



CHILD ABDUCTION RESPONSE TEAM (CART) CERTIFICATION MANUAL

A Guide for Agencies and CART Programs Pursuing Certification



**AMBER[®]
ALERT**

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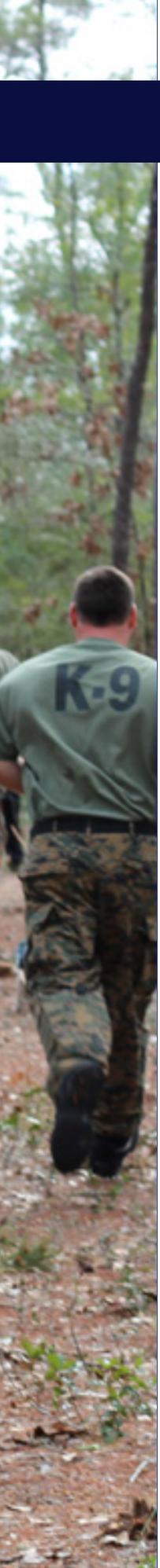
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ABOUT CART CERTIFICATION

The Child Abduction Response Team (CART) Certification Program has been developed to assist local, tribal and state jurisdictions in the creation and implementation of CART Programs. This program guide provides valuable information on best practices regarding child protection and recovery strategies and offers each jurisdiction the opportunity to comply with nationally recognized standards of excellence. This collection of best practices, promulgated by subject matter experts, practitioners and legal advisors, is intended to provide a basis for determining the operational readiness of jurisdictions committed to the protection of children; especially children who endangered, missing or abducted.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

To the extent allowable by law, the agency agrees to indemnify, hold harmless and defend Fox Valley Technical College, the United States Department of Justice, its agents, servants and employees from any and all lawsuits, claims, demands, liabilities, losses, and expenses including court costs and attorney's fees for or on account of any injury to any person or any death at any time resulting from such injury or any damage to property, which may arise or which may be alleged to have arisen out of or in connection with the work covered by this project.

CONTACT US

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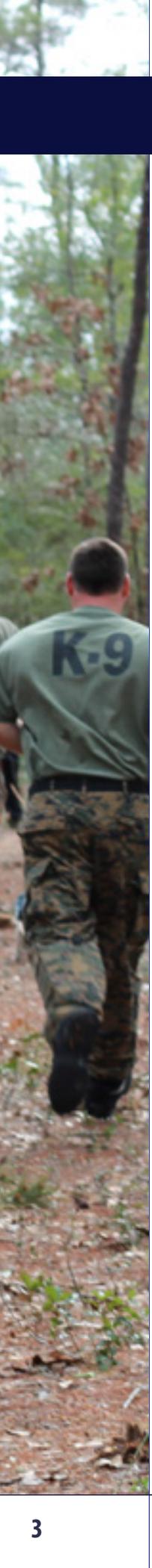
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HISTORY OF THE CART PROGRAM INITIATIVE

In 2006, the United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) launched the Child Abduction Response Team (CART) Program and training as part of its AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP) Initiative. Like AMBER Alerts, a CART represents a critical tool to provide law enforcement with an effective and efficient response to a missing child incident where a child is believed to be endangered or abducted. As a result of the initial success and acceptance of the CART initiative by law enforcement professionals, the program has now evolved to be recognized as an essential component of a community's work to develop and strengthen an enhanced, comprehensive child recovery strategy.

Additionally, as CART gained momentum and broader acceptance in public and community safety arenas as the best practice approach to missing, endangered and abducted children, standards of excellence and evidence-based practices have been created to determine the operational readiness of jurisdictions. Many of the CART programs throughout the U.S. expressed interest in and pursued continuous quality assurance processes to ensure their policies and practices represented the most effective and efficient methods available to safely recover children in crisis. As a result of this pursuit of excellence, the Child Abduction Response Team Certification Program was created and adopted by OJJDP.

Leading subject matter experts, practitioners, policymakers and other child protection specialists have developed operational standards of excellence and evidence-based best practices related to the recovery of missing children. These professionals have worked with the U.S. DOJ and AATTAP to develop a process and criteria whereby jurisdictions can voluntarily seek an opportunity to demonstrate CART policy, procedures and continuous improvement strategies which meet 47 standards of compliance across an array of operational readiness areas. This established CART Certification process culminates in a rigorous practical field exercise, observed and evaluated by a team of trained assessors, to confirm a CART program's ability to rapidly and effectively operationalize, carrying out all functions and maintaining all critical documentation and records, over the life of an endangered or missing child incident.



ABOUT THE CART CERTIFICATION MANUAL

In 2007, the 1st edition CART Certification Manual was developed to guide CART programs through the certification process. The manual outlined the process for CARTs and their jurisdictions to achieve compliance with prescribed evidence-based best practice standards. The certification process required compliance with 44 specific standards covering 11 operational topic areas, along with extensive policy review, interviews with team personnel and compliance with training requirements.

The 2nd edition CART Certification Manual (2010) incorporated new standards and compliance requirements for CART Certification. The revised standards ensured CART Certification represented the highest and most meaningful recognition of jurisdictional efforts to respond swiftly and effectively to endangered missing and abducted children. The 2nd edition manual built upon the standards included in the 1st edition, and added items for a total of 47 specific standards covering 12 operational topic areas. As previously required, extensive policy review, interviews with team personnel, examination of training requirements and an extensive field exercise remained as integral components of the certification process.

The 2nd edition CART Certification Manual also strengthened the comprehensive application process with enhanced eligibility requirements. Additionally, individual files were required to enhance and improve the standard compliance documentation and review process and adherence with the intent of each applicable standard. To create a continuous improvement process and compliance with best practices, an annual recertification requirement was also established in order for CARTs to retain certification on a continuous basis. A quality assurance component, along with detailed duties and responsibilities for all CART roles and key personnel involved, was added. This included the creation of a CART Lead Assessor to oversee all facets of the certification process.

The 3rd edition of the CART Certification Manual builds upon the enhancements made in the 2012 publication, and this 4th edition provides further clarification of the standards and assessment protocols, along with updated forms, resource documents and contact information.

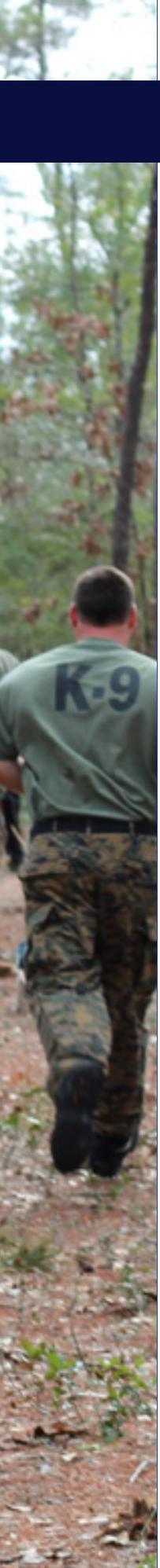
OBJECTIVES OF THE CART CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

- Develop and implement evidenced based standards of excellence which require CART programs to build, execute, and continuously improve capacities, competencies, skills and abilities to safely recover missing children.
- Enhance the critical and specific capacities and competencies of personnel from agencies comprising CART and other community components to safely recover missing children by maintaining adherence to recognized best practices.
- Require CART Programs to continuously update and improve policies, written directives, utilization and identification of resources, and other necessary knowledge, skills and abilities as part of a comprehensive child recovery strategy.
- Provide policymakers, elected officials, public safety organizations, child protection professionals and the general public assurance of due diligence, adoption of the highest standards of child recovery initiatives, and overall confidence of operational readiness to protect, respond to, and recover, endangered missing and abducted children.

THE CART CERTIFICATION PROCESS

CART programs who are interested in becoming certified submit an online application, providing documentation and attesting to the requirements to be considered ready for certification. Upon completion of all application requirements, an onsite assessment is scheduled and confirmed between the AATTAP CART project coordinator and the requesting team's coordinator. This initiates the important preparations related to policy and procedure compilation and preliminary review which occurs in the weeks leading up to the onsite assessment of the full-scale field exercise.

