



# WASHINGTON STATE ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM

## POLICY NO. 4 OPERATIONS POLICY

REVISION: F

Approval Date: November 6, 2024

/s/

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President

/s/

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### REVISION RECORD

Revision	Release Date	Description	Affected Sections
Original	2/5/14	Initial Release	All
A	11/1/17	Redefined roles of OLs, TLs, STLs, & TFLs; added requirement for members returning to base camp to be accompanied; deleted provision for WASART to perform euthanasia; added requirements for deployment of WASART equipment	2.0, 3.1; added new Section 3.2 & renumbered succeeding sections; 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.4.3, 3.5, 4.0, 4.2, 5.0, 6.0, 8.0, 9.0
B	2/13/19	Eliminated Operations Leader category; delineated between Rescue and Sheltering Team Leaders; deleted ham radio license reqmt.; minor clarifications and corrections	2.0, 3.3.1; added new subsections 3.3.1.1 & 3.3.1.2; 3.3.2; deleted section 3.4 and re-numbered subsequent sections; re-numbered section 3.6; 4.2, 6.0, 9.0.
C	6/5/19	Specified supervision requirements for minor members	3.3.2, 4.2
D	6/3/20	Revised title of basic training course, changed name of Equipment and Inventory Committee to Supply Committee, added and revised definitions, clarified responsibilities under WAC 118-04, added provision against carrying firearms on deployment; minor clarifications and corrections	2.0, 3.1, 3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.2, 3.3.2, 4.2, 5.0, 6.0, 9.0.



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E	11/1/23	Revised firearms carry policy	4.2; added Appendix A.
F	11/6/24	Revised requirements for Team Leadership	2.0, 3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.2, 3.5. Significant changes are denoted in <u>underlined italics</u> .



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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document defines the policies that govern the operations of the Washington State Animal Response Team (WASART) as it conducts its business in accordance with its mission. In all cases, WASART shall carry out its operations in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS) of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The definitions contained in the ICS shall apply to WASART's operations.

### 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Acting Team Leader:** a member assigned by a Strike Team Leader or Task Force Leader to act as a temporary Team Leader if there are insufficient Team Leaders available for the number of teams needed. The assignment is temporary and applies only to that mission or event.
- **Activity:** any deployment, training event, meeting, work party, public outreach, conference, etc.
- **Activity Time:** time expended by members on any WASART activity, including reasonable transit time to and from the activity.
- **After Action Report (AAR):** a report summarizing the events of a deployment or training exercise. An AAR is required for each such activity in which WASART participates and shall be prepared by the Strike Team or Task Force Leader in Command for that activity, or by the Call Coordinator that managed the deployment.
- **Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ):** the individual or set of individuals with authority and responsibility to manage an incident. Unless WASART is deployed solely at the request of a private individual, it will operate under the direction of the AHJ.
- **Call Coordinator (CC):** a member of the Duty Officer (DO) roster designated by the DO that has received the request for assistance and decided to deploy WASART in response. The Call Coordinator collects information regarding members' availability to deploy, provides the members with necessary information about the deployment, serves as a communications link between the DO, Strike Team Leader or Task Force Leader for the deployment, and authorizes members to deploy.
- **DEM, Incident, or Mission Number:** a number issued by the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), authorizing an incident deployment. When a DEM number has been issued, State Emergency Workers properly signed in for the deployment are covered by the State against personal injury, property loss or damage, and liability. WASART's credentialed members are all registered as State Emergency Workers.
- **Deployment:** a "mission" or "call-out"; a distinct assignment of personnel and equipment to complete a set of tasks related to an incident, emergency, or disaster



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that occurs under the direction and control of a local authorized official or in response to a request for assistance from a private citizen.

