BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST

SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN

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BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST

SEARCH AND RESCUE PLAN

Background

Forest involvement in search and rescue is increasing as public use of National Forest lands increases. Requests for search and rescue assistance often come on weekends or after normal work hours, with the requesting party expecting immediate answers and actions. Cooperating federal agencies, State, and local municipalities occasionally request helicopter support from Teton Interagency Dispatch for search and rescue or law enforcement missions on lands within their respective jurisdictions. The Bridger Teton SAR plan addresses procedures for accommodating these requests.

Forest Service employees must be knowledgeable of their authority and responsibility, the resources available, and of procedures established for dealing with search and rescue on National Forest lands. Responsibility for costs and liabilities incurred during the emergencies must be understood.

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 1599, Search and Rescue Operations (Appendix F) provides national policy direction for SARs on National Forest Lands. This plan tiers to the Forest Service policy, providing local on-the-ground direction. FSM 1599 provides the authority to Forest Service Line Officers to provide search and rescue aid to cooperating agencies under certain criteria. Refer to Appendix G for policy specifics.

Purpose and Scope

The County Sheriff has the responsibility for search, rescue, and emergency medical activities within their respective county, regardless of landownership. The Forest Service role is one of cooperation and support of the County Sheriff.

This document provides Forest protocols for search, rescue, and emergency medical search and rescue (SAR) operations and emergency medical response (EMR) on the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF). Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) Rangers and other National Park Service medical providers may be requested and assist with County operations on Forest lands. Grand Teton National Park has separate SAR policy that addresses protocols for DOI employees. This document also outlines the parameters under which the BTNF will support GTNP through our interagency relationship.

In those cases where immediate action is necessary to prevent further injury, suffering, or death, an on scene Forest Service employee may initiate incident response and temporarily assume a leadership role, until a transition with the County Sheriff's Department occurs.

Memoranda of Understandings (MOU) will be signed by the BTNF and each County Sheriff. These MOUs will describe the coordination needs and communication expectations between the BTNF and the counties.

Connection to Related BT Plans

The **Bridger Teton National Forest Emergency Response Plan** supports the Forest's emergency medical providers through an integrated EMS system. For more information on this plan see: http://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/dispatch/wy-tdc/documents/logistics-dispatch/SAR_EMS/BTNF_EmergencyResponsePlan_2013.docx.

The Bridger-Teton NF has a contract in place that provides physician medical oversight for our EMT's. This plan also accounts for initial and ongoing training of the providers; certification; integration into local, regional, and national EMS systems; protocols; documentation and Quality Assurance program; and culminates in providing optimal patient care.

FSM 6710 Safety and Health Administration addresses authorities and responsibilities for CISM. The Bridger-Teton N.F. has checklists for each of the roles which may be filled in case of the occurrence of death and /or serious injury at the following location:

O:\NFS\BridgerTeton\Program\6700SafetyHealth\6710SafetyHealthAdmin\Death_Serious_Injury

These checklists provide direction for the Forest Supervisor and subordinate line officers following a fatality or serious injury of an employee or member of the public that may have serious long-term adverse effects on the agency, its employees, their families, and the community.

Responsibilities

County Sheriff – Refers to the Sheriff of the County in which the SAR is located.

The County may request logistical assistance from the Forest Service in terms of personnel, equipment and/or supplies. This assistance can include the use of Forest Service communications systems, qualified personnel, transportation equipment, maps, aerial photos, etc., and is at the discretion of the Forest Supervisor and District Rangers.

The County Sheriff's Department is responsible for determining areas of limited access, logistical support (including air SAR operation), and for the safety of all personnel involved.

Non-Federal aircraft (including life flight) requested by the county will be the responsibility of the County Sheriff. Forest Service personnel may assist in loading/unloading patients and providing aircraft landing area security and safety within the scope of their training and under the direction of a county employee and/or life flight crew. Forest Service personnel costs will be paid for by the employees respective program dollars within the first operational period of a SAR.

Unless the aircraft and pilot(s) are carded by Department of Agriculture or DOI, Bridger-Teton employees will not fly in the aircraft unless approved by the RAO (Regional Aviation Officer) per FS National Aviation Safety and Management Plan.

Federal contract aircraft may be requested by Teton County through Teton Interagency Dispatch

and aircraft flight services will be paid under the provisions within the Mutual Aid Agreement which exists between Grand Teton National Park and the Teton County Sheriff's Office. Federal contract aircraft will be managed by a qualified aircraft manager and will operate under all applicable contract regulations. Aircraft requests will be made through Teton Interagency Dispatch Center (TIDC), as described in Appendix C.

Serious injuries or deaths will be reported to TIDC who will notify the Forest Supervisor.

