

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

A Member of the Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference

PROSPECTIVE MEMBER PACKET

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in the Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group. We hope that the information provided in this packet will help answer questions that you may have about our search-and-rescue organization. Please carefully review the contents in this packet and the membership process. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the current New Member Coordinator or any SMRG member.

Contact Information:

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group
118 Park Street, SE
Vienna, VA 22180-4608
<http://www.smr.org>
New Membership Coordinator: *join@smrg.org*

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OVERVIEW OF SMRG

The Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group (SMRG) is a professional, all-volunteer wilderness search-and-rescue (SAR) organization, dedicated to saving lives. SMRG is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia and has Non-Profit status (as 501(c)3 corporation). Begun in 1974, SMRG was established to assist people who are lost and/or injured in the outdoors. We provide specialized services generally not offered by other emergency service agencies.

As an organization, we are led by a Board of Directors, which provides day-to-day leadership and oversight. Budgetary and other important decisions are deliberated and voted by the “Active” membership, those members who have met the requirements of a probationary period and remain active in the group. Operationally, we are called out based on direct relationships with local law enforcement agencies, or through our affiliation with the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference (ASRC).

We are one of several SAR groups in the ASRC (see Figure 1). The ASRC responds to searches throughout the mid-Atlantic. As a certifying and standards-setting organization, the ASRC is well known throughout the United States.

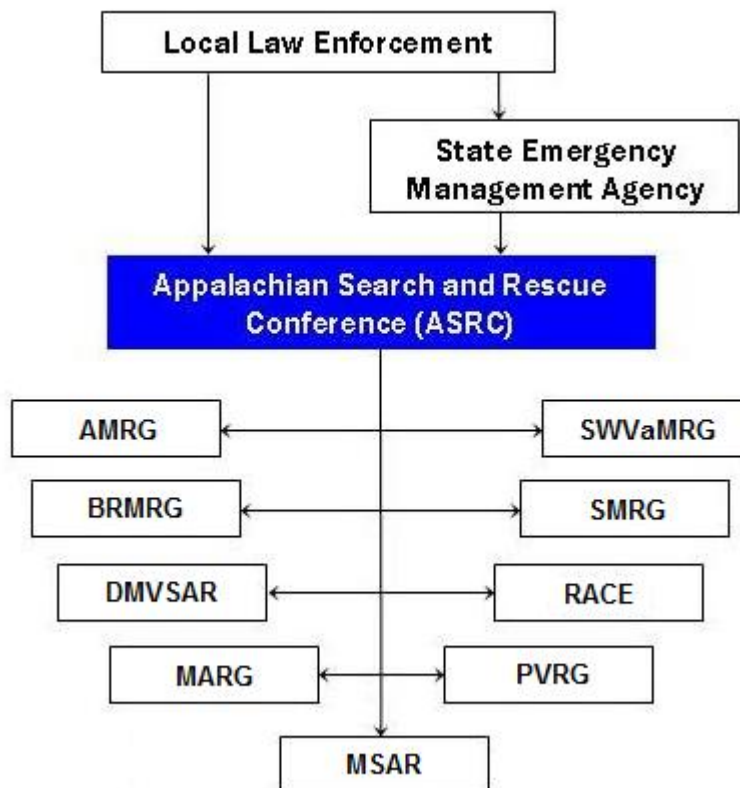


Figure 1. ASRC Organization. All or some of the nine member-groups may be called out to support searches or other emergency missions.

SMRG and the ASRC are also affiliated with the following professional organizations and councils:

- National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR)
- Virginia Search and Rescue Council (VSARCO)
- Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council (PSARC)

SMRG's membership is entirely volunteer, with professional training in SAR techniques. We are supported by membership dues, contributions, and fund-raising activities. Our expenses include:

- Capital Equipment (computers, handheld and base radios, pagers, generator, ropes, etc.)
- Normal SAR Equipment (batteries, map boards, etc.)
- Insurance
- Dues to other organizations and associations
- Administration (photocopying, mailings, office supplies, etc.)
- Expendable Mission Supplies (pens & pencils, flagging tape, medical supplies, etc.)
- Training Materials (handouts, visual aids, etc.)

SMRG SERVICES

SMRG, as well as other ASRC teams, provide specially trained personnel for aboveground SAR activities. We can provide Field Team Leaders (FTL's) to organize groups of searchers to perform field tasks or "foot soldiers" to cover the search area(s). We also have sign-cutters, radio operators, wilderness medical specialists, and technical rescue specialists. For a callout, we immediately begin to mobilize our resources to respond. Often, a quick response team (available for transport in 1 hour) will handle the initial request for assistance. For a missing person search, this team typically includes members trained for incident command, incident management, field team leadership and field search work. Additional ASRC personnel are dispatched once the incident needs are understood.

