

**GREATER ATLANTIC RESCUE DOGS, INC.
BYLAWS**

Version 7, February 11, 2008

ARTICLE I: NAME

(1.0) This organization shall be called Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc. (GARD)

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purposes of this organization shall be:

(1.0) To provide to the public trained dog/handler teams for search and rescue of subjects lost in the wilderness, trapped under rubble, incapacitated, drowned, or for the recovery of human remains upon the request of any official agency, day or night, under any and all conditions where dogs can operate efficiently within the Commonwealth of Virginia and surrounding areas, except in the apprehension of criminals;

(1.1.) To provide continuous training and education for dog teams and support personnel to develop and improve the skills and capabilities of its members and to insure the deployment of skilled search dog teams and Support Personnel;

(1.2) To provide, upon request, demonstrations of the role of dog teams during search missions;

(1.3) To provide, upon request, educational programs designed both to prevent individuals from becoming lost and to teach them what to do once lost to lessen the search time and to improve survivability while waiting to be found.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

This organization shall have Operational, Candidate, and Associate members and Applicants.

(1.0) Active Members shall include Operational Members and Candidate Members. Active Members shall have one (1) vote in the election of officers and directors and in personnel issues including, but not limited to, the admission of new Operational, Candidate, Associate Members and Applicants for membership.

(1.1) Operational Members shall consist of qualified Dog Handlers and Support Personnel. An Operational Member shall be required to attend a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of unit training sessions per quarter and fifty percent (50%) of unit business meetings per quarter unless he/she has extenuating circumstances and requests an attendance waiver in writing for said quarter. The waiver request must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership.

(1.2) A qualified Dog Handler must have completed both a Basic American Heart Association First Aid Course and CPR Certification (or equivalent or higher training), Field Team Member Class or higher, and be physically fit to undertake the duties assigned to him/her prior to becoming Operational. The Dog Handler must also have completed a Field Team Member Class or equivalent or higher training, prior to, or within one year after becoming Operational. Operational Dog Handlers should periodically renew CPR, First Aid, and FTM certifications. A qualified dog must be of sound structure, must be maintained in excellent health and must demonstrate a temperament suitable for tasks to be performed. All dogs must have the current vaccinations required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and be obedience trained to a level necessary to pass the minimum state requirements for obedience as stated in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. All dog teams shall meet the requirements for Operational status as noted in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards before being voted Operational by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership.

(1.3) Any Operational Dog Handler who loses or retires a dog shall, for up to one year, retain the ability to hold office, serve on committees, represent the organization and vote at meetings provided the Handler satisfies all of the other requirements for continuing membership in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs. During that period, the member must begin training a new dog or be actively looking for a replacement. If he/she fails to meet these guidelines within the designated time, he/she shall automatically revert to Applicant Status. Alternatively, an Operational Dog Handler may elect to serve as Support Personnel. He/she may be voted to that status provided he/she meets the requirements set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Support Personnel Standards and is approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Membership. An Operational Dog Handler, serving in the above capacity, who begins training a new dog, shall be required to meet all the dog handler requirements set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. During the period the Handler is actively training a new dog, he / she shall retain all privileges of Operational status. The Handler and new dog must still be approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Membership prior to being considered an Operational dog team.

(1.4) Support Personnel shall meet all requirements of Operational Membership, except they need not show the ability to handle and train a dog. Additionally, they shall meet all requirements for Support Personnel as stated in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. Support Personnel shall be voted Operational by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership.

(1.5) Candidate Members are applicants for Operational status as Dog Handlers who have completed the requirements as stated in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. Promotion to Candidate status requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Membership. A Candidate Member shall be required to attend a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of unit training sessions per quarter and fifty percent (50%) of unit business meetings per quarter unless he/she has extenuating circumstances and requests an attendance waiver in writing for said quarter. The waiver request must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership.

(1.5 a) Once promoted to Candidate status, Candidates shall have six (6) months to meet the requirements for promotion to Operational Status. At the end of the six month period, Candidates shall: 1) meet the requirements for Operational Status as stated in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards and request promotion to Operational status or 2) request, in writing, an additional six-month period to fulfill requirements for Operational status. Should the Candidate not meet the requirements for Operational Status or should their status elevation request be denied, his/her membership shall be automatically terminated. Promotion to Operational status shall require a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Operational Membership. Granting of an additional six month period to fulfill requirements for Operational status shall require a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership. Candidates must be a minimum of eighteen (18) years of age.

(1.5 b) Any Candidate Dog Handler who loses or retires a dog shall, for up to one year, retain the ability to hold office, serve on committees, represent the organization and vote at meetings provided the Handler satisfies all of the other requirements for continuing membership in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc. During that period the member must begin training a new dog or be actively looking for a replacement. If he/she fails to meet these guidelines within the designated time, he/she shall automatically revert to Applicant Status. Alternatively, a Candidate Dog Handler may elect to serve as Support Personnel. He/she may be voted to that status provided he/she meets the requirements set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Support Personnel Standards and is approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Membership. A Candidate Dog Handler, serving in the above capacity, who begins training a new dog, shall be required to meet all the dog handler requirements set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. During the period the Handler is training a new dog, he/she shall retain all privileges of Candidate status. The Handler and new dog must still be approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Membership prior to being considered an Operational dog team.

