



# **Search Management Files, Forms and Maps A Practical Approach**

Version 2.0

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## Contents

Contents .....	ii
Overview .....	4
The Folders .....	4
Tasks To Be Assigned .....	4
Tasks in Progress .....	4
Tasks Completed.....	4
Investigation.....	5
General.....	5
The Maps .....	6
Master Map .....	6
Tasks In Progress Map(s).....	6
Tasks Completed Map(s) .....	6
Clue Map.....	6
Task Map .....	6
The Forms .....	7
Incident Lost Person Questionnaire (Investigation folder).....	7
Incident Objectives (General Folder).....	7
Incident Medical and Evacuation Plan (General Folder).....	7
Incident Communications Plan (General Folder with a copy in Comms) .....	7
Incident After Action Report (General Folder) .....	7
Daily Command Log (General Folder).....	8
Daily Table of Organization (General Folder).....	8
Daily SAR/Government Personnel Register (Staging).....	8
Daily Volunteer Register (Staging) .....	8
Daily Vehicle Register (Staging).....	8
Daily Task Log (Ops) .....	8
Daily Clue Log (Comms).....	8
Daily Communications Log.....	8
Daily SAR Resource Worksheet.....	9
Task Assignment Form .....	9
Filling Out the TAF .....	10
Plans Section.....	10
Incident Name.....	10
Incident Numbers.....	10
Operational Period: .....	10
Date: .....	10
Other: .....	10
Task Description .....	10
Plans Number.....	10
Priority: .....	10
Map(s):.....	10
Created By: .....	10

Task Type: ..... 10

Ops Section ..... 11

    Team Name: ..... 11

    Sequential Dispatch Number ..... 11

    Transport/Equipment Notes: ..... 11

    Briefing Checklist ..... 11

    Team Members ..... 11

    Check In Every ..... 11

    Additional Instructions: ..... 11

    Team Call Sign ..... 11

    Base Call Sign ..... 11

    Other Call Sign ..... 11

    Primary Freq: ..... 11

    Alt Freq: ..... 11

    Emergency Freq: ..... 11

    Base Phone: ..... 12

    Team Phone ..... 12

    Emergency Phone: ..... 12

Debriefing ..... 12

    Date and Time Prepared: ..... 12

    Task Length: ..... 12

    Search Techniques: ..... 12

    Debriefer: ..... 12

    Wind: ..... 12

    Temperature: ..... 12

    Precipitation: ..... 12

    Cloud Cover: ..... 12

    Other ..... 12

    Check Boxes ..... 12

    Describe Areas ..... 12

    Describe Clues ..... 12

    FTL/Debriefer Follow-up Recommendations ..... 12

    Debriefing Checklist ..... 12

    Task Summary: ..... 13

    POD ..... 13

    Routing Checklist ..... 13

The Base (BoO) ..... 14

## Overview

This document describes one method for controlling the flow of paperwork in a lost person search command center. This method has been used with great success for years by the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference (<http://www.asrc.net/>). Greater details and instruction for making use of this method are presented in the Practical Search Operations class available from Search and Rescue Training Associates, Inc.

## The Folders

A search runs on paperwork. The folders listed below provide an efficient way of organizing that paperwork.

### ***Tasks To Be Assigned***

This folder holds the TAFs that have been written but are not yet assigned to field teams. The TAFs in this folder are in duplicate and there are two task maps stapled to the TAF.

When a task is to be dispatched, the TAF is removed from the folder and given to the FTL. At this time the FTL is briefed on the task and is asked to find the appropriate number of FTMs for the task and put in their names.

The two copies of the TAF are separated and the field copy of the TAF along with the task map goes with the FTL.

The base copy of the TAF is then placed into the Tasks In Progress folder.

The Tasks To Be Assigned folder is filled by Plans and emptied by Ops.

### ***Tasks in Progress***

These are the tasks that are in progress in the field. This folder holds the base copies of the TAFs along with the Task Log.

When a team is dispatched the time is noted on the Task log.

