

Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society (TCSS)

Cactus Rescue Crew Program

Policies and Procedures

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this program is to save and relocate native cacti and other succulents that would otherwise be destroyed due to new construction. This Program has been in operation since 1999. All salvage operations strictly follow Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA) Native Plant Protection Laws. All State and Local laws are followed as well as any Company or land owner (the entity allowing the cactus salvage operation) rules and regulations.

TCSS is dedicated to having safe and productive cactus rescues. The crew is an all volunteer group of TCSS Members with about 160 members participating in one or more cactus rescues per year. Crew training for new members is done “on the job” by experienced crew members.

TCSS designates a Cactus Rescue Crew Coordinator who oversees the Program. Trained Cactus Rescue Crew Leaders work under the Coordinator’s direction are selected to conduct a given Cactus Rescue. Crew Chiefs may be selected by the Cactus Rescue Crew Leader per his/her discretion to help supervise the rescue operations.

II. CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Cactus Rescues are almost always performed on weekends as many crew members work during the week and salvage work should not be performed when construction activities are in progress. If cactus removal is necessary during construction activities, no crew members shall work within 100 yards of any equipment for safety reasons.

No cactus rescue activities shall interfere with nor cause any construction or project delays. TCSS has hard hats, safety vests and vehicle wheel chocks to be used per the Company requirements. Crew members have safety glasses and boots (not steel toed) if needed.

TCSS does not do joint cactus rescues with land owners, company employees, neighbors, etc. All people at a TCSS cactus rescue must be TCSS Members except for Company representatives or designated contractors/coordinators to help facilitate the work effort. This is to insure that our insurance covers all workers and they adhere to our rules and directions. TCSS is responsible for all plants that leave the site, ensuring they were removed from appropriate areas and only species allowed to be salvaged were removed and properly tagged per ADA requirements.

III. WORK TO BE PERFORMED AND TOOLS TO BE USED

Work to be performed is the removal of plants that can safely be done using hand tools only, mostly shovels, picks, digging bars and loppers. Wheelbarrows, dollies and cactus carrier slings are used to haul plants to vehicles for transport off site. Heavy work gloves should be used at all times when carrying plants.

No power tools or other powered equipment may be used without specific approval by the TCSS Cactus Rescue Crew Leader. This includes any motorized vehicles other than personal cars and trucks. No ATVs or motorized bikes allowed. Saguaros over five feet tall and other cactus heavier than 200 pounds may not be removed. Plants over 35 pounds must be carried using appropriate plant carriers (cactus slings designed by TCSS) using two or more crew members who are capable of lifting the load.

IV. WORK PROCEDURES AT CACTUS RESCUE SITE

Leadership: The Rescue Crew Leader is in charge of the Rescue Operation in conjunction with a Company person (land owner or Project Company or Project Contractor or designated Company representative) if present. Their rescue operations decisions are final, crew not obeying all rules will be asked to leave the site and possibly barred from any future cactus rescues. Depending on the event site requirements, the TCSS Rescue Crew Leader may also designate Crew Chiefs to help monitor and insure a safe and successful rescue.

Liability: All Crew Members must be paid up TCSS Members for insurance purposes. Crew shows up at designated site location by specified time, those more than 5 minutes late are turned away. All Crew must sign in on the TCSS Liability form, get a name tag indicating they have signed in.

Digging Limits and Restrictions: Crew are instructed about types of plants that can be removed, how they are flagged, how clear limits are marked/staked and if any sensitive areas exist including federally protected washes. Often maps are handed out to each crew member to clarify digging limits, types of plants and the Leader's cell phone number for questions and emergencies.

V. SAFETY

Safety is the highest priority and constantly emphasized during the rescue. If a task can't be done safely, it shall not to be done at all. After all crew have signed in, all important issues are covered by the Crew Leader addressing all crew members. A safety check list is used to be sure all Safety concerns and practices are addressed. A central command point and tagging location is designated where all supplies are kept including a first aid kit.