> For SAR operations requiring motorized and/or mechanized use, Counties will follow the direction outlined in Appendix G. The appropriate Forest Service Special Agent or Law Enforcement Officer should receive copies of reports as available from County Sheriff's Departments regarding serious injuries or deaths on the National Forest.

Forest Service - Refers to the USDA Forest Service Employees and Teton Interagency Dispatch Center

TIDC will notify the appropriate County any time an incident is initially reported to TIDC. Information will include location, type of incident, and Forest Service point of contact if Forest personnel are on scene. A sample information form is included in Appendix D. TIDC will be responsible for notifying the contacts listed in section 4 (Procedures).

For SAR operations that are expected to last longer than one operational period, involve multiple jurisdictions, or that involve a fatality, the Forest Service will designate a line officer to act as Agency Representative.

At the Sheriff's request, the Forest may assist the Sheriff with SAR operations on the Bridger-Teton Forest. The Agency Representative will determine if the request is appropriate and if the Forest Service can meet the request. Forest Service employees assisting the county will abide by Forest Service regulations and will not participate in SAR activities when they do not have appropriate training.

If deemed necessary to reduce suffering or save lives, a Bridger Teton N. F. Line Officer or an Incident Commander with appropriate delegation of authority may initiate a SAR operation and take an interim leadership role. The Line Officer or Incident Commander will notify TIDC of their intent and request additional resources as needed. The Forest Service will maintain the leadership role for the incident until the Sheriff's Department can transition and assume command. Actions taken may range from requesting the necessary assistance to administering emergency first aid. Once incident leadership has transitioned to the County, Forest Service personnel will be under supervision of the County IC, unless a unified command has been established or be relieved of their positions.

In the event of a death, the Forest Service will not disturb the site unless directed by the jurisdictional authority of the scene. Forest Service employees will not release witnesses or injured parties until directed to do so by this same authority unless injured parties need additional care not available on scene.

Forest Service employees may assist with National Park Service initiated SAR operations if requested by the Grand Teton National Park through Teton Interagency Dispatch.

Specific Forest Roles and Responsibilities

Forest Service Agency Representative (AREP):

The Forest Service will provide an agency representative for major SAR incidents expected to last more than one operational period, involve multiple jurisdictions, serious injury or fatality. The District Ranger or their designated acting will normally fill this role; in the event the Ranger or their designated acting is unavailable, the Forest Supervisor will fill that position.

The AREP will ensure Forest Service personnel who elect to volunteer for SAR and take annual leave are aware they are considered not in pay status and unprotected by agency employment entitlements.

The AREP will coordinate with the Incident Commander (IC). The AREP should make an effort to be present at the Incident Command Post through the incident as the coordination will be most effective this way.

The AREP role will be to assure the safety of Forest Service employees involved, provide requested logistical assistance to the Sheriff, and ensure that unwanted resource impacts are minimized. This AREP will determine the need to set up unified command with other jurisdictions to coordinate the SAR response.

The AREP will monitor Forest Service employees to determine if Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is indicated for involved Forest Service employees. The AREP will also determine if an After Action Review (AAR) is appropriate.

Teton Interagency Dispatch Center (TIDC):

TIDC will function as communications and procurer of resources for incidents within the Bridger- Teton National Forest. TIDC will maintain communications with the affected Counties.

Search and rescue flight requests from local cooperating agencies will be made through TIDC from the respective SAR authorities within the local jurisdictions. These may be Sheriffs or deputized members of authorized SAR entities.

These requests must include answers to the following questions:

- Is the nature of the emergency such that air evacuation is the most appropriate extraction method?
- Are we providing a skill and/or resource that is not readily available from another venue?

- Can this request be satisfied within one operational period?
- Are the personnel resources you need limited to Teton Helitack and/or National Park Service personnel?

The intent for the above questions is to streamline our decision process while still meeting our policy requirements. The answers to these questions will allow decision makers to expedite the decision process to allow use of our helicopters and/or allow mechanical wilderness intrusions for SAR purposes. We expect requesting entities to perform reasonable risk assessments prior to making such requests figuring in whether this is the most appropriate tool for the job considering all options.

TIDC will forward these requests to the Park and Forest Fire Duty Officers during the exclusive use helicopter contract mandatory availability period. The Duty Officers will jointly approve requests to assist cooperators for SAR via authority granted to them by their respective line officer. The identified NPS SAR Coordinator, on behalf of the Chief Ranger, and through communication with the daily assigned helicopter manager will decide whether or not to accommodate the request. Decisions should be risk based and consider the entirety of the circumstances. The Forest and/or Park will supply required helicopter management and support personnel for these missions. Cooperating agency personnel must comply with all applicable Forest Service/Park Service policy and guidelines.

For SAR operations requiring motorized and/or mechanized use, TIDC will follow the approval procedures outlines in Appendix G.

