



Search and Rescue of the Northern Adirondacks
PO Box 1116, Saranac Lake, NY 12983
www.SARNAK.org

Standard Operating Guidelines

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Membership

Active Members

Active Membership is the most rigorous and demanding level of membership SARNAK has. Active Members are expected to respond on short notice to rescues and carry-outs across the High Peaks and Northern Adirondacks. Active Members will also respond and likely play leadership roles in Type III campaign searches. Active Members will be conducting operations in the harshest, most rugged parts of the Adirondacks, utilizing helicopters, ATVs, snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles as well as hiking or snowshoeing often double-digit miles in a day. Active Members are expected to maintain the highest levels of fitness and professionalism.

Active Member Requirements

- Must successfully complete the arduous or moderate pack test once per year.
 - Arduous – 3 miles in 45 minutes while carrying 45 pounds.
 - Moderate – 2 miles in 30 minutes while carrying 25 pounds.
- Must attend 50% of all trainings each year (6), including at least three (3) field exercises.
 - Alternative training may be substituted with permission from the Training Officer.
- Should attend the Annual Business Meeting.
- Must obtain and maintain Wilderness First Aid or higher certification and CPR.
- Must prove proficient at winter shelter building and fire starting, GPS use and navigation and search techniques.
- Must have been an Associate Member in good standing for a minimum of one year.
- Field deployment is at the discretion the Coordinator or their designee.

Associate Members

Associate Membership is for individuals who would like to be involved with SARNAK but can't necessarily commit to attending monthly trainings or meet the level of fitness required to be an Active Member. Associate Members are unlikely to be dispatched to rescue situations, but will provide much-needed assistance in boots-on-the-ground Type III campaign searches.



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Associate Member Requirements

- Should, if possible, successfully complete the arduous or moderate pack test once per year.
 - Arduous – Three (3) miles with a 45-pound pack in 45 minutes.
 - Moderate -- Two (2) miles with a 25-pound pack in 30 minutes.
- Must attend one Type III training each year.
- Should attend the Annual Business Meeting.
- Must obtain and maintain First Aid and CPR certifications.
- Associate members who cannot complete physical requirements (pack test) can only operate in the field at the discretion of the Coordinator or their designee.
- Field deployment is at the discretion the Coordinator or their designee.

Life Members

Life Membership is an honor that may be granted to any current or past SARNAK member. Life Member nominations may be made by any member and submitted to a member of the Membership Committee. The prospective Life Member, upon being notified of nomination by the Coordinator, must submit a SAR resume for consideration by the membership. Life Membership can only be approved by a majority vote of the membership at the Annual Business Meeting.

Life Member Requirements

- Must be, or have been, an Associate and/or Active member in good standing for five (5) consecutive years combined.
- Will not be assessed annual dues.
- May participate in search and rescue missions in Command and Support capacities (command post) only.
- May participate in team trainings in accordance with fitness and qualifications.
- May maintain Associate or Active member status and engage in appropriate functions as qualified. Dues required.
- May not hold elected office, unless Active or Associate Membership is maintained.



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Application Process

Applicants to SARNAK are encouraged to begin the application process at any time. The Membership Application and requirements can be found on the SARNAK website. Applicants are considered Prospects until Membership is voted on. Prospects cannot vote on SARNAK matters.

Application Requirements

- Fill out and submit the application, along with the application fee, prior to or at first meeting or training. Application can be mailed to: SARNAK, PO Box 1116, Saranac Lake, NY 12983.
- Application should be submitted to a member of the Membership Committee, which is made up of the Coordinator, Training Officer and Secretary.
- Must receive and read the SARNAK Bylaws, SOGs and Equipment List.
- The Membership Committee will report to the membership on its review of applications. The applicant shall be given an opportunity prior to the final report to clarify any discrepancies or unfavorable references.
- The Membership Committee will provide to the membership a recommendation on an applicant's membership, with explanation, prior to the vote on the applicant's membership.
- Prospects must attend three (3) meetings and/or trainings before application will be considered.

Membership Standards

- Membership is non-transferable.
- Must be at least 18 years old.
- Must have completed the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Basic Wildlands Search course within one year of joining, or at the first opportunity.
- Will have the right to vote on all SARNAK matters.
- Members must read the Bylaws and Standard Operating Guidelines.
- Must pay annual dues at Annual Business Meeting, or within sixty (60) days of Annual Business Meeting.
- Must complete all aspects of application, including, but not limited to, specified ICS courses.



