

Lowland Search Team Leader



**Study notes to accompany the
Lowland Search Team Leader Course**

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www.uklsi.org.uk

- 1. Team Leader's Role?**
- 2. Team Leader Qualities**
- 3. Review of Basic Search**
- 4. Review of Misper Behaviour**
- 5. Leadership Styles and Skills**
- 6. Briefing the Team**
- 7. Leading a Search**
- 8. Debriefing**
- 9. Preservation of Evidence**
- 10. Glossary of Terms**

Section 1 Team Leader's Role?

Define or list the role(s) of the Search Team Leader

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Leadership of a search team is arguably the most important element in a search. The role of a team leader is to provide the group with leadership:

- Ensuring good briefings so that everyone understands the task and their role
- Making decisions regarding search tactics, ensuring the group's health, safety, and welfare and maintaining the team's alertness and motivation
- Should the team find the misper the Team Leader is also responsible for managing the treatment and scene until it is handed over to the statutory emergency services

Section 2 Team Leader Qualities?

List the ideal qualities of a Team Leader

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The Search Team Leader must lead by example. They should be a searching role model and need to have a good understanding of the basic search skills, preferably with lots of operational experience. The Team Leader must have the respect of others within their Unit and act as an example to others in all areas and at all times.

Section 3 Review of Basic Search

All search activities, and decisions that you make, should be based on these principles of search.

- **Search is an emergency**

Why?

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- **Time equals survivability**

Explain

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- **The Misper always comes first**

- **Availability**

= time
 and number of resources
 at a given location

- **Always respect the misper's emergency**

You need to understand each of the terms/concepts below. Write your own notes if you are unclear.

Detection is



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Recognition is

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The Searcher Cube

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Searcher Spacing is found using the Northumbrian Rain Dance.

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**It is important to remember to use
an object that is**

in an environment that is

moving in until

Purposeful Wandering



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Types of Search

Hasty
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Efficient
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Thorough
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Section 4 Review of Misper Behaviour

It is important for a Search Team Leader to have a good understanding of missing person behaviour statistics and how these impact upon the search.

The majority of ALSAR searches are for Despondents and Mispers suffering with a dementia.

Despondents

Distances Travelled

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Track Offset

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Places likely to be found

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People suffering with a dementia

Distances Travelled

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Track Offset

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Places likely to be found

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Section 6 Briefing the Search Team

Briefing the team is extremely important in setting the tone for the rest of the search. Done properly the team will be well motivated, well informed and will search and react more effectively.

UKLSI recommends the use of standardised briefings, a copy of which is given below. However, briefings should contain an introduction, the allocation (or confirmation) of team roles, details of the misper and details of the team's task. It is also useful for the Team Leader to explain how they intend to approach the task – even if, as likely, this will change when you are on the ground.

A reminder of possible misper behaviour and what to do on a find is ALWAYS useful, even with very experienced searchers.

Team Leader Briefing

Introduce yourself

Suggest notes are taken

MOTIVATE ENTHUSE INSPIRE LEAD BY EXAMPLE

The Misper(s)

Misper(s)

Circumstances, Vulnerability, Urgency

Description

Vehicle

Items carried

The Team

All signed in?

Any early finishers?

Team Members Names

Navigator: Map, Map Case, Compass, Notebook, GPS

First Aider: First Aid Kit

Radio Operator: Frequency, Callsigns, Mobile Numbers, Codewords, Radio Check

Personal Kit

High Viz
Adequate clothing
Water
Munchies
First Aid
Sunscreen
PPE
Adequate torches

Team Kit

Large Lamps
Crime Scene Kit
Lif jackets & Throw Lines
First Aid Kit
Hypothermia Kit
Brush Cutting
Sticks
Rope Kits

The Search

Expected Timings
Overview of whole Search
Has sector been searched already?
Description of Sector, terrain, hazards, features, boundaries
Misper Behaviour Info
Prioritisation, sub sectoring, magnets
Clue Consciousness
Track traps
Crime Scene Awareness
Weather
Daylight / Moonlight
Search Discipline

Miscellaneous

Misper family
Any Sensitive or confidential information
Press
Health & Safety, Hazards

Any Questions?
Book out of ICP
Book onto Sector

Section 7 Leading a Search

The basic model for each search sector is

A – P – E

Assess

You can start to assess your search sector as soon as you are given a map from Control, but the process starts in earnest when you first ‘see’ the sector.

