

Glossary of Terms (c) 2009 UKLSI

ALSAR

Association of Lowland Search and Rescue

AMDR / Visible Length

Average Maximum Detection Range. Roughly how far away from an object you can see it.

Availability

Defined as Time and Resource at a Given Location. When you will get to the location of the callout and how long you will be staying. This is extremely important for the Search Coordinator to be able to effectively plan their search.

Briefing

During the briefing you will be given information about the misper and your tasking. Briefings may be given by a member of the search management team to everyone, or to Team Leaders who would then brief their team members. Many teams are moving towards standardised briefings where you will always be given the same information in the same order.

BST Basic Search Technician

The minimum standard of training for any ALSAR operational member. (The word Basic is sometimes dropped from the title)

Callout

1. The method of informing team members of a search incident. Most teams now use SMS text messaging.
2. Refers to the search incident itself – i.e. We had a callout in Anytown.

Clue Conscious

A state of mind where searchers will notice potential clues in an area, but do not actively search for them (slowing down the search.) This involves noticing things that are out of place, or objects that have been mentioned in briefings, whilst searching at normal searcher spacing and speed for the object being sought.

Control

The area set aside for the search management team – if invited into this area you should remain quiet and listen carefully to your briefing.

Coverage

A term used in the mathematics of search theory to calculate the effectiveness of a search prior to calculating the POD. It should never be used to describe how much of a sector has been searched.

Critical Separation

The search technique where searchers are spaced out in such a way that each could just about see the object at its AMDR/Visible Length (or the edge of their vision.)

De-Briefing

1. Feeding back information about your search area to either the Team Leader or the search management team.

2. Carrying out an evaluation at the end/suspension of a search in order to improve upon everyone's performance at the next incident. Should always be a “no-blame” session where constructive criticism is given.

Efficient Search

A search that is planned in such a way as to maximise the chances of finding the misper/object quickly. Traditionally referred to as a Critical Separation search.

Gold, Silver, Bronze

Levels of Command and Control, which can also be termed; Strategic, Tactical and Operational.

Hasty Search

The initial response to a search; a hasty search is a fast initial look at high priority routes, paths and tracks and specific areas. Characterised by its speed the hasty search may provide fast finds but also gives immediate reassurance that something is being done and provides the search management team with valuable feedback on the search area.

IPP Initial Planning Point

The location the search management team is using to start their planning. May be the PLS, LKP or another location.

LKP Last Known Position

A hypothesised location based on “clues”. His/her car was found in this car park, assuming s/he was driving this is their last known position.

LSDogs (LSD)

Lowland Search Dogs

Misper

Abbreviation of Missing Person – Can be used in conversations with SAR/Police personnel but should be used sparingly when talking with members of the Public.

MRE&W

Mountain Rescue, England and Wales

Misper Stats (Statistics)

There are a number of sources of misper stats – MR, Grampian, ISRID. These give the search management team, team leaders and searchers some initial ideas as to what a “typical” misper of this category does, where and how far they go, and where they are likely to be found etc. They are used to help inform decisions, but it should never be assumed that they show exactly what this individual misper will do.

Muster Point

The area set aside for preparing kit/ waiting for tasking.

Northumbrian Rain Dance

A valuable field technique which provides an easy method of estimating the AMDR/Visible Length.

NSARDA

National Search and Rescue Dogs Association

Pden Probability Density

the POA of an area divided by its size gives its Pden. This is used in search theory to help prioritise search areas along with several other factors.

Purposeful Wandering

The search technique whereby searchers wander through their specific search area searching areas which may hide the search object – i.e. the clump of bushes, the fallen tree trunk, etc.

PLS Place Last Seen

The location of the last confirmed sighting of the misper.

POA Probability of Area

An estimate of the likelihood that the object is in a given area.

POD Probability of Detection

An estimate of the likelihood of finding an object if it was in the area searched. Cannot be subjectively found (i.e. by asking the team leader)

POS Probability of Success

An estimate of the likelihood of finding the object through all search efforts so far, either in that search sector or overall.

Route and Path

The search of a route, path or track. Typically done as part of a Hasty search (although can be carried out at the start of an Efficient search of a sector.) Searchers will quickly move along the R&P searching either side of the track. Whilst traditionally defined as “up to 5 metres either side” modern thinking allows Team Leaders greater flexibility to search potential areas whilst maintaining the pace of the search.

RVP (RV) Rendezvous or Rendezvous Point

The place where team members are asked to go when called out. On arrival you must sign in immediately.

SAROG

SAR Operators Group

Search Kit

Can be used to refer to all search equipment a searcher has in his/her vehicle or the kit s/he carries on an individual search. This will vary from unit to unit and individual to individual. However, torch, notepad and pencil, high visibility jacket and ID card are pre-requisites for everyone.

Searcher Cube

The search technique of looking all around whilst searching – i.e. Up, Down, Left, Right, Forward and Backward. Using a searcher cube has been proven to improve a searchers ability to find the sought object.

Searcher Spacing

Refers to the distance between searchers. During Critical Separation searches this will be twice the AMDR/Visible Length. Team Leaders or the search management team may want the searcher spacing to be closer to give a higher POD (or likelihood of finding the object) or in order to safely control the team. They may also use a searcher spacing greater than the critical separation to allow more areas to be searched at a lower POD.

Scenario (Based Planning)

Planning a search around potential scenarios. For instance – the misper may have walked towards town but slipped and become incapacitated. Therefore search tasking – do a R&P towards town.

Standby

A unit's state of readiness for a Callout. The police or Search Coordinator may put unit members on Standby whilst they carry out initial investigations and preparations. During this time team members should inform their team of their availability.

Stand Down

The end or suspension of a search or search period. A search is only ended when the misper is located. In any other case, the search is suspended.

Sweep Width

A term used in the mathematics of search theory to define the ability of a search resource to find an object in a given environment or terrain. It can only be found by experimentation and whilst it is given as a unit of length this does not refer to an actual distance

Thorough Search

A search that maximises the POD (or likelihood of finding the object). Typically this involves shoulder to shoulder, grid searching. It is manpower intensive, time consuming and clue destructive.

TL Team Leader

Someone who is trained to lead a team during a search incident, providing a link between the search management team and the ground, and making decisions based upon the reality of the terrain/search sector.

UKSAR

UK Search and Rescue Committee

Vulnerable Missing Person

A Missing Person whose health or life is believed to be in danger. This may be due to despondency, mental health or age. Whilst the police will use this term communicating with the Public they define mispers as having either Low, Medium or High Risk (The definitions of which can be found in the ACPO Guidance)