

# Vermont Search and Rescue



# SEARCH & RESCUE DEFINED

- *The deployment, coordination, and utilization of available resources and personnel in locating, relieving the distress, and preserving the lives of and removing persons who are **missing or lost in the backcountry, remote areas, or waters of the State.***

# SEARCH & RESCUE DEFINED

Differs from a “rescue” where location of subject is known but requires assistance.

Which are the following examples?

- ▶ Hiker on the Long Trail calls to say they have fallen and broken their ankle.
- ▶ Skier at Killington calls to say they have skied out of bounds and need assistance finding their way back to the resort.
- ▶ An ice climber at Lake Willoughby is stuck mid-cliff.
- ▶ A hunter is reported overdue by his family and his truck is found parked by the side of the road.

TITLE 20, CHAPTER 112  
§ 1824. SEARCHES FOR MISSING  
PERSONS

- ▶ (a) A law enforcement agency shall commence a search for a missing person as soon as a report is received.
- ▶ (b) Any rule specifying an automatic time limitation before commencing a missing person investigation shall be invalid.
- ▶ (c) ...the search for a missing person whose whereabouts is unknown within the backcountry, remote areas or waters of the State shall be conducted as provided in subchapter 2 of this chapter.

# STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS VERMONT

- VERMONT STATE POLICE

- 20 V.S.A. § 1842, Commissioner of public safety; jurisdiction over search and rescue operations; coordination

§ 1842. Commissioner of public safety; cooperation

- ▶ (a) **The Commissioner of Public Safety shall have jurisdiction over all search and rescue operations.**
- ▶ (b)(1) The Commissioner shall cooperate with and support all public safety agencies and any nonpublic entities that specialize in protecting the safety of the public in this State in matters relating to search and rescue operations. When necessary to protect a person missing in the backcountry, remote areas, or waters of the State from harm, the Commissioner shall coordinate local, county, state, and any nonpublic efforts to search for and rescue that person.
- ▶ (2) The Commissioner shall specifically coordinate with game wardens in the Department of Fish and Wildlife as needed to search for and rescue a person missing or lost in the backcountry, remote areas, or waters of the State.

## § 1845. SEARCH AND RESCUE REPORT; RESPONSE

- ▶ (b) Department of Public Safety response.
  - ▶ (1) When provided with a report of a person missing in the backcountry, remote areas, or waters of the State, the Department shall ensure that **notification is made to its Search and Rescue Team** and the Team, in consultation with the entity providing the report, **shall determine the appropriate level of response** needed based on best practices in search and rescue operations. The Department shall also ensure that **notification is made to any municipal police and fire departments of the town in which the person is missing**, any volunteer fire departments of that town, and any emergency medical service providers of that town which are in the search and rescue database.
  - ▶ (2) The Department shall ensure that **an immediate response to any report of a person missing in the backcountry**, remote areas, or waters of the State is made, including immediate action to locate the person reported missing.

## § 1845. SEARCH AND RESCUE REPORT; RESPONSE

- ▶ (a) Report of a person missing; response.
  - ▶ (1) **A law enforcement agency** taking a report of any person missing in the backcountry, remote areas, or waters of the State **shall immediately:**
    - ▶ **(A) respond** and take immediate action to locate the person reported missing; and
    - ▶ **(B) notify** the Department of Public Safety to advise of the situation.
  - ▶ (2) **Any other public safety agency** or a nonpublic entity that specializes in protecting the safety of the public and is included in the search and rescue database set forth in section 1846 of this subchapter which takes a report of any person missing in the backcountry, remote areas, or waters of the State:
    - ▶ **(A) shall immediately notify** the Department of Public Safety to advise of the situation; and
    - ▶ **(B) may respond** and take immediate action to locate the person reported missing.