Forest Public Information Officer:

The Forest Public Information Officer will coordinate with the Sheriff's Office on media releases and information requests. The Forest Public Information Officer will take the public information lead unless otherwise agreed upon.

Forest Fire Duty Officer:

The Forest and Park Fire duty officers will be notified in the event that any fire resources are requested for assignment to a SAR. All requests for federal aviation assets must be approved by the Forest and Park Duty Officers.

Procedures

Initial Reporting

Reporting parties for all incidents on Forest Service lands will be directed to TIDC, who will compile and coordinate all initial responses.

TIDC will make the following notifications. Notification will include a brief description of the incident.

- Appropriate County Dispatch Office
- Forest Supervisor

- District Ranger
- FS Law Enforcement Officer
- Forest Public Information Officer
- Forest Safety Officer
- Winter Sports Administrator if accident is related to winter time sports activities (avalanche, snowmobile or ski area associated)

Forest Supervisor will notify:

- Regional Forester or his/her acting

District Ranger will notify:

- Front liners and other District staff as appropriate
- Jackson District River Manager if river related (most likely Snake River)
- Minerals staff, if accident is related or in the vicinity of oil and gas activity.

Forest Safety Officer will notify as appropriate:

- Regional Safety Officer

Actions to take until County assumes command

Forest Service employees on site should take the following actions while waiting for the County to assume command:

1. Notify TIDC with type of incident, location, if the injured lost party is a Forest Service employee on duty or a non- FS employee
2. Determine and inform Dispatch if there are any immediate needs.
3. Ensure scene safety (for themselves, other Forest Service employees on site, and the injured party)
4. Provide assistance and first aid/emergency medical care within their ability
5. If the involved party is a Forest Service employee, and the Forest Service determines that they will handle the incident internally then inform Dispatch who will make a courtesy call to the appropriate County Sheriff/Dispatch.
6. Gather information and retain witnesses until County authorizes their release.
7. Communicate to TIDC if the need for FS resources is going to exceed one operational shift for subsequent line officer approval.

Communications

Once the County takes responsibility for the incident, the County will determine the radio frequencies to use. The County may request temporary use of a Forest Service frequency if required.

Forest Service personnel assigned to a County Rescue will be provided the SAR frequencies that will

be used on the incident. FS personnel will notify TIDC when they have arrived at the incident and are in communication with the incident organization.

County Dispatch offices may request TIDC to provide flight following for county requested aircraft and or life flight operations. Teton Interagency Fire Exclusive Use aircraft should have qualified flight followers or aircraft dispatchers providing flight following. Transfer of flight following responsibilities will be clearly understood and documented by both dispatch offices.

Forest Service/Interagency Resources

Requests for Forest Service and Interagency resources, in addition to those initially assigned by the District Ranger, will be placed through TIDC.

The Forest Service and the County provide financial protection in case of injury or death to their respective employees only. Forest employees must be within pay status to qualify for such protection, including workmen's compensation. Protection available to Forest employees who volunteer emergency service outside of pay status is limited to their personal insurance. Compensatory time is considered as being within pay status. Annual leave taken to volunteer is not pay status.

BTNF to GTNP SAR support

The BTNF and GTNP have worked cooperatively on SAR operations for decades. An agreement is in place to compensate Forest Service employees that are requested to support GTNP SAR operations. This agreement is set up to provide for overtime and travel costs for SAR's that extend beyond one operational shift.

The scope of work under that agreement is:

"The National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park, conducts Search and Rescue (SAR) missions that frequently require assistance from the USFS, Bridger-Teton National Forest helitack crew, to manage and staff the Teton Interagency Helicopters as well as to provide additional logistical support.

Expected costs covered under this agreement are: personnel services, to include premium pays, such as overtime and hazard pays as applicable; per diem and subsistence costs, if personnel are to remain away from their duty stations and as covered under Federal Travel Regulations. Additionally, supplies and/or equipment committed to these missions that suffer significant damage that would warrant repair or replacement can be repaired or replaced under this agreement."

The BTNF and GTNP met shortly before this plan was updated to review our SAR plans and to identify areas of improvement. Both parties agreed to simplify some of the more challenging aspects of the relationship one of which relates to the management of the agreement. Moving forward, the BTNF will assume all costs for Forest Service Helitack on Park SAR's and those of neighboring jurisdictions which the Park and Forest agree to respond collectively and that do not extend beyond a single operational period. The BTNF will not charge the Interagency Agreement for SAR that meets this criteria. For SAR's that are expected to exceed one operational period or require additional FS employees, the Forest Supervisor or Deputy will be need to be consulted for approval of additional program dollar spending.