- Duty Officer (DO): a WASART member trained to receive requests for WASART assistance from a Requesting Party and make decisions about whether to deploy WASART resources in response to the request.
- Incident Commander (IC): the individual in overall command of the response to any incident, as defined by the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Incident Command Post (ICP): the physical location of the tactical-level, on-scene incident command and management organization. It usually comprises the Incident Commander and immediate staff and may include other designated incident management officials and responders from Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies, as well as private-sector, nongovernmental, and volunteer organizations. Usually, the ICP is located at or in the immediate vicinity of the incident site and is the focus for conducting direct, on-scene control of tactical operations.
- Requesting Party (RP): any government agency, non-government organization or private citizen that requests WASART's assistance.
- Strike Team Leader (STL): a Team Leader or other capable individual who is usually designated by the CC to lead a WASART deployment. The STL is in charge of a team that addresses a single emergency, such as rescue of one or more animals at a single site, or operation of a single emergency animal shelter.
- Task Force Leader (TFL): a Team Leader designated to lead multiple WASART strike teams and/or resources.
- Rescue Team Leader (RTL): an active member who has fulfilled the requirements established in WASART Policy No. 4, WASART Operations Policy.
- Sheltering Team Leader (ShTL): an active member who has fulfilled the requirements established in WASART Policy No. 4, WASART Operations Policy.
- Training event: a planned, non-emergency activity for the development, maintenance, or upgrading of emergency worker skills and/or equipment.



### 3.0 OPERATIONS

#### 3.1 Operations Leadership

All WASART deployments shall be conducted under the leadership of a WASART STL/TFL. In accordance with the ICS, the STL/TFL in command of WASART operations may be the Incident Commander, depending on the circumstances of the deployment. If sufficient resources are available, the STL/TFL shall not be a hands-on participant in the deployment activities. The STL/TFL should remain at the ICP and maintain overall command and control of WASART's activities. If the STL/TFL has expertise that is essential for the activity, and must therefore assume a more hands-on role, he or she must designate a TL or ATL to assume leadership authority and announce the transfer of command to the WASART responders.

#### 3.2 Strike Team Leader (STL) and Task Force Leader (TFL)

STLs and TFLs have the following responsibilities:

- Act as the main contact for his or her team, coordinating the flow of information between the team, the ICP, and the DO/CC.
- Designate Acting TLs (ATLs) if needed
- Make assignments as necessary to maintain a record of member assignments and participation, hours and mileage for that deployment, and a log of WASART radio communications
- Debrief WASART personnel and document comments/concerns
- The WASART STL or TFL should be present at the ICP whenever WASART members are in the field, or, if circumstances require his or her presence with a team away from the ICP, the STL/TFL must designate a TL or ATL to assume leadership of WASART personnel at the ICP. At the conclusion of the deployment, the STL/TFL shall not leave the ICP until all WASART members have returned from the field, signed out on the unit roster log, and left the area
- STLs/TFLs or their designees shall submit a written After Action Report (AAR) and roster to the President or his/her designee within 13 calendar days of completion of the deployment or training event. The AAR shall include the decision of whether the deployment met the criteria for a "Qualifying Deployment" as defined in WASART Policy No. 3, *Training Curriculum*



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### 3.3 Team Leader (TL)

Team Leaders will be chosen based on their training and deployment performance, field experience, demonstrated leadership ability, communication skills, personal interactions, administrative abilities, attendance at General Meetings, participation in WASART activities, and the ability to make sound decisions in a timely manner.

#### 3.3.1 Team Leader Qualifications

##### 3.3.1.1 Rescue Team Leader (RTL)

To qualify as a Rescue Team Leader, candidates nominated after the release of Revision F of this policy:

- Shall have completed 12 months of membership with WASART.
- Shall have completed all basic requirements to be deployable. Additionally, Technical Animal Rescue (TAR) training is highly recommended.
- Shall have successfully completed the TL qualification requirements established by Operating Procedure 6, Technical Rope Rescue Guidelines and Resources.

##### 3.3.1.2 Sheltering Team Leader (ShTL)

To qualify as a Sheltering Team Leader, candidates nominated after the release date of Revision F of this policy:

- Shall have completed 12 months of membership with WASART.
- Shall have completed all basic requirements to be deployable, and Emergency Animal Sheltering training.
- Shall have successfully completed the requirements for Sheltering Team Leader established by the Sheltering Advisory Committee (SHAC).

If qualifications for either TL category are not completed within the prescribed time frame, the individual will revert to his or her previous status.

