

## **Policy for NCRC National Seminars**

Revised February 3, 2007

This document summarizes the policies and procedures by which NCRC National Seminars shall be organized and conducted.

### **Purpose of National Seminars**

National seminars are intended to provide the highest caliber of instruction and to reflect the broad range of skills represented by NCRC instructors worldwide. They serve important roles in development of instructors and instructor candidates. They must be widely publicized, soundly organized, and uphold the national curriculum.

### **Purpose of Regional Seminars**

Regional seminars are intended to train the bulk of cave rescue resources. Instructors may be recruited locally and, while national curriculum must be followed, it is expected that curriculum modifications will be made to reflect local needs and conditions.

### **Training Levels Restricted to National Seminars**

NCRC Level III and Instructor Qualification courses are generally offered only at National Seminars, as these courses serve as the immediate precursors to instructor certification. Authorization to teach NCRC Level III or Instructor Qualification courses at regional seminars may be granted only by the NCRC Board of Regional Coordinators, except in the event a national seminar is cancelled or re-designated as a regional event (see next section). In this rare case, a Level III and/or Instructor Qualification course may be taught that year at a regional seminar at the discretion of the NCRC Training Coordinator. Instructors for Level III shall be appointed by the NCRC Training Coordinator.

### **National vs. Regional Status**

In the event a proposed national seminar fails to attain adequate enrollment to cover expected costs, the NCRC Training Coordinator, in coordination with the NCRC National Coordinator and the host Region, shall have the purview to change the seminar to regional status. This would serve primarily to remove the requirement that a core group of instructors have their meal plan and on-site lodging fees waived, thus reducing seminar cost. Regional seminar policies would apply, impacting fees and allowing the host region to retain any profit generated. However, instructor candidates would not be trained. The decision to re-designate a seminar from national to regional status shall occur no later than 45 days prior to the seminar in question.

## **Selection of Seminar Sites**

National seminar sites shall be chosen by the Board of Regional Coordinators. Any Region wishing to host a national seminar shall submit its bid to the BORC at a winter meeting at least two full years prior to the proposed seminar date. The BORC shall award host status based on the following criteria (not listed in order of importance): expected attendance, availability of instructors, cost, suitability of facilities, proximity to airports/ease of access, access to caves and other sites needed to accomplish curriculum objectives, area/region's training needs, extent to which location would further the NCRC's goals & objectives. The BORC may identify a second location and site coordination team as a backup site, to be used in the event a primary site proves infeasible.

[Note that the Board of Regional Coordinators voted at its February 2005 meeting to transition to use of fixed training sites for national seminars for three of every four years. Fixed sites would be utilized for the first three years in a cycle, with the fourth year open for bid. This is intended to reduce the complexity involved in organizing and managing site logistics. The fixed sites are still under evaluation, and none have been officially designated at this time.]

## **Site Coordination vs. Training Coordination**

The host region and its site coordination team shall be responsible for locating the site of the seminar, identifying and gaining access to caves and other training sites, arranging use of facilities, securing food services, adequate lodging, and transportation for students once on site, and otherwise supporting the logistical needs of the training event. The host region is responsible for developing an acceptable budget and promoting the event. Following the event the host region must promptly settle all applicable bills and submit a final accounting, fees, and any unallocated revenues, to the NCRC national office within 60 days of the seminar's completion.

The national organization is responsible for curriculum design and administration, certification of instructors, instructor assignments, certificates of participation or completion, evaluation of teaching and student satisfaction. The NCRC Training Coordinator, or his designee(s), shall represent the NCRC during the seminar, oversee instruction and curriculum, and resolve any questions concerning content or training activities.

## **Quality Control**

The NCRC Training Coordinator is responsible for ensuring all persons teaching at a national seminar are up-to-date on NCRC curriculum. A curriculum update session, typically a full day in length, will be offered prior to the seminar.

Lead instructors for each level must complete written evaluations of other NCRC instructors teaching under their authority.

## **Budget**

A draft budget shall be developed by the seminar site coordinator and submitted to the National Coordinator & Financial Officer by January 1 at least one full year prior to the seminar. The budget shall be based upon actual costs where predictable, and best estimates of other items. It shall be formatted in accordance with the most recent version of the NCRC chart of accounts. The budget must be approved by the NSS treasurer or his designee before the seminar can proceed.

Site coordinators shall make diligent efforts to minimize the cost of national seminars, while maintaining seminar quality. Neither the site coordinator nor the host region shall benefit monetarily from the national seminar. All income in excess of expenses shall be returned to the NCRC national account.

## **Insurance**

Any approved NCRC seminar is covered under the NSS liability insurance policy, at no additional cost, provided the NSS office has been notified of said seminar in advance. This policy covers only above-ground activities, not those conducted below-ground. Proof of insurance, if required, can be obtained from the NSS office and should be requested well in advance of the seminar's start date.

## **Seminar Dates and Details**

The seminar's dates, location, estimated cost, and registration details shall be announced by June 1 at least one full year prior to the seminar, and brochures shall be available for distribution at this time.

## **Promotion of National Seminars**

Site coordinators of national seminars shall promote them as broadly as possible. This includes posting the event in the NSS News and on the NCRC web site, advertising by direct mail to previous NCRC students, and proactively seeking out and utilizing other promotional media.

