Prospective Member Requirements Awareness

Here's some information to make sure you, as a prospective member, understand the group's expectations. While the group is a volunteer organization we do impose these participation requirements:

- To become a Probationary member you must:
  - Attend either two business meetings or a business meeting and one field training.
  - Submit an application.
  - Pay the $30 one time dues.
  - Agree to a background check.
  - Be approved by the PSAR membership.
- To become an Active member you must:
  - Have at least current First Aid and CPR certifications. Each member is responsible for completing the necessary FA/CPR training on your own. When you present a receipt and certification card, you will be reimbursed for the cost of the course. Links for providers are available on the Training tab of the Members Area of the website.
  - Spend three months as a Probationary member.
  - Complete 32 hours of PSAR participation (meetings, training, missions, and events).
  - Be approved by the PSAR membership.
- To maintain your membership you must:
  - Respond to two missions annually.
  - Attend six training sessions annually; this includes both field training and table-top training conducted at the end of business meetings.
  - Maintain current First Aid and CPR certifications.

Each member is required to submit to a criminal background check that will be submitted by PSAR.

To be eligible to respond to missions you must become Call-Out Qualified (COQ). This involves showing that you have certain minimum gear and going through a session that provides basic information on:

- An overview of SAR in Virginia and how PSAR fits into that
- Expectations of you as a COQ responder
- What happens on a mission
- Basic search techniques and tactics
- Clue awareness and handling

A national requirement is for all mission responders to complete the following National Incident Management System (NIMS) self-study courses that are available at this link - http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslist.asp:

- IS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)
- IS-700: National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction
- IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction
- IS-809: Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Search and Rescue

Training beyond COQ is typically funded by the state with the member's cost only for transportation to and from the training location.

PSAR gets activated based on the Responsible Agent (RA), typically a member of law enforcement, requesting assistance from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). VDEM will then alert specific groups based on the type of mission and its location.

There are certain minimum individual equipment requirements that must be provided by the member. The list is included in the Prospective Membership Packet and the cost can easily be $200 depending on what you already have. Blue Ridge Mountain Sports and OTL Tactical provide a 10% discount for SAR-related purchases. Your expenses are most likely allowable tax deductions.

Once you become COQ you need to obtain a PSAR uniform shirt. This consists of a long-sleeve, non-cotton, fast drying khaki shirt with:

- Name over right pocket
- Piedmont Search and Rescue PSAR patch on each sleeve

PSAR will subsidize $15 of the cost of 1 shirt when you provide a receipt to the Finance Officer. You also get 2 PSAR patches at no cost.

Websites:

- PSAR – www.piedmontsar.org
- Virginia Search and Rescue Council – www.vasarco.org
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management - www.vaemergency.com