may be the only guide you will need if the search can be resolved in the first operational period. However, as the mission develops it may be apparent after a couple of hours that this search is going to be prolonged, intelligence is expanding its scope, or weather conditions are deteriorating. Or it may just be at the end of a long unsuccessful day when you realize that this mission will be ongoing, and it will be necessary to transition to an efficient or thorough search operation. If that is necessary, then the second document comes into play as a guide. In that case the documentation created by the first check list will become the foundation for additional resources and actions to build on.

The third document was developed by Chris Young of the Contra Costa County Search and Rescue Unit and a member of the Bay Area Search and Rescue Council. It will be helpful if the mission is going to require multiple operational periods and provides a flow of information between each operational period. When you take the ICS-300 class you will be introduced to 'The Planning P' which also serves as a guide to the planning process involving multiple operational periods

All these documents are based on the concepts of the Incident Command System (ICS) and refer to the appropriate ICS Forms to manage documentation. Blank ICS forms are available online, and, also at the Bay Area Search and Rescue Council web site 'www.BASARC.org'. The BASARC web site also has some other forms that are specific to missing person searches and might prove helpful.

These documents have been peer reviewed by search managers throughout the United States and Canada and their input has been incorporated.

Considerations for Starting a Missing Person Search:

STARTING SEARCH CHECKLIST

- ☐ Establish who oversees the incident.
- ☐ Identify the IC, Command Post location and Incident Name, e.g.: "Officer Smith is Tilden Park IC and the command post is in the parking area at Big Springs Trailhead on South Park Drive." This information should be passed along to the Communications Center.
- ☐ Begin to develop an ICS organization indicated below.
- ☐ Start an Incident Briefing form (ICS 201).
- ☐ Assign someone to record resources as they arrive on a Check-In List (ICS 211).
- ☐ Locate the PLS (Point Last Seen) or LKP (Last Known Point), isolate and protect it (including scent articles and footprints) until you can send Search and Rescue trained personnel to investigate it.
- ☐ Set up containment boundaries, to attempt to limit the search area. Assign personnel to roadblocks, trail blocks, lookouts, etc.
- ☐ Assign an Officer and/or Search and Rescue personnel, to stay with and interview the reporting party; document the interview by completing the Lost Person Questionnaire (BASARC website) (one LPQ for each missing person).
- ☐ Assign personnel begin a hasty search and to contact individuals that may have seen the subject, e.g.: other park users, staff, and concessionaires.(ICS SAR 104 on BASARC website)
- ☐ Complete the Search Fact Sheet for distribution (ICS SAR 100A on BASARC website).
- ☐ Begin to investigate and notify locations where the subject may appear outside the search area.
 - ☐ The subject's own home.
 - ☐ Local Hospitals.
 - ☐ Local Police Departments and Jails.
 - ☐ Bus companies - AC Transit, County Connection, BART, Taxi services, etc.
 - ☐ Friends' and relatives' homes.
 - ☐ Places of employment.
- ☐ Issue a B.O.L.O. to local agencies that may have contact with the subject, e.g.: city, county, and State Highway Patrol.
- ☐ Have the person's name entered in NCIC (required by DOJ) as a missing person. This must be done within four hours of the report being made to the law enforcement agency.
- ☐ Map the search area on ICS-201. Take into consideration possible distance traveled since the time last seen, physical boundaries and the subject's ability.
- ☐ Investigate the PLS or LKP in detail.
- ☐ Individuals and assignments complete an activity log for each operational period (ICS 214).
- ☐ Complete ICS-201 and present to the new Incident Commander.

Considerations for Starting a Missing Person Search:

SEARCH TRANSITION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Locate an Incident Base and a Command Post with better facilities.
- ☐ Consult the Operational Period Timeline, at least by the fourth hour.
- ☐ Assess the need to order additional Search and Rescue resources as appropriate. Keep response time in mind, what you order now, will not be in place for several hours.
- ☐ Request mutual aid through the county sheriff and obtain a State Office of Emergency Services Mission # _____.
- ☐ A new Incident Commander should begin a new (ICS 201 and 202).
- ☐ Continue confinement with personnel positioned in an attempt to limit the search area. Use roadblocks, trail blocks, lookouts...
- ☐ Protect clues. Direct on scene personnel to protect areas likely to contain perishable clues, such as footprints.
- ☐ Hold a formal briefing (ICS SAR 100 on BASARC website).
- ☐ Expand the Incident Command structure.
 - ☐ Establish a Planning Section to: (ICS SAR 203 on BASARC website)
 - ☐ Establish Probabilities of Search Areas using the Mattson consensus method.
 - ☐ Begin planning team assignments for additional search teams that have been ordered. (ICS SAR 104 on BASARC website)
 - ☐ Manage resource displays and situation statistics. (using T-cards - ICS 219)
 - ☐ Assign personnel to complete initial investigation and follow up on clues found by searchers.
 - ☐ Debrief returning HASTY searchers (ICS SAR 110 on BASARC website).
 - ☐ Establish a Logistics Section to provide services and supplies required by the incident.
 - ☐ Begin planning for multiple shifts.
 - ☐ Establish communication nets and order equipment, i.e.: additional portable radios, batteries (ICS 205).
 - ☐ Obtain nutritious food and drinks.
 - ☐ Arrange for sanitation needs.
 - ☐ Provide shelter and sleeping arrangements.
- ☐ Staff the Public Information Officer position.