(2.0) Associate Members are personnel who participate in the unit's search and rescue operations in some capacity other than as a Dog Handler or Support Personnel. Associate Members are non-voting members.

(3.0) An Applicant is an individual who has submitted an application for membership in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc. After meeting the requirements for Applicant status as stated in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards, promotion to Applicant status shall require a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership. An Applicant shall be required to attend a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of unit training sessions per quarter and fifty percent (50%) of unit business meetings per quarter unless he / she has extenuating circumstances and requests an attendance waiver in writing for said quarter. The waiver request must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership. Applicants are not members and may not vote at meetings. Input from Applicants at meetings is welcome.

(3.0a) Once promoted to Applicant status, Applicants shall have six (6) months to meet the requirements for promotion to Candidate status as stated in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. At the end of the six (6) month period, Applicants shall 1) fulfill the requirements for Candidate status as stated in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards and request promotion to Candidate status or 2) request, in writing, an additional three (3) month period to fulfill requirements for Candidate status. Should the Applicant not meet the requirements for Candidate status or should their status elevation request be denied, his/her application shall be automatically terminated. Promotion to Candidate status shall require a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership. Granting of an additional three month period to fulfill requirements for Candidate status shall require a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership.

(3.1) Individuals voted to Applicant status as a Dog Handler may not be a Dog Handler for any other State or local search and rescue group at any time during membership with Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc.

(4.0) Inactive members are those members (Operational or Candidates) who have not met the attendance requirements for active membership during a period of one quarter (three months) or who have submitted a written request for a leave of absence. Inactive members are non-voting members. Any member who remains inactive for more than six months shall be automatically terminated from membership in Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc. A member who wishes to return to active status and has been inactive for fewer than six months may request in writing to return if they meet the following requirements:

(4.1) Operational Dog Handlers who have been inactive for fewer than six months may request a three month probationary period to meet requirements for return to active status as noted below. Such a request must be approved by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership. Dog Handlers shall not participate in searches as Operational Dog Handlers during this three-month probationary period.

(4.1 a) Dog teams that were operational for at least one year, but have been inactive for less than six months (see 4.0) may return to operational status provided they pass the designated re-certification evaluation for their specialty, and satisfy all requirements for active status as set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. In all instances the returning dog team must be approved for return to active status by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership prior to regaining that status.

(4.1 b) Inactive Operational dog teams that do not meet the above requirements may return to active status provided they pass the designated field evaluation for their specialty, and satisfy all requirements for active status as set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. In all instances the returning dog team must be approved for return to active membership by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Membership prior to regaining that status.

(4.1 c) Inactive Operational dog teams who are unable to meet these requirements during the three (3) month probationary period shall not regain their Operational status as Dog Handlers. Inactive operational handlers may be reinstated as Operational Support Personnel if they meet the requirements for that position and satisfy all requirements for active status as set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. Reinstatement to active status in the new position requires a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership. Inactive operational dog teams that cannot meet the requirements for return to active Operational status or reinstatement as active Operational Support Personnel may be reinstated as an active Candidate Dog Handler or Support Personnel by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership.

(4.2) Inactive Candidate dog teams may be returned to Candidate status if their period of inactivity is no greater than one quarter (three months), provided they satisfy all requirements for active status as set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards. Any leave of absence or period of inactive status greater than one quarter shall result in the return of the Candidate to Applicant status. In all instances the returning dog team must be approved for return to Candidate status by a 2/3 vote of the Active Membership prior to regaining that status.

(4.3) Individuals who have been inactive for more than six (6) months or who have been removed from membership must submit a written request to return to Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc. to the Board of Directors who will, in turn, submit the request to the Active Membership for consideration. The Active Membership may reinstate a member by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote. The status of the returning member shall then be determined by a separate two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Active Membership. This vote must take place within the three (3) month probationary period. During this period the member shall remain at Applicant status and must satisfy all other requirements that are set forth in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards.

(4.4) Any individual whose request to return to membership has been rejected by the Active Membership may resubmit a request to return after one year. The results of this vote shall be final without further recourse.

ARTICLE IV: BUSINESS

The business of the organization shall be as follows:

(1.0) The Board of Directors shall consist of three or four officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Secretary and Treasurer positions may be combined or filled separately. These positions shall be elected by caucus at the November meeting. Only active, voting members may hold office.

(1.1) The President may be the executive officer of the unit and shall preside at all meetings of the unit and shall perform all other duties commonly incident to the office. The President shall be listed as the registered agent of the unit.

(1.2) The Vice President / Training Director, in the absence of the President, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties of the President. The Vice President shall be responsible for maintaining group personnel and attendance records, developing the quarterly training schedules and shall perform all other duties commonly incident to the office.

(1.3) The Secretary / Public Education Coordinator shall record all minutes of the meetings and keep records of the unit; distribute the minutes of the previous meeting to the Membership; send all notices of all meetings as required under Section 2.0, carry on general correspondence, coordinate all educational programs and keep record thereof, and shall perform all other duties commonly incident to the office.