The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, approve TL candidates based on alternative qualifications and/or previous training and experience.





### 3.3.2 Team Leader Responsibilities

- Before being deployed as a Strike Team Leader, each WASART TL is responsible for ensuring his/her team has a fully-functioning radio that can send and receive communications with base camp, as well as a back-up battery pack, and shall conduct a communications check to ensure that all radios are set to the proper channels, including secondary channels in case communications are poor on the primary channels.
- Check with team members prior to leaving base camp to ensure they have the proper gear for the deployment, personal medications, have no conditions that may affect their health or safety in the field, and confirm with each member that he or she feels fit for duty to carry out the assignment. Ensure that any team member under the age of 18 is under adult supervision. Situations where a single minor and a single adult are isolated together should be avoided
- Serve as a WASART Duty Officer to field requests for assistance from Requesting Parties

### 3.4 Members' Participation

No WASART member shall deploy until authorized by the Duty Officer, Call Coordinator or STL/TFL of the deployment.

### 3.5 Specialized Technical Teams

WASART may establish specialized technical teams consisting of members with advanced technical training in specific rescue specialties. Each team shall have a designated coordinator.

Each team shall develop its own qualifications and performance standards.

### 3.6 Requests for Assistance

Any member (other than a trained Duty Officer) who receives a personal request for assistance from a law enforcement agency or officer, Department/Office of Emergency Management or any authorized agent thereof, or any other Requesting Party shall immediately contact a WASART Duty Officer for review and possible response.

## 4.0 DEPLOYMENT POLICIES

Specific procedures for authorizing and executing WASART deployments, including injury and accident reporting, are documented in WASART Operating Procedure No. 5, WASART Deployment Procedures. Deployments within Snohomish County must always be authorized in advance by the Snohomish County Search and Rescue Coordinator, in accordance with the



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procedures established in Operating Procedure No. 4, Procedure for Obtaining a DEM Mission Number by a Government Agency or on Behalf of a Private Citizen.

### 4.1 Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct by WASART members is defined in WASART Policy No. 2, Administration Policy.

### 4.2 Additional General Rules

- No WASART member should deploy from base camp alone.
- Should it be necessary for any team member to leave the team and return to base camp for any reason, he or she shall not return alone, unless specifically authorized to do so by the STL or TL. Unless so authorized, another team member must be detached to return with the member that is turning around and shall remain with that member all the way to the base camp. If the member returning is under age 18, he or she must be accompanied by at least 2 adults. Likewise, no member shall remain alone at base camp; if it is not possible for more than one person to stay at the base, then all WASART and members' vehicles shall be secured, and all responders shall proceed to the Command Post, or beyond, if so directed by the STL/TFL.
- Only members who are fit for duty for which they are credentialed shall deploy. The WASART CC/DO/STL/TFL has authority to restrict a responder's deployment. WASART members are classified as General Emergency Workers under WAC 118-04-100. As such, they are bound by the provisions of WAC 118-04-200, Personal Responsibilities of Emergency Workers. These provisions include the requirement that, when reporting to the deployment scene, emergency workers have the responsibility to inform the on-scene IC, STL or TFL whether they are mentally and physically fit for their assigned duties. Emergency workers reporting as not fit for currently assigned duties may request a less demanding assignment that is appropriate to their current capabilities. Though not enumerated here, WASART responders are also bound by all other provisions of WAC 118-04-200.
- All teams must have radio communications capability:
  - Rescue response teams should carry at least two modes of communication capable of communicating with base camp and/or other team members.
  - Communications checks shall be performed before leaving base and every 30 minutes, or as determined by the base STL/TFL or designee.
- In accordance with the provisions of RCW 9.41.050, If a member has a firearm in his/her vehicle and responds to a deployment, the firearm is to be unloaded and stored out of sight in a safe and approved manner, and the vehicle must be locked. The WASART STL/TFL shall be notified that a firearm is so stowed.



