

# A/R Exercise Guidelines

## Rocky Mountain Region, MRA

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### **Regional Vice-Chair Responsibilities**

#### ***Prior to the A/R Exercise***

- Insures that the applicant team has met the requirements as outlined in the Regional Policies, Article X Policy 1.
- Insures that the Applicant team has requested testing dates at the previous annual regional meeting.
- Verifies that they have received a letter from the applicant team prior to the exercises stating that they meet the Membership Qualifications as stated in the MRA Policies 101.
- Have assigned a qualified person to serve as the Lead Evaluator for the exercise.
- Inform the Regional Chair as to the assigned dates for each team's exercise so that the dates may be posted on the Regional website.

#### ***After the A/R Exercise***

- Is responsible for getting the signed Evaluator Forms, a recap of the voting, copies of the scenarios for each A/R Exercise and the letter stating that the team meets the MRA Policies 101 from each Lead Evaluator for all of the A/R Exercises during the year and getting them placed in the Regional files. All Regional documents (as of 01/01/07) are currently stored in a safe at the Alpine Rescue Team headquarters.
- Is responsible for getting a final list of Evaluators, Observers, Scenario Leads and the Lead Evaluator for every A/R Exercise entered into the current Regional Stats. They should be posted on the Regional Website every year.

## **Lead Evaluator Responsibilities**

### ***Prior to the A/R Exercise***

- The Lead Evaluator has been assigned by the Regional Vice Chairperson and has met the Regional requirements as outlined in the Regional Policies, Article X Policy 1.
- Establish contact with team going through the A/R Exercise.
- Determine who will be your contact from the applicant team going through the A/R Exercise.
- Be sure that the team understands the Regional By-laws & Policies.
- Contact the identified Region Board Member attending the A/R Exercise.
- Inform the applicant team that the safety of the Evaluation Team is not their responsibility and that the individual members of the Evaluation Team will be responsible for their own safety.
- Inform the team that they must submit a letter to the Vice-Chairperson. **Prior** to the A/R Exercise stating that they continue to meet the Membership Qualifications as stated in the MRA Policies 101.
- Determine the areas / sites that will be used for the exercises (It is highly encouraged that you go and visit the team and see the sites prior to the A/R Exercise weekend).
- Once the areas / sites have been determined and agreed upon, they may not be changed unless it is agreed upon by both the Host Team and the Lead Evaluator.
- Coordinate housing between the Host Team and the Evaluation Team.
- Coordinate with the Host team about the maximum size of the Evaluation Team.
- Responsible for recruiting Scenario Leads, Evaluators and Observers.
- Verify Scenario Leads, Evaluators and Observers experience (can be done by past experience at A/R exercises, the current Regional data base or by contacting the Operations Leader of their team).
- Appoint Scenario Leaders for each of the five (5) exercises.
- The five (5) Scenario Leads, if possible, should be from five (5) different RMU's , or AMU's/EMU's that are accredited in that specific skill area.
- The Lead Evaluator shall review and approve all scenarios prior to actual exercises.
- The Lead Evaluator should coordinate, oversee and document the approval process of each written scenario by qualified Scenario Leaders All scenarios should be written down and there should be enough copies for all members of the Evaluation Team. The written scenarios will become part of the Regional records for each A/R Exercise.
- Determine how many Observers and from what teams can attend. Priority has been given to teams that are next in line to go through their own A/R Exercise.
- The Evaluation Team should try not to exceed 30 members on either day. Each RMU has the right to have two (2) Evaluators at any A/R Exercise.
- Establish meeting times and places for the Evaluation Team,
- Establish guidelines that the entire Evaluation Team will adhere to (who is in charge of each exercise / who can make changes to the scenario / Etc.)
- Coordinate what radio frequencies will be used by the Evaluation Team and the Host Team.
- Coordinate with the Host Team which color vests should be worn by the Evaluators and Observers so they may be clearly identified as part of the Evaluation Team.

### ***During the A/R Exercise***

- Serve as the liaison person between the Host Team and the Evaluation Team.
  - Insure that the scenario's given are consistent with previous scenarios in the past and give the host team the ability to demonstrate the skills as outlined in the A/R Exercise worksheet.
  - Appoint the Evaluators and Observers to the different exercises (at a minimum, each scenario must have five (5) Evaluators from three (3) different teams).
- In the past, prior to the Evaluation Team discussing the scenarios for that day, the host team has been given time to address the Evaluation Team on those areas in which the team knows they had

difficulties. (The purpose of this was to cut down on the discussion amongst the Evaluation Team that happens when discussing each scenario).

- Coordinate the critique with the Evaluation Team at the end of each day.
- Coordinate the critique with the Host Team at the end of each day (This is perhaps the most critical responsibility for the Lead Evaluator). Sometimes the message is not good and the messenger is the one who takes all the heat.
- During the critique, the Lead Evaluator should discuss the following for each scenario:
  - The areas that the team performed that significantly exceed the requirements.
  - The areas that the team performed that did not meet the requirements.
  - Recommendations from the Evaluation Team that they feel would help the host team.
  - Overall recommendation from the Evaluation Team for each scenario.
- If for any reason, the Evaluation Team feels that a particular member from the host team should not be in a particular position for a given scenario, appropriate notice should be given to the host team. (In the past this has been done to have the host team demonstrate some depth and not have the same person always be in the same position - medical, site command, mission management)
- Any conflicts that might arise during an A/R Exercise should be dealt with by the Lead Evaluator and the Leaders of the host team.
- The Lead Evaluator is responsible for the actions of everyone on the Evaluation Team. The Lead Evaluator has the right to remove a member of the Evaluation Team if, in their opinion, that person is having a detrimental effect on the A/R Exercise.

### ***After the A/R Exercise***

- Submit the "A/R Exercise Worksheets" from all of the Evaluators to the host team that went through the A/R Exercise.
- Submit the signed "Evaluator's Forms" to the Regional Vice-Chairperson within 2 weeks from the date of the A/R exercise.
- Submit the five (5) written scenarios to the Regional Vice-Chairperson within 2 weeks from the date of the A/R exercise who will insure that they are placed in the Regional files.
- Submit a recap of the voting for the entire exercise to the Regional Vice-Chairperson within 2 weeks from the date of the A/R exercise who will insure that this is placed in the Regional files.
- Submit a record of who was a part of the Evaluation team to the Regional Vice-Chairperson within 2 weeks from the date of the A/R exercise. This should include what team they are from and what position they held during the A/R exercises. (Scenario Lead, Evaluator or Observer)

## **Scenario Leader Responsibilities**

### ***Prior to the A/R Exercise***

- Review the current Regional A/R Worksheets so that you are familiar with the skills that are being required for the scenario you are putting together.
- The scenario should be consistent with scenarios in the past. Past Scenario Leads and past Lead Evaluators can answer many questions for you.
- The scenario should be written out so that you can submit a copy of it to the Lead Evaluator prior to the exercise.
- Prior to all A/R exercises, each written scenario must be approved by the Lead Evaluator and two (2) other persons currently qualified as Scenario Leaders. Preferably, these persons should represent different Region Teams.
- Any supplies that would be needed for the scenario should be obtained by the Scenario Lead prior to the weekend exercise.
- A prior visit to the site in which the scenario will take place will help you determine how to set the scenario up. (In the past, the Scenario Leads have arrived a day before the A/R exercise to go scout out the areas).
- Be aware that your scenario may be connected with another scenario that same day and coordination between the two Scenario Leads must happen.

### ***During the A/R Exercise***

- The morning of your scenario, the Evaluation Team will meet and Evaluators and Observers will be directed to the different scenarios that day. There has not been a specific way this is done except that the Scenario Leads recruit people that morning.
- Please know how many Evaluators and Observers are needed for your scenario.
- You should have a handout of your scenario for every Evaluator / Observer that is going to be helping you at your scenario. This really helps in making sure everyone is on the same page.
- If specific skills or experience is needed for certain Evaluators, (medical, third man, etc.) these people should be recruited first.
- You should verify that you have “At Least” five (5) Evaluators from three (3) different teams at your scenario.
- The region has different color vests for the Scenario Leads, Evaluators and Observers. These should be worn by all the Evaluators / Observers during the scenarios.
- Scenario Leads will wear a different color vest from the evaluators during the entire exercise in which they are the lead.
- Communications (radio Frequencies) amongst the Evaluation Team should be determined through the Lead Evaluator who is coordinating this with the host team.
- Any equipment that is not part of the scenario should be flagged with orange flagging. Try not to flag any natural things – this can lead to much confusion.
- Any ropes, harnesses, helmets climbing pro, etc. that is used for safety purposes during the scenario (either for an evaluator or a subject) should also be flagged. Try and make your scenario as realistic as possible keeping in mind that safety in number one for everyone involved!
- Only the Scenario Lead or their designee may change the scenario during the exercise.
- You may be asked by the Lead Evaluator to go over your scenario when the host team is going through the critique.

### ***After the A/R Exercise***

- Scenario Leads may be asked at sometime in the future to submit their scenario to other Scenario Leads so that we don't have to recreate the wheel every time. Please keep copies of your scenarios, hopefully in an electronic form.

## **Evaluator Responsibilities**

### ***Prior to the A/R Exercise***

- All Evaluators must meet the requirements as outlined in the Regional Policies. If you are a “Support” member with your own team, you can not serve as an evaluator.
- Review the current Regional A/R Exercise Worksheets so that you are familiar with the process.
- All members serving as Evaluators should have permission from their own team prior to signing up with the Lead Evaluator.
- To assist the Lead Evaluator, please sign up as early as possible and if you need to cancel, notification should be given at the earliest time possible.

### ***During the A/R Exercise***

- All safety issues for Evaluators as it pertains to what areas you are going to observe should be based on your own comfort level.
- All Evaluators should bring the appropriate personal gear for all of the scenarios (this would include beacons, shovels, snow travel gear, harnesses, helmet, etc.)
- You should expect very long days starting early each morning at the meeting site determined by the Lead Evaluator.
- Assignments for each day will be determined at this meeting.
- The Region has vests for all of the Evaluators and Observers. Evaluator vests will be different, either in color or stripping, than the vests worn by the Observers.
- All Evaluators should act in a professional manner through out the exercise.
- The only reason that you can stop a scenario is for safety reasons. If possible, try to confer with the Scenario Lead before doing this.
- During each scenario, your job is to observe, not interfere.
- Your commitment as an Evaluator does not end until the critiques of each day’s scenarios have been completed with the Host Team.
- All Evaluators must submit a signed copy of the Evaluator Form to the Lead Evaluator at the end of the day for those exercises in which they are evaluating. If you are staying for the entire exercise, this form can be submitted at the end of the final day.

### ***After the A/R Exercise***

- You are the liaison person between your team and the Region. There is a lot that can be learned at these exercises. Please share any information you get with the rest of your team.
- Stay involved in the Region!!

## **Host Team Responsibilities**

### ***Prior to the A/R Exercise***

- Determine sites that can be used for the Winter Scenarios, Rock Scenarios and the Search. Attain any permission that might be needed at any of these sites.
- Meet all requirements as outlined in the Rocky Mountain Region By-Laws and Policies
- Appoint a representative from your team to serve as a liaison person to the Region.
- If the host team wants to have any pre-tests this can be done on your own or coordinated through the Lead Evaluator.
- Coordinate housing with the Lead Evaluator for the Evaluation Team.
- Coordinate locations that can be used for each days critique with the Evaluation Team.
- Host team will be required to print up the appropriate number of A/R Exercise worksheets for the Evaluation Team.
- Coordinate with the Lead Evaluator what color vests should be worn by the Evaluators and Observers so that so that they may be clearly identified as part of the Evaluation Team.

### ***During the A/R Exercise***

- It is the responsibility of the host team to make sure that all their members are familiar with the A/R Exercise process. If there are questions about what the procedures are or what they might see during a scenario, these questions should be addressed with the Lead Evaluator prior to the exercises.
- Host team members should be familiar with the Regional A/R Exercise worksheet that the Evaluation Team uses during the scenarios.
- Questions, comments or concerns before, during and after the scenarios should to be addressed to the appropriate people in the Evaluation Team. (Lead Evaluator, Scenario Leads)
- At the end of each day, the host team will be able to have a representative from their team address the Evaluation Team prior to the Evaluation Team critiquing the different scenarios. This time should be used to address those issues that the team realized did not go well during the scenario.
- If at all possible, all members of the team going through the A/R Exercise will be asked to attend the critique at the end of each day (this is the most important part of the exercise!).
- The Host Team is responsible for the actions of everyone on their Team. All Members of the Host Team should act in a professional manner through out the exercise.

### ***After the A/R Exercise***

- At the completion of the A/R Exercise, the worksheets from all the Evaluators will be given to the host team. These worksheets can be used in any way the host team deems appropriate. The signed Evaluator Forms will be submitted to the Region and placed in the regional files.
- The goal of the Region is to get its members involved in the A/R Exercise process. Attending other team's exercises is highly encouraged!

## **Critique Guidelines**

### ***Prior to the A/R Exercise Critique***

- The Lead Evaluator is to act as the facilitator for the critiques. While no time limits are suggested, the concept is to create a timely, non-redundant, non-adversarial critique with suggestions for improvement by the Evaluation Team to the Host Team.
- The Host Team will provide a location conducive for a constructive critique, preferably an area where all the evaluators, observers, and members of the host team can gather together as a group. This should include a provision for a private workroom for the evaluators to discuss their critiques; ideally, this private workroom would include a method for written feedback, such as a chalkboard, whiteboard or blank flipchart.
- The Host Team will provide A/R Exercise Worksheets for all members of the Evaluation Team.
- A single critique session should be held at the end of each day that covers the scenarios performed that day.
- A representative from the Host Team should be given the opportunity to address the Evaluation Team prior to the start of each days Evaluation Team critique to provide Host Team input regarding their performance on the days scenarios.
- During this brief address (hopefully no more than five (5) minutes per scenario) by the Host Team representative, the representative should provide input regarding the performance for each scenario that should be confined to problem areas or areas they recognize may need improvement. While this information may not preclude the team from a pass or fail, it can be used by the Evaluation Team as a precursor of lengthy debate of a deficiency or problem area that was also noted by the Evaluation Team.
- Observers should be reminded that their comments should be funneled through evaluators.
- The Lead Evaluator should record feedback and suggestions or appoint a “scribe” to perform this duty.