When a team comes back in from the field the time is noted on the task log and the FTL is debriefed by Ops. The FTL draws on the base copy of the task map the area actually covered. All debriefing info is collected on the base copy of the TAF. The TAF is then moved to the Tasks Completed folder and the Tasks Completed map is updated.

### ***Tasks Completed***

This folder holds the set of TAFs that have been completed. For each task there should be the base copy of the TAF, the base copy of the task map and possibly the team's copy of the TAF and the map. These should all be stapled together. TAFs are placed into this folder as teams return from the field and are debriefed. On top of the folder is the Tasks Completed map. This map is completed/updated with the actual areas that were searched. This may be different from the area that the TAF specified. Information in this

folder issued by Plans to determine the cumulative PODs for a given segment and as an input to the rest of the planning function.

### ***Investigation***

Any information related to the investigation goes into the folder. The LPQ lives in this folder, as well as any other information dealing with the investigation phase. This includes the master copies of the subject photo, boot print/sketch, handouts and medical information...

### ***General***

This is a catchall folder. This is where the Medical & Comms plans live along with the Table of Organization, Objectives, Command Logs and just about all other paperwork. Basically most of the daily forms live in this folder.

## The Maps

There are multiple maps used during a search mission.

### ***Master Map***

This is the main map used by Plans for running the operation. You will need a large number of copies of this map (this is the map that gets used to create the task maps). This map should be covered with two layers of acetate. The bottom layer is used for segmentation and task planning. The second (third...) layers are used for completed tasks. You can use multiple layers for different types of tasks completed or you can use different colored pens. At times during the operation (periodic, when new information comes in...) information from other maps (Clue, Task Completed) is copied onto the master map.

### ***Tasks In Progress Map(s)***

This map(s) is used to track tasks that are currently in the field. Tasks areas are drawn on this map by Ops as the tasks are dispatched and then cleared as the tasks complete. This map (maps if you are using different maps for the different task types) is created by making a copy of the master map on a sheet of acetate. This allows layering this map on other copies for checking.

### ***Tasks Completed Map(s)***

This map(s) is used to chart the tasks that are completed as they come into debriefing. This map (maps if you are using different maps for the different task types) is created by making a copy of the master map on a sheet of acetate. This allows layering this map on other copies for checking.

### ***Clue Map***

As clues are received from the field they are logged in the clue log and entered on the clue map. This map is a copy of the master map made on acetate. The map and log live in Comms.

### ***Task Map***

These are the maps that are provided to the field teams and describe the search task. Each team that goes out into the field should have a task map along with the TAF. Additionally there is a copy of the task map with the TAF that remains in the Tasks in Progress folder in Ops.

## The Forms

### ***Incident Lost Person Questionnaire (Investigation folder)***

This form contains all of the information about the lost person. It is a long form with lots of information. Do not feel like you need to fill out the entire form during the early stages of the search. You need to obtain initial Search Data and initial Planning Data and then fill in other information as it becomes available.

### ***Incident Objectives (General Folder)***

This form is filled out by the IC and gives the overall objectives for an operational period. These overall objectives are then used by Plans in the creation of a search strategy for the operational period. This is one of the most important but least understood forms used in search management. The form needs to lay out, at a high level, what the direction needs to be for this operational period. Early in the search this might include search the high POA segments with hasty teams, establish a suitable BoO (Base of Operations), get the appropriate command structure in place for the next period, and make a determination about needing additional teams... Later in the search it might include create and execute tasks to insure an XX% POD in the high POA areas, plan for additional overhead teams... and in much later periods it might include: determine the need to expand or suspend the search...

### ***Incident Medical and Evacuation Plan (General Folder)***

This form details information needed to care for and if necessary evacuate people during the search operation. The plan should include instructions for treating and evacuating the subject, as well as for treating and evacuating any search personnel. Information in this form is often provided by local EMS staff on the scene. It is important that this form be completed early in the search. When an incident occurs, such as a find or an injured searcher, is the wrong time to try to figure out who is going to provide care and what choices for definitive care exist.

### ***Incident Communications Plan (General Folder with a copy in Comms)***

This form details information needed to cover all forms of communications. It covers both the radio nets used during the search operation as well as any pertinent phone numbers. This form lives in the General folder with a copy in Comms.

