



Park County Search and Rescue

**1402 River View Drive
Cody, Wyoming 82414
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Dear prospective applicant:

We appreciate your interest in the Park County Search and Rescue (PCSAR) and feel obligated to provide you with some basic information concerning our organization, its structure and authority, our expectations from you and what you can expect from us. The Park County Search and Rescue is a civilian, all volunteer extension of the Park County Sheriff's Office. PCSAR operates under the authority of the sheriff's office and the sheriff has the ultimate authority over all PCSAR operations. The sheriff also has the responsibility and liability for the actions of the PCSAR and its individual members. He/she has the final say in all PCSAR matters.

You are not required to have any special skills or knowledge to become a member of PCSAR however, experience in any of the following would be beneficial:

- First Aid, CPR, or other Emergency Medicine;
- Hiking, Backpacking and Camping;
- Mountaineering or Rock Climbing;
- Outdoor Survival;
- Scouting;
- Wilderness Travel/Skiing/Snowshoeing;
- Map and Compass Skills;
- Flying; or
- Water Safety.

You are required to have been a resident of Park County for the past six months and currently live within its boundaries prior to making application. This requirement may be waived upon your request under certain circumstances at the discretion of the sheriff. The sheriff must approve all applications upon completion of a criminal history check. Your application may be rejected if the sheriff has just cause or believes your criminal history to be unacceptable.

You must be at least 18 years of age unless sponsored by a participating adult member. If you are very young, we will evaluate your maturity level and your ability to cope with the various conditions under which we operate. We also diligently attempt to prevent stress exposure to all members, especially younger persons who are often more adversely affected.

You must be in reasonably good health and physical condition, as you will be expected to participate in some rather strenuous activities such as: carrying heavy objects, basic mountaineering, hiking, swimming, etc. Aerobic and strength conditioning would be very beneficial to you in PCSAR activities.

You must be able to read and write the English language. You must be able to provide your own transportation to the PCSAR facilities for meetings, training and callouts. It is desirable (though not mandatory) that you are able to drive common motor vehicles and have a current, valid driver's license.

You will be expected to act in a professional, honorable and courteous manner and be willing to obey regulations, follow orders of superiors and work as a team member. The use of alcohol and controlled substances, including prescription drugs that affect a person's ability to perform safely, are strictly prohibited within eight (8) hours prior to and during participation in all PCSAR activities.

Prior to completing an application for membership, we require you attend a minimum of four (4) training sessions over a six (6) week period. This will permit current PCSAR members to get to know you and your abilities and afford you the opportunity to evaluate the group and its requirements to determine if membership is really something you wish to pursue. Afterward, you will be asked to fill out a detailed application form with some basic personal information. The application must be endorsed by two current PCSAR members who are familiar with you. At this stage, a background investigation will be conducted.

If your application is accepted and upon successful completion of the background investigation, you will meet with the Membership Committee who will interview you to determine your feelings about membership and to verify you have explained some of the expectations of the organization, including the physical and mental requirements and the time constraints expected of membership to your family and your employer. The interview will also afford you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

You will then be voted on by the current membership at a regular meeting when there is an opening available. Membership numbers are limited. If accepted as a probationary member, you will be assigned a mentor to assist you in familiarization with and orientation to PCSAR. The mentor will also guide you through the training requirements of new members during your one-year probationary period. Certain equipment will also be issued to you for which you will be responsible for the care and safekeeping. Those issued items must be returned by you at the termination of your membership or you may be charged for them.

During your one-year probationary period, you will have the opportunity and obligation to learn more about the organization, equipment, procedures and training requirements for PCSAR. You will also be asked to participate in group activities including mission responses within your capabilities and scope of training. Driving the vehicles or operation of specialized equipment will be restricted until it is proven that you are properly trained in such operations. All members may be asked to complete any Incident Check-In/Time Sheet, Task Assignment Form and/or Unit Log, which are documentation of your actions during a mission. During that probationary year, you will also be evaluated by each individual member on your participation, willingness to work, ability to work as a team member, and your learning progress. This evaluation is very subjective and is informal.

There will be another vote by the membership at the end of your probationary period to determine if you will be retained as a regular member. Search and rescue activities are very complex and demanding and on rare occasions, individuals may be rejected for a wide variety of reasons. Not all people are suitable for participation in emergency response and your welfare will be considered along with the organizations.

If accepted as a regular member, other situations will occur at some point:

- You may be assigned to a special duty or position, of which most are voluntary.
- You will be required to continue your training in the Basic Search and Rescue Skills and advanced knowledge areas that have been identified by the Group.
- You should complete a minimum of 50% of the regular Search and Rescue training annually. This means that you should attend at least two of the four training sessions each month for 11 of the 12 calendar months. There are normally at least four official training meeting each month. You need only attend two of these four for adequate monthly attendance credit. You are welcome and encouraged to attend all. Recently nearly all training has been held in Cody every Thursday night.
- You will be expected to participate at a reasonable level in all PCSAR callouts. This, again, is very subjective, but the purpose is to discourage members who do not have the ability, time, or interest to be of real benefit to the organization.
- You will have many opportunities to participate in special training on a volunteer basis. A list or schedule of available training will be maintained by the Training Coordinator, posted on the PCSAR on-line bulletin board, and distributed among the members. This schedule is also now posted on-line at the PCSAR Trello website at: <https://trello.com/>. Once you become a probationary member you will be given access to this site.
- You will be expected to provide your own personal outdoor equipment including a backpack suitable for carrying the following equipment:
 - Clothing appropriate for the seasonal and geographic conditions;
 - Personal first aid, survival, navigation, signaling and camping equipment;
 - A headlamp style flashlight and hand backup with spare batteries and bulbs;
 - Necessary food and hygiene items for self-support for a minimum of 48 hours;
 - PCSAR provides some supplies such as flashlight batteries.
- You will be restricted in your contact with Bio-Hazard substances until formal protection training has been completed and you will be given the opportunity to receive Hepatitis B immunization vaccine. A TB test may be required as well.

Finally, during the course of your duties you may be exposed to some stressful situations including dead, dismembered, or seriously injured persons, catastrophic disasters that may include multiple victims, dead or seriously injured children or children having parents killed, having friends or loved ones involved in missions you respond to, involvement in long, tiring and often stressful operations. You should think seriously about these possibilities as well as discussing them with persons who have been involved in these types of situations prior to accepting membership.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact an experienced PCSAR member, the PCSAR Coordinator, or someone you know who has experienced similar situations. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

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