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Code of Conduct

- Members may not, under any circumstances, be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at any team function.
- Members may not bring firearms of any kind to any team function.
- Members may not speak to the press or media of any kind regarding SARNAK functions without the express permission of the Coordinator. All press or media requests of any kind should be directed to the Coordinator.
- Members must maintain positivity and professionalism.
- Members may not take video, audio or photographs unless specifically instructed to by the Incident Commander, Coordinator or Crew Boss.
- Members must never arrive at and represent SARNAK at a search, rescue or other first response unless they have been dispatched by a SARNAK officer.

Discipline

Members who violate any rule or code of conduct, or behave in a manner that reflects negatively on SARNAK, or puts Members or others in a dangerous position, shall be subject to discipline, up to and including revocation of membership.

- Upon the first violation, any Officer may issue a verbal warning and reprimand.
- After a second violation, or if a first violation is egregious enough, at least two (2) Officers shall determine appropriate disciplinary measures.
- Disciplinary measures include: Verbal reprimand; written reprimand; suspension from SARNAK activities; immediate removal from SARNAK function (if violation occurs during an official team function); temporary or permanent revocation of membership. Members will be notified in writing of any disciplinary measures.
- Members forego all dues paid in the event of suspension or revocation of membership, and no refunds shall be issued.
- Members will not be eligible for training or mileage reimbursements in the event of suspension or revocation of membership.
- If Officers recommend revocation of membership, a vote of the Members present at the next regular training or meeting is required.



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Officer Duties and Qualifications

Coordinator

- Coordinate with Officers for trainings, meetings and business purposes.
- Perform the duties of other Officers if Officer is unavailable.
- Act as main contact for NYSDEC and forest rangers as well as media and press.
- Secondary signatory for all checks, money orders, certified checks, etc. drawn from the organization's bank accounts.
- Maintain call-out list and roster
- Submit search reports to the New York State Federation of Search and Rescue Teams within 48 hours of conclusion of search efforts.
- Compile for Annual Report the following information:
 - Number of searches, rescues and incidents responded to.
 - Number of SARNAK members involved in each mission.
 - Total number of hours SARNAK put in on missions for the year.
 - Total number of days SARNAK put in on missions for the year.
 - Number of applicants, number of applicants approved.
 - Reports from other Officers.
- Compile and present to the membership at Annual Meeting the Annual Report.

Training Officer

- Develop and organize monthly trainings and create annual training calendar.
- Track and record training attendance for each member and all prospects.
- Track and record pertinent certifications (WFA, CPR) for all members.
- Notify all members and prospects of training time, date, location and activity at least seven (7) days prior to activity.
- Act as second in command for SARNAK. Take on Coordinator duties if Coordinator is unavailable.
- Reports on training activities at the Annual Membership meeting. The report will include, but is not limited to: total number of trainings in the past year; number of individuals who attended trainings; and total number of hours dedicated to trainings. If unable to attend the annual meeting, a report will be provided to the Coordinator.



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Treasurer

- Keeps all the financial records of the organization on a fiscal year basis.
- Primary signatory and recorder for all checks, money orders, certified checks, etc. drawn from the organization's bank accounts.
- Receives all checks, cash and other monetary items for deposit. Records and deposits all funds into the organization's bank accounts.
- Receives and reconciles all bank statements for the organization.
- Has electronic access to all of the organization's financial accounts, oversees any transfer of funds, ensures their accuracy, and secures all passwords. Passwords are held solely by the Treasurer and Coordinator and **must** be changed whenever one or the other Officer is replaced OR whenever it is deemed necessary or prudent.
- Files any necessary IRS and/or state tax forms – i.e. form 990 (e-postcard) with the federal government, particularly those that protect the organization's non-profit status. With majority approval of the Officers, the treasurer may choose to arrange complicated filings with an accountant or other accredited financial advisor.
- Collects, records, tracks and deposits all dues and membership fees of the organization.
- Tracks mileage, medical and any other reimbursement to ensure that it complies with the Standard Operating Guidelines – including, but not limited to, the collection of proper receipts for all transactions prior to reimbursement.
- Identifies and manages financial risk.
- Reports on the financial condition of the organization at the Annual Membership Meeting and other business meetings as deemed necessary. The report will include, but may not be limited to: current bank balances; a breakdown of expenditures and inflows; and the current cash position of the organization. If unable to attend the meeting, a report will be provided to the Coordinator.
- Perform, with the Coordinator and Secretary and one (1) team member, an annual audit of the SARNAK financial records.