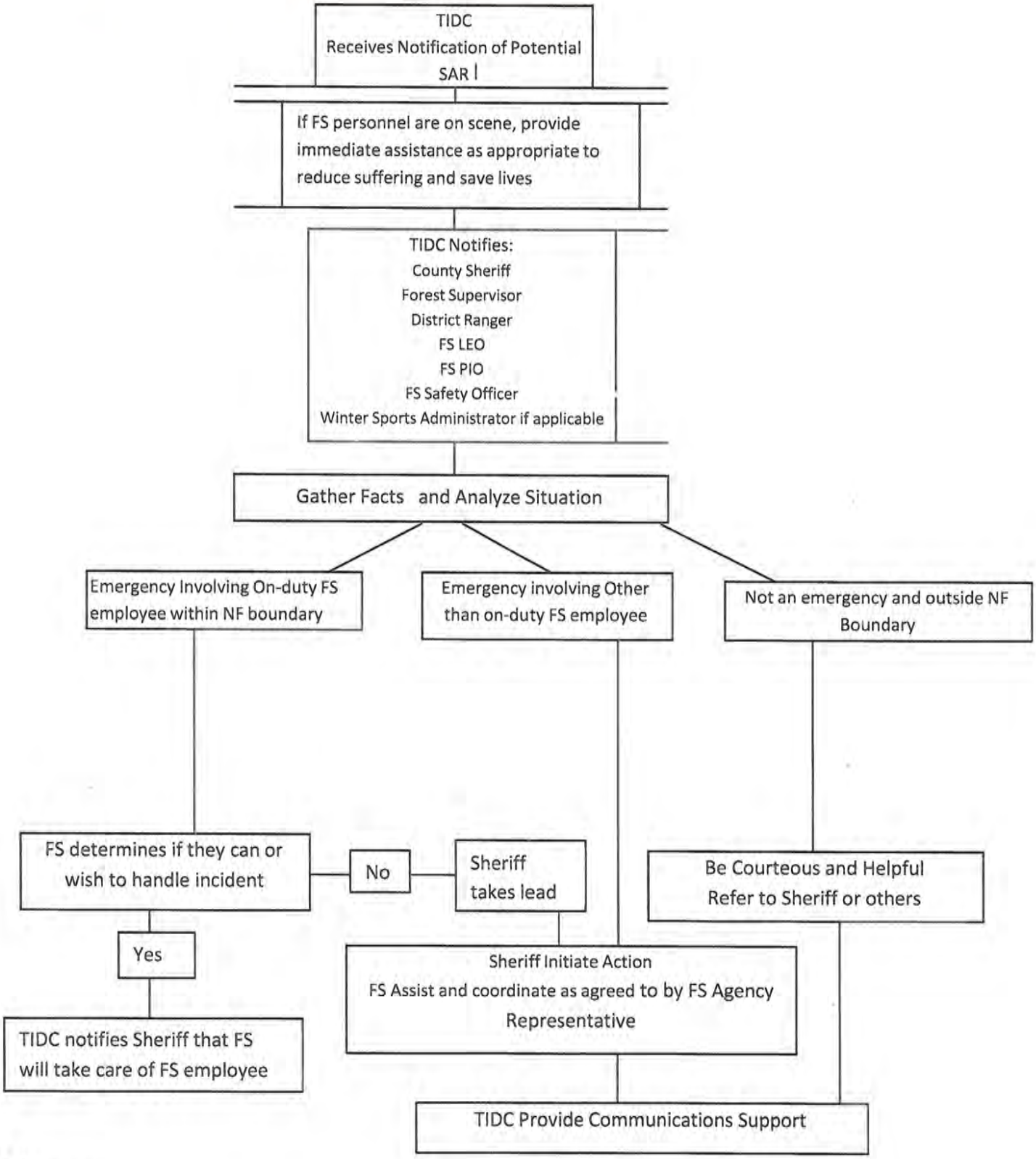
APPENDIX A: Directory

(All Area Codes are 307 unless otherwise iisted)

Title	Name	Work	Cell
Forest Supervisor	Patricia O'Connor	739-5511	500-8292
Deputy Forest Supervisor	Jose Castro	739-5509	413-2018
Forest Safety Officer	Travis Wetzler	739-5550	699-4564
Forest Fire and Aviation Officer	Tobin Kelley	739-5576	413-2028
Deputy Forest Fire Management Officer	Mike Johnston	739-5581	413-2022
Teton Interagency Dispatch Center	Dispatch	739-3301/3630	
Interagency Aviation Officer	David Gomez	739-3339	413-4209
Teton Helibase	Operations	739-5557	
Kemmerer District Ranger (D1)	Adrienne Holcomb	828-5110	203-5514
Big Piney District Ranger (D2)	Don Kranendonk	276-5810	350-0490
Greys River District Ranger (D3)	Richard Raione	886-5310	413-2043
Jackson District Ranger (D4)	Dale Deiter	739-5410	413-2136
Blackrock District Ranger (D6)	Todd Stiles	543-3910	543-9149