The onsite event, which generally spans two full days, is comprehensively observed and evaluated by a team of trained AATTAP assessors. Over the course of the field exercise, each of the 47 standards is observed through a combination of team actions and related procedural documentation and interviews of key CART personnel. Successful completion of the field exercise and subsequent field report documentation establish that the CART program has demonstrated the highest standards of excellence both in policy as well as practice. Following the completion of the onsite assessment, a field report is completed by the AATTAP Assessors and submitted to the AATTAP Administrator toward determination of certification.



THE CART CERTIFICATION TEAM

CART CERTIFICATION MANAGER (CCM)

The CART certification manager (CCM) is an associate role which may be utilized by AATTAP, in addition to the AATTAP CART project coordinator staff position, to provide robust stewardship of the overall CART certification process. The CCM and AATTAP CART project coordinator will work with a designated lead assessor and one or more co-assessors to comprise what will hereafter be referred to as the **AATTAP assessment team**.

The designated CART Certification Manager (CCM) and the AATTAP CART program coordinator will provide overall coordination and oversight for the certification process and will serve as the principal point of contact with the AATTAP Administrator or his/her designee for discussion and decision points throughout each CART certification process.

PRINCIPLE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CART CERTIFICATION MANAGER AND AATTAP CART PROJECT COORDINATOR

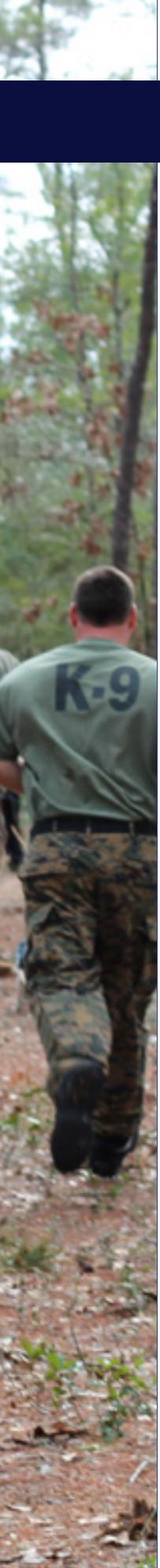
- Oversee the CART certification process.
- Coordinate, with the AATTAP Administrator, the final eligibility of any CART applying for certification.
- Work closely with the AATTAP Administrator and staff to review applications and assess team and/or jurisdictional readiness/ability for applying teams to meet the established CART certification objectives.
- Contribute to certification application decisions and assist with scheduling/confirming onsite assessment events.
- Assist as needed in the training and management of CART certification lead and/or co-assessors.
- Review all documents and reports completed by CART assessors for completeness, accuracy, and consistency with certification requirements and expected outcomes.
- For CARTs not recommended for certification following an onsite assessment event, coordinate with assessors to remedy non-compliance issues and/or deficiencies identified and documented by onsite assessors, to include official correspondence to the designated applying CART's agency points of contact.
- Recommend certification approvals to the AATTAP Administrator.
- Review lead and co-assessor peer performance feedback and evaluation input as received from the applying CART's coordinator via the prescribed post-event quality assurance online survey.
- Perform all other duties and project tasks as assigned by the AATTAP Administrator.

CART ASSESSORS

Appropriately trained assessors are utilized for onsite CART certification assessments. These assessors are proven public safety professionals who possess extensive knowledge, and who bring to the process a wide variety of important skills and abilities. Assessors are assigned to specific components of the overall CART certification process to ensure careful and targeted observation and evaluation of a team's ability to demonstrate compliance with each certification standard over the course of the onsite event.

PRINCIPLE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CART ASSESSORS

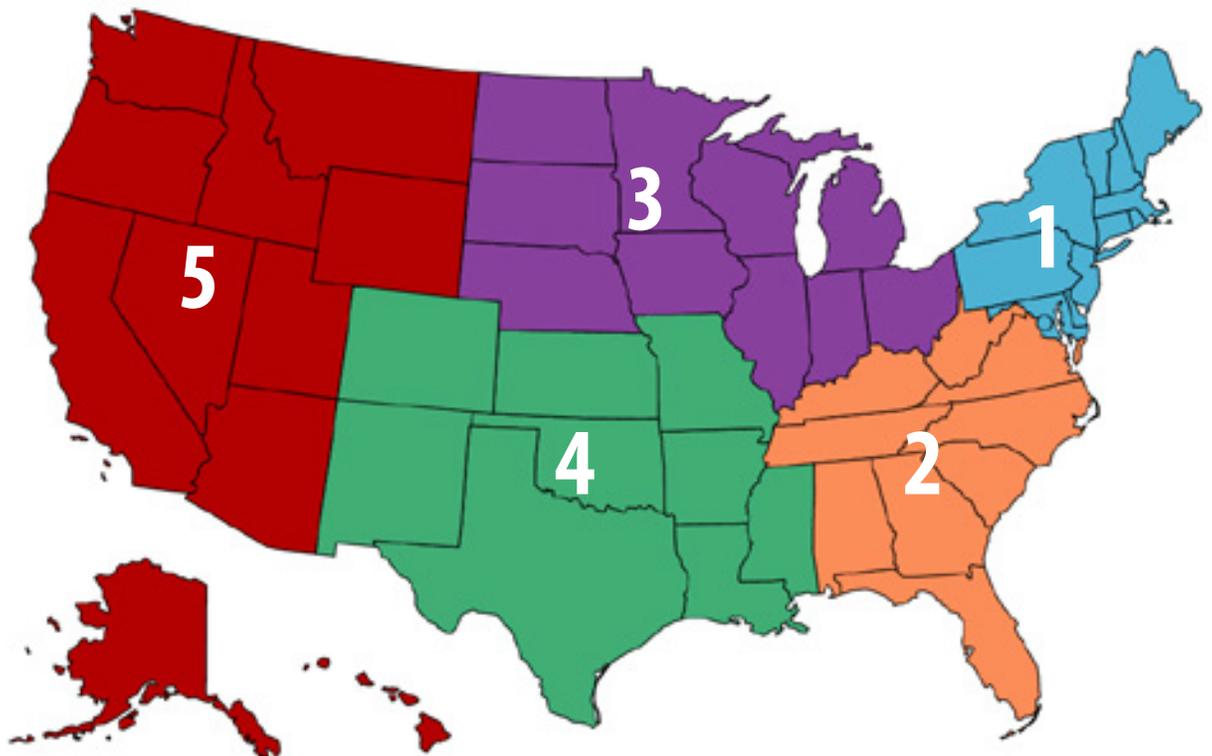
- Upon invitation from AATTAP, complete the online web form to submit the assessor application and submit to the AATTAP.
- Review and develop extensive working knowledge of all CART standards and demonstrate understanding of applicability.
- Successfully complete required assessor training. Attend child protection training courses advised by the AATTAP Administrator and/or AATTAP CART project coordinator for skill enhancement.
- Undergo required performance reviews with the AATTAP CART project coordinator.
- Assessors will disclose any potential conflict of interest in performing their duties as an assessor in writing to the AATTAP CART project coordinator prior to performing any duties associated with a certification.
- Manage and coordinate all facets of the onsite certification assessment with the requesting agency's CART coordinator, to include scheduling of necessary personnel for interviews, providing work space and onsite transportation and coordinating any other facet of the onsite assessment as requested and deemed appropriate.
- Prepare and submit for review and approval a comprehensive evaluation report following the onsite assessment, to be completed as soon as is feasible following the field exercise, and/or as directed by the AATTAP CART project coordinator.
- If non-compliance with CART standards is identified and corrective measures prescribed for the requesting CART to achieve certification, those will be addressed in the draft report; once the measures are remediated, the assessor will include those details in the report and submit the final report to the AATTAP CART project coordinator within 15 days of completion.
- Upon conclusion of the field exercise, assessors are instructed not to advise any CART program personnel about the status of their performance or certification; such decision and communication will only be made by the AATTAP Administrator and designated staff (generally the AATTAP CART project coordinator and/or CCM).



