

Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers



SARSASV

SARSASV would like to thank Coquitlam SAR for
permission to use and adapt their social media policy for our use.

<http://www.coquitlam-sar.bc.ca>



Purpose

- To provide written policies and procedures in regards to the use of social media by SARSAV members.
- To clarify SARSAV's expectations of our members and provide guidelines.
- To provide chapters with a clear understanding of the acceptable use of social media.
- To aid in protecting our members personal and professional image, their privacy and the privacy of those for whom and with whom we work.
- To provide clear, professional communications in our dealings with the public, media and SAR community.

In drafting this policy we have looked at some existing social media policies from various organizations. We have found Coquitlam SAR to have given considerable time and effort into a policy that is recognized as leading the pack when it comes to such policies. We have received permission to use this policy and adapt it to our use.

SARSAV would like to thank Shelley Ballard-McKinlay and Bobbi Buchanan for their assistance with the development of this document.

We welcome feedback from SAR chapters, stakeholders, and the public as it relates to this document.

Definitions

In this policy, the following terms are defined as:

Chapter: A organized group of volunteers that is recognized as a member of SARSAV, as defined by the bylaws and constitution of SARSAV.

Member: Any member of a Search and Rescue chapter that is a member of SARSAV, any member of the SARSAV executive and directors, any person appointed to a position and any SAR member tasked by SARSAV under a mutual aid agreement.

Page: The specific portion of a social media website that displays content and is managed by an individual or individuals with administrative rights.

Post: Content a user shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Profile: Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

SARSAV: Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers, a charitable non-profit association incorporated under the laws of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Social media: A category of Internet based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation/collaboration. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites such as Pinterest, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia and personal/special interest blogs.

Social networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information and socialize with others using a range of technologies and media.

Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, video or related forms of communication.

Team: Members of a SARSAV chapter or group of SAR volunteers participating in a SAR-related activity that is tasked under a recognized chapter of SARSAV.

Wiki: A website that is developed collaboratively by a community of users, allowing any user to add and edit content.



Use of social media by SARSAV chapters and members

Social media has a place in emergency management and first response agencies, both operationally and to further the goals of the association and its member chapters.

Goals

The use of social media by SARSAV and our SAR chapters has several goals:

- To notify the public of the SAR activities.
- To assist the team and our tasking agencies to locate a missing person(s).
- To promote important public safety messages and PSAR (Preventative Search And Rescue) messages
- To foster relationships with other SAR Teams and emergency services agencies
- To promote SARSAV and SARSAV chapters.
- To develop relationships and understanding with the public about SAR and its activities.

General Principles

No use of social media should violate any laws, including Canadian and Saskatchewan privacy laws.

All information representing SARSAV and SARSAV chapters should come from "official" SARSAV accounts on each of the social media systems.

SAR members are allowed to post about their own experiences and opinions as long as they adhere to these guidelines and do not purport to represent SARSAV or a SARSAV chapter in any way, unless authorized to do so.

Guidelines

Task Related Usage

No member may release information via any channel during an active task for any purpose without the expressed approval of the Public Information Officer, if one is assigned, or the SAR Manager in consultation with the tasking agency. This includes radio, cell phones, social media, email, blog or by personal conversations.

This directive is in line with Ground SAR and Team Leader training that all SAR members in Saskatchewan receive; all responsibility for an ongoing task flows through the chain of command.

No information, including images or likenesses of the subject(s) of a search, is to be released without a prior formal press release by law enforcement of jurisdiction or tasking agency and / or a request to release such information by the same. Release of information about the subject of a search is only for the express purpose of locating a missing person, and then only when publication of such information is judged to be helpful by the command staff. For example: Re-posting a news release about an active missing person. Sharing of links during the task should be directly from the tasking agency's website / social media platform and not that of a news media outlet.

Examples of actions that are prohibited under this rule are:

- Transmitting any images from an active task.
- Transmitting information, commentary, plans or briefing notes.
- Recording via video or audio any of the above without express permission.

The rationale for this directive is that SAR members may not be aware of all of the information pertaining to the ongoing task and any release of information from the field can undermine continuing efforts by incident command or be misinterpreted by the public.

All information received through the use of social media that pertains to an active task shall be forwarded to the active SAR Manager for follow up as soon as possible.



Non Task Related Usage

Images recorded during a SAR task can be used in limited circumstances as long as they adhere to the previously mentioned task-related usage, non-task usage and the guidelines following this section.

