



# Nevada Search and Rescue Bulletin

Published by the Nevada Division of Emergency Management, State SAR Coordinator, 2478 Fairview Drive, Carson City, NV 89701

## SAR Statutes in Nevada

NRS 248.092 states: *The sheriff is responsible for searches and rescues within his or her county.* (Added to NRS by 1983, 1354)

NRS 414.170-260 describes the role of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management and the assistance we provide to both Sheriffs and search and rescue operations throughout the state. It includes the coordination of resources for search, assisting the Sheriff on search operations when requested, and developing the State of Nevada Search and Rescue Plan. These responsibilities, and more, are outlined within state law. For more information on these statutes, please follow these links:

<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-248.html#NRS248Sec092>

<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-414.html>

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## Search and Rescue Board Appointed

Caleb Cage, Chief of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management, has appointed a new State Board for Search and Rescue for the 2016-2017 term. They include representatives of the Nevada Sheriff's and Chief's Association, Nevada Fire Chief's Association, Nevada Division of Forestry, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Nevada National Guard, Civil Air Patrol/Nevada Wing, and a Search and Rescue Organization.

The new members are: Col Carol Lynn, NV CAP; LtCol Cory Schultz, Nv NG; Burdel Welsh, Russ Pedersen, Ron Unger, and Sharon Wehrly, Nevada Sheriff's and Chief's Association; Richard Fenlason, NV Div. of Public and Behavioral Health; Tom Knight, NV Div. of Forestry; John Steinbeck, Nv Fire Chief's Association; and Josh Ketcham SAR Member.

On December 1, 2015, the board met for the first time and set about the business of re-establishing bylaws for the organization and setting the course for 2016. Of particular interest was the structuring of the various search and rescue resources throughout the state and updating the resource database. Additionally, there was discussion on search and rescue standards and the typing of SAR resources.

The State SAR Board approved the Federal 508-8 standards for SAR Resources in 2011, but in the interim there has been work done at the federal level to improve upon these standards. In the coming year the SAR Board will be looking at these improved standards and determining if they would like to adopt these standards, or structure standards specific to Nevada. To request a copy of the meeting minutes, please contact the State SAR coordinator at: [pburke@dps.state.nv.us](mailto:pburke@dps.state.nv.us)



**They end up in the strangest places!**  
Douglas County SAR personnel snapped this picture of a SAR members locating a missing woman in the most unlikely of places... the roof of a golf course clubhouse! Excellent search technique and cell forensics aided the team in the find !

## New Years Eve Search

On December 31, 2015 Douglas County SAR was involved in searching for a 34 year old woman who had disappeared from the Mont-bleu Resort Hotel in Stateline, NV. The day-long search involved many search and rescue and law enforcement personnel from the Lake Tahoe area. The search event culminated in locating the missing woman... atop the Edgewood Golf Course Clubhouse!



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## Nevada Land Search Management (NLSM) Course February 22-26, 2016

The **Nevada Land Search Management Course** will be held February 22-26, 2016, at the Nevada 1 USAR Task Force building located at 3955 North Pecos Road, #15, Las Vegas NV 89115. The course is free to attend for representatives of SAR Teams affiliated with a Nevada County Sheriff office or public safety organization.

The Nevada Land Search Management (NLSM) is a Nevada Post Certified course is designed to teach the essential knowledge and skills necessary to perform as the initial response Incident Commander on a lost person incident with the primary focus on the *Search* element of SAR. The course prepares the student for the management responsibilities and leadership skills required during SAR missions. The course explains the tasks and procedures needed to effectively initiate, plan, and manage SAR operations from the initial response, through the expansion phases of the search, to the final demobilization of all resources. This is a new course, and different than prior search management courses offered by NDEM. It is the only National course which currently meets the federal standard for "Wilderness Search and Rescue Manager".

The NLSM course explains and describes in detail the overall objectives, strategies, and tactics needed for a successful outcome of SAR missions. It includes a component called Virtual Search Planning, or VSP. This process, when properly applied, has a success rate of locating the lost person 80% of the time in the operational period where it is applied. Students will be required to apply learning objectives to a series of tabletop map exercises where teamwork and process are essential to solve the lost person event. These are actual events which have been reproduced from historic search operations in Nevada and elsewhere.

With further incident management training and field experience; the person with this training can perform as the Incident Commander on prolonged and more complex searches. This is a certification course and may not be audited. The course length is 40 hours and runs from 0800-1700 all five days of the course. Students will be graded on a final map exercise to insure they have both understood the concepts and are able to apply them effectively. The course is limited to 25 students.

Requirements: Actively assigned to a Search and Rescue team or program within a Sheriff's Department, or, assigned within an Emergency Response or Management agency. **Prerequisites: Students must have taken IS-100.b, IS-200.b and IS-700.a** courses which are available online at: <http://www.training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx> Operational knowledge of search and rescue incidents and operations is recommended. Students must have and bring to the course a portable computer, Windows or Apple-based Operating System, and have Google Earth Pro installed...this is a free download at:

<https://www.google.com/work/mapsearch/products/earthpro.html>

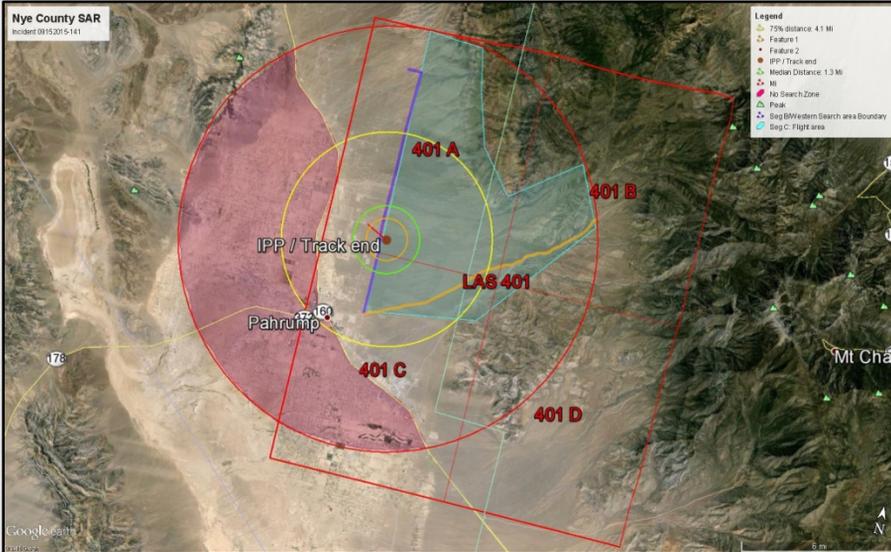
REGISTRATION FOR THIS COURSE : [http://dem.nv.gov/training/NDEM\\_Course\\_Registration\\_Form/](http://dem.nv.gov/training/NDEM_Course_Registration_Form/)

*"To know you have searched well, that you have followed what you have learned, Is to find a person with purpose, not by some fluke or accidental activity."* Paul Burke



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A portion of the Incident Action Plan provided to an Incident Commander, the graphic / map provides visual reference and data describing high probability areas and search segments for various deployed resources, including aircraft.

## Virtual Search Planning: A Scientific Approach to Search and Rescue Operations

Virtual Search Planning (VSP) is a process designed to be used during the initial operational period of a search for a missing person. It involves the timely collection of a wide variety of data specific to the subject of the search and the data specific to location and weather.

Added to this process is the evaluation of statistical information specific to the class of missing subject, historical or actual weather data, a behavioral profile, any medical or drug information associated with the subject, and extensive terrain analysis. In many cases, and whenever possible, cell phone forensic data, radar or thermal imaging data, and known track or clue data supplement the analysis to provide a comprehensive “picture” of the missing person event. From this analysis, VSP Technicians develop an Incident Action Plan (IAP) tailored to the specific event.

The process of VSP with the resulting IAP are designed to be delivered to the Incident Commander (IC) within two hours of the request, and are most often developed and away from the actual Incident Base or the initial search location. As odd as this may seem, the process benefits from the remote nature of the analysis. VSP Technicians are not “caught up” in the complexities of resource deployment or staging, and are able to concentrate their efforts solely on the critical analysis.

## Virtual Search Planning: Its History and Success

For decades the process for planning search and rescue operations had fixed itself to subsequent operational periods, usually after the initial response proved ineffective for locating the missing person.

Beginning with a conversation in 2003 among long-time SAR Coordinators at a conference for the National Association for Search and Rescue, the concept of quick and effective planning for initial operations was kicked around. Paul Burke, the Nevada State SAR Coordinator, took upon himself to coordinate what has now become the Virtual Search Planning process, or VSP.

Using a wide variety of subject matter experts (SME’s) from across the country, they have developed a network of individuals and systems designed to provide a quick analysis of factors related to missing person cases. The analysis work and development of an Incident Action Plan for the IC has resulted in an 83% find rate of the missing person in the operational period in which the plan is used.

Virtual Search Planning is currently being developed into a three day course offering for search managers and should be available Summer 2016.



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## SAR Team Profile: Douglas County Search and Rescue



Douglas County Sheriff's Search & Rescue (SAR) is non-profit group made up of professionally trained volunteers that work under the auspices of the Douglas County Sheriff's Department. Every year, local citizens and visitors from around the world enjoy the backcountry of Douglas County, which includes Lake Tahoe, the Carson River and Pinenut Mountain Range. The interaction of people, challenging wilderness terrain and frequent adverse weather, predictably creates the need for search and rescue services.

Douglas County SAR is Mountain Rescue Association Accredited Wilderness SAR Team that conducts wilderness search, swiftwater and flood search operations, high/low angle rope rescue, wilderness emergency medical treatment, fire evacuation, aircraft Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) search, and K-9 operations. Team members are also trained in all aspects of Search Management and Operations to insure safe and effective response operations.

Through generous donations within their community, and with one of the most comprehensive search and rescue programs of any Nevada sheriff department, Douglas County SAR is equipped for just about any response in their community. From response vehicles, mobile command vehicles, and even Snowcats, Douglas County SAR is a ready and capable SAR asset anywhere they are called to serve.

### Douglas Co. SAR Mission Statement:

*The goal of Douglas County Sheriff's Search and Rescue is to provide emergency search and rescue services for the residents of and visitors to Douglas County, Nevada. We also provide emergency aid and assistance in times of natural and man-made disasters and provide assistance, as requested, to the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and to our neighboring Counties in Nevada and California.*



## Ten Things Volunteers Need to be Happy

By Joanne Fritz  
[Nonprofit Charitable Orgs Expert](#)

1. They want you to be prepared for them.
2. They want to feel welcomed.
3. They want good training.
4. They want to do interesting work.
5. They want to know up front how much time the job may take.
6. They want to be appreciated.
7. They want you to communicate with them well, and often.
8. They want to know they are making the world a better place.
9. They want to be connected socially.
10. They want to learn something new.

**Now could be the very best time to take a look at your volunteer program and make needed improvements so that your volunteers will want to come and stay.**

If you would like to contribute to this Newsletter, or provide a SAR Team Profile, please submit original materials or materials with appropriate credits to:

Paul M Burke, NV SAR Coordinator  
2478 Fairview Drive, Carson City, NV 89701, or

Email: [pburke@dps.state.nv.us](mailto:pburke@dps.state.nv.us)

Materials will be considered on a topical basis and may be edited for length.