AMBER ALERT REGIONAL LIAISONS

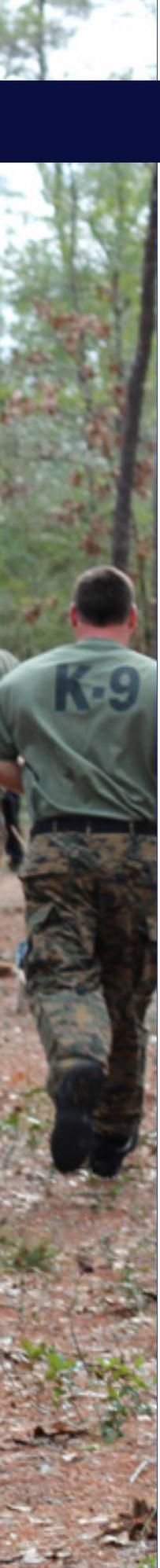
The AATTAP utilizes regional liaisons to support effective communication, information sharing and resource coordination with state and regional AMBER Alert and CART partners and stakeholders.

- Region 1 - Northeast U.S. and Canada
- Region 2 - Southeast U.S., Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands
- Region 3 - Mid-North U.S.
- Region 4 - Mid-South U.S. and Mexico
- Region 5 - Western U.S. and Guam



SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AATTAP REGIONAL LIAISONS FOR THE CART PROGRAM AND CERTIFICATION

- Within the assigned region, and utilizing the CART Administrative Database located on the AMBER Advocate Partners Portal, create and update information on all CART programs, providing data and documentation on all required elements of the database's 'CART Record' format (including but not limited to items such as contact information, training and certification dates, resources provided and/or developed, etc.).
- Market CART initiatives to include the certification process within the designated region and provide referral information to the appropriate liaison for any contacts received outside the designated region.
- Through the AMBER Advocate Partners Portal CART database and through monthly activity reporting tools on the portal, create and maintain contact records for all assistance provided to CARTs in the assigned region (e.g., training/resource referrals, meetings/teleconferences, etc.).
- The liaison may serve as the initial point of contact for any CART program expressing a desire to pursue certification; however, all administrative actions will be completed by AATTAP staff and approved by the AATTAP Administrator.
- Provide CART programs who request information about team development and/or certification with guidance on the location and best use of the CART Resources page on the AMBER Advocate website (<https://amberadvocate.org/cartresources>), where best practice guides, the certification manual, operational form templates, as well as certification and recertification forms, can be viewed/downloaded/submitted.
- Provide other assistance to CART programs as specified by the AATTAP Administrator or CART project coordinator.



CART CERTIFICATION: CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

Following each standard criterion, you will find bold text indicating the documentation and/or observations to be obtained as part of the assessor's evaluation of the CART's compliance with that standard.

SECTION 1: RESPONSE CRITERIA

This section describes the basis for a CART activation, mobilization or call-out. CARTs must have established criteria in order to know when activation, mobilization or call-out is appropriate. Standards require the criteria to be well-defined and acknowledged by all participating agencies. 'Activation', 'mobilization' and 'call-out' are terms utilized interchangeably which characterize the assembly and deployment of a CART.

The following are examples of criteria for a CART activation, mobilization or call-out discussed during CART training; however, additional deployment criteria may be considered/adopted by member agencies.

1. The true non-family abduction of a minor child (under the age of 18).
2. The abduction of a minor child (under the age of 18 or consistent with state, tribal or local statutes for proper age designation) with a belief of endangerment or imminent harm circumstances.
 - These circumstances must be clearly articulated to the CART coordinator in order to activate, mobilize and deploy the team members.
 - The child's disappearance or abduction should meet the agreed upon criteria if the child's life or well-being is perceived to be at-risk (due to violence or health conditions), or if the identified parental abductor has a potential for violence or could endanger the child.
 - This criteria may reflect the appropriate AMBER Alert criteria or any other activation criteria indicating endangerment of the child.
3. Any other abduction or missing child investigation that requires immediate response in order to protect the well-being of the child.
 - All incidents at this level shall require the approval of the CART coordinator or his/her designee.

To initiate a request for assistance, the criminal justice agency administrator (designated point of contact/commanding officer) must contact the appropriate CART coordinator, or other appointed administrator in the absence of the CART coordinator, who will approve or deny the request based upon the criteria specified in the policy or operating procedure governing the CART. This process should be guided by interagency agreements or memoranda of understanding.

STANDARDS FOR SECTION 1 - RESPONSE CRITERIA

- 1.1 The CART has a written set of criteria to determine the circumstances in which CART activation can occur. (**Policy/written directive/proof of distribution**)
- 1.2 The criteria have been communicated to all participating agencies, and such criteria are supported through written documentation clearly indicating all member CART agencies are in agreement. (**MOU/training roster/policy/proof of distribution**)
- 1.3 The criteria shall be incorporated in all participating agencies' policies, directives and/or standard operating procedures. (**Sample policies from all applicable agencies/proof of distribution**)

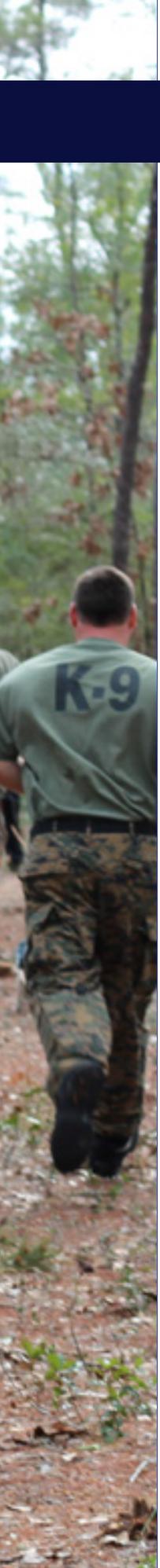
SECTION 2: TEAM COMPOSITION

This section addresses the composition of the team and personnel selection, to ensure team membership represents the various stakeholders involved in incidents of endangered missing and abducted children. For a CART to be successful during an activation, mobilization or call-out, the team must have personnel available with a level of expertise which affords swift and accurate response, and which supports the effective activation of the CART. Examples include: personnel experienced in interviewing, search and rescue, canvassing, search and seizure, forensic evidence collection, information analysis, and other areas relating to endangered missing and abducted child cases.



STANDARDS FOR SECTION 2 - TEAM COMPOSITION

- 2.1 The CART has an assigned CART coordinator who has responsibility and oversight of the CART team's coordination, processes, team development, training, debriefings, after action reports and other logistical needs as determined by the CEOs and CART members. The CART coordinator determines who is responsible for coordination in the event of CART call-out. The CART coordinator can be either sworn or non-sworn, and must possess supervisory responsibilities with a proven background in leadership and management. (**Job description document/proof of distribution/posted announcement**)
- 2.2 The CART roster and team makeup will be posted at member agencies and distributed to all personnel of each agency. The CART coordinator is responsible to maintain and update the CART roster, including all contact information and version history/date of last update. (**Roster of personnel/effective date and version history/revisions**)



- 2.3 The CART should include representatives of various agencies to include: public safety personnel (federal, state and local), U.S. Attorneys, correctional personnel, child welfare personnel, school resource officers, crime stoppers, search and rescue groups and/or personnel from other organizations who could assist the CART in the event an endangered missing or abducted child. **(Roster of personnel to include agency and specialty; should be current and reflect version history/revisions/interviews/observation)**
- 2.4 The CART coordinator is responsible for maintaining selection criteria for assignment and replacement of CART personnel. Consideration should be given to members regarding specialized skills. Written policy or directive should outline in detail the selection process, include position descriptions, all appropriate training and skills inventories, along with any other policy guidance. These items and documentation should demonstrate that personnel being utilized possess appropriate and significant expertise in serving as members of the CART.
- 2.5 The CART must have demonstrated capacity to sustain activation, mobilization and deployment over multiple days. **(Relief schedule document/call-out schedule, and example(s) of how sustained activation has been accomplished previously by the team)**

SECTION 3: NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL

This section relates to important considerations for the activation, mobilization, or call-out of a CART. For a CART to be successful in its mission, the agency of jurisdiction must have a proven and effective method to execute the team's deployment. The CART coordinator or designee must know who to contact and the team must be able to respond immediately.