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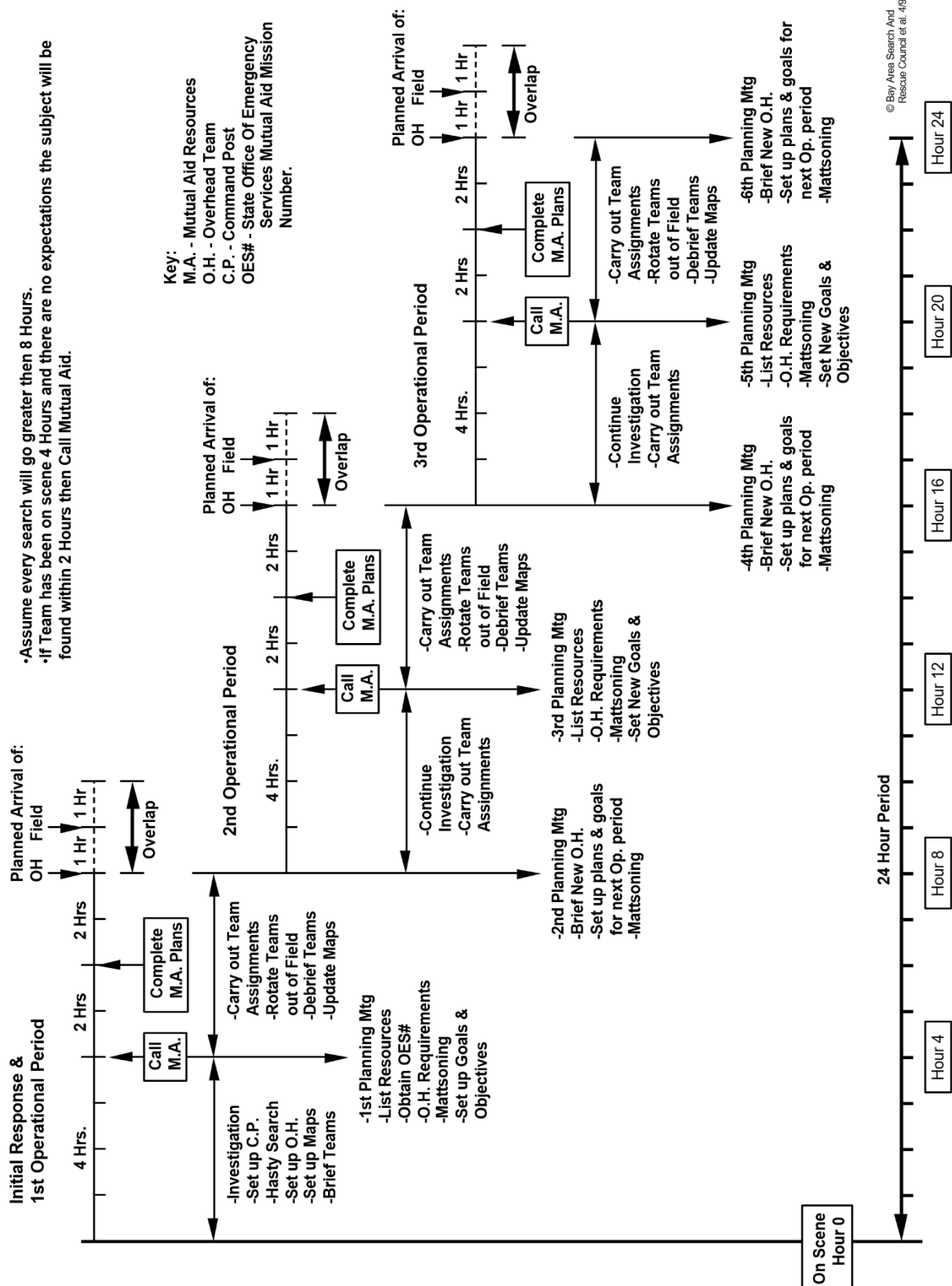
- ☐ Prepare a media release.
- ☐ Prepare a location to meet media representatives, and VIPs at the scene.
- ☐ Staff additional ICS positions as needed.
 - ☐ Operations Section Chief.
 - ☐ Safety Officer.
 - ☐ Liaison Officer
- ☐ Appoint a liaison for victim/family.
- ☐ Develop a medical plan (ICS 206) and an evacuation plan for when the subject is found.
 - ☐ Staff the rescue team and have them available at an appropriate location.
- ☐ Review span of control considerations.
- ☐ Rotate units out of field after 4 to 6 hours of searching.
- ☐ Consider demobilization (ICS 221) and CISD potential.

Considerations for Starting a Missing Person Search:

Standard Operating Procedure for Mutual Aid Callouts:

- Assume every search will go greater than 8 Hours.
- If Team has been on scene 4 Hours and there are no expectations the subject will be found within 2 Hours then Call Mutual Aid.

Key:
M.A. - Mutual Aid Resources
O.H. - Overhead Team
C.P. - Command Post
OES# - State Office Of Emergency Services Mutual Aid Mission Number.



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