Pinedale District Ranger (D7)	Rob Hoelscher	367-5710	413-9783
North Zone LEO	Veronica Gooding	733-5573	208-520-1323
South Zone LEO	Phalen Whitehair	367-5729	413-2139 or 2042
East Zone LEO	Adam Dale	886-5332	699-1990
Supervisory LEO	Vacant		
Winter Sports Administrator	Ray Spencer	739-5415	413-2046
Teton County Sheriff's Office	Dispatch	733-2331	
Lincoln County Sheriff's Office	Dispatch Afton Kemmerer	 885-5231 877-3971	
Sublette County Sheriff's Office	Dispatch	367-4378	
Wyoming Highway Patrol	Dispatch	1-800-442-9090 or 733-3869	
Teton County SAR	Jessica King	732-8337	690-8429
Sublette County SAR (Tip Top)	Kenna Tanner		749-1016

APPENDIX B: Search and rescue flow chart



Appendix C: Outside Agency Request for Teton Interagency Helicopter to Assist in SAR

1. SAR call received at TCSO; TCSAR IC established; request for interagency helicopter is made from TCSO dispatch to TIDC with IC and basic call information.
    - Basic call information should include nature of the emergency, location, resources needed and IC.
    - Request information will need to answer the following questions before the request is granted:
        i. Is the nature of the emergency such that air evacuation is the most appropriate extraction method?
        ii. Are we providing a skill and/or resource that is not readily available from another venue?
        iii. Can this request be satisfied within one operational period?
        iv. Are the personnel resources you need limited to Teton Helitack and/or park service personnel?
2. TIDC gets approval from Park and Forest Duty Officer and a **permanent** Jenny Lake SAR Coordinator.
3. TIDC notifies Teton Helibase/Helicopter Manager that the aircraft is requested, permissions obtained, and they should expect a call from the TCSAR IC.
4. TIDC notifies TCSO dispatch that aircraft is available.
5. TCSAR IC, the helicopter manager for the day, and the JL SAR coordinator (if necessary) communicate directly to coordinate SAR response.
6. Notifications will be made as listed on pages 7 and 8. TIDC will utilize "Send Word Now" (SWN) a text sent to the appropriate people, to expedite their respective notifications

APPENDIX D: Medical incident size-up card

Medical Incident Report

Use items one through nine to communicate situation to communications/dispatch.

1. **CONTACT COMMUNICATIONS/DISPATCH**
   Ex: "Communications, Dh: Alpha. Stand-by for Priority Medical Incident Report." (If life threatening request designated frequency be cleared for emergency traffic.)

2. **INCIDENT STATUS: Provide incident summary and command structure**

Nature of Injury/Illness		*Describe the injury (Ex: Broken leg with bleeding)*
Incident Name:		*Geographic Name – "Medical" (Ex: Trout Meadow Medical)*
Incident Commander:		*Name of IC*
Patient Care:		*Name of Care Provider (Ex: EMT Smith)*

3. **INITIAL PATIENT ASSESSMENT:** *Complete this section for each patient. This is only a brief, initial assessment. Provide additional patient info after completing this 9 Line Report. See page 100 for detailed Patient Assessment.*

Number of Patients:	Male/Female	Age:	Weight:
Conscious?	☐ YES	NO = *MEDEVAC!*	
Breathing:	☐ YES	NO = *MEDEVAC!*	
Mechanism of Injury: *What caused the injury?*			
Lat./Long. (Datum WGS84) Ex: N 40° 42.45' x W 123° 03.24'			

4. **SEVERITY OF EMERGENCY, TRANSPORT PRIORITY**

SEVERITY	TRANSPORT PRIORITY
☐ **URGENT-RED** **Life threatening injury or illness.** Ex: Unconscious, difficulty breathing, bleeding severely, 2°-3° burns more than 4 palm sizes, heat stroke, disoriented.	Ambulance or MEDEVAC helicopter. Evacuation need is **IMMEDIATE**.
☐ **PRIORITY-YELLOW** **Serious injury or illness.** Ex: Significant trauma, not able to walk, 2°-3° burns not more than 1-2 palm sizes	Ambulance or consider air transport if at remote location. Evacuation may be **DELAYED**.
☐ **ROUTINE-GREEN** Not a life threatening injury or illness. Ex: Sprains, strains, minor heat-related illness	Non-Emergency Evacuation considered **Routine of Convenience**.

