



## **THE SAN DIMAS MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM**

### **HISTORY**

To meet the growing need for an organized Special Rescue Squad to assist those victims of accident and circumstances in the San Gabriel Canyon, the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team was founded on May 14, 1955, by Ed Rankin and six others. Before the advent of the Team, searches and rescues were performed by hastily assembled citizens and by local police and fire agencies who lacked the specialized training required to safely and effectively perform the highly specialized and technical rescues, searches and evacuations unique to our San Gabriel Mountains and Valley.

Originally, the Team was designated as a non-affiliated unit of the Civil Defense, and was added as a special unit of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in 1957. In 1968, members became Los Angeles County Reserve Deputies to give them the authority required to facilitate performance of their duties. Then, as now, they were paid \$1.00 a year to cover them with Workers' Compensation Insurance during the hazardous responsibilities which they were asked to assume.

Until 1961, the Team furnished all its own transportation, medical supplies, ropes, helmets, hardware and all other needed equipment. After 1961, the Sheriff's Department began furnishing basic transportation, rope, and certain other items. These were put to use without delay, as the number of rescue call-outs began to increase. During the first few years of its existence there were 12 to 16 call-outs per year, but by 1965, this had increased to 70 call-outs per year. The Team currently responds to over 50 rescues per year, and receives a steady budget of funding from the Sheriff's Department which enables the Team to acquire and maintain specialized vehicles, communication equipment and rescue hardware.

The San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team became incorporated as a non-profit corporation on February 5, 1970, and in 1971, was granted non-profit corporation status by the State of California, and IRS 501 (c) 3 non-profit charitable status by the Federal Government. This has enabled the Team to obtain help from the generous contributions of residents and businesses of the area to purchase special equipment not available from the county sources.

The Team is recognized by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) as a State Disaster and Emergency Services asset. As an OES resource

and a full member of the national Mountain Rescue Association (MRA), the Team has often been called on to assist other teams in Los Angeles County as well as teams from other counties in the State.

The Team is now responsible for rescues, searches and evacuations in a 250 square mile area of Los Angeles County, bordered roughly by Fish Canyon and the San Gabriel River Freeway on the West, Angeles Crest Highway at the crest of the San Gabriel Mountains to the North, the San Bernardino County line on the East, and the Orange County line to the South.

## ACTIVITIES

The activities of the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team can be categorized by four major types: searches, rescues, evacuations, and education.

Searches - typical searches include those for lost hikers, overdue hikers, children who have wandered away from campsites, suicide and homicide victims, evidence of crimes, searches for escaped convicts, missing or downed aircraft, and many others.

Rescues - at any hour Team members may be called upon to perform a rescue operation such as that for a vehicle that has gone over a cliff with victims trapped hundreds of feet down from the roadway. Rescues are frequently directed to hikers and climbers stuck on the edge of sheer precipices, airplane crashes, persons trapped by floods, persons injured miles up rugged canyons and others caught in situations of peril, needing expert assistance immediately.

Evacuations - during years of severe floods, earthquakes and forest fires the Team has always been among the first agencies to be called out to warn and evacuate people who have been in danger of losing their lives and property to these natural disasters.

Education - believing that prevention can save more lives than searches or rescues, the Team has an ongoing program of lectures, demonstrations, and literature that it presents to schools, youth and civic organizations, clubs, and any interested group to educate them to enjoy the natural environment in safety.

## MEMBERSHIP

The San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team extends an equal opportunity to all citizens to become a part of the ongoing and rewarding work of this organization.

There are three classes of membership - Active members, Supporting members, and Honorary members. Honorary Membership is generally granted to persons who have given continuous non-rescue, non-technical assistance to the Team. Supporting Membership is made available to persons possessing a skill or expertise of value to the Team, who respond or make their expertise available to the Team when the need arises for their particular skill.

The following information is directed to persons who are interested in applying for ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP (mountaineer trainee):

### Minimum Requirements -

Applicant must:

1. Be at least 21 and under 55 at the time of application.
2. Be a U.S. citizen.
3. Be a high school graduate or equivalent.
4. Be in good health (will be certified by a thorough physical and psychological examination).
5. Possess a valid California Class "C" driver's license or higher.
6. Must have a satisfactory background. All applicants will undergo a thorough employment, social and criminal background investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Any previous felony conviction disqualifies an applicant.

### Other Requirements -

- A. Upon receipt of an application, the prospective member is scheduled for an interview by the Applicant Evaluation Committee.
- B. After the interview, applications are reviewed and accepted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- C. Applicants must successfully complete the Training Academy, which consists of approximately 6 months of basic training, conducted on weekends, 6 months of advanced training, and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) school.
- D. Successfully complete the Sheriff's Department 24 week Training Academy for Reserve Deputy, Level 2.

## Time and Training

As an applicant, you will be expected to devote an extra amount of time to training. During the formal training program, an applicant can expect to participate in weekly training sessions with other applicants and training personnel.

