

# **New England K-9 Search and Rescue Communications Officer Job Description**

## **Required Knowledge**

- Familiarity with mobile and portable radios, GPS units, and altimeter watches used by NEK-9.
- Ability to perform basic radio troubleshooting and programming of frequencies as needed.
- Knowledge of licensed unit frequencies and those used by other agencies.
- Familiarity with radio protocols and 10-codes used by law-enforcement agencies.
- Working knowledge and ability to do basic troubleshooting of computer hardware and software, including Windows XP and Maptech Terrain Navigator Pro.
- Working knowledge of SAR concepts and terminology.
- “People skills” and ability to interface effectively and professionally with search management, law enforcement, other officials, family of missing subjects, etc.
- Strong ability to multitask (eg: Monitor multiple radio channels while keeping log, interfacing with others, and working with computer.)

## **Specific Duties**

(The following is an overview of typical communication officer duties. The specific list will expand or contract depending upon circumstances such as location, victim description, number of available communications officers, etc.)

### **I. Base Logistics During a Search (or Training):**

- A. GPS units
- B. Altimeter watches
- C. Getting handlers out to the field
  - i. Master map with assignments (handlers and assistants) – try to make sure everyone is “on the same page”
  - ii. Sign-in sheet
  - iii. Maps in feet or meters?
  - iv. Help w/ equipment (eg. Assign working channel, provide backup radios and charged batteries as needed, change feet to meters in GPS unit or altimeter watches)
  - v. Upload assignment waypoints from laptop to GPS units (often)
  - vi. Upload tracks to GPS units (very occasional)
- D. Handlers in the field / keeping track of teams
  - i. Radio log basic info (time / team / short note)
  - ii. Note transmissions to/from NEK-9 units and important ones from search management.
  - iii. Monitor multiple channels
  - iv. Handlers’ starting search assignment
  - v. Radio chatter among & between teams
  - vi. Points of interest (coordinates) – record in log and put in laptop
  - vii. Triangulation of voice / sound contact.
  - viii. Hourly status checks on teams

1. Safety
  2. GPS coordinates & next heading
  3. Mental image of location on map
  4. Muster resources if you can't raise team on radio
  - ix. Permission to alter assignment (discuss w/ OL)
  - x. "Click" method if you can't hear them but they can hear you
  - xi. Relay messages or ask others to relay for you
  - xii. What to do with too much traffic on main channel.
  - xiii. Subject found
    1. "Clear to copy" for coordinates & status
    2. Tag status (Green, Red, Black)
    3. Polling teams to come back in (but not prematurely)
    4. Help coordinate getting resources to subject location – possible quickest routes to get help / carry-out teams in to coordinates
    5. We notify L.E; L.E. notifies family
  - xiv. Keep it interesting – you don't want to get the "monotone of the year" award (don't put them to sleep and listen for signs of fatigue, frustration or unspoken request for help)
- E. Handlers back from the field
- i. Download tracks (always done)
  - ii. Naming tracks (eg. "8-14-06 S03-1")
  - iii. Download waypoints (sometimes done: ask / remind handlers)
  - iv. Naming waypoints (eg. Footprint, odor, base)
  - v. Export tracks and waypoints to files for L.E.
  - vi. Naming exported files (eg. "Newport 8-14-06.txf")
  - vii. Hand out debrief forms
  - viii. Sign out personnel
  - ix. Usually last to leave after all personnel accounted for and paperwork completed.
- F. Luxury of more than one base person
- i. Divide up work (drawing maps for handlers, radio log, download tracks, etc.)
  - ii. Person in command post w/ L.E.?
  - iii. Remote base for comm. problems or widely scattered teams
- G. Other care and feeding of dog handlers
- i. Give them the shady parking spots (for their dogs)
  - ii. You may be asked to do doggy care for a handler's second dog

For more information, contact: [info@nek9sar.org](mailto:info@nek9sar.org) or call 603-526-6754