

RANDALL'S ADVENTURE AND TRAINING SEARCH AND RESCUE (RAT-SAR)



MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES



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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND & TEAM PURPOSE

RAT-SAR is a 501(c)(3) regional search, rescue, and training organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Alabama. RAT-SAR is founded on the Mountain Rescue / Alpine principles of self-sufficient, mobile teams trained to operate for extended periods of time in remote wilderness, mountainous, high angle, subterranean and other austere environments. RAT-SAR does not charge for its services.

Its purpose shall be:

- A. Provide trained search and rescue volunteers working under an incident command system for the purpose of technical rescue, search, and recovery operations in wilderness, high angle and/or natural subterranean environments, and to assist in search and rescue and recovery efforts during natural disasters.
- B. To provide search and rescue training to Search and Rescue (SAR) personnel operating in wilderness, high angle and/or natural subterranean environments.
- C. To further the science, knowledge and practice of technical search and rescue in remote wilderness, natural subterranean, and other austere environments.
- D. To be active at a membership level with the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads supporting their goals and mission for search and rescue in the state of Alabama.

The primary training discipline for all RAT-SAR members is **L.A.S.T.** (the ability to **L**ocate, **A**ccess, **S**tabilize and **T**ransport a subject from a wilderness or other austere environment to definitive care).



CHAPTER 2 TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Section 1 – Membership Eligibility

Membership is open to anyone 18 years of age and older who, (a) provides all necessary documentation, (b) successfully meets minimum training and physical fitness requirements, and (c) is approved by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

Section 2 – Meetings and Training Sessions

RAT-SAR meetings may coincide with monthly training days. RAT-SAR Training Officers will set an agenda for training days, and scheduled training days may apply to mandatory continuing education credit hours. All members will be notified of scheduled training days or changes in scheduled training days. In addition, all RAT-SAR meetings and training days will be posted on the www.ratsar.org website. All Regular Members are required to attend satisfactory training each year to maintain current membership as stated in Chapter 3, Section 4 of these guidelines.

Section 3 – Dues

RAT-SAR members are required to pay \$38.00 per year membership dues to cover membership fees with the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads (AARS) and workman's comp insurance (AARS fees are \$20.00 per year, per member and workman's comp fees are \$18.00 per year, per member). All RAT-SAR members must be members of the AARS.

Section 4 – Documentation

The following documentation will be required from each member of RAT-SAR:

- RAT-SAR membership application form
- Liability release form
- Current, valid, state-issued driver's license

Section 5 – Voluntary Leaves of Absence

RAT-SAR members needing extended leaves of absence from the RAT-SAR team and training schedule shall submit a request to the Executive Board. Any leave of absence shall be noted in that team member's file.

Section 6 – Insurance

RAT-SAR team members must have their own health, accident, vehicle and property insurance. **Note: workman's comp only covers members responding to official callouts in Alabama and the contiguous states of Alabama.**



CHAPTER 3 PERSONNEL GUIDELINES

Section 1 – Volunteer Membership

Participation and membership in RAT-SAR is strictly voluntary. No compensation or expense reimbursements are provided to any member of RAT-SAR unless approved by the Executive Board. All levels of membership require active participation in meetings / training sessions.

Section 2 – Regular Membership

Regular Members are members in good standing who have met all training requirements. Regular Members will complete a satisfactory number of training hours per calendar year. This training will be reviewed continuously by RAT-SAR Training Officers and by the Executive Board to determine competency.

- Regular Members may respond to call-outs.
- Regular Members hold full voting privileges.
- Regular Members can serve on the Executive Board.
- Regular Members can deploy to rescues as requested by AHJs.
- Within the RAT-SAR organization, Regular Members can assume Incident Command roles, Team Leadership roles, or Rescuer roles **as per their training level**.

Section 3 – Support Membership

- Support Members may operate in roles defined by the Team Leader, Operations Officer, or Executive Board.
- Support Members hold no voting privileges.
- Support Members may attend RAT-SAR training events.
- Support Members do not have to complete the Regular Member minimum training requirements, but are encouraged to do so.
- Support Members can deploy to callouts when requested by the Executive Board or Operations Officer.
- All new members are considered Support Members until all Regular Member training has been completed.

Section 4 – Required Training

RAT-SAR will maintain a training file for each member. Training files will be updated regularly by the Training Officer(s) with certifications, re-certification requirement dates, and continuing education hours. It is the responsibility of the member to forward appropriate certificates and training documentation to the RAT-SAR Training Officer.



The following training certificates are required to be submitted with membership application to RAT-SAR. This training is required of all Support Members:

- FEMA IS-100 (FEMA online course)
- FEMA IS-200 (FEMA online course)
- FEMA IS-700 (FEMA online courses)
- CPR / BLS (from a nationally recognized provider)

Regular Member Training:

The RAT-SAR Search and Rescue Training Series is a Position Task Book (PTB) format with five single-day courses and one online course. To receive Regular Membership with RAT-SAR, candidates must successfully complete all six courses and have their instructor sign their PTB for each successfully completed course. Candidates will submit their completed PTB to RAT-SAR for review and certification as a regular member. The PTB will be issued to the candidate at the first class they take. These required classes are at no charge to the applicant and can be completed after the membership application is approved:

- Land Navigation / Map & Compass / GPS (RAT-SAR or AARS course)
- Basic Rescuer (RAT-SAR or AARS course equivalent)
- Intro To SAR (RAT-SAR or AARS course equivalent)
- SarTopo / CalTopo (RAT-SAR or AARS course equivalent)
- Initial Response (RAT-SAR or AARS course equivalent)
- Swiftwater Awareness (free TEEX online course: <https://teex.org/class/tng80a/>)

Acceptable Equivalents To Above:

- Intro to Search and Rescue: Current NASAR SARTECH III, II or I, or other ASTM F2209-20 compliant course or NFPA 1006 compliant course (minimum NFPA 1006-2021 11.1 and 11.2).
- Basic Rescuer: ASTM F2752-19 or NFPA 1006 Rope Rescue compliant course (minimum NFPA 1006-2021 5.1 and 5.2).
- TEEX Swiftwater: NFPA 1006 Swiftwater Rescue compliant course (NFPA 1006-2021 18.1 or higher) or RAT-SAR Backcountry Swiftwater Rescue course.

Section 5 – Specialized Technician and Additional Training

Specialized Training (Encouraged but not mandatory for regular membership):

- Technical Rope Rescue
- Swiftwater / Flood Rescue
- TEEX Wide Area Search
- FEMA ICS 300
- FEMA ICS 400
- EMT (or other higher medical certification)
- HAM Radio Technician License (2-Meter)
- NC MSAR Program



Section 6 – Training Providers

RAT-SAR members may use various training venues; however, outside Training Providers must be approved by the Executive Board by a majority vote of the Board. The Executive Board may choose to require Training Providers to submit a certificate of liability insurance, business license, and completed IRS W9 form to the RAT-SAR Executive Board before being approved as an official Training Provider.

All training for RAT-SAR members will be approved by the Training and/or Operations Officer(s). Training Providers will stipulate a full synopsis of the course being offered, a skills check-off sheet (Job Performance Requirements), and minimum gear requirements for the course. At the conclusion of each course, the training provider will provide copies of completed and signed Job Performance Requirements for each RAT-SAR student to the RAT-SAR Training Officer(s).

The authority for certifying that all members have met the training requirements will be RAT-SAR. RAT-SAR, at its discretion, may choose to independently test each member who has completed training through an outside Training Provider before certifying that member as fit for operations with RAT-SAR.

Section 7 – Physical Fitness Requirements

RAT-SAR members must be fit to serve in a search and rescue capacity that may require carrying patients in litters over long distances, hiking over rugged terrain, or accessing patients in remote areas. Each RAT-SAR team member shall maintain a level of physical endurance and agility required of strenuous search and rescue missions. At the discretion of the Executive Board, team members may be required to improve fitness levels in order to maintain Regular Membership status.

Section 8 – Grandfather Clause

The Executive Board may choose to “grandfather” members into the RAT-SAR organization as Regular Members based on previous training records, membership with other search and rescue teams, and/or known ability to work under the conditions of membership in RAT-SAR. This Grandfather Clause may apply to all training and physical fitness requirements if so decided by the Executive Board.

Section 9 – Team Member Duties

- Team members assume the responsibility of clear-headed, competent performance when on scene in a rescue operation.
- Team members will adhere to a clearly delineated call-out procedure.
- Team members shall provide and maintain their own personal equipment.
- Team members shall maintain and keep in good condition all issued equipment and uniforms.
- Once a team member becomes part of an assigned search and rescue mission, he/she shall serve on that mission until the operational period is completed, or is relieved of duty by a RAT-SAR Team Leader or by the Incident Commander.
- During a non-training search and rescue mission, no team member shall attempt to perform or encourage another team member to attempt to perform a skill that is outside of that member's scope of training.



- The rescuer's personal safety, the safety of the team, the safety of other search and rescue personnel, and the safety of the subject of a search and rescue mission shall remain the top priority throughout a search and rescue mission and/or training exercise.
- Team Members shall report any injuries that occur before or during a callout that would adversely affect the ability to carry out duties.
- Team Members shall, at all times, conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of moral, ethical and legal behavior.

Section 10 – Disciplinary Policy / Membership Revocation

RAT-SAR Team Members may have membership revoked without warning for any of the following reasons:

- Violating any provision of the RAT-SAR Membership Guidelines.
- Working outside their scope of knowledge without prior consent of the Team Leader or trained technician.
- Failing to complete training standards within a reasonable timeframe.
- Conducting any illegal or immoral activity that could bring harm to the reputation of RAT-SAR or its members.
- Acting on behalf of RAT-SAR without consent of the Executive Board.
- Self-deploying to any search and rescue call without authorization.
- Failing or refusing to follow RAT-SAR command structure.

Membership may also be revoked for any other reason deemed by the Executive Board (a) to be detrimental to the RAT-SAR team or (b) to produce an unsafe environment when working in a search and rescue or training capacity.

In the event a RAT-SAR team member has their membership revoked, that member will immediately surrender any and all property belonging to RAT-SAR to an Executive Board member.

Section 11 – Inactive Membership

Regular Members who fail to complete satisfactory training may be placed on inactive status while they work to develop competencies. If Inactive Members do not work to complete training in a timely fashion, they may have their membership terminated by a majority vote of the Executive Board. Inactive Members hold no voting privileges.



Randall's Adventure & Training Search and Rescue (RAT-SAR)
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RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
(Please sign and give to Executive Board)

I, the undersigned Randall's Adventure & Training Search and Rescue team member applicant, acknowledged having received a copy of the MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES.

I agree to abide by all stipulations described therein.

Applicant Signature

Date