# VSP POLICY

## VSP-DIR-532

### Missing Persons Requiring Search and Rescue

Vermont State Police | Rules & Regulations



**VSP-DIR-532**

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**Missing Person Requiring Search and Rescue**

# SUMMARY OF INITIAL ACTIONS BY VSP

- ✓ Trooper taking report will notify the Patrol Commander (Sgt.) on duty.
- ✓ Patrol Commander will respond to the scene and notify the Station or Watch Commander (Lt.)
- ✓ Station/Watch Commander will notify VSP SAR Team Leader.
- ✓ VSP SAR Team Leader will determine appropriate level of response.
- ✓ Response decision is typically a collaborative decision between the SAR Team Leader, SAR Coordinator, and local resources and Asst. FF Commander.
- ✓ Situation is monitored until conclusion.

# VSP SAR TEAM



- ▶ 20 Member allocation
- ▶ All trained in basics of SAR
- ▶ Search Management (NASAR MLPI)
- ▶ Monthly trainings
- ▶ SAR Coordinator

# VSP SAR TEAM

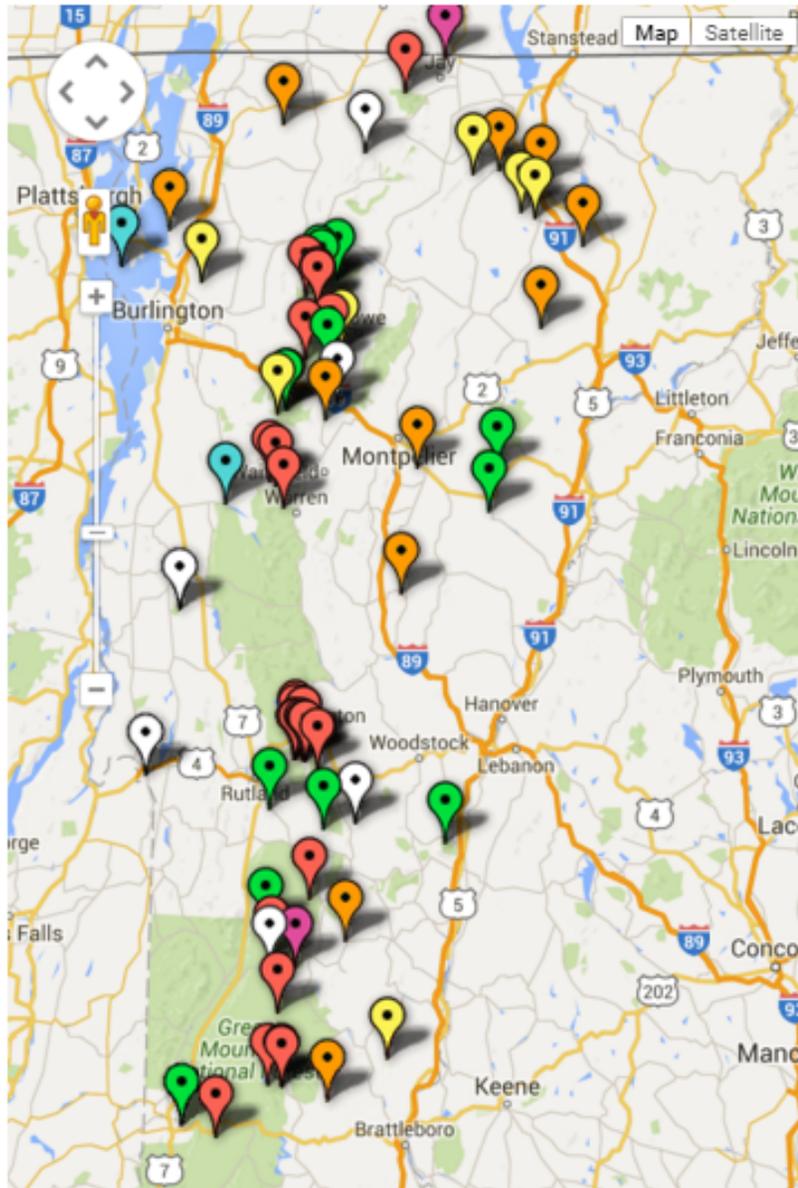
- ▶ The Vermont State Police SAR team responds to approximately 50-60 calls a year.
- ▶ Calls for lost persons such as skiers, hikers and hunters.
- ▶ Calls for missing or lost children, elderly, or persons with mental health related issues.
- ▶ Primary responsibility is to provide oversight and search management expertise.
- ▶ Deploy field trained resources.