You need to get a feel for the terrain. What is in your search sector? What is the vegetation like? Are there any structures, watercourses, hazards or other features that will affect how you search the area?

All this must be recorded and will form part of your de-brief to Control.

What options do you have with how you assess your sector?

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Plan

Once you have assessed the search sector you can now start planning your search. Unless you have been given a very small, uniform area it is likely that you will sub-sector your sector into smaller “chunks”. This will allow you to use the appropriate search techniques and tactics for each area, manage team health & safety, and provides an opportunity to evaluate each sub-sector.



Prioritise

After sub-sectoring you should prioritise each sub-sector and plan how you aim to search the whole sector. You should consider likely misper behaviour, alongside more practical considerations such as start and finish points, transit areas and any hazards and geographical barriers such as bridges, fences and gates.

At this point you should share your plan with your team.

Evaluate

After each sub-sector is searched you should evaluate the effectiveness of that search. Whilst being extremely important in terms of your final sector de-briefing with the Search Control Team, it helps maintain searcher motivation and gives an opportunity for regular breaks for searchers. It also gives you an opportunity to re-evaluate your search plan and change it as circumstances dictate.

The evaluation mirrors the final de-brief which is covered in more detail later, but covers what has and has not been searched and areas requiring additional or further attention. At this point you will need to consider whether your team should undertake this, or whether you should feed it back to Control for later attention.

Search Tactics

Each sector and sub-sector you search will be unique and it will be up to you to search it as you see fit in the circumstances.

Use this section of the handout to write notes on what you would consider and how you could approach these different types of search.

Route & Path

Corridor Search

Line Search

Fields and Open Areas

Watercourses

Roads

Other Potential Areas

Clues

List the sorts of clues you may find.

Underline or emphasise those that are most useful.

Clue Consciousness

Clue Consciousness describes a state where searchers are aware of clues and their value, yet still focus their search on the missing person rather than a 'hunt for clues'. In vulnerable missing person searches (as opposed to evidence searches) we are searching for a human sized object.

Excessive focus on clues can slow the search down to an unacceptable degree. Time equals survivability.

Be Clue Conscious, not Clue Obsessed

Track Traps

Track traps refer to a piece of ground, vegetation or environment that because of its nature will capture evidence of anyone passing through or over it. This can be one of the most useful “clues” that a Search Control Team can have.

Track Traps include

- Sand
- Mud
- Soft ground (which will have impressions in if anyone steps on/in it)
- Long grass or vegetation (which will show disturbance if someone has passed through it recently or which may catch pieces of clothing/material)
- Fences, gates and stiles which may show evidence of being used recently.

Many Units have a number of trained Trackers and you should get to know them and ask their advice. You may have one in your team.

However, it is important that you, as a Team Leader, know what could be an extremely useful clue, or in some cases lack of clue, and where they are found.

You should consider doing the UKLSI Tracking course if you have not done so already.

Investigation

Many searches have been successfully resolved because Team Leaders have spoken to members of the public during the search and gained useful information, or that person has been aware of the missing person and later seen and reported them.

It is important that you as a Team Leader know what information is in the public domain and what is not. If in doubt, you **MUST** only release the minimum amount of information –

“We are searching for a vulnerable missing person for the Police – should you require any further information or you see something you feel is important please contact your local police station or if it is urgent call 999.”

On the next page is a handout explaining more about how to approach and question potential witnesses in such a way as to get the maximum amount of useful information.

Eye Witness Sightings

- A** Amount of time under observation
- D** Distance from the subject. Include where the witness was standing. Grid Ref or sketch map
- V** Visibility
- O** Obstructions to witness view
- K** Known or seen before including where and when
- A** Any special reason for remembering the subject
- T** Time lapse. How long has passed since the witness saw the subject?
- E** Error or material discrepancies between the descriptions given by the witness in the first and subsequent accounts

Use Open Questions

Note Taking

As a Search Team Leader you must make a lot of notes. It is not sufficient to rely upon your memory. Contemporaneous (taken at the time) notes have high evidential value.