Secretary

- Take meeting notes at all trainings and meetings, including the following:



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- Date and location, as well as start and end time of each training and meeting.
- Members present, including email and phone number.
- Prospective members present, including email and phone number.
- Subject of training and /or business items discussed.
- Within 48 hours of each meeting or training, provide all members with a PDF of the meeting minutes via email.
- Respond to all correspondence, including but not limited to, sending thank-yous for donations, requests for more information, etc.
- At the Annual Membership Meeting, reads the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting. If unable to attend the meeting, a report will be provided to the Coordinator.

Uniform

Members are expected to dress professionally and appropriately for all team functions, including searches.

- No cotton clothing.
- If SARNAK logo is worn, it should be over left breast.
- Members should wear an item of safety orange or yellow clothing (hat, vest, shirt, jacket, etc.).

Operations

Call Out/Deployment

SARNAK can only be deployed in search and rescue functions by the DEC or FEDSAR. SARNAK does not search for lost or missing pets.

- DEC/FEDSAR will be provided with an up-to-date call-out list after any change in Officers. DEC will call, in order: Coordinator, Training Officer, Treasurer, Secretary.
- First Officer contacted will use the Member call-out list to alert Members via phone and email to provide all necessary information on the incident.
- Members should respond immediately with their availability.



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Radio Communications

SARNAK uses hand-held portable radios programmed with emergency bands, DEC bands and SARNAK channels. Radios can only be used for official SARNAK functions. Family and friends of the subject may be within ear shot of radio transmissions, so do not transmit personal information or anything about the status of the subject.

- Plain language only, no 10-codes.
- Press talk button, wait, then speak. Speak slowly and clearly. □ Absolutely no profanity.
- Identify yourself as: “SARNAK, LAST NAME” (ie: “SARNAK, Smith to DEC”).

Provision of Medical Care

- Members shall be responsible for providing medical assistance only to the level at which they are trained and certified and in accordance with the protocols of the credentialing agency(s).
- Medical care rendered in the field may be relinquished upon the arrival of another certified provider, for treatment or transportation, at the roadside or landing zone, or upon refusal of treatment or transportation.
- Confidential documentation of medical care shall be maintained by the Coordinator. Members are responsible for reporting medical care issued.
- Recognized certifying organizations include, but are not limited to:
 - American Red Cross, National Safety Council, National Ski Patrol, SOLO, NOLS, Wilderness Medical Associates, American Heart Association.
- Documentation of first aid and medical certification(s) shall be provided at the time of membership, and on an annual basis to the Training Officer at the time of membership renewal.



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Administration Financial obligations

- No member or officer may incur an expense on behalf of SARNAK without the express written permission of the Coordinator. The Coordinator must have written agreement with at least one (1) other Officer before incurring a expense.
- Any purchase of \$350 or more requires a majority vote of the membership attending a regular or special business meeting. Purchases of less than \$350 must be approved by a majority vote of the Officers.
- Only the Treasurer and Coordinator shall have access to bank accounts and ability to sign SARNAK checks.
- All matters involving finances must include the Treasurer's involvement. □ Secretary shall receive all financial statements for review.
- No debt shall be incurred on behalf of SARNAK without a vote of the team.

Reimbursements

- Members in good standing are eligible for two financial reimbursements.
 - Mileage
 - Members who drive to a search are eligible for mileage reimbursement of \$0.15 per mile, up to a maximum of 200 total miles per day. Searches must be initiated by DEC or FEDSAR and approved by the Coordinator prior to the deployment. Members are encouraged to carpool. Reimbursement cannot be applied to trainings or meetings.
 - Officers that attend FEDSAR functions are eligible for mileage reimbursement upon approval by the Coordinator and/or Treasurer.
 - Medical
 - Members, after one (1) year of membership, are eligible for an annual reimbursement of half, up to \$350, for medical training. Reimbursement will be paid upon submission to the Treasurer of proof of successful completion and amount paid for training.
 - Only Active Members in good standing are eligible for medical reimbursement. Associate Members who become Active Members can apply for retroactive reimbursement for up to one year after training is completed.



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- Trainings eligible: First aid, CPR, Wilderness First Aid, Wilderness Advanced First Aid, Wilderness First Responder, Wilderness EMT, Wilderness ALS. Other medical training may be eligible, contact the Coordinator if unsure.
- Reimbursement will be for half the amount of training, with a maximum payout of \$350. For instance, a \$200 course would earn a reimbursement of \$100. A \$700 course would earn a reimbursement of \$350.



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Definitions

- Annual Meeting – The annual meeting of the organization held at the March business meeting. Officer Elections and appointments for the following fiscal year are made.
- Application for Membership – The form to be completed with release and copies of certifications to be submitted to the membership committee for consideration.
- Authorized Agency – Recognized law enforcement or search organizations that SARNAK Officers approve for team deployment.
- Callout – Activation of the phone chain as either notice of deployment or to inform members as necessary. Callouts are sometimes limited to members that are qualified to respond in the capacity of the resource requested. Callouts for deployment are initiated by authorized agencies. Callouts for training are initiated by the Training Officer; callouts for meetings are initiated by the Secretary. Any other callout can only be authorized the Coordinator.
- Closed Grid – Search pattern where search line members are closely spaced and within visual contact with one another. Commonly referred to as Type III search patterns where the primary goal is to spot clues as to the subjects having passed through the area being searched.
- Command and Support – Positions and assignments within the SAR incident response that are not field roles in nature and do not require the physical capabilities of field positions.
- Competency – Specific skill needed as part of qualification level.
- Contact List – List of SARNAK Officers along with position and priority of contact.
- DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Responsible for all SAR incidents within the Adirondack Park. Primary authorized agency for team deployment.



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- DEC Dispatch – NYS DEC Dispatch operations in Ray Brook or Albany, NY. Dispatch center for most of the response area of the team.
- Deployment – Response by the team to an actual request for resources.
- Designated Contact Persons - List of SARNAK Officers along with position and priority of contact.
- Evaluation – Method used to determine whether a member has achieved the knowledge, training or testing for the competency.
- Federation/FEDSAR – NYS Federation of Search and Rescue Teams. An association of SAR teams from NYS.
- Fiscal Year – The twelve month period from April 1 through March 31.
- Hasty Search – Search pattern where areas of high probability location of the subject are searched by small teams. Typically trails, drainages and other areas of probable travel.
- ICS - Incident Command System. Nationally recognized system of organizing responses to emergency incidents that defines positions of responsibility and organization of authority within the emergency response.
- Incident – specific happening that is the causative factor for a need for emergency resource response.
- Incident Command – person or command organization that is responsible for the organized response to an incident.
- Informed Decision –
 - Incident Command (IC) has the authority to use all resources at their disposal in whatever capacity they desire.
 - Incident Command may assign a resource that is not certified to respond in the requested capacity.
 - It is incumbent upon the person/resource responding; to inform Incident



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Command to the fullest extent possible that they are not certified to respond in the capacity requested, and that Incident Command has full understanding of the limitations of the resources.

- So long as Incident Command has full knowledge of the limitations and lack of certification of the responding resource and still decides to use that resource in such role as they are uncertified, the team member may respond in the manner requested.
 - Keeping in mind that team members are encouraged to not operate in a situation that they are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with. The decision to operate remains that of the individual.
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- Membership Committee – A standing committee of the organization established as of January 1, 2006 that is charged with reviewing a member applicant's background and making a recommendation to the team regarding the applicant. The resolution creating the membership committee names the initial members of the committee but does not establish guidelines for future appointment.
 - Membership Renewal – Annually as of April 1. Officers establish dues.
 - NIMS – National Incident Management System. National system that defines how federal agencies incorporate into the ICS system when emergency incidents reach a level of national significance.
 - NYS – New York State
 - Officers – Elected officer positions are Coordinator, Training Officer, Secretary and Treasurer.
 - Open Grid – Search pattern where search line members are widely spaced usually within vocal contact with one another. Commonly referred to as Type II search patterns where the primary goal is to establish vocal contact with the subject.
 - Phone Chain – Process of contacting team members by phone, pager, email, etc.
 - Requesting Agency – see Authorized Agency.



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- Roster –Listing of active team members, contact information and qualification levels that are approved to be contacted for deployment.
- SAR – Search and Rescue.
- SARNAK – Search and Rescue of the Northern Adirondacks.
- Scheduled Meetings – Regular meetings of the organization, and other team organized training Events.
- Stand-by – Notification of possible response to incident. If members get a STAND-BY notification, they should be prepared for deployment.
- Stand-down – End of official activities or end of stand-by.
- Training Hours – Team membership requires a certain amount of training hours. Any SAR related training that the member takes should be noted to training officer with copies of certifications received. Training officer will include with documented training.
- Training Session – regular training session of the organization held on the even numbered months.
- Type II,– see Open Grid.
- Type III – see Closed Grid