The following include but are not limited to non-task related use of social media:

- Community outreach and engagement including, but not limited to:
 - Providing PSAR tips or education (i.e. Hug-A-Tree, the essentials, etc.)
 - Advertising chapter events or activities.
 - Thanking sponsors or supporters.
 - Requesting assistance from community (i.e. missing person or funding).
- Time-sensitive notifications or information on:
 - SAR events, weather emergencies and outdoor conditions.
- Interaction with other SAR agencies, teams and supporting groups to support the goals of SAR in Saskatchewan, Canada and elsewhere.

SARSAV will not use the likeness nor reveal any identifying information about any subject of a search or rescue in any way without full consent of said subject, unless, as previously mentioned, the subject's information is released by the tasking agency or law enforcement of jurisdiction as an official press release from the same. Example: police requesting public assistance in locating a missing person SARSAV or Chapters may share such a official release of information.

General Guidelines for use

- All SARSAV social media pages and posts shall clearly indicate they are the property of and maintained by SARSAV.
- Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that SARSAV reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, and other inappropriate material. These are considered reasonable restrictions of free speech and are not censorship by any definition.
- Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.
- No member shall represent SARSAV in any media format, including social media without the authorization of the SARSAV executive and President.
- Representation of SARSAV's actions, activities or statements shall only occur through the official SARSAV social media outlets.
- SARSAV members and their actions are to be depicted in a manner consistent with a safe and professional rescue team and be respectful to the public and the subjects we rescue.
- Where members are authorized to represent SARSAV through any media outlet(s), they shall:
 - Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of SARSAV and generally accepted professional behaviour.
 - Observe and abide by all copyright, trademark and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.
 - Identify themselves as a member of SARSAV or the chapter they are officially representing.
 - Not make statements about their personal opinion regarding a task, subject, SAR team, governing body or related policies.
 - They shall not personally comment on active tasks, nor post, transmit or otherwise disseminate confidential information including photographs or videos related to SAR training, activities or related assignments.

Examples

Command

SARSAV managers can post updates to social media when the chapter is called out on a search. If the tasking agency has a missing person and deems public disclosure to be necessary, SARSAV can retransmit a link to the tasking agency's postings.

Members

SAR members should not be depicted behaving in a disrespectful or unsafe manner while on a search. Photos of members "goofing off," laughing or in humorous situations should be properly identified as non-task related.

Equipment

Noting that as professionals we will be using equipment in a safe manner, but that sometimes captured images may be misleading, due precautions should be taken before images are published.



Public

Photos and media that contain images of members of the public where they are not the primary subject of the photo are not considered to infringe on the rights of the people in the photos. It is assumed that if they are in a public place they have no reasonable expectation of privacy and as long as they are not singled out or identified by name they can be background in any image.

On some searches, members of the public are present and now have the capability to record and transmit images, video, audio and text directly from the site of a rescue. If any member of the public is present SAR members have to assume that they can record anything said or done. Keeping this in mind, SAR members should act in a responsible and professional manner at all times.

Blogging and Forum Posting

SARSAV members are allowed to blog and post to online forums, social media and other systems about their own thoughts, experiences and opinions arising from their SAR activities as long as they adhere to the guidelines set in this document. Such blogging can be a very important form of public education, and allow SAR members to contribute to the SAR community as a whole. SARSAV is supportive of such efforts.

When commenting online about chapter-related issues in a personal capacity, chapter members shall use their private (non-chapter) email address and identify themselves by name and ensure they are speaking for themselves and not as a representative of the chapter or SARSAV. All chapter members are expected to use common sense, caution and good judgment when participating in social media for either official or personal usage.

It is highly recommended that opinions regarding active or past SAR incidents that involve safety, procedural or interpersonal conflicts be handled by contacting SARSAV executive in writing. This will properly address the topic rather than complaining in a public forum. We seek to find solutions to such situations, and complaints in public do not serve this goal.

Traditional Media Releases

Activation related media releases shall be done by the agency of jurisdiction. Example: RCMP, Municipal Police, EMO, ect. Once they have issued a release, SARSAV and chapters can share or link to such officially released information.

Non-activation related media releases shall be done in consultation with the agency of jurisdiction if one is involved. For example, a media release about a joint or multi-jurisdictional training exercise must receive approval from the agency or agencies involved or released by an agency of jurisdiction.

Violations of Policy

Violations of this policy should be reported in writing or via email to the SARSAV Executive for review.

Review of Policy

Due to the rapidly changing nature of social media and technological advances, this policy shall be reviewed on a yearly basis and updated as required.

Original Signed By <Insert President's Name>

Original Signed By <Insert Name>

<insert name and position and date signed>

<insert name and position and date signed>

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