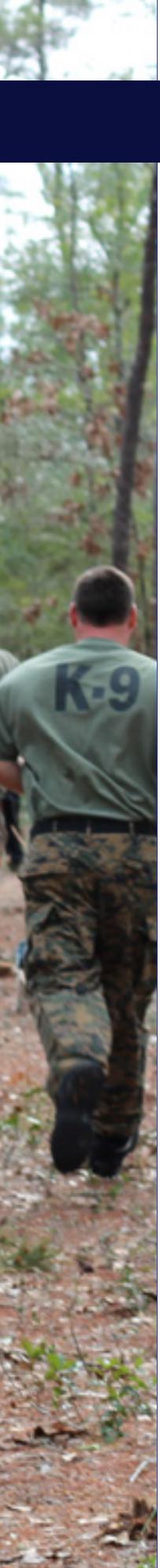
STANDARDS FOR SECTION 3 - NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL

- 3.1 Each participating law enforcement or public safety agency has a written policy that provides specific and detailed information regarding how to activate, mobilize, call-out and deploy the CART. Further, the policy or written directive shall describe in its procedures the person within the organization who has the authority to request activation. **(Policy/directives for all involved agencies on CART/proof of distribution)**
- 3.2 The CART has written documentation stating how the CART coordinator is notified and how activations, mobilizations, call-outs and deployments are approved. **(Policy/directives on notifications and approval/ examples of past processes)**

- 3.3 The policy or directive shall include the designated CART coordinator and applicable succession plan in the event the designated CART coordinator is unavailable. This succession plan must be included in the policy or directive and updated prior to any announced changes in the CART Coordination protocol. **(Organizational chart showing chain of command/proof of distribution)**
- 3.4 There shall be written procedures/processes for CART activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment, including all of the following. **(Policy/directives/observations and interviews can supplement policy or directives)**
- a. Method and manner of notification to responding CART members and any other personnel
 - b. Responsibilities of responding CART members
 - c. Time requirements for response
 - d. If applicable, equipment that assigned members should bring
- 3.5 Governance policy and written directives should include specific equipment availability, operational protocols for equipment use and any specific designation of personnel responsible to obtain and deliver the referenced equipment to the designated scene, location or staging area. Current contact information for all CART personnel must be maintained and made accessible to all member agencies. **(List of current contact info, dated and reflecting version history/revisions/if directives have been tested, include copy of after-action results)**
- 3.6 The CART has an established method to ensure proper identification of/for CART members during CART activation (such as identification cards with photo, agency member name and name of CART member). Such protocol shall not conflict with an agency's security and confidentiality requirements. If such conflict exists, the specific agency must be identified and a substitute identification protocol must be in place prior to an activation, mobilization or call-out. **(Observed/photo should be placed in file)**
- 3.7 The CART policy or written directive shall include an expected response time for activation, mobilization or call-out to the designated location. This policy or directive should include proof of agreement by participating member agencies.

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of this section of standards is to establish written protocol, directive or policy on communications protocol, coordination and specific interagency agreements to support the CART and investigative response. During CART activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment, multiple agencies will be on scene in staging areas or actively engaged in the investigation, requiring internal and inter-agency communications. CART agencies must recognize the need to have established communication protocols to accommodate the host of challenges associated with deploying to investigate, rescue and recover endangered missing and abducted children.



STANDARDS FOR SECTION 4 - COMMUNICATIONS

- 4.1 The CART has a process in place to immediately establish a hotline number (preferably toll-free) for tips and leads. (**Written directive/SOP/policy/observation of phone bank/lead processing operation/interviews**)
- 4.2 The CART has written guidelines indicating how staffing will occur at the hotline number/call center/phone bank to accomplish effective intake and logging of calls. (**Written directive/SOP/policy/schedule of call-takers/telecommunicators/observation/interviews**)
- 4.3 The CART has an established process/system for leads management, including the coordination, assignment, prioritization, tracking and resolution/closure of leads. (**Policy/SOP/directive/training roster/lesson plan/copies of lead sheets/examples of completed lead sheets**)
- 4.4 The CART coordinator maintains a current list of all communication equipment to be utilized in CART activation. The list must include all of the following items.
 - a. Personnel responsible for maintenance and upkeep (e.g., regular testing, fresh batteries, proper storage and transport)
 - b. A log of personnel trained and tested for proficiency in the use of assigned equipment
 - c. Field test records to ensure equipment is compatible with all jurisdictions covered by the CART, with written backup plan(s) for equipment failure. (**SOP/policy/inventory list/testing schedules/maintenance records/training records/skills inventory/emergency measures if failure occurs**)
- 4.5 A procedure is in place to ensure equipment can be accessed in a timely manner in the event of activation, and the equipment is accessible by more than one person. (**SOP/policy/observation/interviews**)

SECTION 5: COMMAND AND CONTROL

This section recognizes the nature of CART activation, mobilization, call-out or deployment and acknowledges multiple agencies/jurisdictions may be responding. The CART serves as an enhancement resource comprised of experts, equipment and a planned strategy to respond to critical incidents of endangered missing and abducted children. It is imperative a command and control structure and policy be in place that is understood and agreed upon prior to such activation. The requesting agency shall maintain the lead role during CART activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment.

STANDARDS FOR SECTION 5 - COMMAND AND CONTROL

- 5.1 The CART maintains an organizational chart detailing roles and lines of authority and reporting for the entire team. The chart should include detailed language on who oversees the overall CART, and how

authorizations are affected across all CART functions. (**Organizational chart/policy/SOP/ directive/command responsibilities/supervision**)

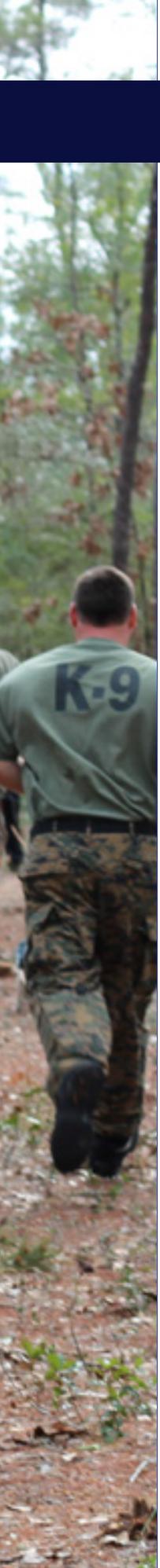
5.2 A written directive must be agreed upon by all participating agencies which details an Incident Command System including the role of the CART coordinator, the role CART plays in the establishment of a command post, how the incident commander is determined once the CART has arrived on scene and how conflicts are resolved between CART and other responding entities (e.g., federal, state or local authorities). Incident Command System (ICS) protocol shall be a component of the CART policy, directive and training, and shall be consistent with the uniform ICS adopted by each state and political subdivision or tribal nation. The ICS is a standardized, on scene, all-hazards incident management approach developed and adopted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (**Policy/ MOU/directives/SOP/ICS training logs/lesson plans**)

5.3 A written directive exists describing the various assignments necessary during CART activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment; including, but not limited to, a lead investigator(s), emergency operations coordinator (EOC), AMBER Alert representative, witness coordinator, leads analyst, media representative, support/ logistics representative, search coordinator, family liaison, technical support, legal advisor and a crime scene/forensic evidence collection representative. (**Directive/policy/SOP/assignment roster/training schedules/agendas/certificates/CART organizational chart**)



SECTION 6: SEARCH, CANVASS AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

This section recognizes the intricacies involved in conducting searches. The importance of the search, canvass and rescue operations cannot be overstated in CART activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment. In endangered missing and abducted child events, time is of the essence, and agencies should use all available means to search the immediate and collateral area; and to potentially obtain a direction of travel or investigative leads. Immediate and collateral areas include the last known location of the child or children, witnessed locations of activities of the suspects, individuals with knowledge of the abduction, and other identifiable locations critical to the determination of the location of the child or children. Analysis and review of child abduction investigations clearly indicates it is imperative for searches to be controlled, coordinated and conducted by trained personnel. Additionally, experience strongly supports the use of tracking dogs, when available, as they are essential with these incident types and the scope and complexity of investigations they require. K9 assets used in search and tracking often provide information that leads to the rapid recovery of the child. The following standards reflect the various elements that must be in place to ensure searches and are conducted quickly and effectively and are not compromised.