Regularly scheduled events that require the attendance of all active members and applicants are: business meetings the first and third Monday of each Month and a "Dry Run" training session involving a mock-rescue or special technique training the third Sunday of each month. Business meetings are held in the evening for approximately three hours, and the "Dry Run" usually extends from 7:00 AM until 3:00 PM.

Your training will develop extensive proficiency with several basic knots and rope techniques as well as training in working with helicopters in rescues; search techniques; snow and ice rescues; rock climbing; rappelling; river crossing; compass and map reading, and much more. At the completion of your training you will be one of the most generally-proficient search and rescue technicians in the world - a member of the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team.

## To the Mountaineer Trainee Applicant -

The San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team is looking for people that are willing to give a minimum of five, preferably ten or more, years to voluntary service in saving the lives of their friends, neighbors and fellow human beings. To this end the members of the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team will devote a great deal of time and effort to train you and teach you how to perform all phases of mountain rescue, to be a specialist in a highly specialized field, and to be an example to all those who will be looking to you for guidance, confidence, comfort and action.

For this reason, and because of the great amount of time expended on your behalf, we want you to be honest with yourself and with the Team. The Team is all volunteer. Will you be able to give your services to the Team? Are you settled in your job and your future to the extent that you can see yourself remaining in the local area for ten years? When the pager sounds an emergency at 2:00 in the morning, and it's raining in Glendora and snowing at 5000 feet, and the emergency is to help save a group of boy scouts overdue from a hike up to Bear Creek Campground, ten hard miles up a brush and boulder-choked canyon, with the water rising and every minute precious to those in need - will you be able to respond? Will you respond? Will our spouse and family support your decision to go?

Often Team members have been at parties or out to a restaurant and receive an emergency page requesting an immediate response for a car over the side. Will

you be there to help save the victims of this terrible accident, or will the pressures of the comfortable situation you are involved in cause you to turn away?

These are the emergencies and realities that form our commitment to our training and the service we provide to the public as a non-paid professional.

The San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team urges you to evaluate your motivation and your priorities and responsibilities. Talk to your Employer. Will you be able to occasionally leave work mid-day at a moment's notice for a rescue? Will your supervisor understand if you are delayed at an all-night search and not able to make it back to work at 8:00 AM?

Talk frankly with your spouse and family about your desire to be involved in mountain rescue. Statistics have proven that if an applicant does not have the understanding and support of his family, it will create domestic problems which will make the applicant unsuitable for continued participation with the Team and the family both. If you do not have the support of your spouse and family, please consider some other organization.

If you have any questions as to what being a member of the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team involves, we encourage you to ask, we are more than pleased to talk to you about the Team. If you have considered and discussed with those who will be affected by your involvement and can make the commitment to this life-saving work, come on - we want you!

The following information is for Support Member Applicants-

Applicant must:

1. Be at least 21 at the time of application.
2. Be a U.S. citizen.
3. Be a high school graduate or equivalent.
4. Must have a satisfactory background. All applicants will undergo a background investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Any previous felony conviction disqualifies an applicant.

Other Requirements -

- A. Upon receipt of an application, the prospective member is scheduled for an interview by the Applicant Evaluation Committee.
- B. After the interview, applications are reviewed and accepted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

The purpose of support membership is to provide a needed service to the Team that would otherwise be the responsibility of an Active Member. This allows Active Members the ability to dedicate their efforts to training and operations. For example, using a Support Member for radio communications during a search, provides the ability to put one more Active Member in the field.

Support Members' time commitment will depend on their specific area of responsibility. Each Support Member will be expected to spend sufficient time to satisfactorily complete their assigned responsibilities. Support Members are required to attend the business meeting held on the third Monday of each month and possibly, depending upon their area of responsibility, the meeting on the first Monday of each month as well.

Because Support Members are accepted for one or two specific areas, the over all time commitment will depend on the specific area of responsibility. Some areas will require more time than others. Each Support Member will be expected to enter into an informal written agreement as to their area(s) of responsibility so as to be accountable to the Team.

To all applicants-

To speak to a Team Member or for more information, call our Station at (909)394-4705 and leave a message for a Team Member to call you. Explain that you have received the Mountain Rescue Team's Information for Applicants, and that you have some questions. We will have a Team Member call you.

The following page contains your first step toward becoming a member of the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team. Complete the requested information and mail it to:

San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team  
P O Box 35  
San Dimas, Ca. 91773

The information will be used to complete a brief, preliminary, background verification.

Thank you for your interest in the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team.

San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team  
114 E. First Street  
San Dimas, Ca. 91773

To: San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team  
P O Box 35  
San Dimas, Ca. 91773

Please let me know how I can receive more information about applying for membership in the Team.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Full Last First Middle

Driver's License No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Work

How did you hear of the San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you spoken with a Team Member about your interest in the Team? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, who and when? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_