

Almost Heaven Star Party (AHSP) Emergency Preparedness Plan at SKMC

Scope

This plan addresses responses to serious types of fires, medical needs, and other types of emergencies that may threaten AHSP participants while they are at The Spruce Knob Mountain Center (SKMC). This plan includes site evacuation in the event of a major fire and evacuation of any injured or ill who need medical attention. It is for use in planning *prior to* AHSP and in responding during the time this event is being held. Emergency planning poses special problems due to the remote nature of SKMC. In almost all emergencies, prompt action by AHSP staff is required.

SKMC Facilities and AHSP

SKMC facilities used by AHSP include the Main Yurt for presentations and meals, two dorm buildings, and the shower building. Also, AHSP uses three large observing fields, where participants stay in tents, campers, and RVs. One field permits vehicles to park at the observing area, while the other does not. During AHSP, we can expect around 125 vehicles and 200 participants. Vehicles, tents, and equipment are quite close together on a grass field.

Possible Types of Fires

- a. Fire in a SKMC building, such as Main Yurt, dorm building, or shower room. Each building has fire extinguishers. People should be warned of the fire so the buildings can be evacuated. We can assist SKMC personnel as necessary.
- b. Grass Fires and forest fires. Such fires could be started by lightening or people. We have limited ability to fight a small fire threatening the property or AHSP observing areas until fire equipment can arrive. Observing fields normally have been mowed, with the grass cut short and hay removed. Nearby roads provide potential firebreaks. A rapid response to a fire starting on the property will have the best potential to bring under control. Any local response will be made in coordination with SKMC personnel.
- c. Vehicle and cooking fires. Vehicles are parked close together in the observing areas and outside cooking is allowed. No open fires are permitted. Participants should warn AHSP staff and immediately use fire extinguishers positioned in each area. If necessary other vehicles should be moved to avoid the fire spreading to them.
- d. An early decision to call 911 and ask for fire department help should be done if there is any doubt about our ability to deal with a fire.

Water for Firefighting There are no water mains or fire hydrants at SKMC. Water from taps and spigots are found in buildings, about a quarter mile from the AHSP observing fields as well there is one water lines to the red observing field.

Nearby Fire Departments

There are no nearby fire departments. The nearest units are volunteer fire departments in Whitmer and Circleville. The 911 operator will likely dispatch one of these units. In the past, the Whitmer VFD has been assigned to calls from SKMC.

Whitmer VFD has two trucks, a 1,000-gallon pumper and a smaller 500-gallon truck. These units can be expected to arrive at SKMC about 45 minutes after being notified. Distance is 17 miles via gravel and paved mountain roads.

- Circleville VFD. This is the closest fire department to SKMC and is 11.6 miles away. They have two or three fire trucks. Their units must climb the 6 miles up the steep Saw Mill Rd.

On Site Fire Fighting Equipment

SKMC possesses very limited firefighting equipment, which consists of fire extinguishers in buildings and tools (shovels, rakes, mowers). Hand tools are kept in the tool shed behind the main Yurt and outside the Shower building. AHSP has upright fire extinguishers, shovels, 5 gallon water pails, and two backpack fire pumps to be kept at the observing fields and the Registration tent. Low tech means such as wet towels, shovels, and rakes can be effective in certain situations when used by a group of people working together.

Lightning and High Winds

Lightning poses a serious threat for AHSP participants in the observing areas as these areas are on high ground and in the open. AHSP staff will monitor severe weather conditions and warn participants. Daily severe weather updates can be provided at meals and on the Monitor in the Yurt. People can take shelter in the Main Yurt or in their vehicles. Hard top vehicles offer protection, providing one does not come in contact with metal surfaces. People should avoid taking shelter under tall trees and not remain in tents.

Getting and Disseminating Dangerous Weather Forecast Information

The NOAA office in Sterling, VA prepares forecasts for the SKMC area. Information can be obtained by weather radio, radio stations, and the Internet. NOAA also disseminates information on fires and fire conditions. AHSP will monitor weather conditions every 4-6 hours or more often if bad weather is being forecast.

Communications Limitations

Requesting Help. Due to the remote location of SKMC, most cell phones will not work. This means any request for emergency assistance will have to be made by landline from a telephone in the Main Yurt. If phones are not working, someone would have to be sent to look for a phone to report an emergency. SKMC staff will advise in these circumstances.

Getting Warnings to Participants Onsite. AHSP staff will have access a handheld FRS walkie talkie radio, which can be used to disseminate emergency information. A Radio will also be placed near each first aid kit and at the registration tent. In addition, the SKMC dinner bell can be used to alert people quickly. Weather information will be posted on the TV Monitor and the mounted window computer screen.