5. **TRANSPORT PLAN:**

Air Transport: (Agency Aircraft Preferred)	
☐ Helispot	☐ Short-haul/Hoist ☐ Life Flight ☐ Other
Ground Transport:	
☐ Self-Extract	☐ Carry-Out ☐ Ambulance ☐ Other

6. **ADDITIONAL RESOURCE/EQUIPMENT NEEDS:**

☐ Paramedic EMT(s) ☐ Crew(s) ☐ SKED/Backboard/C-Collar
☐ Burn Sheet(s) ☐ Oxygen ☐ Trauma Bag
☐ Medication(s) ☐ IV/Fluid(s) ☐ Cardiac Monitor/AED
☐ **Other (e.g., splints, rope rescue, wheeled litter)**

7. **COMMUNICATIONS:**

Function	Channel Name/Number	Receive (Rx)	Tone/ NAC*	Transmit (Tx)	Tone/ NAC*
Ex: Command	*Forest Rpt. Ch. 2*	*168.3250*	*110.9*	*171.4325*	*110.9*
COMMAND					
AIR-TO-GRND					
TACTICAL					

8. **EVACUATION LOCATION:**

Lat/Long (Datum WGS84) *EX: N 40° 42.45' W 123° 03.24'*	
Patient's ETA to Evacuation Location:	
Helispot/Extraction Size and Hazards	

9. **CONTINGENCY:**

Considerations: If primary options fail, what actions can be implemented in conjunction with primary evacuation method? Be thinking ahead…

APPENDIX E: Guidelines for EMS response

See the Bridger-Teton NF's EMR Plan for more information:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/gbcc/dispatch/wy-tdc/documents/logistics-dispatch/SAR_EMS/BTNF_EmergencyResponsePlan_2013.docx

GUIDELINES FOR EMS RESPONSE

Definitions of medical capability

BLS - Basic Life Support: Includes multimedia first aid, advanced first aid, and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training.

ALS - Advanced Life Support: Includes advanced EMT, paramedic and/or GTNP Rangers and/or Teton and Sublette County Search and Rescue Teams.

GUIDELINES

On National Forest system lands that comprise much of the Northwest part of the State of Wyoming, EMS response takes longer and, if only basic life support is initially dispatched and upon arrival it is determined that advanced life support is needed, the time factor until arrival of ALS may be a serious element in the outcome of the patient.

These guidelines are intended to help those concerned with EMS response.

The following are examples of situations that should, if possible, have ALS field care:

1. **Serious trauma** - Examples include patients with head and spinal injuries, chest injuries, blunt or penetrating abdominal injuries, and fractures of large bones, e.g., femur (thigh) and pelvic bone fractures, full or partial amputations, etc. Patients in shock include: (1) weak, rapid pulse, (2) cold, clammy skin, (3) low blood pressure, (4) altered mental status, and (5) restlessness. However, a patient's compensatory reactions immediately after an accident may delay shock i.e., the patient with serious injuries may **not** have a rapid pulse or decreased blood pressure. But when the compensatory mechanisms no longer compensate sufficiently, the patient may suddenly show signs of shock and may later die of shock.

   Patients with serious head injuries are usually unconscious or semiconscious or have some disorientation, loss of memory, etc. The patient with a skull fracture, particularly a depressed skull fracture, may evidence this injury to someone trained to assess it; but, in some cases, heavy bleeding from the scalp wounds obscures this. In any situation involving a serious head injury, spinal injuries should be automatically considered. In some instances, a serious head injury may not be evidenced until after some time delay. For example, a closed head injury may not be evident until increased intracranial pressure (ICP) builds up due to bleeding within the skull. When the pressure, after a period of time, has built up, the patient begins to lose consciousness, will not

react to stimuli, etc.

2. **Cardiac/Respiratory Conditions** - Patients with cardiac/respiratory conditions may exhibit some or all of the following signs and symptoms:

   Respiratory difficulty
   Chest pain
   Pain in jaw, down arm, back, etc.
   Nausea, Vomiting
   Cold, Clammy skin (sweating)
   Sudden collapse
   Weak, rapid pulse

   Patients with cardiac/respiratory problems may suddenly go into cardiac arrest, or cardiac arrest may occur after the person has been experiencing cardiac/respiratory difficulties for some time. In cardiac arrest, a patient has no pulse or respiration. CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) must be initiated immediately. Prolonged CPR in the wilderness has a very low chance of survival, especially after 20-30 minutes. Termination of resuscitation after this point may be considered in conjunction with medical responders and their medical control.

3. **Unconscious Patient - Unknown Cause** - The unconscious patient, from unknown causes, may have a head injury, a drug overdose condition, or a diabetic coma or be in shock due to a bleeding ulcer, ruptured aneurysm, etc.

4. **Miscellaneous Conditions** - Other conditions that may necessitate ALS include:

   Anaphylactic shock/severe allergic reactions, e.g., bee stings, etc.
   Cerebrovascular accidents (CVA's) or strokes
   Drug overdose
   Poison ingestion, inhalation, or skin absorption
   Serious burns
   Premature birth/high-risk mothers/infants

APPENDIX F: Forest Service Manual reference

1599 - SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS. The Forest Service recognizes its public duty to render assistance in cases involving persons lost in the National Forest System and to transport persons seriously ill, injured, or deceased from the National Forest System lands to a point where the person or body may be transferred to interested parties or local authorities.

- Authority. The payment of necessary expenses incurred in search and rescue operations is authorized by 16 U.S.C. 575:

"The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized in cases of emergency to incur such expenses as may be necessary in searching for persons lost in the National Forest and in transporting such persons seriously ill, injured, or who die within the National Forests to the nearest places where the sick or injured person, or the body may be transferred to interested parties or local authorities."

This statute imposes no duty, the breach of which would be actionable at law, on the Forest Service to search for and rescue persons lost in the National Forest. It merely authorizes the Forest Service to incur necessary expenses in search and rescue operations. The legislative history of the statute shows there is nothing to suggest that the reason for authorizing the Forest Service to incur expenses in search and rescue operations was to relieve States, counties, or other political subdivisions from undertaking, or participating in, search and rescue on National Forests. Congress did not contemplate that the Forest Service respond to every search and rescue situation on the National Forests. The letter from Acting Secretary R.W. Dunlap to Chairman McNary, Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, United States Senate, 71st Congress, stated:

"The class of cases this bill is designed to cover includes only those where forest officers are forced by circumstances to assume responsibility. On such occasions there is not time for delay; the officer must function immediately, the incurring of expenses for provision, horse hire, and the like, being one of his first actions. He should be clothed with unqualified authority to certify such bills to the designated disbursing officer for settlement from regularly appropriated moneys. A direct responsibility to render all reasonable aid under such circumstances unavoidably attaches to the Government, and accordingly provision certainly should be made for paying the expenses necessarily incurred in such undertakings from public funds."

The Acting Secretary's letter suggests that the Forest Service, while perhaps better qualified, would be only one of several available search and rescue organizations, both public and private. The letter states:

". . . the need for a law of this character is becoming more urgent annually. Each year brings an increasing number of visitors to forest areas seeking recreation and diversion, and in consequence more persons are lost in the mountains and more accidents occur. Almost invariably there is a strong public demand that the local forest officers, who are public officials thoroughly familiar with the country and peculiarly fitted for such work, shall assume leadership in the relief or rescue activities.

Failure to do so would cause strong public disapproval and resentment with very unfavorable reaction upon the work not only of the individual officer but of the Forest Service. There are, however, many instances where local residents or other forest visitors organize search or relief parties, the expenses being borne by the individuals personally, or paid by public subscription."

- Objective. To render assistance in cases involving persons lost in the National Forest, transporting persons who are seriously ill or injured, or who die inside National Forest System lands, to the nearest place where the sick or injured person or where the body may be transferred to interested parties or local authorities.

- Policy. The role of the Forest Service in search and rescue is one of supporting and developing strong local and State leadership. The local public authority, usually the county sheriff, is the agency with primary responsibility for the protection of life and property. Field personnel must continue to be responsive to the public needs as they involve these aspects, with emphasis toward supporting and cooperating with the local officials.

The Forest Service shall take a temporary lead role in any search and rescue emergency in which immediate and quick response will reduce suffering or save lives. The concept of closest forces must be used and the lead role maintained only until the predetermined local responsible authority is available to assume its leadership. After transferring the leadership role, the Forest Service shall assume a supportive role and provide assistance to the fullest extent possible.

When the Forest Service has assumed the lead role, direct expenses incurred shall be paid from Forest Service appropriated funds. Instructions covering overtime shall be followed whenever overtime is incurred in search and rescue missions (FSM 6153).

The above policy applies when the Forest Service has assumed a supporting role with the following exceptions:

1. Contract aircraft, when possible, shall be released to the responsible search and rescue agency, and payment for services rendered shall become the responsibility of that local agency.

2. When local lead agency requests volunteers from the Forest Service, the volunteers become agents of the local agency, and expenses are borne personally or by local agency.

The benefited party shall not be billed for costs that the Forest Service incurs during search and rescue missions.

There is no authority for expenditure of Forest Service funds to render search and rescue assistance to persons outside the exterior boundaries of the National Forest System. However, if a search starts inside the exterior boundaries of the National Forest System, it may extend to areas immediately outside these boundaries if the exigencies of the situation demand.

Full support and encouragement shall be given local agencies to cooperate and coordinate with the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Scott Air Force Base. The Forest Service shall not duplicate

or compete with existing resources.

- Responsibility

1599.04a - Department of Agriculture (Reserved)

1599.04b - Forest Service. The Secretary has delegated to the Chief search and rescue responsibilities in the National Forest System. The Fiscal and Accounting Management Staff, Law Enforcement Group, has been assigned search and rescue responsibilities in the Washington Office.