(1.4) The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all funds received by the unit and shall dispense funds as directed by voting and policy. The Treasurer shall maintain complete records of all financial transactions and shall provide a copy of the Treasurer's report to the Membership quarterly, in January, April, July and October of each year. The Treasurer shall report on the unit's financial status at each monthly business meeting and send a report to the Board of Directors. Additionally, the Treasurer shall prepare financial reports as necessary for the Board of Directors to forward to the Internal Revenue Service and other related agencies, submittal of the annual corporate report to the Board of Directors for forwarding to the State Corporation Commission, and shall perform all other duties commonly incident to the office.

(1.5) Any officer who fails to fulfill his/her responsibilities or whose conduct has adversely affected the reputation or operation of Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

(1.6) The term of the Board of Directors shall be twelve (12) consecutive months starting on January 1 and ending December 31 regardless of changes in individual unit officials.

(1.7) Any permanent unit vacancy in the Board of Directors shall be filled by the unit membership at a special meeting until the next November meeting of the unit.

(1.8) The Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint working committees as necessary.

(1.9) The Board of Directors shall receive no compensation for their services as Directors.

(1.10) The Board of Directors shall govern and be responsible for conducting all business at the corporate level, unless specifically stated in these bylaws.

(1.11) Seventy-five percent (75%) of the Directors shall be required to constitute a quorum. A quorum may be obtained by proxy and an e-mail proxy shall be deemed acceptable.

(1.12) The Membership shall be informed of all meetings of the Board of Directors and minutes of the Board meetings shall be sent out via e-mail within seven days of the meeting. A hard copy will be provided to any member so requesting.

(2.0) Meetings of the Board of Directors and of the general membership shall be held as noted below and shall be governed by Parliamentary Law as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise specified by these bylaws.

(2.1) Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held to meet the needs of the organization:

(2.1-1) There shall be an annual meeting of the Board of Directors each year, the time, date and place to be determined by the preceding Board of Directors. The Secretary shall give notice to all Board of Director Members in writing at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date thereof. The notice may be waived if all Board Members agree in advance.

(2.1-2) A mid-year meeting of the Board of Directors may be held, if deemed necessary, each year, the time, date and place to be determined by the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall give notice to all members of the board in writing at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date thereof. Notice may be waived if all Board Members agree.

(2.1-3) A special meeting may be called at any time by the Board of Directors for any reason having imperative interest to the structure and purpose of this organization. All Board of Directors shall be notified of such meetings in advance.

(2.2) The meetings of the Membership of the organization shall be as follows:

(2.2-1) General meetings shall be held at least once a month at a time and place that shall be announced via the quarterly training schedule to be e-mailed to the membership, if possible, one month prior to the beginning of the quarter. Minutes of general meetings will be distributed to the membership within seven (7) days. Members may send amendments to the Secretary. Minutes of each meeting will be approved by the membership at the beginning of the next meeting. A hard copy will be provided to any member so requesting.

(2.2-2) A special meeting of the Membership may be called at any time by the Board of Directors for any reason having imperative interest to the structure and purpose of Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc. Minutes of all special meetings shall be distributed to the membership within seven (7) days. Members may send amendments to the Secretary. Minutes of each meeting will be approved by the Membership at the beginning of the next meeting. A hard copy will be provided to any member so requesting.

(3.0) Disciplinary Action/Removal from Office and Membership: The members of this corporation are required to adhere to the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standards set forth in the appendices of these bylaws. Members are also expected to conduct themselves professionally whenever they are representing themselves as a member of this corporation. Any member whose actions have adversely affected the reputation or operation of this corporation may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board of Directors including removal from membership by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

(4.0) No Member or Applicant of this corporation shall respond to a search mission without first notifying the designated dispatcher of Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs, Inc. or a member of the Board of Directors. Non-operational and inactive members shall not respond as an Operational Member on an actual mission. Limited exceptions to this policy may be defined in the Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's). No exceptions will be allowed that are not specifically covered by existing clauses in the SOP's. Any member or applicant who acts in contradiction to this shall automatically be removed from membership or have his/her application terminated. Members and Applicants who are removed from membership or whose application is terminated under this clause may be reinstated by a 2/3 vote of the Active Membership.

ARTICLE V: DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

No distribution of corporate funds shall at any time be made to members either upon dissolution or otherwise. This prohibition shall not prevent the corporation from reimbursing members for actual expenses incurred by them in search and rescue work. Reimbursement for expenses incurred during public or agency relations or educational activities directly related to the purposes of this corporation shall only be made if the Board of Directors has previously approved attendance at such meeting or activities. Such reimbursement shall come from any available funds in its possession.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended only at the mid-year Board of Directors meeting or at a special meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all Board Members. All amendments will be presented in writing or by e-mail to the active membership after their adoption.

Bylaws passed by the Active Membership on 07/99.

Revised (07/10/03)

Revised (12/30/2006)

Revised Bylaws passed by the Active Membership on February 3, 2007.

Revised Bylaws passed by the Active Membership on August 21, 2007

Revised Bylaws passed by the Active Membership on February 17, 2008