Your notes will include start and finish times, details of your terrain analysis and sector assessment, your sub-sectors and the search tactics and techniques you used for each of these. You will also need to note down any areas that were not searched and the reason, any areas your team were unhappy with, or thought needed further attention, and any areas that they felt needed searching that weren't in your sector.

Additional notes will need to be made if you find any clues, and if you find the misper.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety of your team is a very important responsibility. An injury within your team will seriously detract from the effectiveness of the entire search effort, and may adversely affect the whole of volunteer search and rescue. However, the key to successful health and safety is the **management** of risks. Search and Rescue is always going to involve an amount of risk. Often the misper's vulnerability is due, at least in part, to the terrain and environmental conditions. It is the team leader's role, through experience and training, to assess the risks faced by their team and to manage them effectively. Understanding the capabilities of your team is an important part of this. A task that is acceptable in the earlier stages of a search may become unacceptable as the risk increases because your team is tired. Always consider if the task can be done in a

safer way.



Section 8 Debriefing

As a Search Team Leader you are the “eyes” of the Search Control Team. It is rare for those in Control to get the opportunity to actually get out on the ground to understand what the terrain and search area is really like. They therefore rely on Team Leaders to give them the information they need to ensure the search area is searched effectively.

Debriefing then needs to be timely (so that the Search Control Team have the information at the earliest opportunity in order that they can plan for future search taskings) and be accurate, honest and self-critical. Search Team Leaders need to have the courage to say ‘this was not well searched’. Anything else in the circumstances will mean the misper is not getting the best search possible.

Debriefing also needs to be based upon individual belief, everyone’s search opinion counts – you did not search their area. You must, therefore, ensure that everyone has been consulted before debriefing with the Search Control Team. It is usual to do this before returning to Control, or on the way back, in order to ensure it is done before searchers disappear to toilets, get a brew etc

Make a list of things you need to feedback to the Search Control Team.

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- **Your list should have included;**
- **Start & Finish Times**
- **Terrain Analysis**
- **Explicit coverage**
- **Areas not searched, and why**
- **Search difficulties**
- **Any clues found. What? Where? Who dealt with it and how?**
- **Any comms issues, including dead spots**
- **Suggestions for further search areas**
- **Suggestions for tactics if the area is to be searched again.**

Team Leader Debriefing

Purpose:

Evaluate how thoroughly task was completed

Identify tasks that need carrying out

Enable future planning

Must be

Timely, accurate, honest, self critical, focussed on individual belief and recorded

Team

Accidents/Injuries
Rest and refreshment requirements
Equipment replenishment
CISD

Tactics

Tactics used
Coverage, Search techniques
Search Difficulties or gaps in coverage
What wasn't searched & why

Sector

Summarize the Sector and Sub Sectors
Terrain Type & Density
Special Hazards
Draw map if necessary

Clues

What was found or seen
Where specifically, was it found
Who found it
What did you do with it
Persons and vehicles seen in area
Crime Scene Log

Miscellaneous

Communications Difficulties
Map inaccuracies
Suggestions, Ideas, Recommendations
Lost, damaged, inadequate equipment
Weather, Light
Remind Team for need for confidentiality
Eyewitnesses spoken to

Section 9 Preservation of Evidence

Life and Limb is the primary concern

Although you may be considering preservation of evidence procedures whilst your searchers are dealing with any find, no searcher should do anything that does not put the life and limb of searchers and misper first.

The SOCO Mantra

Assess

Protect

Communicate



Assess

The initial searcher should, in most cases, make the first approach. This starts to preserve evidence by keeping others away, but is also the quickest way of getting attention to the misper.

Everyone else, including you, should stay away unless entirely necessary – for example a first aider is needed. This applies even when the misper is conscious. Too many people crowding around can be distracting and distressing and the scene may still need preserving.

You must therefore rely upon your searcher to assess the immediate scene and misper and communicate this to you.

Locard's Principle

Every Contact
leaves a trace

Protect

Any potential scene of crime must be protected. The area safeguarded should be as large as physically possible with the manpower you have available.

Make sure of any physical features that limit access, but be aware that these are likely entry points for any potential offender too. Ensure as little physical contact as possible, but remember that it is better to contaminate evidence rather than allow it to be lost completely.

Once the initial searcher has completed any note taking that is required, they should leave by their initial route, marking this with barrier tape if possible. This may become the Common Access Path – the one route in and out of the scene used by everyone, police and scenes of crimes officers, visiting the scene.

Communicate

The most important role of the Team Leader is to ensure FULL communication at the scene.

This includes ensuring the Emergency Services are notified, usually via Control but may be by mobile phone if required.

The Team Leader will need to record the details of all SAR team members at the scene and what they have all done. The Team Leader will also need to document the scene – drawing sketch maps of the location, noting details of the environment (weather etc.), any persons or vehicles nearby and so on. The initial searcher will need to make copious notes at the scene and the Team Leader should be instrumental in ensuring that this is done.

The Team Leader is in charge of the scene until they hand it over to the Police and must document anyone entering the scene such as police and paramedics. These records should include the time and the actions of those entering the scene.

Team Welfare

Any find could be potentially traumatic for any of your team members and it is your responsibility in the first instance to ensure their welfare.

This can be achieved quickly and effectively by ensuring that they all have something to do. It is also important to keep them all involved and informed.

Section 10 Glossary of terms

This is a list of some of the SAR terms you should be aware of. They are often used by those trying to impress, and usually achieving the opposite effect. Only use terms you understand.

ALSAR

Association of Lowland Search and Rescue

AMDR / Visible Length

Average Maximum Detection Range. Roughly how far away from an object you can see it.

Availability

Defined as Time and Resource at a Given Location. When you will get to the location of the callout and how long you will be staying. This is extremely important for the Search Coordinator to be able to effectively plan their search.

Briefing

During the briefing you will be given information about the misper and your tasking. Briefings may be given by a member of the search management team to everyone, or to Team Leaders who would then brief their team members. Many teams are moving towards standardised briefings where you will always be given the same information in the same order.

BST Basic Search Technician

The minimum standard of training for any ALSAR operational member. (The word Basic is sometimes dropped from the title)

Callout

1. The method of informing team members of a search incident. Most teams now use SMS text messaging.
2. Refers to the search incident itself – i.e. We had a callout in Anytown.

Clue Conscious

A state of mind where searchers will notice potential clues in an area, but do not actively search for them (slowing down the search.) This involves noticing things that are out of place, or objects that have been mentioned in briefings, whilst searching at normal searcher spacing and speed for the object being sought.

Control

The area set aside for the search management team – if invited into this area you should remain quiet and listen carefully to your briefing.

Coverage

A term used in the mathematics of search theory to calculate the effectiveness of a search prior to calculating the POD. It should never be used to describe how much of a sector has been searched.



Critical Separation

The search technique where searchers are spaced out in such a way that each could just about see the object at its AMDR/Visible Length (or the edge of their vision.)

De-Briefing

1. Feeding back information about your search area to either the Team Leader or the search management team.
2. Carrying out an evaluation at the end/suspension of a search in order to improve upon everyone's performance at the next incident. Should always be a "no-blame" session where constructive criticism is given.

Efficient Search

A search that is planned in such a way as to maximise the chances of finding the misper/object quickly. Traditionally referred to as a Critical Separation search.

Gold, Silver, Bronze

Levels of Command and Control, which can also be termed; Strategic, Tactical and Operational.

Hasty Search

The initial response to a search; a hasty search is a fast initial look at high priority routes, paths and tracks and specific areas. Characterised by its speed the hasty search may provide fast finds but also gives immediate reassurance that something is being done and provides the search management team with valuable feedback on the search area.

IPP Initial Planning Point

The location the search management team is using to start their planning. May be the PLS, LKP or another location.

LKP Last Known Position

A hypothesised location based on "clues". His/her car was found in this car park, assuming s/he was driving this is their last known position.

LSDogs (LSD)

Lowland Search Dogs

Misper

Abbreviation of Missing Person – Can be used in conversations with SAR/Police personnel but should be used sparingly when talking with members of the Public.

MRE&W

Mountain Rescue, England and Wales

Misper Stats (Statistics)

There are a number of sources of misper stats – MR, Grampian, ISRID. These give the search management team, team leaders and searchers some initial ideas as to what a “typical” misper of this category does, where and how far they go, and where they are likely to be found etc. They are used to help inform decisions, but it should never be assumed that they show exactly what this individual misper will do.