# VSP SAR TEAM

## TYPES OF MISSIONS



## 2015 Search & Rescue Incidents



	DESPONDENT
	HIKING
	HUNTING
	RUNAWAY
	SKIING
	SNOWMOBILE
	UNCLASSIFIED
	WANDERING
	WATER/BOAT

ACTIVITY	count()
DESPONDENT	7
HIKING	12
OTHER	6
SKIING	27
SNOWMOBILING	2
WANDERING	11
WATER/BOATING	2

# K9 RESOURCES

## LAW ENFORCEMENT K-9 TRACKING UNITS

Function – Respond to the scene, attempt to cut sign and track the individual path of travel. Scent specific



# K9 RESOURCES

## Air Scenting

Non scent discriminating, will find any human in area

- New England K9 SAR
- Vermont SAR K9



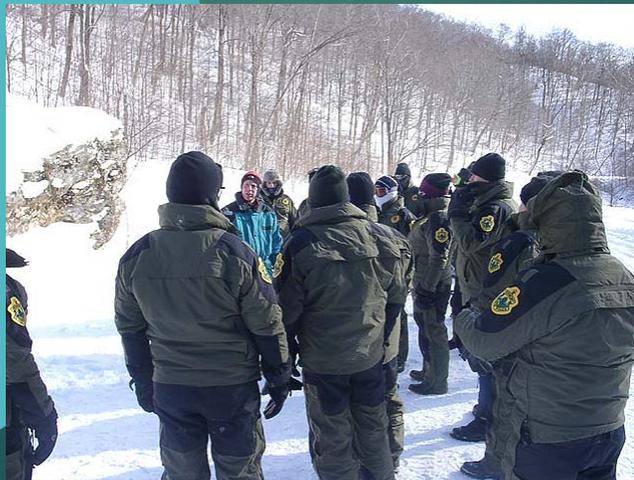
# TRACKERS



# GROUND SEARCHERS

Trained and clue aware searchers who are prepared for the environment and with various search techniques – hasty search, grid search, critical separation, etc.

- VSP SAR
- VT F&W
- UVWRT
- Stowe Mountain Rescue
- Waterbury Back Country Rescue



# AIR SUPPORT

- ▶ Army National Guard\*
- ▶ Customs & Border Protection\*
- ▶ New York State Police\*
- ▶ Civil Air Patrol\*
- ▶ DHART



\* These resources must be requested through Vermont DPS \*



# SPECIALIZED SAR RESOURCES

## Litter Evac & Technical Rescue Teams

- ▶ Stowe Mountain Rescue
- ▶ Upper Valley Wilderness Response Team
- ▶ Colchester Technical Rescue Team
- ▶ Waterbury Back Country Rescue
- ▶ Southern Vermont SAR



# SPECIALIZED SAR RESOURCES

## SKI PATROLS



# SPECIALIZED SAR RESOURCES



# COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ Mobile Command Post
- ▶ Critical Incident Dispatch Team
- ▶ VEM - RACES



# Questions? Suggestions?

## Contacts:

Team Leader:

Lt. Matt Nally, 802-229-9191

[Matthew.nally@state.vt.us](mailto:Matthew.nally@state.vt.us)

SAR Coordinator:

Neil Van Dyke 802-241-5656

[neil.vandyke@state.vt.us](mailto:neil.vandyke@state.vt.us)