Site Evacuation Plan

If there is a major fire threatening the area, local police and fire officials will warn all residents of the area by personal visits and also by phone calls. In that event, AHSP will need to specify to participants which evacuation routes should be used. Large RVs and vehicles pulling trailers will likely substantially slow any evacuation, due to the narrow one lane routes out of SKMC. AHSP should contact the Pendleton County Sheriff's Office to help direct traffic on Sawmill Road between SKMC and Route 28. During an emergency evacuation, Sawmill Road should only be used for one way traffic to Route 28.

Area Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Units

There are no nearby EMS units. Neither Circleville VFD nor Whitmer VFD have ambulances. These VFD units are small and are mainly for responding to fires. Whitmer has one trained EMT with the department. The nearest EMS Unit is at North Fork/Riverton, which is a volunteer unit and has one ambulance. The distance to SKMC is 18 miles, with estimated response time of 45-60 minutes. After that, the nearest EMS Unit is at Franklin, more than one hour away. The 911 operator will determine which unit is tasked to respond to an emergency at SKMC. Unlike VFDs in the Washington area, these units are never manned. There are no crews standing by with their vehicles. Also, unlike larger cities, the 911 operator will not automatically dispatch both a fire truck and an ambulance. It is possible only a fire truck crew would be dispatched to deal with some types of medical emergency.

Area Medical Facilities

There are no nearby medical facilities. Three hospitals and two Primary Care facilities are available. Hospitals are all more than one hour drive from SKMC. Grant Memorial hospital (Petersburg) and Davis Memorial Hospital (Elkins) have 24-hour Emergency Rooms and are the closest to SKMC. They will not send ambulances to SKMC. Sentara RMH Medical Center in Harrisonburg is a two-hour drive and also has a 24-hour Emergency Room. Anyone needing medical attention of a non-life-threatening nature should drive or be driven to one of these hospitals. Due to the time for travel to a hospital, participants should be urged not to wait until a medical condition worsens. The Primary Care facilities operate Monday – Fridays, daytime only and are located in Green Bank and North Fork. They are generally staffed with Nurse Practitioners and Physicians Assistants and use a phone call in appointment system. See page 6 for a list of area hospitals and primary care clinics. The nearest pharmacies are located in Franklin, Elkins, and Petersburg.

Medical Evacuation of Injured or Ill Persons

A serious accident or illness should be handled by calling 911. The 911 Call Center for Pendleton County is in Franklin. They will dispatch an ambulance only if it is absolutely necessary and after conversations to determine the precise condition of the individual. If the person can be moved safely, it may be faster to get a friend or AHSP staff person to transport the person requiring medical treatment to Petersburg or Elkins. Petersburg is the easiest hospital to reach as it is on Route 28, as you enter town.

Any ambulance from Riverton/North Fork will take about 45-60 minutes to arrive. A vehicle from Franklin will take at least an hour and probably much longer. Plus, the ambulance will take an hour to reach a hospital from SKMC.

In extremely serious injury or illness, where time is of the essence, the 911 Call Center could call a medical evacuation helicopter. SKMC has advised that two companies provide this service. Possible landing zones include areas near the Registration tent, the rear of the larger observing (yellow) lot, the road junction to the observatory (where the canoes are kept), and the area near the pond and the Main Yurt. SKMC staff and the 911 operator have experience in assisting with making a determination of how to best get the person to a hospital.

First Responders

Due to the time required for medical personnel to arrive at SKMC, the AHSP and SKMC staffs are in fact the first responders. AHSP will attempt to identify staff and attendees who are first aid qualified as well as any medical personnel. Their names should be kept on a list at Registration and known by the NOVAC and Experience Learning coordinators. In the event of a medical emergency the Experience Learning Staff will manage the incident onsite. The principal point of contact with SKMC is Jackie Lambert. After hours, contact the SKMC Staff representative whose name and living quarter's location are left in the Main Yurt Office each day.

First Aid Kits/AED

AHSP should have three first aid kits in the field, and the one first aid kit at the Main Yurt. Contents will be examined annually for completeness and to replace outdated items. Before arrival, AHSP planning group members will become familiar with the contents of the first aid kits. The AHSP AED will be placed at the Registration tent, while the SKMC AED is kept at the Main Yurt. SKMC has a large first aid kit kept at the office in the Main Yurt.