ASRC does not displace local emergency services, such as rescue squads or fire departments. Instead, we serve to supplement local emergency services with our specialized skills. The ASRC considers a mission complete when the subject is located and transported to an accessible location where they can be transferred to the local medical authority or Responsible Agent. The ASRC and member-groups are also willing to assist law-enforcement agencies with certain tasks such as evidence collection or recovery of a subject in wilderness areas. However, we will not be involved in the direct apprehension of criminals.

We operate at the discretion, and under direction, of a legally Responsible Agent (RA). The RA will usually be the local law enforcement agency (County Sheriff's Office or Police Department) or another organization responsible for search-and-rescue activities in their region (such as a local fire department or rescue squad). The RA may be State Police, or in the case of federal land, the park or forest-service staff. Our personnel fulfill roles defined by the RA and within the scope of our training. Water rescue, search by aircraft, and cave search are handled by other agencies specializing in those techniques. However, the ASRC can provide ground support for these types of missions. When responding to a search incident, SMRG is able to maintain its own communications, field equipment, ground transportation, dispatch coordination and on-scene liaison. We also provide specialized management and technical services for outdoor search problems.

SMRG also offers SAR training and outdoor-safety education for interested organizations and groups. We can provide speakers on a variety of wilderness topics, including land navigation, rescue techniques, field communications and on wilderness medical issues such as hypothermia and heat injuries. We have also developed a children's education program based on the National Park Service's video, *Lost But Found . . . Safe and Sound*.

MISSION ALERTING & CALLOUT PROCEDURES

All ASRC teams, including SMRG, are available for callout 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, regardless of weather, location or terrain. The ASRC and all member-groups (including SMRG) use an alphanumeric pager network to make notifications about pending incidents and give the status of current operations. SMRG supplements this paging network with mobile phone text messaging as well as e-mail alerts.

Since the ASRC functions under the authority of a legally responsible agent for the incident, it is the RA that initiates the alert. Typically, an RA notifies their state department of emergency management, who in turn alerts the ASRC. For a callout, a response team is usually mobilized within one hour of the initial alert. The ASRC & SMRG maintain a dispatch system to track—and to ensure the safety of—personnel responding to the mission.

SMRG can also be put on alert when major weather incidents occur or are expected to occur. Examples include being on standby for floods, hurricanes, and other severe weather. Members with specialized experience have assisted in specific emergencies, such as fighting fires in the Midwest, Florida and Virginia, as well as SAR missions after Hurricane Andrew.

The ASRC and SMRG are always willing to work with any other agencies or organizations responding to an incident. SMRG can easily deploy personnel to locations within a three-hour drive of Washington, D.C. SMRG members typically drive their personal vehicles to the location of the incident, carpooling when possible.

TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS

The ASRC's reputation rests on its training standards. All member-groups of the ASRC meet the same training standards and follow the same standard operating procedures. SMRG members are skilled in search techniques, orienteering and land navigation, wilderness survival, wilderness emergency medical care, technical rescue, and search-incident management.

To meet the ASRC's training requirements, SMRG conducts regular training. Classroom sessions typically convene once per week, generally on Tuesday or Thursday. These weekday training sessions usually start at 7:30 PM and last until approximately 10:00pm. Practical field training is scheduled on weekends, typically once or twice per month. The field exercises vary in length and location, depending on the purpose of the training. Usually, though, a weekend field exercise will consume at least one full day, stretching late into the evening. Other training activities may be scheduled as opportunities arise.

As a group, SMRG conducts training in the following areas:

- SAR Operations & ASRC Protocols
- SMRG Dispatch Procedures
- Ground Search Strategy and Tactics
- Land Navigation and Orienteering
- Wilderness Survival and Safety
- Semi-Technical Rescue Techniques
- Communications
- Search Incident Management

Certifications within SMRG/ASRC reflect an individual member's level of training and experience.

Callout Qualified (CQ): Members holding the **Callout Qualified (CQ)** certification are typically fairly new members. They have completed an equipment and basic safety check, and have at least rudimentary knowledge of the basic principles of search-and-rescue and protocols of SMRG and the ASRC. Prior to attaining CQ, members are PCQ (provisional CQ), which restricts response to a mission unless they can coordinate and attend the search with a more senior member.