Muster Point

The area set aside for preparing kit/ waiting for tasking.

Northumbrian Rain Dance

A valuable field technique which provides an easy method of estimating the AMDR/Visible Length.

NSARDA

National Search and Rescue Dogs Association

Pden Probability Density

the POA of an area divided by its size gives its Pden. This is used in search theory to help prioritise search areas along with several other factors.

Purposeful Wandering

The search technique whereby searchers wander through their specific search area searching areas which may hide the search object – i.e. the clump of bushes, the fallen tree trunk, etc.

PLS Place Last Seen

The location of the last confirmed sighting of the misper.

POA Probability of Area

An estimate of the likelihood that the object is in a given area.

POD Probability of Detection

An estimate of the likelihood of finding an object if it was in the area searched. Cannot be subjectively found (i.e. by asking the team leader)

POS Probability of Success

An estimate of the likelihood of finding the object through all search efforts so far, either in that search sector or overall.

Route and Path

The search of a route, path or track. Typically done as part of a Hasty search (although can be carried out at the start of an Efficient search of a sector.) Searchers will quickly move along the R&P searching either side of the track. Whilst traditionally defined as “up to 5 metres either side” modern thinking allows Team Leaders greater flexibility to search potential areas whilst maintaining the pace of the search.

RVP (RV) Rendezvous or Rendezvous Point

The place where team members are asked to go when called out. On arrival you must sign in immediately.

SAROG

SAR Operators Group

Search Kit

Can be used to refer to all search equipment a searcher has in his/her vehicle or the kit s/he carries on an individual search. This will vary from unit to unit and individual to individual. However, torch, notepad and pencil, high visibility jacket and ID card are pre-requisites for everyone.

Searcher Cube

The search technique of looking all around whilst searching – i.e. Up, Down, Left, Right, Forward and Backward. Using a searcher cube has been proven to improve a searchers ability to find the sought object.

Searcher Spacing

Refers to the distance between searchers. During Critical Separation searches this will be twice the AMDR/Visible Length. Team Leaders or the search management team may want the searcher spacing to be closer to give a higher POD (or likelihood of finding the object) or in order to safely control the team. They may also use a searcher spacing greater than the critical separation to allow more areas to be searched at a lower POD.

Scenario (Based Planning)

Planning a search around potential scenarios. For instance – the misper may have walked towards town but slipped and become incapacitated. Therefore search tasking – do a R&P towards town.

Standby

A unit's state of readiness for a Callout. The police or Search Coordinator may put unit members on Standby whilst they carry out initial investigations and preparations. During this time team members should inform their team of their availability.

Stand Down

The end or suspension of a search or search period. A search is only ended when the misper is located. In any other case, the search is suspended.

Sweep Width

A term used in the mathematics of search theory to define the ability of a search resource to find an object in a given environment or terrain. It can only be found by experimentation and whilst it is given as a unit of length this does not refer to an actual distance

Thorough Search

A search that maximises the POD (or likelihood of finding the object). Typically this involves shoulder to shoulder, grid searching. It is manpower intensive, time consuming and clue destructive.

TL Team Leader

Someone who is trained to lead a team during a search incident, providing a link between the search management team and the ground, and making decisions based upon the reality of the terrain/search sector.

UKSAR

UK Search and Rescue Committee

Vulnerable Missing Person

A Missing Person whose health or life is believed to be in danger. This may be due to despondency, mental health or age. Whilst the police will use this term communicating with the Public they define mispers as having either Low, Medium or High Risk (The definitions of which can be found in the ACPO Guidance)

Terms you should never use

Cleared

A Search Sector is cleared if it has been searched to 100% POD and has been sealed to ensure no one can re-enter that area. This is possible during explosives/evidence searches in limited areas/buildings with sufficient manpower. It is not possible during missing person searches and should therefore never be used.

Senile

This term was used in the past to describe people suffering from various different dementias. It is both misleading and offensive.

