**Why Is the Search and Rescue Association of Alberta Adopting a Code of Conduct?**

1. We have been in operation for many years and have focused on standards that are primarily operational in nature.  There has been a long recognized need to have an internal Code of Conduct within Search and Rescue Alberta to govern its Executive and Board.
2. The stakeholders which we interact with will have a Codes of Conduct to govern their INTERNAL conduct.  It is a fundamental element of a legitimate, sustainable and well-functioning organization
3. Like any organization, Search and Rescue Alberta needs to ensure that its Executive and Board are being held accountable internally so that members are treated with respect and dignity.
4. This is an act of transparency and integrity.  SAR Alberta continues to push forward with initiatives and as such is garnering more attention from the public, stakeholders and its member groups.  In addition SAR Alberta is responsible for increased funding among other things.  Given this reality it is imperative that we make it known that we hold ourselves accountable to conduct our business in a transparent way and acting with the utmost integrity.

**Guiding Principles of the SAR Alberta’s Code of Conduct (form which the detailed behavioural standards etc. will be derived from)**

1. The actions and decisions of members are made to promote the public interest and to advance the mandate and long-term interests of the association.
2. Members are responsible stewards of public resources.
3. To serve the public interest, members have a responsibility to uphold and reinforce the association’s values and principles.
4. Members have a responsibility to act in good faith and to place the interests of the association above their own private interests.
5. Members behave in a way that demonstrates that their behaviour and actions are fair and reasonable in the circumstance.
6. Members enjoy the same rights in their private dealings as any other Albertan, unless it is demonstrated that a restriction is necessary in the public interest.
7. When a member, as an individual, is subject to more than one code of conduct, the member must consider the expectations in all.  Members understand that this Code is not intended to conflict with other Codes of Conduct, and will discuss any potential conflicts with the Code Administrator.
8. The Code applies to all members unless a specific exemption is granted by the Code Administrator.
9. Members know that when they become aware of a real or apparent conflict of interest, they must at the first opportunity disclose this conflict to the Code Administrator.
10. Members understand that disclosure itself does not remove a conflict of interest.
11. Members encourage their colleagues to act fairly and ethically and know that they are able to raise concerns about a suspected breach by another to the Code Administrator without fear of reprisal.
12. Members know that breaches of this Code may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal of the member from the Board.
13. Members know that if they have any questions about the Code, or are not sure how to apply these principles, they should consult with the Code Administrator.
14. Each member confirms at the Annual General Meeting their understanding of, and commitment to, the Code’s expectations.

**Next Steps**

Myself and Stacey Pasutto, South Director have gathered pertinent documentation around Codes of Conduct, have a draft that we will be presenting to the Board at our next Board Meeting this month.  Upon adoption, it will be sent out and posted. As well formal procedures for reported breaches as well as outcomes of confirmed contravention of the Code will be established.

**What If I Have an Issue with the Conduct of a Member of the SAR Alberta Board?**

I ask that you gather relevant information (examples, names, dates etc.) and upon the official and formal adoption of the Code of Conduct you bring your issue forward along with some thought around what areas of the Code are being contravened.  The exact procedure will be outlined but I can say that it will consist of:

1. Resolving it with the individual(s).  If unresolved or unable to,
2. Escalating to your local Board.  If unresolved or unable to,
3. Bringing the documentation forward to your Search and Rescue Regional Rep who will also notify the Search and Rescue Alberta Past President for transparency and additional perspective (unless the Past President is a source or connected to the issue).  If unresolved or unable to,
4. directly to the Past President of Search and Rescue Alberta.  Note that the Past President reserves the right to escalate to the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

You will notice that I include THREE documents that may assist your organization in creating a Code of Conduct of your own.  They are generic and you are free to change as needed.  We will send out the Search and Rescue Alberta Code when ratified.

For two videos pertinent to this issue please go to Search and Rescue Alberta’s Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/SARAl berta/](https://www.facebook.com/SARAlberta/)and remember to LIKE the page while you’re there. The videos are also on YouTube  [https://www.youtube.com/chann el/UCBGGoA3GVuodefNTMQ8huhw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBGGoA3GVuodefNTMQ8huhw) so remember to SUBSCRIBE.

Thank you for your time.

Daryl D. Black

Past President

Search and Rescue Alberta