

Mounted Evaluation and the SAR Mount

1. Objective/Purpose:

The Unit Mounted Evaluation program's objective is to provide initial and on-going mounted evaluations to new and existing members and their mounts, so that they can effectively participate in search and rescue missions and other Unit activities.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all NMMSAR members and covers both initial and on-going evaluation.

3 Policy:

NMMSAR uses the Mounted Proficiency Test/Standards developed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department as a guide. NMMSAR will use these guidelines to determine the ability of the mount and rider team to perform the needed skills for Mounted Search and Rescue deployment, as well as specialized event participation. At times a higher level of ability may be required of the mount and rider team to participate in certain specialized events. The Review Board will outline and approve these necessary skills on a case by case basis.

Note: NMMSAR does not endorse or condone any one type of training method or equine philosophy. How an individual rider and mount are able to achieve the required level of skill is the responsibility of the individual rider. (NOTE: NMMSAR is not a training program and does not bear any responsibility to "train" any mount.) Any advice and/or direction pertaining to horsemanship, given by any member of the Unit, is subject to the individual's interpretation, and should be taken as such. Outside training and continuing education for both the mount and rider is strongly encouraged.

- a. NMMSAR will utilize the LA County Proficiency Test as an evaluation guide. The annual evaluation must be completed by each mount and rider team to become qualified to participate with NMMSAR. (Refer to the LA County Mounted Unit documents for more details on the requirements.) A probationary period will be provided to allow incoming members to have time to train their mount to meet requirements.
- b. The Search and Rescue mount may be an equine of any breed, age, or type, capable of carrying its rider and necessary gear that can safely pass the NMMSAR proficiency test. Stallions will need to exhibit exceptional behavior and be approved unanimously by the Review Board in order to participate in Unit searches or events.
- c. Any mount or rider team deemed to be unsafe or disruptive, as determined by the Review Board, will not be allowed to participate with the Unit.
- d. Most importantly, the NMMSAR mount must be calm and manageable, under diverse situations, to allow the Unit member to carry out their search and/or patrol duties.
- e. English or Western style riding is acceptable during search missions, providing one's necessary gear and equipment can be safely secured to the mount and/or rider. During specialized events the preferred style is Western to produce a more uniformed Unit appearance; however, exceptions may be granted by the Review Board.
- f. NMMSAR members will maintain their mount's health and welfare by using the current, best known equine care practices.

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