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APPENDICES

TL Outline Programme

<u>Friday</u>			DS
1900	Assemble & Opening Address	Lounge	SU
2000	TL Role, Review of BST	Classroom	RB
<u>Saturday</u>			
0730	BREAKFAST		
0815	Leadership, Team Briefings	Classroom	RB
0915	Practicals I - Briefing; Review Search Skills; Review Misper Behaviour	Outside In Teams	
1015	BREAK		
1030	Leading a Search	Classroom	RB
1130	Practicals II – Sub-Sectoring; Leading Searches; Eye Witness	Outside In Teams	
1230	LUNCH		
1330	Debriefing, Crime Scenes	Classroom	RB
1430	BREAK		
1445	Practicals III – Preservation of Evidence; Leading a Search	Outside In Teams	
1715	Night Ex briefing	Classroom	JR/SU
1730	DINNER		
1930	Night Ex	Ex Area	ALL
2230	Endex	Pub	
<u>Sunday</u>			
0730	BREAKFAST		
0815	Revision & Ex Debrief	Classroom	
1015	BREAK		
1030	Practicals IV – Crime Scene Demo; Building Search	Outside Centralised Demo In Teams	BT, AS, SC, AM, DS
1230	LUNCH		
1315	Clean Up		
1345	Written assessment		
1445	Course Debrief		
1500	Disperse		



Team Leader Briefing

Introduce yourself

Suggest notes are taken

MOTIVATE ENTHUSE INSPIRE LEAD BY EXAMPLE

The Misper(s)

Misper(s)

Circumstances, Vulnerability, Urgency

Description

Vehicle

Items carried

The Team

All signed in?

Any early finishers?

Team Members Names

Navigator: Map, Map Case, Compass, Notebook, GPS

First Aider: First Aid Kit

Radio Operator: Frequency, Callsigns, Mobile Numbers, Codewords, Radio Check

Personal Kit

High Viz
Adequate clothing
Water
Munchies
First Aid
Sunscreen
PPE
Adequate torches

Team Kit

Large Lamps
Crime Scene Kit
Lifejackets & Throw Lines
First Aid Kit
Hypothermia Kit
Brush Cutting
Sticks
Rope Kits

The Search

Expected Timings

Overview of whole Search

Has sector been searched already?

Description of Sector, terrain, hazards, features, boundaries

Misper Behaviour Info

Prioritisation, sub sectoring, magnets

Clue Consciousness

Track traps

Crime Scene Awareness

Weather

Daylight / Moonlight

Search Discipline

Miscellaneous

Misper family

Any Sensitive or confidential information

Press?

Health & Safety, Hazards

Any Questions?

Book out of ICP

Book onto Sector



Team Leader Debriefing

Purpose: Evaluate how thoroughly task was completed

Identify tasks that need carrying out

Enable future planning

Must be Timely, Accurate, Honest, Self Critical, Focussed on individual belief and Recorded

Team

- Accidents/Injuries
- Rest and refreshment requirements
- Equipment replenishment
- CISD

Sector

- Summarize the Sector and Sub Sectors
- Terrain Type & Density
- Special Hazards
- Draw map if necessary

Tactics

- Tactics used
- Coverage, Search techniques
- Search Difficulties or gaps in coverage
- What wasn't searched & why

Clues

- What was found or seen
- Where specifically, was it found
- Who found it
- What did you do with it
- Persons and vehicles seen in area
- Crime Scene Log

Miscellaneous

- Communications Difficulties
- Map inaccuracies
- Suggestions, Ideas, Recommendations
- Lost, damaged, inadequate equipment
- Weather, Light
- Remind Team for need for confidentiality
- Eyewitnesses spoken to



Team Leader Crime Scene & Evidence Preservation

"Every contact leaves a trace!!"

- Take control and remind Team to think "Crime Scene". TL on-scene is in charge until relieved by the Police
- Life & Limb of Misper and Team is the primary concern**
- Establish accurate location ie Grid reference and Advise Control. Consider Security of Comms.
- Only one person should approach the scene if possible. Limit access to only those **needed**. Post sentries on paths to keep others away
- Define, mark and use **Common Access Path**
- Start a Scene Log and nominate a Team member to record everything with times of all occurrences
- Take photographs, and make sketches
- Record names and contact details of all personnel who come into contact with the scene.
- Safeguard the scene (tape as large an area as possible) and exclude everyone not essential
- Protect evidence from weather if possible
- Record details of any vehicles and people in immediate area but DO NOT approach individuals

CISD

Consider and monitor the effects on Team Members at the scene and afterwards.



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