Field Team Member (FTM): The first formal level of training is the **Field Team Member (FTM)**. FTM's are presumed to be knowledgeable in SAR techniques and proficient in basic skills. FTM training lasts about sixty (60) hours of field training and evaluation. Both SMRG and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management teach the FTM course and members are able to take the course from either provider (although members attending VDEM courses must complete some additional SMRG requirements to achieve our FTM certification). FTM training covers basic search operations, search strategy & tactics, basic land navigation, communications, patient packaging and related search and rescue skills. Typically, an FTM functions as a trained member of a search team, working under more experienced SAR personnel.

Field Team Leader (FTL): With additional training, mission experience, practice of advanced field skills, search strategy and demonstration of leadership qualities, a member may become a **Field Team Leader (FTL)** by taking another course of training. FTL training requires approximately forty (40) hours of field training and evaluation. FTL's can act as team leaders of any search or rescue team. They are often tasked to lead groups of untrained searchers (such as local on-site volunteers). FTL's can oversee evacuations and medical treatment of victims. FTL's are vital to the search mission.

Incident Staff (IS) and Incident Commander (IC): After FTL, a member may continue with specialized search-management training by taking a formal course called "Managing Land Search Operations." After completing this course, another in "Practical Search Operations," and gaining supervised, evaluated mission-management experience, members may become qualified for **Incident Staff (IS)** and then **Incident Commander (IC)** certifications. These search-managers run operations, planning, and the logistics of a search. The IS and/or IC work directly with the locally Responsible Agent. These levels require considerable search experience, a formal classroom-training program, and approval by the ASRC Board of Directors. The ASRC training standards describe in detail all of the knowledge and performance requirements for each of the certifications above.

MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION & GROUP ADMINISTRATION

There are no prerequisites of experience or training to become a member of SMRG. Although outdoor experience is very helpful, we invite anyone who is interested in the outdoors and emergency services to join. SMRG does not discriminate in membership based on sex, race, religion, ethnic background or sexual preference. The nature of our outdoor services is often physically and mentally demanding, both in training and in practice. Active members are expected to put in at least 100 hours per year in training or mission events.

Of our current membership of approximately 100 individuals, most are professional men and women residing in the Northern VA, Washington, and Baltimore metropolitan areas. Some members are undergraduate or graduate students, while others are active professionally in emergency medical and fire services, government and US Armed Forces.

Initially, prospective members attend the New Member's Orientation Meeting which is held the last Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club headquarters, 118 Park Street SE in Vienna, Virginia. Prospective members will receive this Application Packet, and a short overview of SMRG. You are encouraged to ask questions regarding the organization and the application process.

Then, the prospective applicant is invited to attend Search and Rescue Orientation Class, normally conducted on the second Tuesday of the each month, at 7:30 PM again at PATC Headquarters. This class covers in more detail our search-and-rescue activities and important ASRC and SMRG protocols. A prospective applicant is expected to bring all application materials, their "SAR pack," and appropriate clothing and footwear for field-work. Your gear will receive a "Pack Check" to verify that you have all appropriate minimum equipment, as listed in second Appendix: ASRC/SMRG Essential Equipment List.

Upon completing this training and being voted into the group, a member is considered a **Probationary Member** of SMRG and will be assigned a Mentor. Probationary members may participate in all activities of the organization, as appropriate to their training level. Probationary members do not vote on business matters before the membership. After a minimum of three months and 36 hours of SMRG activities (4 of which must contribute to the administrative operation of SMRG), the member is eligible to become an **Active Member**, following nomination of the Group Training Officer and voted endorsement of the membership.

SMRG holds business meetings once per month, normally on the last Tuesday of the month beginning at 7:30PM. All members and those interested in joining are welcome to attend. SMRG members elect the Board of Directors: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Operations Officer, Group Training Officer, and two representatives to the ASRC Board of Directors. Other officers are appointed. An organizational chart of SMRG administrative leadership is shown in Figure 2. These positions are voluntary, and all members are strongly encouraged to contribute to the administration of the club. Taut administration ensures that our mission-response is coordinated and strong, and that our trainings are instructive and challenging.

