



### CAVE SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) TEAM LEADER

RESOURCE CATEGORY	Search and Rescue
RESOURCE KIND	Personnel
OVERALL FUNCTION	The Cave Search and Rescue (SAR) Team Leader leads Cave SAR teams performing search, rescue and recovery in naturally formed cave environments, including both horizontal and vertical caves
COMPOSITION AND ORDERING SPECIFICATIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. This position can be ordered as a single resource or in conjunction with a NIMS typed team (Cave Search and Rescue (SAR) Team).</li><li>2. Discuss logistics for deploying this position, such as working conditions, length of deployment, security, lodging, transportation, and meals, prior to deployment</li><li>3. The requestor should consider the need for additional recognized capability or endorsement, such as animal rescue</li><li>4. The position typically works 12 hours per shift, is self-sustainable for 72 hours and is deployable up to 14 days</li></ol>

Each type of resource builds on the qualifications of the type below it. For example, Type 1 qualifications include the qualifications in Type 2, plus an increase in capability. Type 1 is the highest qualification level.

COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	NOTES
DESCRIPTION	Same as Type 2, PLUS: Performs search, rescue and recovery in caves that may involve swiftwater	The Cave SAR Team Leader: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provides general leadership, direct supervision, wellness and safety of the team and members</li><li>2. Provides first aid and other medical care within limits of training and applicable protocols</li><li>3. Operates within the Incident Command System (ICS), in a specialized position within a Cave SAR Team</li><li>4. Operates in environments with and without infrastructure, including those affected by disasters and terrorism; with compromised access to roadways, utilities and transportation; and with limited availability of shelter, food and water</li><li>5. Provides safety of self and team members; basic medical care of self, team members and patients; and simple decontamination of self, team members and personal/team equipment</li><li>6. Coordinates with other Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) provided/organized resources as necessary to perform operations and support mission</li><li>7. Conducts initial response to incident, including size up and initial report; rescue vs. recovery assessment; and pre-planning, incident action planning and emergency response planning</li></ol>	Not Specified
EDUCATION	Same as Type 2	Not Applicable	Not Specified



## Position Qualification for Mass Search and Rescue Operations Search and Rescue

COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	NOTES
TRAINING	<p>Same as Type 2, PLUS: AHJ verification of completion of a cave SAR training program that results in the following position-specific awareness and capabilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Address complex rigging problems in vertical environments</li><li>2. Perform rescues with minimal equipment</li></ol>	<p>Completion of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. IS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS-100</li><li>4. IS-200: Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response, ICS-200</li><li>5. IS-700: National Incident Management System, An Introduction</li><li>6. IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction</li><li>7. AHJ verification of completion of a cave SAR training program that results in the following position-specific awareness and capabilities:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Steep angle evacuation</li><li>b. High angle evacuation</li><li>c. Techniques that facilitate patient movement with limited personnel</li><li>d. Ascending and descending on rope</li></ol></li><li>8. All hazards Team Leader level training</li><li>9. Operational Leadership training</li><li>10. Training on the use of National Weather Service (NWS), United States Geological Survey (USGS) and related warning and notification systems specific to discipline, such as storms and inflow flooding</li><li>11. Hazards and safety in and around caves, including:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Stillwater and swiftwater considerations</li><li>b. Cave flooding considerations and response procedures</li></ol></li><li>12. AHJ-verified completion of a Cave SAR training program meeting the following position-specific skills and aptitudes pertaining to initial response:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Size up and initial report</li><li>b. Rescue vs. recovery assessment</li><li>c. Pre-planning, incident action planning and emergency response planning</li></ol></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Operational leadership training follows the guidelines of:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The AHJ</li><li>b. National Park Service (NPS)</li><li>c. United States Coast Guard (USCG)</li></ol></li><li>Operational Leadership training</li><li>d. National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) L-180: Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service or discipline equivalent</li><li>e. NWCG L-280: Followership to Leadership or discipline equivalent</li><li>2. The AHJ may require additional training capabilities and endorsements</li></ol>



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COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	NOTES
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	Same as Type 2, PLUS: Ability to perform search, rescue and recovery in caves that may involve swift water or highly complex rigging	Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: 1. Knowledge of cave rescue and associated hazards 2. Knowledge of use, care, inspection and maintenance of all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), tools, devices and equipment specific to this position 3. Ability to carry out technical rescue operations, rope rescue and Cave SAR 4. AHJ-validated experience demonstrating the following: a. Scene management and dynamic assessment of risk b. Cave SAR techniques c. Identification of hazards, including potential operating environments 5. Completion of a Cave SAR Team Leader Position Task Book (PTB) or equivalent AHJ documentation	National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1006: Standard for Technical Rescuer Professional Qualifications (specifically Chapter 13 Cave Search and Rescue) and NFPA 1670: Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents (specifically Chapter 13 Cave Search and Rescue) address knowledge, skills and abilities standards that may apply to Cave SAR
<b>PHYSICAL/MEDICAL FITNESS</b>	Same as Type 2, PLUS: 1. Meets minimum physical fitness and swimming standards, in accordance with the AHJ's JRPAT 2. Physically capable of performing search, rescue and recovery in caves that involve swiftwater while utilizing appropriate PPE	1. Arduous 2. Maintains physical fitness standards, in accordance with AHJ Job Related Physical Ability Test (JRPAT) 3. Maintains immunizations in accordance with current AHJ requirements 4. Is able to work while wearing appropriate PPE 5. Physically capable of performing search, rescue and recovery operations in caves with long and/or complex/tight horizontal and/or vertical passage	1. The NIMS Guideline for the National Qualification System (NQS) defines Physical/Medical Fitness levels for NIMS positions 2. PPE is mission specific and may vary by working environment and it includes protective footwear, protective clothing for skin exposure, eye and ear protection, respirators, gloves and masks
<b>CURRENCY</b>	Same as Type 2	1. Annual refresher of related SAR skills and abilities in cave environments 2. Functions in this position during an operational incident, planned event, exercise, drill or simulation at least once every five years 3. Maintains currency for the NIMS Type 1 Cave SAR Technician 4. Background checks as applicable law permits or requires	Provider must carry out and use any background checks as applicable law specifies. This may include: 1. A background check completed within past months 2. A sex-offender registry check 3. A local, state and national criminal history
<b>PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS</b>	Same as Type 2	1. Certification or completion of cave SAR training that relates to the job standards 2. AHJ-required Basic Life Support (BLS)-level medical care certification or recertification	The AHJ determines the emergency medical certifications the team leader needs to meet the minimum criteria, which can include first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and BLS



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### NOTES

Nationally typed resources represent the minimum criteria for the associated component.

### REFERENCES

1. FEMA, NIMS 508: Cave Search and Rescue (SAR) Team
2. FEMA, NIMS 509: Cave Search and Rescue (SAR) Technician
3. FEMA, National Incident Management System (NIMS), October 2017
4. FEMA, NIMS Guideline for NQS, November 2017
5. FEMA, National Response Framework, October 2019
6. ASTM International F2890-12: Standard Guide for Hazard Awareness for Search and Rescue Personnel, 2023
7. NFPA 1006: Standard for Technical Rescuer Professional Qualifications, 2021 (Chapter 13 Cave Search and Rescue)
8. NFPA 1670: Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents, 2017 (Chapter 13 Cave Search and Rescue)
9. NWCG, L-180: Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service, 2008
10. NWCG, L-280: Followership to Leadership, 2008