

Search and Rescue - Team Guide

The Search and Rescue Team needs to search all the unoccupied houses on the block to ensure 1) no one is trapped inside and 2) no gas is leaking.

Search and Rescue Team	Team: Always have a minimum of three people doing search and rescue. Two to enter the house and one outside to serve as a lookout and to communicate. The person outside waits for the two search people to come out. Have communication with the command post by radio or runner. You should have look-outs for danger and to keep everyone informed. Post people to keep the public out of the dangerous area. Backup people: bring tools and equipment to the rescue workers, hold flashlights, and runner communication.
Safety	Note: we will only be doing light search and rescue. And we will only enter structurally sound buildings.
Tools & Equipment	● Hard hat ● Gloves ● Goggles ● Mask ● Flashlight ● Headlamp ● Heavy Boots ● Crow bar ● Ax ● Hand saws ● Bolt Cutters ● Car Jacks ● Sledge Hammers ● Clipboards and Pens ● Radios ● Whistles
Safety Procedures	Before entering a structure, consider all the dangers. Evaluate the situation before attempting entry. Assure yourself the building is safe to enter. Is the building structurally sound? Assess the damage, such as a gas leak or a fire. Consider the weather. Is the wind blowing? Communicate what you're going to do to everyone in the group. Everyone needs to understand what they are going to do before

	entering the building. For example: “We are going to enter this house through the front, and we are going to search all the rooms on the first floor, starting with the rooms on the left, and meet by the back door.” Before entering the house, be aware of any overhanging pieces of the outside of the house above you – e.g., loose windows, hanging branches, hanging electrical wires, broken chimneys, pieces of the roof, etc. Assume all wires are electrically charged (hot!) Shut off the gas AND electricity before entering the house.
Privacy Considerations	We have a permission list where some neighbors have agreed to having their houses entered and searched if they are not at home or do not answer the door. We need to determine as a neighborhood how to handle this as all houses in the neighborhood need to be searched for the safety of everyone.
Search and Rescue Techniques	First, knock on the door and see if anyone is home. Even if they say their house is okay, we should still make a walk-through to look for any real damage so that we can sign off the house on the outside for the fire department. If no one is home, or no one answers, try to locate a key from a neighbor. If no key, pry open a door or window. Do as little damage as possible to make entry. If someone is calling from the inside for help, we will pry open the door or windows to get in. As you enter the house, be aware of the smell of gas. If you smell gas, leave the house and reaffirm that the gas valve outside is shut off. Watch for broken glass, sharp nails broken concrete, uneven surfaces, piles of debris, water leaks and slippery surfaces, or water leaking on electrical wires. Safety is a must. Take the search cautiously. Always be on the alert for danger to yourself. Begin the search to the left, circle around the house and come out the way you came in. Circle through the house from left to right and search each room. Confirm with your partner that each room is okay, and then come out.

Emotional Considerations	Cooperation is a must during search and rescue, and there's a lot of work to do. Be aware of your emotional state. This process of searching all the houses on the block may be a long process. Frequently check and cross check one another's conditions. (How are you feeling? Getting tired? Etc.) If a team member is tired or in an especially bad or argumentative mood, this person may need to be replaced with someone who is rested. If someone needs coffee or water or needs a bathroom break, the team leader may need to find a replacement. All this needs to be considered.
After the Search	Mark on the front of the house a large X on the door or a wall facing the street so that the fire department driving by can see at a distance that the house has been searched. Enter this information into the X: Top of X: Date and Time of Search Right Side of X: Assessment -- either "All OK" or a list of damage found or incidents and results, e.g., "someone trapped, gas is off; we smelled smoke and had to evacuate; found a fire, sent for fire dept." Bottom of X: "Search Complete" or "Partial Search" Left Side of X: Name of Search Unit – "Upper Amador REACT Team"
If Someone is Trapped	Determine if we will make a rescue effort ourselves. The team must assess the danger. Those with REACT training are best equipped to do this. We must evaluate the danger and determine the method for lifting heavy objects, dragging the person out safely, preventing other injuries, etc. This is a team effort and must be discussed thoroughly before beginning. A whistle can be used for the person outside to call for additional help, or to warn people on the inside to exit the house. This evacuation signal (3 long blasts) should be agreed upon by everyone before entering the house. Whistles, car horns, yells, etc. can be used. Report injuries or dangerous situations to the command post by radio or runner. Send for a medical team or fire fighting team, if necessary. Advise the command post if special needs or shelter is needed.
Use the Search and Rescue Log	Mark on the clipboard form (the <i>Search and Rescue Log</i>) the house number and the search and rescue team names. Log all necessary information.

	After searching all the houses, return to the command post, complete the log sheets and turn them into the Logistics team.
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