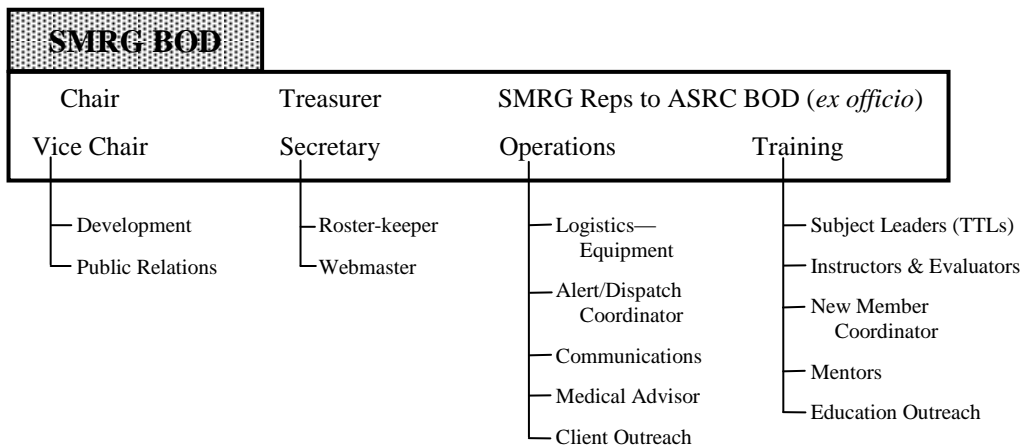


Figure 2. *SMRG Organizational Chart*

Additional policies governing members and organizational processes are defined in Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and an Administrative Manual for SMRG; the same three documents for ASRC, plus an ASRC Operations Manual and ASRC Training Standards; plus SMRG-specific Training Policy and Operations Policy. These documents are available through the *smrg.org* web-site. Members are expected to register for the *smrg.org* web-site, to gain access to materials not open to the public.

Finally, mission response can be intense. Our trainings push members hard to meet ambitious expectations. And our business meetings and administrative efforts can raise difficult, often contentious, matters. SMRG fosters a culture of professionalism to support our hard work and to accommodate the challenging situations we occasionally encounter. But we also note that volunteers drift away if our hard work is not tempered by FUN. Frequently, impromptu social events will occur at the end of our meetings and trainings. We encourage carpooling to missions and trainings, which offers an added measure of safety and good company. Some of our best “team building” occurs in such pleasant settings. So our last expectation of members: *All members are encouraged to attend informal social gatherings and to enjoy their participation in SMRG!*

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SMRG MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The following items are to be brought to the SAR Orientation Class and Pack Check.

1. SAR Pack with Essential Equipment, as described in the ASRC/SMRG Essential Minimum Equipment List (next page).
2. A completed ASRC/SMRG Membership Application. Attach \$30 check (payable to “SMRG”) or cash for Annual SMRG Dues.
3. A SMRG Waiver Form
4. A completed Medical Data Form
5. An original or copy of any current CPR/First Aid Certifications
6. A completed Request Form for Criminal Background Check (required as part of SMRG EMS License)
7. Two (2) SMRG Reference Forms completed by family, friends or co-workers and returned to YOU in a sealed envelope with your name on the front.
8. A completed PATC Membership Application. Select your Membership Category and then either pay by check (made payable to “PATC”), cash, or enter your credit card number on the application. If you are already a member, please bring your membership card, or a photocopy.

In addition, you will need to complete the FEMA training listed below before being voted into the group. These are online training modules that should take a few hours to complete and can be taken at your convenience. When completed, FEMA will email you a completion certificate. Please email a copy of these training certificates to the new member coordinator (join@smrg.org).

IS100a: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS100A.asp>

IS700a: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700a.asp>

IS800b: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS800b.asp>

IS809: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS809.asp>

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ASRC/SMRG ESSENTIAL MINIMUM EQUIPMENT LIST

This is a list of our pack “essentials.” You may want to begin collecting them in one place in preparation for becoming a probationary member. These items are required for you to become Callout Qualified (CQ) and must be carried with you at all times during searches and during specific training events.

1. Daypack
2. Appropriate clothes and footgear (For fair and foul weather!)
3. Water (1-2 quarts)
4. Food (For at least 48 Hours)
5. Lighter, matches and candle (Or an equivalent waterproof fire source)
6. Compass – Orienteering style
7. Whistle (Plastic without cork)
8. Trash bags – 5 Large heavy duty black contractor bags
9. Five One-Gallon Zip Lock Bags
10. Pen/Pencil and Paper (Either store in a zip-lock bag or use “waterproof” paper/pen)
11. Personal First Aid Kit (With at least 2 pair of plastic/vinyl gloves)
12. Small Knife or multi-tool
13. Headlamp AND flashlight or a second light source (need to include an extra set of batteries for each and an extra bulb for each – LED-based lights do not require an extra bulb)
14. Leather gloves
15. Personal Identification

Other items that should be seriously considered:

- Medication
- Glasses/Contacts, etc.
- Money
- Toilet Paper
- Safety Glasses



Use common sense as you have to carry it all yourself.

Never allow yourself to get separated from your pack!