### ***Incident After Action Report (General Folder)***

This form is used to provide details after the completion of a search. A copy should be sent to the appropriate agency after the search to support gathering of statistical information.

***Daily Command Log (General Folder)***

This form is used to track all of the significant commands given by the IC during an operational period. Items that might be noted on this log are commands given in response to clues, changes in operation strategies...

***Daily Table of Organization (General Folder)***

The ICS structure for this operational period. There is no need to fill in every item in this chart. The organization that is put into place should be appropriate for the current size of the mission. In addition to keeping the original of this form in the General Folder, it is a god idea to post a version in Ops.

***Daily SAR/Government Personnel Register (Staging)***

This is the sign-in sheet for SAR and Government personnel. For searcher safety, it is very important that every searcher that comes into the operation signs in and provides all of the information on the form. As searchers leave they must fill in the Actual Departure Time portion of the form. During demobilization anyone who has signed in but not signed out needs to be located. The Staging Officer maintains this form. It is the responsibility of this position to insure that all staff coming into the search are registered and provide emergency contacts. Additionally, they must insure that as staff leaves the search they sign out.

***Daily Volunteer Register (Staging)***

Same as the SAR/Government version but for untrained Volunteers (or, non-SAR volunteers).

***Daily Vehicle Register (Staging)***

This form is used to track vehicles that come into the search.

***Daily Task Log (Ops)***

This form is used to track tasks as they are assigned to the field. As tasks are dispatched they are logged onto the form. As teams return and are debriefed, the Time In portion of the form is completed by Ops.

***Daily Clue Log (Comms)***

A log of all of the reported clues. Clues are reported they are logged on this form by Comms and plotted on the Clue map which is attached to the folder. If significant clues are discovered by Ops during the debriefing process, they too are entered in this log and on the clue map.

***Daily Communications Log***

A log of **every** communication that happens. This form lives in Comms. Additionally, Comms may want to keep a log of important phone numbers and contact info.

***Daily SAR Resource Worksheet***

This work sheet can be used to track the availability and location of resources. This form lives in Staging.

***Task Assignment Form***

This is the workhorse of the search. For every task to be executed a TAF is created in duplicate along with two copies of the task map. The majority of the TAF is filled out by Ops and then placed into the Tasks To Be Assigned folder. When the task is to be dispatched, Ops takes the form and fills in the Comms info along with the names of the people assigned to the task. The team gets a copy of the form along with a task map. The base copy of the form is then placed into the Tasks In Progress folder.

## Filling Out the TAF

This section provides an overview of the Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council/DCNR Task Assignment Form and some guidelines on how to fill out that form.

The form is broken into three distinct sections. These sections are filled out at different times and possibly by different sectors of the command structure.

For best results this form should be printed in duplicate using carbonless paper. The top copy, usually in white, is the original while the bottom copy, usually yellow, is the copy.

### ***Plans Section***

Plans, or in the early stages of a search PIOps, fills in the initial sections of the TAF. These sections describe the task and how it is to be executed.

**Incident Name:** The specific name given to this incident

**Incident Numbers:** If your team uses an incident numbering system, the ID for this incident should be placed here.

**Operational Period:** The operational period in which this TAF was written. It may be dispatched in a different operational period.

**Date:** Date that the TAF was written

**Other:** A place for Plans to note other team/incident specific information

**Task Description:** This section should provide a written description of the task. It should cover a description of the segment to be searched as well as any specific instructions on what techniques are to be used. Task descriptions such as “Search area as drawn on map” are not valid.

**Plans Number:** As Plans creates tasks, it gives each one a number. This is a planning number only. Ops may dispatch tasks in an order that is different from the planning number.

**Priority:** An indication by Plans of how quickly this task should be executed in the field.

**Map(s):** A designation of which incident map was used to create the task.

**Created By:** The name of the person in Plans or PIOps that created the task

**Task Type:** Indicate the type of task and resources to be used to execute this task. There are check boxes for the most common task types and an area to describe tasks that do not fall into the “normal” (radio relay...) list.