## **Accounting**

The host region or site coordination team shall open a separate checking account to handle seminar funds, in accordance with NSS account policy (see policy on Regional Checking Accounts and note below), by June 1 at least one full year prior to the seminar. The account shall be used to collect all revenue and pay all expenses. It shall be closed no later than 90 days after the seminar's conclusion, unless the NCRC Financial Officer extends this deadline. Upon closure, any unallocated revenues shall be forwarded to the NCRC for deposit in the NCRC national account.

Receipts shall be issued to each paying party, and shall be obtained for each expense. A detailed accounting, following the format of the most recent version of the NCRC chart of accounts, shall be provided to the NCRC Financial Officer within 60 days of the seminar's conclusion. It shall provide a complete and organized record of all income and expenses attributable to the seminar. Receipts for expenses shall be attached. The Financial Officer may authorize an extension of this deadline if need is demonstrated by the site coordinator.

*Note: It takes about three months to obtain the necessary signatures for an NSS account. Start the process in early March to ensure it will be open by June 1. Check with your bank to see if out-of-state signers must each have the form notarized, and determine if notary language needs to be on the form in advance.*

### **Applicable Fees**

The National seminar site coordinator shall budget for and collect the following fees:

- an equipment fee of \$35 per student
- a curriculum development fee of \$15 per student
- and an administrative fee of \$5 per student

These fees are in addition to any other costs associated with the seminar (including the cost of transporting the NCRC equipment cache to the seminar site). They shall be remitted to the NCRC, for deposit in the NCRC national account, no later than 60 days after conclusion of the national seminar.

### **Unallocated Revenues**

Any unallocated revenues resulting from a National seminar shall be remitted to the NCRC national account at the time the seminar checking account is closed.

### **Instructor Expenses**

The site coordinator shall budget for, and offset, the on-site costs of the core/lead instructors (as designated by the NCRC Training Officer – see below) plus other key support staff, to the maximum extent feasible. The budget shall include funding to waive tuition, meal plan, and reasonable lodging costs for these persons. Travel to and from the seminar site, meal costs in excess of that provided by the meal plan, or lodging expenses in excess the event's lodging plan shall remain the responsibility of the instructor or staff member. If seminar income is insufficient to cover all costs, instructors and staff shall have their expenses offset to the extent possible, while ensuring the seminar does not develop a negative balance. Instructors or staff who qualify for cost waivers but participate for only a portion of the seminar will have their waivers prorated. Instructors not specifically designated as part of the core instruction group for the seminar will be responsible for the costs of their meals and lodging.

## **Selection of Instructors**

The NCRC Training Coordinator shall recruit experienced instructors for lead teaching and evaluation roles well in advance of the seminar, and recruit additional instructors (beyond the core group) sufficient to maintain a 1:5 instructor-to-student ratio. The NCRC training officer shall make instructor assignments for the seminar at least 90 days prior to the seminar, and shall provide class assignment materials to instructors at least 30 days prior to the seminar.

Other NCRC instructors are encouraged to attend national seminars, but will not have their meals and lodging subsidized. The seminar host may require them to register in advance in order to anticipate meal/lodging requirements.

All instructors attending national seminars must respect the Training Coordinator's assignments.

## **Youth Participation**

Youth (under age 18) may participate in NCRC training events only if the following requirements are met:

1. The youth must, in the opinion of the lead instructor, have sufficient physical, emotional, and mental maturity to perform safely and effectively as a member of the class.
2. The youth's primary guardian(s) must sign the NCRC liability waiver in the presence of the event's lead instructor. If a primary guardian cannot sign the course documentation in the presence of the lead instructor, their signature must be notarized. The primary guardian(s) must also provide the lead instructor with a medical status summary and authorize NCRC to seek medical treatment for the youth if deemed necessary.
3. An adult must accompany them in the class, in such a manner to ensure the adult will be physically near the youth throughout the training activities. Preferably the adult should be enrolled as a co-student, but other arrangements may be allowed at the discretion of the lead instructor. (An adult participating in another level or subgroup would not qualify as an accompanying adult). If the accompanying adult is not the youth's primary guardian, the primary guardian must provide the lead instructor with a written statement identifying the person who will accompany the youth and designating him or her to act as temporary guardian during the course. This statement must be signed in the presence of the lead instructor or notarized.

## **Use of NCRC Logo**

Use of the NCRC logo for national seminar promotion and correspondence is encouraged. However, use of the logo, or any close facsimile, for items of apparel (hats, shirts, jackets, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Apparel items should clearly indicate their association with the specific training event for which they are produced. These restrictions are intended to prevent the wearers from misrepresenting themselves

(intentionally or accidentally) as “members” of the NCRC or conveying the impression that NCRC is a “rescue group.”

### **Timeline of Activities**

- Winter BORG meeting two years prior to seminar – host presents bid to NCRC BORG
- January 1 at least one full year prior to seminar – host submits budget to NCRC and NSS
- March 1 at least one full year prior to seminar – host initiates process to open seminar checking account
- June 1 at least one year prior to seminar – host announces seminar, makes brochure available
- 90 days prior to seminar – Training Coordinator makes instructor assignments
- 45 days prior to seminar – Training Coordinator makes national vs. regional decision
- 30 days prior to seminar – Training Coordinator distributes teaching materials to instructors
- Seminar occurs
- 60 days after seminar – host presents detailed accounting to NCRC Financial Officer and remits fees to NCRC
- 90 days after seminar – host closes seminar checking account and remits unallocated revenues to NCRC