STANDARDS FOR SECTION 6 - SEARCH, CANVASS AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

- 6.1 The CART has a document detailing the types of searches in which the team has been trained, and the forms to be used when conducting these searches (e.g., neighborhood canvass, sex offender interviews, roadblock canvass and grid searches). Documents should be personnel-specific and should include any specialized skills or certification, such as K-9 certification. **(Policy/directives/SOP/training logs/lesson plans/sample documents/certification documents)**
- 6.2 The CART has a designated search coordinator responsible for ensuring searches are conducted properly during an activation, search areas and search participants are logged, searchers are briefed and updated, search perimeters are defined and procedures are in place for handling evidence. **(Policy/directive/SOP/training certificates/lesson plans)**
- 6.3 The CART has a written protocol in place for a tracking dog to be dispatched to the scene within a defined response time. **(SOP/directive/policy/interviews)**
- 6.4 If CART utilizes volunteers, all appropriate personnel information, training, equipment and the volunteers' roles should be clearly explained and agreed upon. Special emphasis should be placed on integrity and background clearances of selected volunteers. If an agency does not utilize volunteers, a plan must be in place to deal with volunteers who self-dispatch to the area to offer assistance. **(Policy/SOP/directives/interviews)**

SECTION 7: TRAINING

This section addresses the minimum training standards for CART development and ongoing proficiency. There should be a designated training coordinator for CART. The designated training coordinator can be a member of the CART or participating agency with the requisite skills, knowledge, competencies and abilities to design, develop and deliver required or designated training to support the CART. CART training should be designed and delivered for individual and team assignments, emphasizing expectations and responsibilities to ensure an effective multi-disciplinary and multi-agency response. The standards in this section provide direction as to who should be trained and the need for a set of training standards which outline required competencies and capacities across the scope of all team roles/functions.



Nothing in this standard should be interpreted to be inconsistent with established state, local or tribal statutes, legislative acts or executive orders to establish minimum training standards for law enforcement or public safety professionals. Appropriate minimum standards established by each state, local or tribal legislative or executive branch shall be the threshold for referenced training and will represent the minimum standards for competencies, skills, knowledge and abilities.

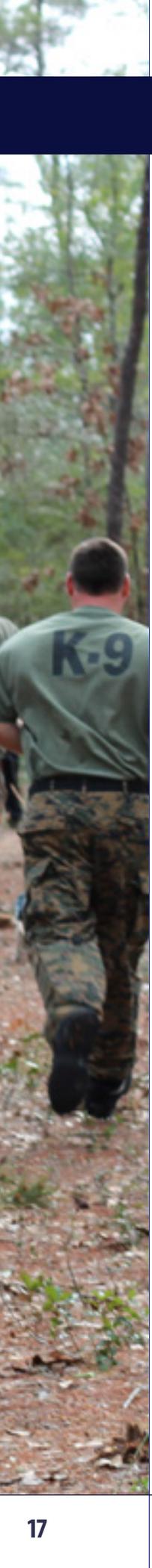
STANDARDS FOR SECTION 7 - TRAINING

- 7.1 There is a designated training coordinator for the CART. **(Organizational chart/job description)**
- 7.2 Training occurs semi-annually, at a minimum, and team members practice and/or train together. At least 60% of CART must attend each training session or designated specialty training.
- 7.3 CART related training for team members must be documented and maintained to provide proof of compliance. **(CART meeting/training schedule/policy/directive/ SOP/rosters/lesson plans)**
- 7.4 A mock activation exercise or tabletop exercise is conducted annually, if the team has not had a real activation during the same timeframe. At least 60% of CART members must attend the scheduled exercise. **(After action report/policy/directive/SOP/copy of field exercise/roster of attendees/copy of debriefed document)**
- 7.5 Assigned team members who require specialized skills, such as investigators, crime scene, search/rescue and K-9 personnel, etc., will receive training by their agencies for these skills. **(Policy/directives/SOP/training roster/schedules/lesson plans/copy of certificates/certification)**
- 7.6 A current skills inventory document is maintained and includes details of all training each team member receives and the knowledge, skills and abilities the member possesses as a result of the training. **(Directive/ SOP/policy/ personal history form on each member/training roster/schedules)**

SECTION 8: LEGAL ISSUES

The goal in endangered missing and abducted child cases is to rescue the child and develop a solid prosecutable case against the offender(s) without violating the constitutional rights of the innocent or the accused. This section contains standards required to ensure these elements are achieved and that issues such as search and seizure and the role of the prosecutor in the CART command post are addressed in the overall CART protocol.

Additionally, when establishing a CART, agencies must be fully aware of potential legal issues. If legal opinions are necessary or legal action needs to be taken immediately during a call-out, it is essential to have proactively developed a relationship with a legal advisor, and to have considered and addressed all known/potential jurisdictional issues and liability concerns. This supports having in place, before these incidents occur, all necessary Memorandums of



Understanding (MOUs) or Mutual Aid agreements. The complexity and time-critical nature of endangered missing and abducted child incidents necessitate solid readiness by the CART to execute investigative actions which supports effective prosecution of the offender(s) and careful protection of the victim(s).

STANDARDS FOR SECTION 8 - LEGAL ISSUES

- 8.1 The CART has written policy or directive establishing/outlining the authority team members have to operate outside of their area of jurisdiction. **(Policy/directive/SOP/MOU/copy of law/authorization/interview)**
- 8.2 There is written policy or directive, and through Mutual Aid Agreements, state statute and/or MOUs, that addresses all liability issues, including protection of CART members, who may be injured while on an activation, as well as protection of members and their agencies from civil liability. **(MOU/policy/directives/ SOP/mutual aid agreements/statutes/administrative rules)**
- 8.3 There must be written policy or a directive addressing the role of the prosecutor in the CART command post. **(Policy/directive/SOP/MOU/operating agreement)**
- 8.4 The CART has a relationship with a legal advisor(s); and in case of civil litigation jurisdictions within, the CART would have appropriate access to legal representation. **(Policy/directive/SOP/MOU/binding legal statute/city and state administrative rules)**

SECTION 9: EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

Previous sections of this document treat the availability of human resources during CART activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment. This section relates to the physical resources and equipment necessary during the activation such as command vehicles, thermal infrared imaging systems, air support, tracking dogs, all-terrain vehicles, etc. The standards in this section provide ways to address how the CART can answer the following questions with regard to the team's resources.

- a. What is the resource?
- b. Who has it?
- c. Who maintains it for operability?
- d. How is it accessed?
- e. Is access different depending upon time of day or day of week?
- f. What is the response time for acquiring the resource?
- g. Are there any costs involved with the resource?