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- Recognizing that rescue of an animal in distress may sometimes be impossible under extreme circumstances in deployments, it may be necessary for WASART teams to carry firearms on such missions for the sole purpose of performing a humane euthanasia. Should the circumstances warrant it, all firearms carry shall be conducted strictly in accordance with the provisions of Appendix A.
- It is each member's responsibility to accurately sign in and out of the deployment base camp on the sign-in roster and to keep track of the portal-to-portal transit time and mileage to and from all WASART-sanctioned activities, and to report this on the sign-in roster.

### 5.0 WASART EQUIPMENT POLICIES

- All equipment purchased with WASART funds or donated to WASART becomes and remains the property of WASART. No equipment with a residual value of \$50.00 or greater may be disposed of or encumbered in any way by any person(s) without the consent of the WASART Board of Directors. Items with a residual value less than \$50.00 may be disposed of at the discretion of the Chair of the Supply Committee
- WASART equipment shall not be loaned to other parties. Any deployment of WASART equipment shall be accompanied by at least one WASART member fully familiar with its assembly, setup and use. The accompanying member is responsible for returning the equipment to its original location and notifying the Supply Committee chair of any issues with its condition upon its return
- WASART accepts responsibility for the routine maintenance and repair of equipment owned by the organization, and which also may be in the custody or control of a member. WASART members are responsible for any repairs or replacement costs of damaged or lost WASART equipment that results from acts beyond normal or ordinary use occurring in a non-WASART situation
- WASART shall assist members whose personal equipment is damaged in the course of a deployment covered by a DEM Incident Number in seeking reimbursement from the State Emergency Management Division. WASART shall also maintain its own insurance coverage to indemnify members for personal equipment damage not reimbursed by the State EMD or the member's personal insurance



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### 6.0 OBTAINING MISSION NUMBERS FOR DEPLOYMENTS

WASART intends that all its deployments be sanctioned by the EMD, and that the deployment be covered by a Mission Number (also known as a DEM number) issued by the EMD through local Authorities Having Jurisdiction, to indemnify WASART and its members for losses incurred as a result of the deployment. Procedures for obtaining DEM numbers are contained in WASART Operating Procedure No. 4, Procedure for Obtaining a DEM Mission Number by a Government Agency or on Behalf of a Private Citizen.

A DEM number can be obtained after a deployment has begun, but it is desirable to obtain it as soon as possible, preferably at the time the decision to deploy is made. However, it is not WASART's intent to allow an animal to suffer or die simply because it was not possible to obtain a DEM Number. The decision to deploy in such a situation is left to the judgment of the Duty Officer.

### 7.0 COMMUNICATIONS

Communications procedures are detailed in WASART Operating Procedure No. 3, WASART Communications Procedures.

### 8.0 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

- At a deployment, training opportunity, recruiting event, presentation, etc., all requests for information concerning the event shall be referred to the WASART STL/TFL, the WASART Public Information Officer (PIO) on duty, or the AHJ's spokesperson.
- If the requesting agency asks WASART to address the media specifically concerning WASART operations, all statements will be made by the WASART STL/TFL, WASART PIO on duty, or another member specifically designated and authorized by the STL/TFL.
- Except as authorized above, no WASART member shall make comments concerning an event in progress at any time to any member of the media.
- Routine media requests for information concerning WASART (aside from deployment operations) are to be referred to the WASART PIO, President or Vice President.
- WASART members, other than the WASART PIO, shall never post comments or discussion of a deployment in progress on either their own social media accounts or on WASART's.



### 9.0 AFTER ACTION REPORTS (AARs)

The President or his/her designee shall forward AARs, via fax or email, to the following entities:

- To King County Office of Emergency Management and the emergency management agency in the county in which the deployment occurred, within 15 days of completion of deployment or a WASART training event
- To WASART Board of Directors
- To WASART membership, except as noted below

Due to the confidential nature of the information contained in After Action Reports, they will not be distributed to the WASART general membership if there is a possibility of the AARs being used in a legal action. However, the general membership will be notified that a request for assistance had been received, to which some WASART members did, or did not, deploy. The WASART Board of Directors, Team Leaders, Duty Officers, as well as the agency requesting WASART's assistance, will receive these restricted AARs. The current deployment process is not affected by this rule. However, WASART members involved in such deployments are to maintain strict confidentiality about the deployment details until the legal action, if such occurs, is resolved and either the President, WASART PIO, or the WASART STL/TFL on that particular deployment releases the participants from this obligation.

