

Pincher Creek Search & Rescue

Resource Summary

PCSAR Doc-94

This document summarizes Pincher Creek Search and Rescue and the local Community Response Group (CRG) as a volunteer resources supporting Tasking Agencies (police, emergency services) and other SAR organizations.

Contact Information

Emergency: +1 403 627-2262 (answered by STARS Link Centre); **+1 403 627-5804** (Manager)

Please call and we can help you evaluate the need for a full response, limited response, or suggest initial actions.

Administration:

+1-855-727-6825
pcsar@castrov.cuug.ab.ca

website: pcsar.webhop.org
Box 1705, Pincher Creek, AB, T0K 1W0

Typical Operational Activities

- mountains summer (e.g. injured biker, hiker, scrambler, hunter)
- mountains winter (e.g. lost snowmobilers)
- rural agricultural (e.g. despondent)
- avalanche search/recovery
- water edges and banks
- urban (e.g. lost child, Alzheimer)

In support of other organizations, PCSAR is typically willing to undertake any activity to aid public safety or survival. PCSAR can provide a cohesive group that is organized, disciplined, self supporting, equipped with its own communications, and able to work in adverse conditions.

- low-angle, high-angle support (e.g. slopes, cliffs)
- swift-water rescue support
- evidence search, urban/rural (e.g. for RCMP)
- civil emergency response (e.g. flood, wildfire, tornado, H₂S, evacuations, road blocks)
- logistical support
- overhead team support

The time from first notification until first resources in the field is typically 45 minutes plus travel time. The initial 45 minutes includes:

- call to emergency number by requesting party
- contacting team search manager
- search manager gathers information and determines response level
- members are notified
- first members arrive, are briefed, and sent into the field.

Combining with other SAR teams, a response effort can be sustained for a continuous 96 hours.

Structure and Relationships

Founded in 1995, PCSAR is registered under the Alberta Societies Act as the “Pincher Creek Search and Rescue Society”. PCSAR is a member of SAR Alberta and operates under an agreement with the Alberta Office of the Fire Commissioner. PCSAR normally partners with the local Community Response Group, which consists largely of former PCSAR members, and often with Pincher Creek Emergency Services (fire, ambulance).

PCSAR has a good working relationship with the Pincher Creek RCMP detachment. The RCMP typically calls in PCSAR as soon as they have information of a lost person.

PCSAR has a good working relationship with its neighboring volunteer SAR groups: LASARA (Lethbridge ground SAR), Lethbridge CSDA (dog group), Crowsnest Pass SAR/Fire, Foothills SAR (South of Calgary), Calgary SAR, SEASAR (Medicine Hat). Several volunteers are members of both PCSAR and a neighboring group. We share training and rely on each other for organizational ideas. PCSAR's standard operating procedure is to give its neighbors a heads-up when a search is happening, and to ask them to be prepared if tasked, to assist in the first op period. PCSAR have developed a protocol with local industry to assist in H₂S incidents.

Regular meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at the fire hall in Pincher Creek. The general meeting, which is mostly composed of training starts at 19:00 and typically ends by 22:00. There is an open invitation for non-members to attend. Other training is scheduled typically for weekends.

Operational Regions

There has been no formal or informal discussion with Tasking Agencies or other SAR groups about where PCSAR would be considered a primary or secondary SAR responder. PCSAR would be willing to act in either role as requested by a Tasking Agency.

In the past, PCSAR has acted as primary SAR responder:

- in the mountains South and West of Pincher Creek (Castle Parks)
- in the southern Flathead, B.C. (by informal arrangement with the Sparwood RCMP and SAR; this area is more quickly accessed from Alberta).
- in the agricultural land around Pincher Creek
- on the Peigan Reserve
- in the southern Porcupine Hills (North of Pincher Creek)
- in the Carbondale area (West of Pincher Creek)
- in the town of Pincher Creek and surrounding villages
- in the town of Fort MacLeod
- in the agricultural land around Cardston
- on the Blood Timber Reserve

In the past, PCSAR has supported other SAR groups:

- in the Crowsnest Pass and the hills and mountains to the north
- in the City of Lethbridge
- in the areas South and North of Lethbridge
- on the Blood Reserve
- in the Nanton area
- in the Medicine Hat area
- at the High River flood
- at the Pine Lake tornado site near Red Deer
- in the Sparwood area

Typically there is a reduced response for travel distances over 2 hours. PCSAR will consider requests to respond anywhere, but may be limited by costs of travel.

Membership

- 18 volunteers (total); Community Response Group: 35
- 16 certified SAR Basics; CRG: 18
- 5 certified Track Aware (basic Man-Tracking); CRG:3
- 5 certified Search Managers; CRG: 3
- 3 in Crowsnest Pass area; CRG: 1
- 2 in Lethbridge area; CRG: 1

At a typical local search during the first operational period, PCSAR fields 8 volunteers and are joined by about 3 people from other organizations and 4 spontaneous volunteers. The numbers are limited by those who can be contacted immediately and have the specific skills required.

Each member operating in the field has their own ready pack and can be expected to be self-sufficient under any weather conditions for 24 hours.

Equipment

- mobile command post
- equipment trailer and truck
- briefing trailer (warming shelter)
- 2 SAR management kits
- large range of maps
- 9 portable radios (Tac 9, Mutual Aid, PC Fire & Ambulance), 2 relocatable vehicle radios
- 2 handheld satellite phones
- 6 satellite message devices (inReach)
- 5 GPSs
- rescue sleigh to be towed by snowmobile
- avalanche transceivers, probes and probes
- wilderness stretcher with support wheel
- various rescue stretchers
- rope rescue rigging
- swiftwater rescue kit
- first aid kits, first aid pack
- blankets
- generator
- exterior lighting

Other equipment/resources can be drawn from the community for local needs.