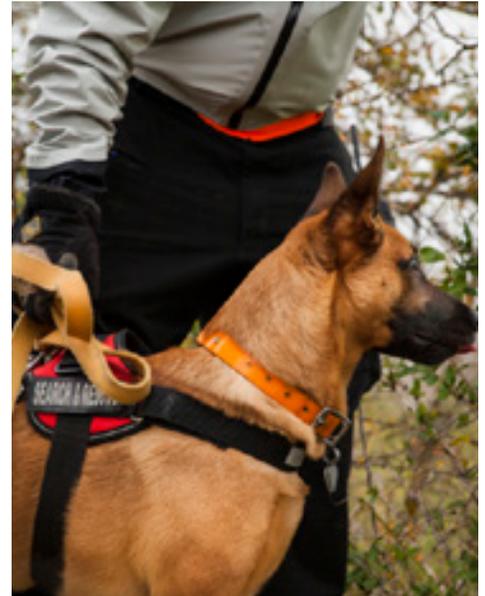
STANDARDS FOR SECTION 9 - EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

9.1 The CART maintains a current list of equipment, guidelines for use and any expert personnel who can be utilized to operate and/or troubleshoot the equipment during the CART activation, mobilization, call-out or deployment. Documentation directives shall include a list of all equipment and resources available to the CART. This directive must be updated at least semi-annually and is accessible to all members of the team. **(Policy/directive/SOP/interview/observation/AAR-prior incidents)**

9.2 The directive for the CART inventory shall provide specific details for gaining and securing operational access to each specified item of equipment or resource. This standard requires the inventory of resources and assets to include the following documentation for all equipment and resources to be used by the CART. **(Policy/directive/SOP/MOU)**

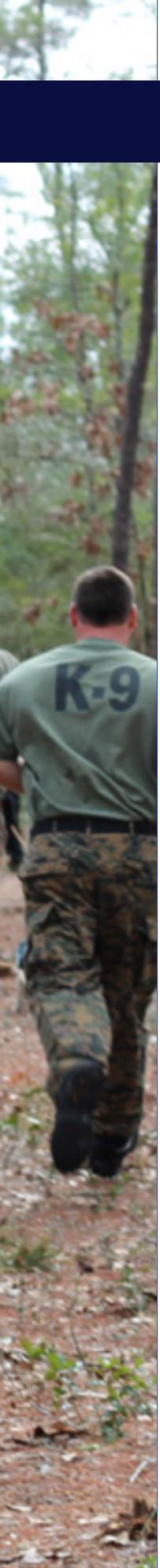
- a. Each item of equipment or resource
- b. Pre-agreement for use by the owner of each item of equipment or resource
- c. Estimated response time for mobilization of each item of equipment or resource
- d. An assumption of cost agreement by the CART from the agency possessing the item of equipment or resource

9.3 The CART inventory must demonstrate the team's full capacity to respond to the endangered missing or abducted child incident with the appropriate amount of physical and asset resources. This standard is assessed by CART Assessors prior to and during the onsite assessment and evaluation process. CART Assessors will determine the reasonable and appropriate resources and assets available to the CART that are needed in order to effectively respond to, locate and safely rescue/recover endangered missing and abducted children. **(Policy/directive/SOP/interview/observation/organization chart/rosters/ MOU)**



SECTION 10: CART PROTOCOLS

This section focuses on the need for establishing protocols and operating procedures and inclusion of these items in a CART manual. This is to ensure the CART functions in a manner consistent with the standards established herein, and that any changes to team dynamics, policies or procedures are appropriately documented and maintained in a designated location. While the standards in this section reflect documents and protocols developed by the CART member agencies and managed by the CART coordinator, all directives and documents are required to be shared and accepted by each participating agency. Signatures of the participating CEOs in the CART are required to signify acceptance and adoption by each of the respective agencies comprising the team.



The standards for operational protocols establish the responsibilities of the CART coordinator during activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment, as well as specific information required for inclusion in written protocol, policy or directive, under CART assignments.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CART COORDINATOR

1. Initiate the activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment notice for CART members.
2. Coordinate the AMBER Alert (if applicable or designated) in accordance with department/agency procedures.
3. Activate and provide notice to establish a public telephone number in order to receive information and leads from the public.
4. Respond to the scene of the incident and assume or appoint the role of Incident Commander in order to facilitate the rescue, recovery and investigation.
 - a. Establish law enforcement contact with lead agency
 - b. Assign CART members to designated positions, location or staging area
 - c. Obtain and document comprehensive incident briefing
 - d. Make investigative assignments as necessary or make assignments to supervisory investigative point of contact
 - e. Coordinate all activities on the scene with requesting (lead) agency
 - f. Coordinate the utilization of crime scene unit(s)
 - g. Ensure the communications center has made all required notifications
 - h. Ensure the CART resources (EOC, private organizations, media, etc.) are utilized and initiated immediately
 - i. Provide or designate a point of contact or public information officer for the lead agency to manage all media inquiries and information releases
5. Provide timely and periodic briefing summaries to the lead agency and CART members.
6. Provide other coordination and management as determined by the CEOs of respective agencies participating in the CART.

STANDARDS FOR SECTION 10 - CART PROTOCOLS

- 10.1** A written CART response manual shall be developed and approved by participating agencies to include at a minimum the following items. (**Policy/directives/SOP/ CART manual with all referenced items**)

highlighted and listed on table of contents/interviews/observations/AAR-prior incidents)

- a. The role of the CART coordinator
- b. All standards included in the appropriate edition of CART Standards for Certification
- c. Other critical team assignments, notification or activation, mobilization, call-out and deployment of team members
- d. Use of equipment
- e. Use of an incident command structure on the scene
- f. Designation of an Incident Commander
- g. Legal documents
- h. CART forms to be used
- i. Leads tracking capability
- j. Use of a tip line
- k. Use of volunteers
- l. A list of predetermined activities that will immediately take place as soon as CART arrives on scene, in order to limit downtime

10.2 Written documentation is available indicating and reflecting a debriefing is conducted and an after action report is created after each real or field exercise. The documentation must also address how issues identified during the activation are resolved.

10.3 For purposes of the field exercise conducted for certification, the assessor report will serve to meet the after action reporting requirement. A structured debriefing is required following the field exercise. **(Policy/directives/SOP/ after action report/debrief documents to include minutes and plan for collection/roster of attendees/ date and location of debrief to include distribution schedule)**





SECTION 11: VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND REUNIFICATION

A child abduction can absolutely devastate a family and paralyze a community. Families who have experienced this type of tragedy have indicated they were not prepared for all of the issues they faced, such as being thrown in the spotlight of the media, being the focus of the investigation to eliminate them as suspects, and dealing with psychics, volunteers and others who arrive at their doorstep or call to offer help. CART should identify a victim advocate or have other/additional resources available to assist the family and to act as a liaison with the responding law enforcement agency.

Once the child has been recovered, it is imperative services be made available to the child and victim family as soon as possible; not only to assist the child with any physical or medical needs, but to also assist in determining psychological needs resulting from the abduction. The existing body of research supporting this standard clearly indicates a forensic interview should be conducted by a recognized interviewer immediately following the recovery of the child or children. The forensic interview should be conducted to assist in apprehending suspect(s), determining if other crimes were committed against the child and determining if returning the child to his or her home provides an appropriate, safe environment. Additionally, the forensic interview may provide information to assist in the prosecution of defendants and identify other potential victims and/or suspects resulting in additional investigations. This section contains standards that shall be in place as part of the CART initiative to clearly outline responsibilities to child victim and family, and to ensure proper support responses are immediately available for them. This standard also requires that a reunification plan exists as a part of the CART policy and procedure.