The general WASART membership will continue to receive AARs from deployments that are not likely to result in legal action against the animal's custodians or deployment personnel.

AARs should be written as concise, factual reports. They should not editorialize or draw conclusions as to medical condition, responsibility for the animal's situation, or success or failure of the deployment. Personal opinions should be omitted.



### APPENDIX A

#### PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR FIREARMS CARRY FOR PURPOSE OF HUMANE EUTHANASIA

- Firearms shall only be carried on a WASART deployment for the purpose of potentially carrying out humane euthanasia when the known circumstances of the mission indicate that rescue of the animal may be impossible due to the animal's condition, terrain, or other circumstances.
- Euthanasia by firearm will only be carried out as a last resort, to prevent suffering of an animal that cannot be rescued timely, cannot be chemically euthanized because of the potential of wildlife poisoning or water source contamination, and if left in the wilderness will die in a terrible manner, or would present a safety risk to others who may come upon the animal and attempt a rescue
- The Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for the mission shall be notified of the potential need for humane euthanasia and shall authorize carrying and using a firearm for such purpose
- The owner of the animal or the owner's agent shall concur in the possible need for euthanasia and shall indicate concurrence by signing WASART Form A-024, Field Euthanasia Authorization, which shall also make clear that removal of the carcass, if desired or necessary, is the responsibility of the owner. If the owner or agent is unknown or unreachable, the AHJ may authorize euthanasia.
- The owner or agent of the property where the euthanasia may take place shall grant authority for the euthanasia to be conducted on the property, also by signing WASART Form A-024. If the owner or agent is not available or cannot be located, the AHJ must authorize the potential act. If AHJ or property owner authorization is granted remotely, the Strike Team Leader (STL) shall so indicate on the Form A-024.
- Prior to departing base camp, the STL and the designated shooter shall brief the team on the possible need for euthanasia and the fact that a gun and ammunition will be carried with the team. Should it be necessary for the STL to leave base camp, he or she shall designate an Acting STL to remain at base, and the Acting STL shall brief any later arriving team members of the possibility of euthanasia by gunshot before they depart from base. All responding members will be given the opportunity to participate to whatever extent they feel comfortable.
- The firearm(s) to be carried shall be carried unloaded.
- Selection of weapon, ammunition, and procedure for carrying out the euthanasia shall be conducted in accordance with the American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals, Part II, Section M3.5.



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- No more than two weapons shall be carried beyond the base camp
- Ammunition to be carried shall be limited to one magazine of no more than 10-round capacity, or sufficient rounds for one revolver cylinder, as appropriate. The person authorized to make the shot shall confirm before departing base camp that the ammunition is correct for the weapon to be used.
- The weapon shall only be loaded immediately prior to carrying out the euthanasia, and shall be unloaded immediately afterward, including any chambered round
- The person who loads and discharges the weapon shall have completed a gun safety course within the past 3 years and shall have evidence of course completion on file with the WASART Credentials Manager. The evidence shall be confirmed through the mission Call Coordinator prior to departing base camp, unless the shooter is able to present the evidence directly to the STL. If the STL is to perform the euthanasia, he or she shall assign an Acting on-site STL while the euthanasia is carried out.
- Weapon handling shall at all times be safe and done with discretion.
- Prior to loading the weapon, all team members except the shooter and, if needed, an animal handler, and all other on-site personnel shall depart the immediate site to an out-of-range location safe from possible ricochet and wait to be called back. If present, the animal handler should remain in a location which is protected from possible ricochet. If the animal handler is needed, he or she shall serve as witness to verify and confirm the animal's death. If an animal handler is not needed, another member of the team shall serve as witness to confirm the death. Verification can be accomplished after the fact and need not be by witnessing the actual shot.
- If the animal's location is such that regulations require that it be moved away from a trail or other location due to predator or aesthetic concerns, the team shall do their best to ensure that such requirement(s) are met before departing the site.