

Jefferson County Fire and EMS Operational Guidelines

Jefferson County, WV

OG 16-014 Jefferson County ATV Response Team Standard Operating Guideline

Introduction: Special teams are emergency services resources immediately deployable to support incidents, disasters, and other emergencies requiring specialized personnel, equipment, and resources. Of the 210 square miles of land in Jefferson County, a vast portion of that are wild lands that span the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Potomac River basin, and central areas throughout the county used for hunting, trapping and recreation. Of the population in Jefferson County, the majority (29.9%) represents the vibrant and active age group of 25-44 years of age, and 32% of our households have children under the age of 18 residing within. These statistics ensure that there is a high probability of the need for an ATV/UTV/Snowmobile (collectively referred to as ATV) response team.

The Jefferson County All-Terrain Response Team (JCART) was created to respond to emergencies in geographical areas that may be inaccessible to standard fire apparatus, or powered all-terrain vehicles will significantly improve a search scenario. Inaccessible geographical areas are considered to be any area with severe terrain that consist of densely populated trees, brush, or rock, and slick or impassable driving conditions caused by mud, ice, extreme weather, deep snow, marsh, or wetland areas. A search scenario is any incident in which a land search is necessary.

Purpose: The purpose of this Operational Guideline is to establish and direct the participation of a county-wide all-terrain Response Team, under the direction of the Jefferson County Fire and Rescue Association (JCFRA) – or designee. The establishment of the Jefferson County All-Terrain Response Team (JCART) allows for rapid deployment of the team to respond to an incident or emergency within the geographical area of Jefferson County, or surrounding jurisdictions, to provide necessary resources to affect a search, rescue, or extrication of a patient.

Team Membership: Any emergency responder with an affiliation to a Fire Department, including the JCESA, within Jefferson County is eligible to join the JCART. JCART will be overseen by the Jefferson County Fire and Rescue Association – or designee.

Membership Oversight: An authorized representative (i.e. Fire Chief, EMS Chief, etc.) of each department will be responsible for the approval of a members association with the JCART. Each member's host department must accept full responsibility for the liability of that member responding on emergency incidents in participation with the JCART.

Membership: Membership in the JCART is solely voluntary, and each member accepts the responsibility and liability of membership. Each member, or department, is required to provide

their own ATV for the purposes outlined within this operational guideline, and understand that there is no provided gear, liability insurance, or other maintenance/oversight of the equipment used in acceptance of membership on the JCART. Each member must have the ability to transport the ATV to the emergency scene. Through membership, the member agrees to abide by the minimum ATV standards outlined within this guidance. By responding to an incident following the activation of the team, the member agrees to abide by the incident command system, and accepts any and all standards provided within this operational guideline. Additionally, the member understands that s/he will utilize his/her ATV at his/her own risk of damage to the vehicle, personal injury or death.

Activation of the Team: In the event a determination is made that one or more ATV's could benefit the outcome of the circumstances, the incident commander or other authority on scene/responding will request of the Jefferson County Communication Center (ECC) to alert for the JCART. Similar to that of the Jefferson County Swift Water Team, the ECC will alert the team to respond.

In addition to emergency activation, the JCART can be activated for the purpose of stand-by events and other mass gatherings. In this case, prior planning and communications is necessary.

Definition and Minimum Standards: Only ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles are authorized to respond in an activation of JCART. For the purpose of this document ATVs, UTVs, and snowmobiles are collectively referred to as ATVs. Absolutely no dirt bikes or mountain bikes are to be used in conjunction with the JCART.

ATV: ATV is defined as a 4 wheel vehicle designed for off-road use. An ATV will provide seating for 1 or 2 riders, but no more. This vehicle is commonly referred to as a "four wheeler," and is normally 4 wheel drive capable.

UTV: UTV is defined as a 4 to 6 wheel vehicle designed for off-road use. With side-by-side seating, and possibly a rear seat, this vehicle can sometimes have up to 6 occupants. Normally, these vehicles will be less capable than an ATV, but have the ability to climb steep terrain, and transport multiple people.

Snowmobile: A specially designed vehicle used for response in winter conditions.

To maintain consistency and accountability within the JCART, the following minimum standards MUST be maintained:

Any ATV used in response to an incident must have:

- Substantial Lighting, in addition to the factory headlights.
 - 360 degrees of bright white lights are strongly encouraged.
 - Emergency Lighting (Red/Red or Red/White)
- First Aid Kit or other means to treat the injured.

- EMS Jump Bags, during the duration of the incident, are acceptable to use providing the ambulances resources are not diminished, and weather conditions permit.
- Hand Lights: At a minimum, 1 hand light is available for all riders.
- Storage Rack, and Tie Down Capability
 - All ATVs must have the ability to properly secure equipment and stokes baskets via a front or rear rack.
 - All ATVs must maintain their own supply of tie down equipment.
- Gear Trunk, Box or Bag for the storage of emergency supplies, water, food, etc.
- Operational Winch.
- Trailer Hitch
 - A Standard 2" Ball is required, and additional options are encouraged.
- The ability to signify the ATV is being used on an official capacity.
 - An EMS flag and/or decal.

Any Operator or passenger of an ATV used in an incident must have:

- Long pants, steel toed boots, extrication jumpsuit, or wild land firefighting gear on at all times the ATV is operational. EMS Jump Suits are acceptable.
- Eye protection.
- Helmets with chin strap and Gloves.
- A portable radio capable of communications with the incident commander and/or other ATV operators.

Radio Designation: In the event a portable radio must be used, radio designations will be authorized by the incident commander, or designee. Standard practice will suggest the use of ATV and the home company with which you are associated (i.e. ATV 3, ATV 3-1, ATV 3-2, etc.).

Standard for ATV Use on a Scene:

- Prior to using an ATV, the operator shall check to verify fuel level, oil level and tire pressure.
- An ATV shall not be operated upon any paved road surfaces unless it is an emergency situation or when traveling to or from an activity site where no reasonable alternative route exists.
- An ATV shall not be operated upon any railroad tracks for any reason. Adjacent access roads are acceptable. Extreme caution should be used when crossing tracks and operating in the vicinity of the tracks as the noise of the ATV will make it impossible to hear a train. If there will be an extended use of the ATV in the vicinity of the tracks, have the ECC notify the railroad.
- An ATV shall be operated at speeds that are reasonable for road and terrain conditions.
- The primary uses for the ATV would be search: finding a lost or otherwise disoriented victim; medical: reaching a victim in inaccessible areas and transporting back to civilization and; fire: for accessing and transporting firefighting equipment in the event of a fire in an otherwise inaccessible area.

- Equipment and/or patients transported on the ATV or trailer/sled must be secured using available straps, ropes, etc.
- Extreme care and LOW SPEED will be used whenever transporting a person on the trailer/sled or ATV.
- Whenever an ATV is in use it should be operated in a safe and professional manner. It should be operated at a safe speed and all wheels must remain on the ground. At no time should the public get the impression that it is being operated recklessly, recreationally or for personal enjoyment.

Personal Injury or Property Damage: Membership within a special response team such as the JCART, by the very nature of the operations, is inherently dangerous. In the event of any personal injury incurred while using the ATV or any damage to the ATV caused by the operation of the ATV within the duty of JCART shall be reported to the incident commander immediately for the procurement of medical treatment, and/or replacement of resources. Damage to the ATV is the responsibility of the owner, as outlined within the guideline, and not that of the JCFRA, JCESA or any fire department of Jefferson County.

Training: Members should attend an annual coordinated training event to demonstrate safe and appropriate operation of the ATV, loading and maneuvering with patients, and general wilderness operations.

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Chairman of Chief's Committee

Approved Date:
Implementation Date: