

Whatcom County SAR 4x4 Unit By-Laws

Proposed 1/12/2016
Accepted 2/9/2016

ARTICLE I

TITLE

The name of this organization shall be Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 unit, herein after referred to as “the organization or the unit.”

ARTICLE II

MISSION STATEMENT

The primary purpose of this organization is to plan, prepare, respond, recover, and evacuate during situations of missing persons. The unit shall work in affiliation with state and local emergency management agencies utilizing the principles of the Incident Command System (ICS). The unit shall be comprised of a network of trained and certified individual volunteers in vehicle based operations. In addition, the unit shall be a non-profit organization that is non-political, and non-partisan in character.

1. Objectives of the Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 Unit:
 - a. To perform duties, but not limited to, vehicle road searches, evidence searches, and recoveries from wilderness to urban environments.
 - b. To provide technical support, equipment, and assistance when needed to other County search and rescue units, fire departments, and the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office or other law enforcement agencies. In addition, the organization shall provide mutual aid assistance to other counties when needed.
 - c. To provide assistance as directed during states of emergency, e.g. floods, inclement weather, fires, and other disasters under the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office.
 - d. To provide training classes and opportunities. The organization shall encourage attendance at additional outside trainings e.g. state conference and other classes.
 - e. To promote community education through First Aid and CPR classes. Further, the organization shall participate in demonstrations of search and rescue techniques and outdoor safety throughout the community thereby promoting Preventive Search and Rescue (PSAR).

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ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

1. Members:
 - a. All applicants and members are subject to regular background checks conducted by the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office.
 - b. Be at least 18 years of age.
 - c. Own a four-wheel drive vehicle approved by the Oral Board.
 - d. Hold a valid Washington State driver's license.
 - e. Have the minimum Washington State requirement for public liability and property damage insurance on any vehicle you respond in.
 - f. Hold a State of Washington Emergency Worker Identification Card issued by Whatcom County Emergency Management.
2. Governing Documents
 - a. All members are subject to the Unit By-Laws, the Units Membership Policy Guide, and any other applicable local, county, state or federal regulations.
 - b. Members are also governed by the By-Laws and Policies of the Parent Organization, Whatcom County Search and Rescue Council.
3. Member Rights and Responsibilities
 - a. Each Member of the Unit, if in good standing, shall have the right to cast one vote on all actions for which Members shall have a right to vote. The right of a member to vote and all of his or her rights, title, and interest in or to the Unit shall cease on the termination of his membership
 - b. Other rights and duties of each Member shall be as specified in the organization's Membership Policy Guide.
 - c. Turn in volunteer hours as outlined in the Policies.
 - d. Turn in proof of training to Training Officers.
 - e. Members shall outfit themselves with personally owned equipment and consumables as outlined in the Membership Policy Guide. This equipment shall be the sole responsibility of the member.
 - f. No Member shall be entitled to share in the distribution of the organization assets upon the dissolution of the Unit.
4. Membership in the Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 Unit is a privilege which can be terminated at any time for violation of any rule, regulation policy, procedure or standard of the Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 Unit. Such termination shall be executed by the Executive Board.

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ARTICLE IV

OFFICERS AND DUTIES

1. Officers
 - a. Elected officers shall be the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, two training officers.
 - b. Appointed officers shall be the Sergeant at Arms and the Equipment officer.
2. Election
 - a. The officers of the Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 Unit shall be elected by a simple majority of members in good standing in December of each year for a one (1) year term beginning on the first (1st) of January.
 - b. Nominations will be made in October and November.
 - c. Nominees must be a member in good standing.
3. Duties of the Officers
 - a. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Organization, shall have general supervision over the affairs and property of the Organization and over its officers, and shall generally do and perform all acts pertaining to the office of President. The president shall conduct the meetings, appoint committees and shall appoint any member in good standing to fill a vacancy. He/she will also attend and have a voting voice for the unit at the monthly Council meetings.
 - b. The Vice President shall perform all the duties of the President at his/her request or in his/her absence or disability, and he/she will assist the president with his/her duties. He/she will be responsible for issuing and keeping track of unit issued equipment.
 - c. The secretary shall keep all personnel records, take minutes of all meetings and handle Search and Rescue correspondence. He/she will also collect and total monthly volunteer hours turned in by members.
 - d. The treasurer shall have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all the funds of the organization and shall keep, or cause to be kept, and shall be responsible for the keeping of, accurate and adequate records of the assets, liabilities and transactions of the organization. He/she shall also distribute all stickers, hats, and patches. He/she is responsible for ordering and distributing all SAR 4x4 clothing and accessories. He/she will provide a financial report at the monthly meetings and review the accounts with a unit-approved accountant quarterly.
 - e. The training officers are responsible for providing Search and Rescue related training at all monthly meetings. They are responsible for providing a minimum of 24 hours of additional training, no more than 1/3 of which shall be a practice search, they are also responsible of keeping track of training records, requesting and tracking training/mission numbers for all 4x4 activities. They will provide a report of each members training status at least quarterly.

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- f. Sergeant at Arms. The Sergeant at Arms will be appointed by the president. He/she will be responsible for keeping order at monthly meetings and unit events.
- g. Equipment Officer. The Equipment officer will be appointed by the president. He/she will be responsible for maintenance and repairs on all 4x4 unit owned vehicles and equipment.

ARTICLE V

BOARDS

1. Executive Board will consist of the current elected officers and the most recent, highest ranking, past officer, that is currently a member in good standing.
2. The Oral Board shall consist of three elected officers and three additional members that are in good standing.

ARTICLE VI

MEETINGS

1. Monthly meetings shall be held on the second Tuesday @ 7:30 p.m. at 1041 W. Smith Rd, the Search and Rescue Building, or such other time and/or location as may be mutually agreed upon by the officers.
2. The President may call special meetings as necessary that must be attended by a majority of officers elected and appointed. Special meetings will be announced via the callout system with as much notice as possible.
3. Members desiring to bring issues affecting search and rescue activities and the 4x4 members before the Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 Unit, should contact the Secretary and President in writing no later than one week prior to the monthly meeting so the topic can be added to the agenda. The request should describe the issue and include suggestions for addressing the issue. The entire request will be attached to that months agenda.

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ARTICLE VII

BY-LAW CHANGES

1. A quorum for by-law changes shall consist of 60% of members in good standing, including a minimum of two elected officers.
2. Any unit member in good standing may suggest amendments to the by-laws.
3. Proposed amendments to the by-laws shall be drafted by the member requesting the change and presented in writing to the unit at a regularly scheduled meeting and voted on no sooner than the next meeting.
4. The proposed amendments or rewrites require a majority vote of the quorum present at a regularly scheduled meeting to become effective.
5. All unit documents will have a creation date in the document header along with the title. References to “versions” of documents will be made by this creation date.
6. A Bylaw and Policy review may be done annually as deemed necessary.

ARTICLE VIII

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

1. Conflict of interest – the purpose of the conflict of interest bylaws are to protect the organization’s tax-exempt status. Any violation of the conflict of interest policy may result in the loss of tax-exempt status and possible fines levied by the IRS.
 - a. Members shall not receive financial gain from the organization.
 - b. Members may or may not be reimbursed for pre-approved continuing education classes, conferences, and trainings.
 - i. Reimbursement shall be pre-determined by the officers and voting members in good standing prior to attendance to said classes/trainings.
 - ii. Reimbursement shall be limited to expenses specifically related to the event with proof of attendance and proof of payment being required before reimbursement is to occur.
2. Procedure for addressing the Conflict of Interest.
 - a. An interested person (director, officer, member of a committee, or member of the organization) may make a presentation to the organization. However, after said presentation, he/she will not be allowed to have a vote on the decision of said

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- presentation. Further, the voting membership and officers shall discuss and decide if a conflict of interest exists.
- b. Should any member become involved in an external public or private charitable organization and/or endeavor, the member shall not involve the Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 Unit in any manner.

ARTICLE IX

DISSOLUTION OF THE ORGANIZATION AND ASSETS

In the event of dissolution of the Whatcom County Search and Rescue 4x4 Unit, the net assets are to be distributed as follows: After all debts and obligations are paid or adequately provided for, the remaining assets shall be divided among the volunteer organizations. At the time of dissolution, said organizations shall be in good standing with the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office. Further, said organizations shall be actively participating in search and rescue and shall have established a tax-exempt status as required in section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.