### ***During the A/R Exercise Critique***

- Comments/critique should be confined to those items that have received a “1” or “3” score from the A/R Exercise Worksheet. Items with a score of “2” indicate the team meets the requirements and do not need discussion in a critique format. Further discussion is strongly encouraged outside of the official critique as necessary to increase understanding and learning between the Host Team and Evaluation Team
- The Evaluation Team shall deliver all critiques in a constructive and professional manner.
- Comments and critiques, once made, should not need additional underscore.
- For each scenario, the Evaluation Team should record feedback in the following areas that can be presented during the critique with the Host Team and the Evaluation Team:
  - Areas in which the team did not meet the requirements as outlined in the A/R Exercise Worksheet (scores of “1”).
  - Areas in which the team significantly exceeds the requirements as outlined in the A/R Exercise Worksheet (scores of “3”).
  - Equipment or technique recommendations that might assist the host team, if applicable (if associated with items with a score of “1”; other recommendations can be discussed outside of the critique)
- A pass or fail vote will be taken after each scenario discussion by the Evaluators and Scenario Leaders

- It should be the goal of the Evaluation Team that members of the Evaluation Team are not swayed by the votes of other evaluators. Listed below are possible ways to conduct the voting to help ensure this:
  - A paper vote at the conclusion of each scenario discussion.
  - A vote by raising hands at the conclusion of each scenario discussion.
  - With eyes closed, a straw vote can be taken prior to the scenario discussion thus giving the Lead Evaluator a sense of how the evaluation team feels prior to the discussion.
- At the end of the A/R exercise weekend an overall summary critique should be given that addresses overall pass/fail status without going back over points that have already been discussed in previous critiques.

### ***After the A/R Exercise Critique***

- As written in the Regional Policies, at the completion of the A/R Exercise, the six (6) page worksheets from all the Evaluators will be given to the host team and the signed Evaluator Forms will be given to the Lead Evaluator and submitted to the Region and then placed in the regional files.
- The Lead Evaluator will summarize significant discussion points, deficiencies, strong points, and voting results in a written format to the Host Team with a copy to the Region Chair, Region Vice-Chair, and the regional files.

## **Scenario Guidelines**

**As stated in the Rocky Mountain Regional Policies** “The scenarios should be as realistic as possible within the parameters of a typical mountain rescue mission.”

### ***Search***

- Lost or missing subjects in the search scenario should not be more than one (1) mile from the LSP.
- Although search dogs are used in normal operations, teams should understand that the region is not testing the dogs and they should not be used in these scenarios.

### ***Technical Rock – Scree***

- Teams should understand that during or after the scree evacuation, the evaluation team may require the team to change from a lowering to a raising so that these skills may be observed.
- Teams should expect that during or after the scree evacuation, the evaluation team may require the team to perform a knot pass (even if the team normally uses a brake tube or the evacuation distance is less than one rope length)

### ***Technical Rock – High Angle***

- Teams should expect to evacuate by litter no more than one (1) injured subject from a rock face.
- No other subjects or role players will be on the rock face.
- Teams are required to demonstrate a mid-face litter load and litter team movement over high angle terrain.
- Teams should expect that during or after the high angle technical rock evacuation, the evaluation team may require the team to perform a knot pass (even if the team normally uses a brake tube).
- Teams should expect that during or after the high angle technical rock evacuation, the evaluation team may require the team to change from a lowering to a raising so that these skills can be observed

### ***Winter Rescue – Technical Evacuation***

- Teams should expect that during or after the winter technical evacuation, the evaluation team may require the team to perform a knot pass (even if the team normally uses a brake tube).
- Teams should expect that during or after the winter technical evacuation, the evaluation team may require the team to change from a lowering to a raising so that these skills can be observed.

### ***Winter Rescue – Avalanche***

- Avalanche debris area should not be larger than 3200 square meters.
- No more than three (3) Avalanche Transceivers will be buried in the debris area.
- Avalanche Transceivers should not be buried more than 1.5 meters deep.
- Avalanche Transceivers should be buried on a board, dummy or in a pack (at least 2' x 2') to allow for probe hits.
- Although search dogs are used in normal operations, teams should understand that the region is not testing the dogs and they should not be used in these scenarios.