## ***Ops Section***

**Team Name:** This is the name that will be used when talking about this specific team. It is often the same as the Team Call Sign (See below). For operations where entire teams stay together this may be the name of that specific team (i.e. PA Strike Team 1).

**Sequential Dispatch Number:** This is the number assigned by Ops when the task is dispatched. This number is used to match this task in Ops Task Log.

**Transport/Equipment Notes:** Ops will place any transportation of special equipment instructions here. This may include how the team is to get to the task starting location or how the team is to get back to base at the end of the task.

**Briefing Checklist:** This checklist provides a means to insure that the team going into the field has been properly briefed by Ops. If a team is given the information indicated by each block on the form, the team should have a very good idea of what is expected of them.

**Team Members:** This is a list of every person or dog that is on the task. Normally this information is collected by the FTL when he gathers a team from staging. For team members with no specific training, as in emergent volunteers, do not check one of the team position boxes.

**Check In Every** This is an indication of how often the team is to check in with base. Normally this will be hourly, or *Check In Every: Hour*. The *On The* boxes are used to indicate at what part of the hour the check in call is to happen.

**Additional Instructions:** Any additional communications instructions are written here. One very common instruction to be found in this box is: "Perform radio check when leaving base".

**Team Call Sign:** The call sign that will be used by Base to contact this team.

**Base Call Sign:** The call sign used by this team when contacting base.

**Other Call Sign:** If there are special communications end points they should be indicated here.

**Primary Freq:** The frequency or channel that is to be used for general team to base communications.

**Alt Freq:** An alternate frequency or channel to be used if there are communications problems with the Primary.

**Emergency Freq:** If assigned, a special frequency to be used in the case of some emergency condition.

**Base Phone:** Self explanatory

**Team Phone:** Self explanatory

**Emergency Phone:** Self explanatory

## ***Debriefing***

**Date and Time Prepared:** The date and time that the debriefing took place.

**Task Length:** The amount of time that the team was on the task. This is an important value in that it can provide some indication of how well the task was completed and an indication of the quality of the POD estimate.

**Search Techniques:** What type of search was done (Type I, II, III) and any other techniques, such as critical separation, were used.

**Debriefer:** The name of the IS staff member that performed the debriefing

**Wind:** An indication of the wind speed. This information along with the next couple of environmental values are useful in dealing with dog tasks.

**Temperature:** Temperature

**Precipitation:** Was it raining? Snowing?

**Cloud Cover:** What was the cloud cover?

**Other:** Catch all

**Check Boxes:** Self Explanatory

**Describe Areas:** This is a free form area for the FTL to describe the areas of their task that were searched as well as the areas of the task that were not searched.

**Describe Clues:** An area for the FTL to describe any clues or other items that were encountered on the task. It is very important to note any safety hazards in the area. All of these items should be marked on the map that is attached to the debriefer's copy of the TAF.

**FTL/Debriefer Follow-up Recommendations:** An area for any specific recommendations that either the debriefer or the FTL have about actions to be taken as a result of this task.

**Debriefing Checklist:** A check list to remind the debriefer of things to consider

**Task Summary:** A set of check boxes to indicate if the task was completed or not.

**POD:** The area for the FTL's and the debriefer's estimate of POD. A discussion of how to generate these numbers is well beyond the scope of this document. These fields must be filled in for all search tasks, or there was no reason to execute that task.

**Routing Checklist:** An indication of what needs to happen with the task. Should other specific portions of the command structure see this TAF? Were questions generated as a result of this task that require follow-up?

## The Base (BoO)

The Base of Operations (BoO) must provide for the following things:

- Shelter
- Power
- Communications
- Administration

When setting up the base you need to ask:

- How do I get power?
- What is available for shelter?
- What can I use for a flat surface?
- Where can I set up comms?
- How many staff members do I have and what is their training?
- What is going to be the traffic flow in the base?
- Where can I get copies made?

As the mission progresses the BoO will also need facilities for:

- Eating
- Port o Potties
- Sleeping

And the most important of all: Where can I get coffee?