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| SMRG MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/UPDATE FORM | | | |
|---|----------------|--|---------------|
| Reason(s) for Submission | | | |
| New Application <input type="checkbox"/> | | Change of E-mail <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Change of Address <input type="checkbox"/> | | Update Certifications <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Change of Contact Numbers <input type="checkbox"/> | | Change Vehicle Info <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | | |
| Last Name | First Name | M.I. | Date of Birth |
| Home Address | | City | State |
| Home Phone | Work Phone | Mobile Phone | |
| E-mail Address (1) | | E-mail Address (2) | |
| | | | |
| Emergency Contact Name | | Relationship | |
| Emergency Contact Phone (1) | | Emergency Contact Phone (2) | |
| | | | |
| Vehicle (1) Make and Model | Year and Color | License number | State |
| Vehicle (2) Make and Model | Year and Color | License number | State |
| | | | |
| List SAR and Related Certifications with cert agencies & expiration dates, if applicable | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| List Current CPR & Medical Certifications , including certifying agencies and expiration dates | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE | | | DATE |

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SMRG WAIVER FORM

The undersigned applicant acknowledges that he/she applies for membership in the Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group, Inc. (SMRG), a member group of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, Inc. (ASRC), with full knowledge of the dangerous conditions and risks associated with the activities of training for and participating in search and rescue operations, and that he/she assumes sole and entire responsibility for any property damage, injuries, or loss of life he/she may sustain in connection therewith.

In consideration of the privilege of training and participating with SMRG and other ASRC member groups, the applicant agrees to release SMRG and the ASRC, their directors, officers, agents, members, affiliates and Groups from any and all liability for property damage, injury, or loss of life resulting from any cause whatsoever in connection therewith.

In addition, I agree to abide by the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and other properly established rules and regulations of both SMRG and the ASRC. Finally, the information given on this document is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

SIGNATURE OF THE APPLICANT DATE

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

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MEDICAL DATA FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State and ZIP Code: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Relationship To You: _____

Emergency Contact, Home Phone Number: _____

Emergency Contact, Work Phone Number: _____

Emergency Contact, Mobile Phone Number: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Blood Type: _____

Medical History: _____

Allergies to Medicine: _____

Current or Required Medications: _____

Comments/Notes: _____

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

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REQUEST FORM FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Print Clearly

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------|--------|--------|-----|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Last Name | First Name | Middle | Maiden | Sex | Race | Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) |
| Complete Address | | | | | Social Security Number | |
| City | | State | | | Zip Code | |

Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group

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REFERENCE FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE SMRG MEMBERS

To the Evaluator:

_____ is applying to the Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group, a search-and-rescue organization dedicated to saving lives in the outdoors. We ask you to be as candid as possible in your evaluation of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, as work in an emergency setting can be very demanding.

1. Your name and phone number: _____

2. Your relationship to the applicant:

_____ Spouse/family _____ employer _____ acquaintance
_____ friend _____ co-worker _____ other

3. How long have you known the applicant? _____

4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best), please rate the applicant's willingness to work as a team:

Gets along with others _____
Conscientious worker _____
Cooperates with others _____
Dependable when assigned a task _____

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate the applicant's leadership qualities:

Promotes teamwork, pursuit of team goals _____
Leads by example _____
Demonstrates good decision-making skills _____

6. Please rate the applicant on the following qualities:

a = adequate g = good e = excellent

Willingness to work hard to learn a new skill _____
Ability to get along with colleagues _____
Persistence and self-motivation _____
Common sense _____
Good judgment under pressure _____

7. Please provide any other comments, impression, or information:

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1. Your name and phone number: _____
2. Your relationship to the applicant:

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| _____ Spouse/family | _____ employer | _____ acquaintance |
| _____ friend | _____ co-worker | _____ other |
3. How long have you known the applicant? _____
4. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best), please rate the applicant's willingness to work as a team:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Gets along with others | _____ |
| Conscientious worker | _____ |
| Cooperates with others | _____ |
| Dependable when assigned a task | _____ |
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate the applicant's leadership qualities:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Promotes teamwork, pursuit of team goals | _____ |
| Leads by example | _____ |
| Demonstrates good decision-making skills | _____ |
6. Please rate the applicant on the following qualities:

| | | |
|---|----------|---------------|
| a = adequate | g = good | e = excellent |
| Willingness to work hard to learn a new skill | _____ | |
| Ability to get along with colleagues | _____ | |
| Persistence and self-motivation | _____ | |
| Common sense | _____ | |
| Good judgment under pressure | _____ | |
7. Please provide any other comments, impression, or information: