

Arrowsmith Search and Rescue (ASAR) Self Assessment Guide/Application

We appreciate your interest in becoming a member of our organization. If after completing this Self Rating Guide you decide to submit it, a panel will review it to help select prospective candidates for a limited number of seats in our training program. If you wish to join Arrowsmith Search and Rescue in another role, please let us know as we also accept members for our Operational Support Team (OST) and auxiliary membership. Please email: membership@arrowsmithsar.ca or phone 250-752-7774 for more information on the OST or auxiliary membership.

ASAR is responsible for Search and Rescue (SAR) activities on Vancouver Island from Nanoose Bay to Cook Creek, from Cathedral Grove to Jeddah Island. In addition to search tasks, many hours are spent on training, planning, administration, fundraising and public education. ASAR members are unpaid professionals and are held to lofty standards of training with an emphasis on safety.

The process to join Arrowsmith Search and Rescue (ASAR) is very similar to interviewing for a paid job. There are several stages involved: application, self-assessment questionnaire; attending various interviews, aptitude assessments and then the essential training courses. This is not an attendance program where everyone passes. You will be graded on a variety of academic and practical skills performance. You must pass in order to become certified.

Be aware that we are not going to downplay any of the challenges that are the realities of what we do. The role of an ASAR member is physically and psychologically difficult, time consuming and sometimes extremely dangerous. It can be a thankless job where you may be involved with things you are not permitted to openly speak about. In essence, SAR is a lifestyle; consequently, following is a document that is

designed to help you determine whether you want to pursue a relationship with ASAR.

As you read the Guide and respond to the questions, we ask that you take very seriously the details and answer as honestly as you can. If you decide that ASAR is not for you, do not submit your personal completed Guide, we thank you for taking the time to complete the Guide and wish you well. (Alternatively, you may wish to become involved with the Operational Support Team, email membership@arrowsmithsar.ca or call 250-752-7774 for further information.) However, if you decide to take the plunge and submit the Guide, a panel of experienced members will review your responses and will contact you within a short time.

Before you proceed to the Guide, you may be wondering why we want you to complete the Guide. Firstly, we want you to make an informed decision based on a realistic understanding of just how difficult our tasks are, and that you are willing and able to contribute a minimum of five years to ASAR. (The financial cost, as well as the time and effort ASAR trainers dedicate to candidate intake and training is a substantial investment to bring a candidate into ASAR and have the candidate trained to the minimum competency required before being assigned to searches or rescues.) Secondly, we want to make sure that we will be a good fit for you just as much as you must be a good fit for us. Thirdly, we are not looking for heroes or badge collectors. We seek out people who:

- do their very best, even when no one else is watching;
- are good followers and potential leaders;
- are physically fit and emotionally sound;
- know their limits and are willing to safely push them;
- have the ability to learn, retain and correctly employ what has been taught or learned and to keep learning;
- have the maturity to make sound, rational decisions during times of heightened stress while concurrently paying attention to detail;

- have drive, dedication and strength with the will to give 100 percent whenever called upon.

Note: The person that has the so-called “Type-A Personality” usually does well in SAR.

One final piece before you get into the Guide. The route from applicant to certified GSAR specialist is an ongoing assessment involving interviews, field exercises, classroom instruction, practical skills evaluation and other formal training courses (the GSAR Program of Courses). During your training and thereafter, you will be expected to train and participate throughout the year in all weather conditions. Bottom line: the training and assessments never stop!

“We don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training.”
- Archilochus – Greek Lyric Poet c. 680 – c. 645 BC

In a nutshell this means -

... the ability to succeed is not based on some type of Godly superpower someone is born with such that they can simply expect to succeed knowing it will happen due to their exceptional abilities. Success is based on the human ability to train to the point that when faced with a critical situation someone has practiced responses so many times, that it has become an immediate reaction occurring without thought.

If you are still interested, please complete the guide, and return it as an attachment to membership@arrowsmithsar.ca with the email subject line “ASAR APPLICATION”. You should receive an acknowledgment withing 3-5 business days, if not, please call 250-752-7774.

If after completing the Guide you believe that operational search and rescue may not be for you but still would like to be involved, please consider our Operational Support Team or auxiliary membership. Further information is available by emailing membership@arrowsmithsar.ca or phoning: 250-752-7774.

Time

The time commitment required of ASAR is substantial. Your family absolutely needs to support your decision to be part of ASAR. Also, if you are employed, your employer should be aware of your decision. Some employers will allow you to go to tasks others may not. Employers have no legal obligation to allow you to leave for a SAR Operation. Your days and nights will be interrupted by call-outs. These call-outs become a priority over virtually anything else. Most recently, as an example, ASAR was called out on a search which lasted hours in a snowstorm on Christmas Eve. Members went. Why? Because they knew that that person and their family, was likely having the worst day of their lives.

Are you of the age of majority? (Above 19)	Yes	No
Are you currently employed?	Yes	No
Do you work weekends?	Yes	No
Can you commit to 5 active years in ASAR?	Yes	No
Can you commit to approximately 200 hours each year of training and search activities?	Yes	No
During the formal Member in Training Program (Entry level training program) over +/- 4 months and the GSAR Training Program (certification) over +/- 6 months; can you commit to weeknight and weekend training sessions with 100% attendance?	Yes	No
Can you to commit to call outs on special days like Christmas and Halloween?	Yes	No
Are you willing to commit to maintaining your required personal gear; having it always ready?	Yes	No
Would you be available for Community Events and fundraising activities, such as the Parksville Polar Bear Swim on New Year's Day?	Yes	No
Hopefully now you are realizing just how demanding our roles are and understanding how our time is focussed on ASAR.	Yes	No

Fitness

Training programs and active searches are conducted in all sorts of terrain and all-weather conditions. Physical fitness and stamina are not only a pre-requisite, but essential. Vision and hearing are the two key senses used by ASAR members in searches and for personal safety.

Are you able to hike for 4 or more hours with a 25-pound (12 Kg) pack on your back over uneven and rough terrain?	Yes	No
Are you able and willing to operate in rain, sun, sleet, snow, fog and everything in between?	Yes	No

Do you have any special concerns or chronic condition(s) that would affect your capacity to participate in rigorous SAR training or operations?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Stress

To be blunt, there is a lot of stress that comes with being an ASAR unpaid professional. Looking at an individual, be they a child or adult, who is injured and bleeding can be difficult. Being part of a team that discovers a cadaver affects everyone differently; consequently, ASAR enlists the assistance of trained Critical Incident Stress de-briefers. We realize serious life and death situations can trigger Post Traumatic Stress reactions. Keep that in mind when you imagine a call-out at 03:00 a.m. to search for a missing child.

Would you be able to deal with finding a deceased person and remaining at that site for several hours with the cadaver?	Yes	No
Would you be able to stay composed when providing First Aid?	Yes	No
Are you comfortable dealing with blood, from either a stranger, yourself, or a search team member? (You do not have to like it.)	Yes	No
If you were uninjured, would you be able to handle spending a night or two alone in the woods?	Yes	No

Professionalism

ASAR adheres to professional operational standards (as published by the provincial government) for many reasons including, but not limited to: competency, efficiency and pride.

Confidentiality is a must in Search and Rescue. We come across situations and become privy to information that are strictly private or legally confidential. Can you limit yourself to sharing with only ASAR members – not with friends or family?	Yes	No
Could you hold your comments and refer questions to a Senior ASAR Leader when the Press or other Media asks you questions?	Yes	No
At times, given the gravity of tasks, our command and deployment follows a strict chain of command; it resembles a military command chain. Are you able to follow orders or direction, only asking questions for clarification and better understanding?	Yes	No
Are you willing to continuously learn and apply your learning throughout your tenure with Search and Rescue?	Yes	No
Are you willing to teach others and share what you have learned with other team members?	Yes	No

Would you be able to receive constructive criticism and correction appropriately?	Yes	No
Do you always learn from your mistakes?	Yes	No
Are you willing, even if you are shy or introverted, to work and be active in teams of all sizes?	Yes	No
Are you flexible; able to adapt to changing situations and information quickly and appropriately?	Yes	No
Do you need formal structure and direction to feel comfortable participating in activities?	Yes	No
Are you able to use your initiative conscientiously and appropriately?	Yes	No

Do you have previous experience as a first responder? If yes, please add comments as to how long you were involved, what you did in your role, for which organization, highest level attained.

Yes No

Our unpaid professional members are usually requested to not only become qualified search members, but also to take on more responsible roles, such as Team Leaders or Board of Director positions. Are you willing to take the training to advance and follow through?

Yes No

Certifications and Equipment

What class of driver's license do you have?		
Would you be willing to submit a driver abstract?	Yes	No
Do you have any driving infractions?	Yes	No
Do you have any restrictions of your driver's license? (no night driving, speed limitations etc)	Yes	No
First Aid: do you currently hold any level of first aid? Note: All ASAR members require a certificate in First Aid. (training is provided).	Yes	No
Criminal Records Check (RCMP): Are you willing to submit to a Criminal Records check? Every candidate being selected for training must provide a current Criminal Record Check issued by the RCMP. (No cost to you)	Yes	No

Do you have your own reliable transportation?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

By signing this application form, I am stating that all information provided above is true, correct and complete. I also understand that I will be subject to a criminal record search, the results of which will be released by the RCMP to Arrowsmith Search & Rescue. I hereby acknowledge and understand that there are inherent risks associated with search and rescue activities, including training and that these activities may occur during adverse weather conditions, at night, and in remote wilderness terrain. I fully assume the risks associated to these activities. I confirm that I have read and considered each question. I am aware that my Self Rating Guide will be reviewed and that I will be contacted regarding the outcome.

Privacy Notice: *Arrowsmith Search and Rescue respects the privacy of our members and stakeholders. We do not sell or trade any personal information. We use the information collected on this form to evaluate entry in our Ground Search and Rescue Training program and will not use this information for any other purposes. If you wish to have your application withdrawn and deleted, or if you have questions, please contact membership@arrowsmithsar.ca*

Full Name: _____
Phone Number: _____
Email address: _____
City of Residence: _____

Should you wish to continue with your application, please submit this guide to membership@arrowsmithsar.ca and a selection panel will review your responses and contact you by telephone. If we are unable to contact you via telephone, will contact you by email.

Arrowsmith Search and Rescue

UT ALII POSSINT VIVERE (That Others May Live)¹

¹ From the PJ Creed “...placing these duties before personal desires and comforts. These things we/I do, that others may live.”