1599.04c - Regional Forester. Each Regional Forester will develop standards and guides necessary to coordinate with search and rescue activity in each Region.

1599.04d - Forest Supervisor. The Forest Supervisor shall develop search and rescue plans and provide guidance to the District Rangers. Search and rescue activities on experimental Forests shall be coordinated with the local Research administrator.

1599.04e - District Ranger. District Rangers are responsible for conducting search and rescue activities within established guidelines.

APPENDIX G: Motorized and Mechanical Use in Wilderness and Non-Wilderness

Wilderness SAR Operations

Wilderness approval for motorized or mechanized use, "including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area" [Section 4 (c) of the Wilderness Act] is required. The BTNF has identified the following criteria to streamline the approval process.

Use of any other motorized or mechanized equipment by the county for rescues including but not limited to helicopters, ATV's, or any other motorized equipment must have prior approval by the Forest Supervisor

Approval authority for motorized or mechanical transport within Wilderness rests with the Forest Supervisor (FSM 2326.1) Approval may be given for emergencies *"where the situation involves an inescapable urgency and temporary need for speed beyond that available by primitive means."*

Non-Wilderness SAR Operations

The Bridger-Teton also has designated areas of non-motorized use outside of wilderness. SAR operations conducted by federal, state, or local officers or members of an organized rescue force are specifically exempted from these travel restrictions. Counties will notify TIDC or the Forest liaison when motorized operations are planned or carried out in these restricted areas.

Approval Guidelines for Use of Mechanical and Motorized Equipment for SAR Operations within Wilderness.

This plan pertains only to those items requiring Forest Service (or designee) approval, i.e., air drops, low elevation air search, and the landing of aircraft in wilderness, or the use of motorized or mechanical equipment in the wilderness. Over-flights are not an approval item, when they are above the FAA 2,000 feet advisory but low elevation over-flight (aerial search) criteria should be essentially the same as landing criteria if the intent would be to land once the party had been found for rescue/recovery purposes. Low level flights are discouraged through the FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 91-36 over noise sensitive areas such as wilderness and wildlife closures. For SAR purposes, this may be a necessity in which cases sharing awareness of these operations will be expected.

When a wilderness mechanical or motorized intrusion is requested for a SAR operation, the lead dispatcher and/or forest duty officer can make the call whether it falls into the always approve or other categories. The Forest Duty Officer should be the first call but if he/she is not immediately available, the lead dispatcher may make the determination. If it falls into any of the other categories, a call will be made to the Forest Supervisor or other delegated Agency Administrator to make the final determination and to seek final approval. A list of delegated

officials will be provided to TIDC annually. When it falls into the "always approve" category the Forest Sup and respective DR will be notified of the situation after the approval has been relayed.

The Bridger-Teton NF Forest Supervisor, Patricia O'Connor, has preapproved motorized and/or mechanical use in wilderness areas if it meets the following "always approve" criteria.

Always Approve:

1. The rescue and/or evacuation of persons with symptoms of life threatening conditions: breathing or airway problems, serious bleeding, lack of circulation to limbs, mental confusion, paralysis of limbs or body, obvious broken bones, etc.

2. The search for those persons who by virtue of their age, physical condition, mental condition, health or mental ability are in a life threatening situation and may be at extreme risk to serious injury or death because they cannot take care of themselves and/or make the rational decisions in the way that could be expected of a healthy adults (e.g. young children, elderly persons, developmentally disabled persons, handicapped persons, etc.).

3. When there is reasonable doubt as to whether or not the person's injury, condition, or situation is life threatening.

Consider approving:

1. A close relative has died and the family has requested the person be located so they can perform a necessary function within uncontrollable time constraints.

2. Removal of deceased persons when pack animals or litters are not available or when their use would be inefficient due to the evacuation distance or when their use presents hazards to the rescuers. We need to be sensitive to the grief of family members and friends, but pack animals and wheeled litters when available are effective ways to evacuate deceased persons.

3. When there is an external situation requiring immediate location of a person within the wilderness, e.g., immediate relative is in a critical medical situation.

4. There is good reason to believe the lost person will be placed in a serious situation as a result of a predicted adverse change in the weather, e.g., person is not equipped for overnight trip and snow storm is predicted.

5. Where the topography or footing is so hazardous that it will expose the injured person or the rescue team to a high probability of additional or new serious injury (approval here might depend on the skill or experience of the rescue team).

Never Approve:

1. There does not appear to be any real indications that the person is in a life threatening situation, e.g., person in good health, dressed for the situation, is slightly overdue or there are options to transport the person by non-motorized or non-mechanical means to the nearest logical point of rescue (e.g. simple fracture of arm, sprained ankle).

2. Outside request is made to locate a person for non-critical external reasons, e.g., attend funeral of a friend, to make financial decisions, to see if a person is okay.