

**P-2027**  
**DESCRIBE CAP SEARCH PATTERNS**

**CONDITIONS**

You are a Mission Scanner trainee and must describe CAP search patterns.

**OBJECTIVES**

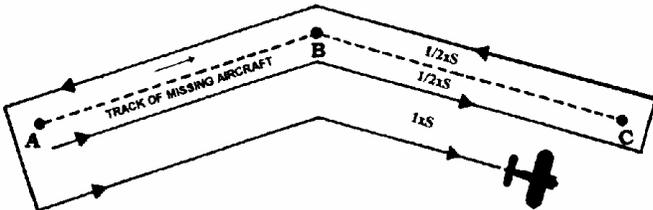
Describe the four most common CAP search patterns.

**TRAINING AND EVALUATION**

**Training Outline**

1. As a Mission Scanner trainee, understanding CAP search patterns is very helpful. This allows you to anticipate events.
2. Route search pattern. The route (track line) search pattern is normally used when an aircraft has disappeared without a trace. This search pattern is based on the assumption that the missing aircraft has crashed or made a forced landing on or near its intended track (route). It is assumed that detection may be aided by survivor signals or by electronic means. The track line pattern is also used for night searches (in suitable weather). A search aircraft using the track line pattern flies a rapid and reasonably thorough coverage on either side of the missing aircraft's intended track.

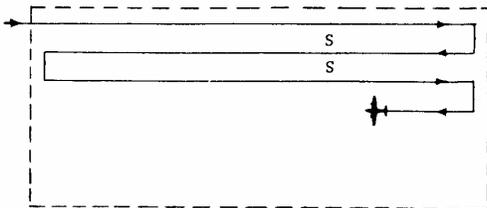
Search altitude for the track line pattern usually ranges from 1000 feet above ground level (AGL) to 2000 feet AGL for day searches, while night searches range 2000 to 3000 feet AGL (either depending upon light conditions and visibility). Lat/long coordinates for turns are determined and then entered into the GPS as waypoints, which may then be compiled into a flight plan.



The search crew begins by flying parallel to the missing aircraft's intended course line, using the track spacing (labeled "S") determined by the incident commander or planning section chief. On the first pass, recommended spacing may be one-half that to be flown on successive passes. Flying one-half "S" track spacing in the area where the search objective is most likely to be found can increase search coverage.

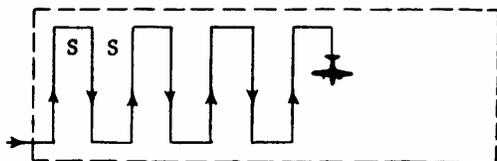
3. Parallel track search pattern. The parallel track (sweep) search pattern is normally used when one or more of the following conditions exist: a) the search area is large and fairly level, b) only the approximate location of the target is known, or c) uniform coverage is desired. This type of search is used to search a grid.

The aircraft proceeds to a corner of the search area and flies at the assigned altitude, sweeping the area maintaining parallel tracks. The first track is at a distance equal to one-half (1/2) track spacing (S) from the side of the area.



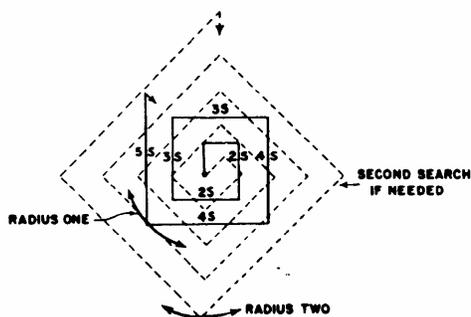
4. Creeping line search pattern. The creeping line search pattern is similar to the parallel patterns. The parallel pattern search legs are aligned with the major, or longer, axis of the rectangular search areas, whereas the search legs of the creeping line pattern are aligned with the minor or shorter axis of rectangular search areas. The creeping line pattern is used when: a) the search area is narrow, long, and fairly level, b) the probable location of the target is thought to be on either side of the search track within two points, or c) there is a need for immediate coverage of one end of the search area.

The creeping line is a succession of search legs along a line. The starting point is located one-half search track spacing inside the corner of the search area.



5. Expanding Square search pattern. The expanding square search pattern is used when the search area is small (normally, areas less than 20 miles square), and the position of the survivors is known within close limits. This pattern begins at an initially reported position and expands outward in concentric squares. If error is expected in locating the reported position, or if the target were moving, the square pattern may be modified to an expanding rectangle with the longer legs running in the direction of the target's reported, or probable, movement.

If the results of the first square search of an area are negative, the search unit can use the same pattern to cover the area more thoroughly. The second search of the area should begin at the same point as the first search; however, the first leg of the second search is flown diagonally to the first leg of the first search. Consequently, the entire second search diagonally overlays the first one. The bold, unbroken line in the figure illustrates the first search, while the dashed line represents the second search. Track spacing indicated in the figure is "cumulative," showing the total width of the search pattern at a given point on that leg. Actual distance on a given leg from the preceding leg on the same side of the pattern is still only one "S," the value determined by the incident commander or planning section chief.



### **Additional Information**

More detailed information and figures on this topic are available in Chapter 11 of the MART.

### **Evaluation Preparation**

**Setup:** Provide the student with a sectional and descriptions of each search pattern.

**Brief Student:** You are a Scanner trainee asked to describe the most common CAP search patterns.

### **Evaluation**

#### Performance measures

#### Results

1. Describe the following search patterns:

- |                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| a. Route            | P | F |
| b. Parallel         | P | F |
| c. Creeping line    | P | F |
| d. Expanding square | P | F |

Student must receive a pass on all performance measures to qualify in this task. If the individual fails any measure, show what was done wrong and how to do it correctly.