Hazards: All crew are instructed about any hazards that may exist on the site (rattle snakes, open trenches, power lines, steep banks of washes, hill slopes etc.). Reminders are given about watching out for fellow crew members work zones (radius around the area where they are digging) and to work safely with hand tools.

Buddy System: All crew members shall work in groups of at least two members and shall always stay in visual contact and shouting distance of one other member in case of an emergency. All crew members are expected to work together for the same period of time until the stop digging time is reached. If a crew member needs to leave early, the Rescue Crew Leader must be notified.

Communications: Cell phones are utilized for both work communications and emergencies. All crew are given the Rescue Crew Leader cell number and Crew Chiefs also share their cell phone numbers with each other. Three long horn honks signals when the time is up for digging plants. Carrying out, loading vehicles and tagging is to be completed so the rescue can be concluded. Continuous short horn honks signals an emergency situation has occurred and all crew should proceed to the central tagging location for briefing and instructions.

Mobile radios are used by the Cactus Rescue Crew Leader and Chiefs in addition to cell phones if requested and provided by the Company. This is normally done in mining operations.

Vehicles: Crew shall not ride in truck beds or trailers and shall use seat belts when the vehicle is in motion. Wheel chocks shall be used when vehicles are parked if requested by Company. TCSS does not own nor operate any vehicles or trailers, crew members provide what they need for their personal use or to haul plants for TCSS to their holding sites.

Crew Member Work Abilities: Each crew member determines their own work abilities/limits. Each crew member is required to have their own water and snacks. The work period is four hours or less to minimize fatigue. Most rescues start within an hour after sunrise to avoid as much sun/heat exposure as possible.

Health Considerations: A crew member who has any health limitations including being diabetic must apprise the Rescue Crew Leader as such so extra monitoring of that individual can be given. The TCSS Crew Leader brings oranges for a quick energy snack for the crew to share. Each crew member is responsible for their own safety and health monitoring and is to ask for assistance when needed.

Minors: Children under age 16 are not allowed on Cactus Rescues due to safety concerns. Exceptions may be made by the Rescue Crew Leader prior to the Rescue depending on the work site and working conditions. We are very concerned about venomous reptiles that may be in our working area. All children under the age of 16 if allowed to be on the rescue site must stay within 50 feet of the central command point and tagging area and be closely monitored by an adult at all times.

VI. IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENTS

Minor Injuries: All minor injuries are to be reported immediately to the TCSS Rescue Crew Leader. TCSS carries a First Aid kit to clean wounds and provide band aids. The crew member is responsible to determine if additional care is needed. TCSS will provide any assistance the crew member needs to help get proper care of the injury or medical needs. The Cactus Rescue Leader shall be aware of the closest Urgent Care facility and be able to give directions to the facility if needed or arrange for transportation to the facility.

If external sources (hospital or Urgent Care) are not required for the minor injury, a note is made on the sign-in sheet but no detailed record is made of the incident and no formal notifications are sent to the TCSS President or Company representative.

Significant Injuries or Emergency Situations: All injuries are to be reported immediately to the TCSS Crew Leader and the Company Representative if on site. A call to 911 shall be made for any injury that appears to be life threatening, signs of a stroke, person can't walk or stand without severe pain, significant bleeding, or any injury the injured crew member feels paramedics are needed.

If a crew member(s) is missing, the Rescue Crew Leader shall initiate a search effort using other crew willing members. If a reasonable search of the area by the crew members turns out to be futile (usually about an hour depending on the rescue site), a call to 911 shall be made for assistance.

If, in the judgment of the Rescue Crew Leader and Company Representative if on site, external sources (Hospital, Urgent Care, Law Enforcement, Rescue Teams) are required for the incident, a record is made on the sign-in sheet of the incident and the TCSS President and the Company representative are notified via email with details of the incident including action taken and the crew members choices.

VII. DOCUMENTATION

The Cactus rescue Leader is responsible to account for all plants removed during the rescue and to report them to the Cactus Rescue Crew Coordinator for TCSS records that are shared with the Company and/or contractor performing the work. The Liability sign-in sheets are kept by TCSS for ten years and shall be shared with Company if requested.