STANDARDS FOR SECTION 11 - VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND REUNIFICATION

- 11.1 The CART has procedures in place to ensure medical and psychological assistance is readily available during CART activations, mobilization, call-outs and deployments. The purpose of this standard is to ensure the medical and psychological services and assistance are available. This standard mandates a protocol to provide the services but does not require a specific law enforcement or responding agency or organization to provide such services or assistance. **(Policy/directives/SOP/MOU/contract with service providers/redacted examples)**
- 11.2 The CART has a key position assigned to the team (e.g., victim advocate) to address family assistance during the investigation and reunification; and advocacy in the event the abduction resulted in the child's murder. This standard requires a description for the position, inclusive of the role of a victim advocate. **(Organizational chart/skill inventory/policy/directives/SOP/observation/interview)**

- 11.3 The CART has a plan in place that identifies services and resources available at the community, state and national levels to assist in victim and family support during the investigation, reunification and post-reunification referrals. These resources are documented in the CART's Resource Inventory. **(Resource Inventory)**
- 11.4 The CART procedure includes a requirement for a detailed forensic interview of the child by a qualified forensic interviewer. If possible, forensic interviewers will be identified prior to activation of the CART and all listed forensic interviewers will provide a statement of qualifications accepted in the jurisdiction of prosecution. **(Organizational chart/policy/directive/SOP/redacted examples of previous interviews)**
- 11.5 The CART procedure includes a requirement for a risk assessment and background check on the family/shelter prior to returning the child to the family/shelter. **(Copy of form/document to be used/examples of previous cases/MOU/policy/directive/SOP)**

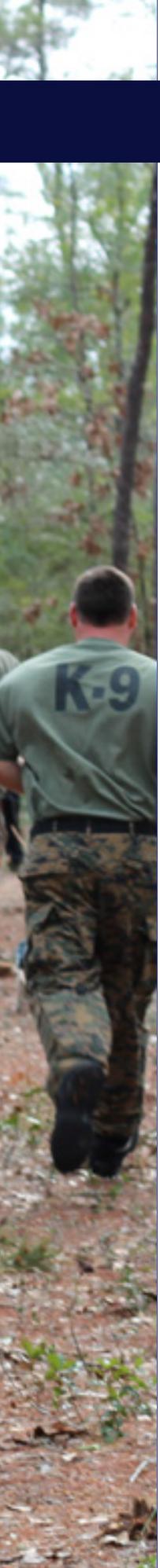


SECTION 12: COMMUNITY

This section focuses on the importance of CART in community education both for adults and juveniles. The standards stress the vital need for community outreach for all citizens, including children, to understand the proactive measures necessary in the prevention of missing, abducted and exploited children, which in turn will make communities safer for all.

STANDARDS FOR SECTION 12 - COMMUNITY

- 12.1 Jurisdictions represented in CART have an established community outreach plan relating to the prevention of child abduction and the AMBER Alert plan utilized in that jurisdiction. **(Lesson plan or established curriculum/roster/appointment letter/agenda/social media account/page, or other public facing website/page)**
- 12.2 Jurisdictions represented in CART hold educational sessions to juveniles and/or their parents regarding internet safety and other child safety prevention programs. **(Lesson plan/roster/appointment letter/agenda)**



CART CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY

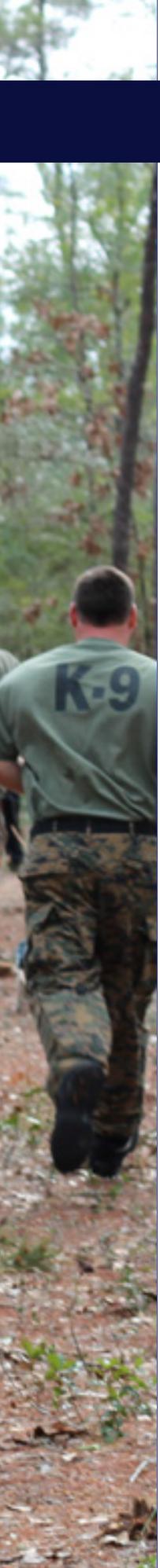
To be eligible to apply for CART Certification, jurisdictions must meet and/or complete the following items.

- The designated CART coordinator and the core members of the team must have attended a US-DOJ sponsored CART training program or other appropriate AATTAP sponsored training.
- The CART coordinator or designee will maintain a training record of AATTAP training attended by personnel assigned to their team and assure each member has received sufficient training and appropriate certifications to serve on the CART.
- Conduct one tabletop or field scenario exercise annually to test operational readiness and complete an appropriate after-action report. The report is to be submitted as part of the application package.
 - If the CART has experienced an activation in the previous 12 months, this may be substituted, but an after-action report must be completed.
 - Activation is defined as a mobilization of a substantial number of CART member components or the entire team, where a mission has been established and credible evidence supports activities to reflect an actual good faith response of a CART.
 - The CART coordinator may submit the after action report or utilize AATTAP's AAR [fillable PDF template found on the CART Resources Page of the AMBER Advocate website](#).
- Complete the CART Certification application to include an endorsement letter by the chief operating officer (CEO) of the lead agency for the CART.
 - The CEO of the lead agency is defined as the authorized or statutorily provided, appointed or elected official with policy (legislative) and budgetary powers for a political subdivision of a state or a state entity or federally recognized tribe.
 - The intent of this working definition is to provide guidance on the identification of the elected or appointed executive designated as a CEO; if needed and upon request, further clarification can be provided by the AATTA Program Director.
- If several agencies are designated as a lead agency in the CART organization, all lead agency CEO's must provide endorsement letters or sign a joint letter of agreement or memorandum of understanding. The documents should be included with the application packet.

- The CART must agree to an onsite certification event conducted by a designated team of assessors and which includes the following requirements.
 - The CART will make available appropriate personnel.
 - A full-scale mock field exercise will be conducted and observed by the AATTAP assessment team for the purpose of demonstrating practical and proficient understanding of CART standards and best practices.
 - The mock exercise will be conducted without live weapons; designated training weapons (Red or Blue Guns) can be utilized during the exercise. (Refer to the [Safety Plan Form](#))
 - The AATTAP CART Project Coordinator as well as the CCM and the assessor team assigned to the certification event will thoroughly review all pertinent documents and proofs related to all CART Certification standards as established in this manual.

APPLYING FOR CART CERTIFICATION

CART programs interested in pursuing certification from AATTAP and the US-DOJ can make application by completing the [online CART Certification Application form](#). This form is completed and submitted online by the requesting CART program's CART coordinator, and a complete copy of the form is automatically emailed to designated AATTAP staff and the submitter. Signed letters of agreement from all lead agencies, or a signed and dated MOU with all agency CEO signatures, are submitted electronically, via document upload as part of the online application form.



CART CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following are guidelines regarding file review and compliance to be reviewed and understood by both the requesting CART coordinator and the AATTAP CART certification team (AATTAP CART project coordinator, and the assigned lead and co-assessors).

- All standards must be in full compliance. If disputes arise regarding compliance, they are to be discussed amongst the AATTAP CART certification team as noted above, and a formal response/clarification provided to the requesting agency's CART coordinator by the AATTAP CART project coordinator or lead assessor (if authorized).
- Standards can be addressed through a variety of proofs to include: General orders, standard operating procedures, written directives, interviews or observations. However, where standards require specific documentation or proof, the language included in the standard will stand as the absolute requirement.
- Any documents presented as proof of compliance must be signed by the appropriate authority. For additional directives or policy(ies) provided by member agencies, a current date must be shown, and the policy or directive must be incorporated as part of official policy of the CART. Distribution of documents to all applicable individuals must be exhibited. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure the CEO for each member agency establishes directives reflecting CART participation and creates authority of enforcement of all directives.
- Standard Compliance documentation (SCD) and all necessary proofs related to them will be submitted by the requesting CART to the AATTAP CART project coordinator, and uploaded/managed electronically via secure portal, for use by the assigned CART certification team in offsite review of standard compliance, and in preparation for the onsite assessment. Assessors will provide review input in accordance with direction and parameters established by the AATTAP CART project coordinator.
- In the event a standard which is observed/confirmed as part of the onsite event is not in compliance, the CART coordinator may be able to achieve compliance before the conclusion of the onsite event. However, if not completed to the satisfaction of the assessors, the requesting agency CART coordinator and the lead assessor will develop a strategy to correct any deficiencies.
- For any standard requiring observable or documented action, if an action has occurred previously, proof of that action should be included/attached with relevant notation to the applicable SCD record(s) for that standard. For example, for Standard 2.4, if during a call-out a relief schedule has been created and utilized, documents relating to that event should be in the file to demonstrate compliance.
 - Similarly, if a standard has an observable component, a photo/digital image should be included/attached to the applicable record(s) as well.

- The proofs requested for each standard serve as guidelines and all the proofs listed for a standard may not be needed. However, generally, as much proof as possible should be placed in the file.
- When proof elements (documents, images) are added to an SCD record, the applicable component of the element should be noted (e.g., 'See page 2 of attached SOP for relevant proof information').
- Simulation of certain events/tasks by the CART during the field exercise must be pre-approved by the CART lead assessor before the onsite visit.
- Many agencies have different terminology when addressing policy, written directives and standard operating procedures. When in doubt, the requesting CART's definition and utilization of such documents will take precedence over the AATTAP certification team's definition. Generally, the following definitions apply.
 - **Policy** – a binding document signed by CEO and distributed to all personnel in the agency
 - **Written Directive** – a binding document signed by CEO but often distributed only to specific individuals serving a specific function
 - **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** – generally distributed to the impacted unit only, this is a binding document usually targeting a particular unit, skill or expertise and serving as a “how to” manual for applicable personnel



CART CERTIFICATION EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

In order to constantly improve individual and organizational efforts, an evaluation system will be utilized at all appropriate steps in the process. Two evaluations will be utilized upon conclusion of the certification process and award/announcement of certification.

Component 1 | External Evaluation: Requesting/Participating Agency Evaluation Feedback

- Survey Component 1 – The CART coordinator will be asked to evaluate their contact and relationship with the lead and co-assessor(s).
- Survey Component 2 - The CART coordinator will be asked to evaluate the overall certification process.
- Survey Component 3 – If an AATTAP Regional Liaison was involved with a CART's certification, the CART coordinator will be asked to evaluate the quality of the liaison's contacts/guidance and support over the course of the certification process.

Component 2 | Internal Evaluation: Annual AATTAP Evaluation of CART Certification Assessors

The AATTAP CART project coordinator will complete annual evaluations for all assessors who were actively assigned over the past 12 months to ensure retention and demonstration of skills and competencies, and to promote continuous improvement in the performance of CART assessor duties.

Links to the surveys can be found on the AMBER Advocate website's CART Resources page: <https://www.amberadvocate.org/cartresources/>

APPENDIX A: CART CERTIFICATION FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

The following resources are found at <https://www.amberadvocate.org/cartresources/>

CART Certification Manual and Agency Guide | AATTAP Publication for use by CART programs interested in preparing for and achieving Certified CART Status by the US DOJ).

Online Application for CART Certification | For **initial/first-time** CART certification. To be completed and submitted online, via a web form, along with documents uploaded as part of the submission process. This form **must** be completed and submitted by the requesting CART's Coordinator.

Online Application for CART Re-Certification | For **re-certification by currently certified CART programs**. To be completed and submitted online, via a web form, along with documents uploaded as part of the submission process. This form **must** be completed and submitted by the requesting CART's Coordinator.

CART Certification After Action Report Form | This form can be used to submit an AAR as part of certification and/or re-certification in the event the CART does not have its own AAR form.

CART Certification Standard Compliance Form | This is a form used by CART Assessors but is also available on the public side of the website so the requesting agency CART coordinator/leadership team can see/view its format and information captured during the compliance review process.

Safety Plan for CART Certification Field Exercise | Used by requesting CART programs to use in documenting their safety plan for field exercises, including that which is part of their final CART Certification onsite assessment event.

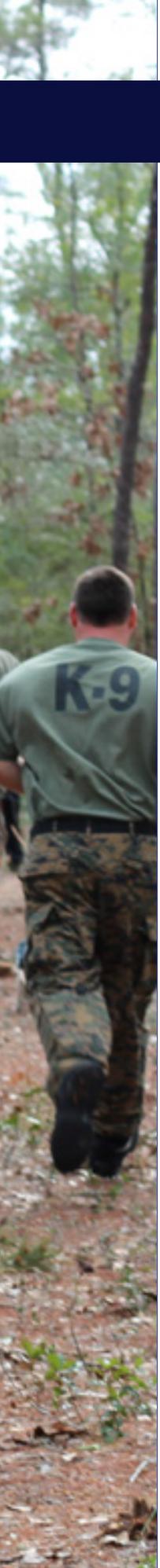
Quality Assurance for CART Certification | These online surveys are completed by the participating CART coordinator to give feedback on the process. (There is one additional online survey that is **not** published on the CART Resources page – the AATTAP Regional Liaison survey. This survey is sent directly to the participating CART coordinator if and only if their respective AATTAP Liaison was indeed involved in the certification process.)

Lead Assessor Survey

Co-Assessor Survey

Overall Certification Process Survey

Outside of specific reference to CART Certification, the CART Resources web page contains other reference downloads and sample forms relative to CART operations.



APPENDIX B: CART ASSESSMENT FIELD SCENARIO SAMPLE SCHEDULE

The following 2-day event schedule represents a basic framework for the AATTAP assessor team's work to conduct onsite assessment and evaluation activities. The final agenda and schedule for each CART Certification onsite event will be developed by the CART project coordinator with input as requested from the assigned assessor team, with final approval by the AATTAP Administrator.

DAY ONE

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Meet with CART Coordinator and Interviews of Designated CART Personnel

The assessors will meet with the CART coordinator upon arrival and discuss any final logistics for the day. The assessors will then interview specific members of the CART for policy or procedure clarification and to validate the policies are communicated to personnel. The interviews and potential interviewees will be pre-determined by the CART coordinator (e.g., Communications Center Supervisor, Public Information Officer (PIO), Investigations Chief, and Watch Commander) with the CCM. If CEO's request to speak with assessors or discuss any areas of the assessment, this can be done at this point.

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Site Visits and Select Personnel Interviews

The CART coordinator and the assessors will visit each site to be used during the exercise to address any logistical concerns including site safety and participant safety. Any additional personnel not involved in the exercise but involved in a true CART activation and missing child event (e.g. sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE), child abuse pediatrician, child advocacy center director, forensic interviewer, etc.) shall be briefly interviewed to verify their understanding of their roles and responsibilities during the missing child event, recovery and reunification.

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Agency Introductions

The agency head, CART coordinator and invited CART participants will begin this session with a welcome and introductions.

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Field Exercise Briefing

A representative from each agency participating in the field exercise and primary participants will meet for a briefing.

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Closing Onsite Review

The agency head, CART coordinator and any other invited agency representatives will meet to discuss preliminary findings and to answer any questions as a final preparation for the next day's events. It is expected that CEO's of each agency or appropriate command staff is represented.

DAY TWO

7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Field Scenario Exercise

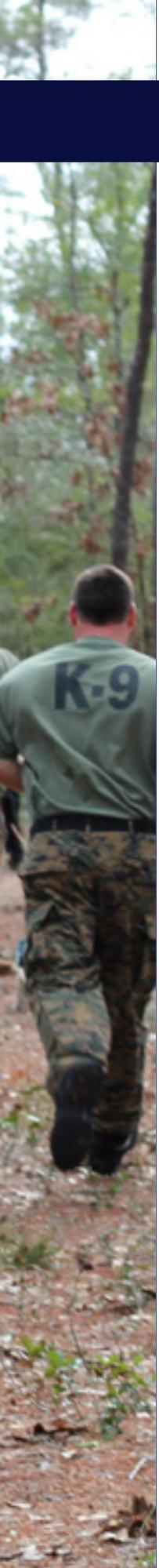
The activation begins at the Command Center.

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Press Event/Media Availability

All agency representatives and major participants will meet to debrief with assessors and stress importance of command staff participation in exercise.

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Closing Comments

At the conclusion of the certification process, the CART Assessment Team will meet with agency representatives and agency heads to provide observations regarding the assessment and notify the CART coordinator of the status of their certification process, including any necessary steps to complete CART Certification.



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