Phone Numbers for SKMC, Local Authorities, and Poison Center

- Dave Martin and Jackie Lambert, SKMC Director (H) On File.
- Pendleton County 911 Call Center in Franklin. Admin line: 304-358-3271
- Pendleton County Emergency Preparedness Office, Franklin.
Bruce Minor, Director: 304-358-3889; Cell: 304-668-1100
- Pendleton County EMS Unit, Franklin. Admin line: 304-358-7869
- North Fork/Riverton EMS Unit. Admin line: 304-358-3271.
- Whitmer VFD (Randolph County). Clarence Turner, Chief: 304-227-4444
- Circleville VFD: Carl Warner, Chief. 304-567-2249 or 2617.
- Pendleton County Sheriff's Office, Franklin. Admin line: 304-358-2214
- Spruce Knob Mountain Center (SKMC) (host) 304-567-2644; Earth Sheltered Office: 304-567-2632
- Heavy Wrecker Service: Carl's Garage, Circleville, WV: 304-567-2249
- Wrecker Service: Roger Shirks Towing, Petersburg, WV: 304-257-9066
- Heavy Wrecker Service: John Riggelman's Towing, Petersburg, WV 304-538-6192
- National Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222

Directions to Area Hospitals and Primary Care from SKMC

1. **Grant Memorial Hospital**, 117 Hospital Dr, (Rte. 28/55) Petersburg, WV 26847. Tel: 304-257-1026. Distance 48 miles. 1 ¼ hours driving time. Small, regional hospital with 45 beds. Web page: <http://www.grantmemorial.com>. This is the closest hospital. **GPS: +38.978523 -79.1557829**.

Driving Directions: At SKMC entrance, turn left onto Sawmill Road. Proceed approximately 6 miles to WV Route 28. Turn left onto Route 28 North. Go 8.6 miles. Turn left at US 33/WV 28 North. Stay on Route 28 North for 31.8 miles, until you reach Petersburg. You will see the hospital on the right side of Route 28.

2. **Davis Memorial Hospital**, 812 Gorman Ave, Elkins, WV 26241. Tel: 304-636-3300. Distance 40 miles. Driving time: 1 ½ hours. Ninety bed hospital. GPS: + **38.8724495 -79.8192905**
Web page: <http://www.davishealthsystem.org>

Driving Directions: At SKMC entrance, turn left onto Sawmill Road. Proceed approximately 6 miles to WV Route 28. Turn left on Route 28 North. Stay on Route 28 for 8.6 miles. Turn left at US33/WV Route 28. Go 10.9 miles. Turn left at US33/WV Route 55 West. Stay on US33 for 34.7 miles to Elkins. In Elkins, stay on US Route 33. Turn left on Harrison Ave/WV 92. The Emergency entrance will be on your left.

3. **Sentara RMH Medical Center**, 2010 Health Campus Dr, Harrisonburg, VA 22801. Tel: 540-689-1000. Distance: 71 miles. Driving time: 2 hours. Large medical facility with 238 beds. **GPS: +38.405097 -78.855426**. Web page <http://www.rmhonline.com>

Driving Directions: At SKMC entrance, turn left onto Sawmill Road. Proceed approximately 6 miles to WV Route 28. Turn left onto Route 28 North. Stay on Route 28 for 8.6 miles. Turn right at US33/WV Route 28. Stay on US33 East to Harrisonburg, VA, about 51 miles. Outside Harrisonburg, turn right on Route 726/Erikson Rd immediately before Mountain View Elementary School, go approx. 5 miles. Erikson becomes Stone Spring Rd. The hospital is on the right.

4. **North Fork Primary Care Clinic**. Week days only. Return to Route 28. Turn left – north. Follow Route 28 approx. 10 miles to Riverton/North Fork. Address: 16921 Mountaineer Drive (Rte. 28), Riverton, WV 26814. Open 5 days a week. Physician's Assistant and Nurse Practitioner. Mon-Thurs: 8:30am-5pm. Fri: 8:30am-12:30pm. For appointments, call 304-567-2101. Clinic has no lab, x-ray, or pharmacy.

5. **Green Bank Community Care Clinic**. Week days only. Return to Route 28. Turn right – Rte. 28 south. Follow Route 28 approx. 27 miles to Green Bank. Address: 4498 Potomac Highland Trail (Route 28), Green Bank, WV 24944. Open: M-W: 8am – 5pm. Thurs, 8am-7pm. Fri: 8am-4:30pm. MD on staff. For appointments, call 304-456-5115. Clinic has Lab, pharmacy, no x-ray.

Spruce Knob Mountain Center (formerly called TMI), Spruce Knob, WV. Telephone: 304-567-2644. Ask for Almost Heaven Star Party staff. Alternate number at Earth Sheltered Office at entrance (daytime only) is 304-567-2632.