

# MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE

## Search Team Leader Certification Standard

### I. Introduction

- A. The Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) is dedicated to providing a centralized clearinghouse of volunteer search and rescue (SAR) services for the State of Maine. To this end, MASAR has developed the following standard for leaders of ground search teams used in SAR incidents.
- B. This standard is intended to define the minimum requirements necessary for any leader of a ground search team.
- C. Certification issued under this standard is required for those who wish to lead search teams while participating in search and rescue incidents in the State of Maine. (In the event that there is not a sufficient number of certified search team leaders available, the agency in charge of a search operation shall designate people to act as search team leaders for the duration of the mission.)
- D. Testing of an individual for certification shall be done by the unit of which the individual is a member, utilizing the objectives and procedures provided by MASAR. An individual who is not a member of a unit must apply to the MASAR Standards Committee for testing.
- E. These standards apply to wilderness search only. Other search specialties shall be evaluated based on additional specific standards and evaluation tests accepted by the MASAR Standards Committee.
- F. A person certified under this standard meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of ASTM F2685-07, "Standard Guide for Training of a Level II Land Search Team Member", with the exception of paragraphs 5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

### II. Certification

- A. Certification under this standard shall be issued by the MASAR Standards Committee.
- B. Initial certification is valid for three years, following which the person must be recertified by the Standards Committee. After the last day of certification, a 1-year grace period is allowed during which a person may request recertification. Unless recertification is requested, a person's certification under this standard shall cease to be valid.
- C. Certification or recertification must be requested in writing, sent to the chairman of the MASAR Standards Committee. The request may come from one of the following:
  - 1. an officer of a MASAR-certified unit;
  - 2. an instructor of a Maine BASAR course or MASAR-accepted equivalent;
  - 3. the individual seeking certification.
- D. Limited Certification  
The Standards Committee recognizes that not all personnel will be capable of the full range of SAR activities. For these personnel the Standards

Committee may issue a limited ground searcher certification. Each unit that wishes to request limited certification for a member under this standard shall define that member's capabilities and which activities they are not capable of performing.

### **III. Suspension and Revocation of Certification**

#### **A. Suspension**

1. Any person who is temporarily unable to work in the field for an extended period (usually greater than six months) should request inactive status from the Standards Committee.
2. The Standards Committee may suspend anyone who does not request inactive status when some deficiency impedes that person's effectiveness.
  - a) When a report of someone's deficiency is brought to the attention of the Standards Committee, the committee will consult with that person and the unit training officer before taking any action.
  - b) The person in question will have the right to challenge any report of deficiency and has the right to know and confront the person who makes the report. He or she may provide written, oral, and recorded testimony in his or her support.
  - c) The committee may take one of the following courses of action upon the challenge of a ground searcher's competence.
    - (1) The committee may confirm that person's continued certification.
    - (2) The committee may require that the person in question complete the re-certification process before the normal re-certification time.
  - d) In all instances, the person in question shall have the right to request a field test or the relevant parts thereof, in order to confirm certification.

#### **B. Revocation**

1. The committee shall have the option of permanently revoking a search team leader's certification in the following circumstances.
  - a) Retirement of the search team leader from active service.
  - b) Serious misconduct on the part of a search team leader which endangers the operation or credibility of the SAR enterprise.

### **IV. Documentation Required for Initial Certification or Recertification**

#### **A. Initial certification:** The applicant must provide the Standards Committee with copies of the following:

1. Proof of current certification by MASAR as a Search Team Member.
2. Proof that he or she has met all of the requirements of Appendix A of this standard.
3. Proof of current certification in CPR from the Red Cross, American Heart Association, National Safety Council, or equivalent organization.
4. Proof of current certification in Wilderness First Aid (or higher level

- certification) by SOLO, WMA, NOLS, or equivalent organization.
  5. Proof of successful completion of National Incident Management System (NIMS) ICS-200.
  6. Awareness-level training in recognizing and dealing with Hazardous Materials, as defined by OSHA [29 CFR 1910.120(Q)(6)(i)]\*\*.
  7. Proof that within the past six months the applicant has met the requirements of an aerobic fitness evaluation test equivalent to one of those in Appendix A of the MASAR Search Team Member certification standard.
  8. Letter of recommendation from an officer of the unit in which this person is a member.
- B. Recertification: The applicant must provide the Standards Committee with copies of the following:
1. Proof of continuing training as shown by written records from the Training Officer (or equivalent), the President, or the Director of a MASAR-certified unit. These records must attest to the successful continuance of a SAR training program administered by that unit.
  2. Proof of current certification by MASAR as a Search Team Leader
  3. Current certification in CPR from the Red Cross, American Heart Association, National Safety Council, or equivalent organization.
  4. Current certification in Wilderness First Aid (or higher level certification) by SOLO, WMA, NOLS, or equivalent organization.
  5. If not provided previously, proof of completion of awareness-level training in recognizing and dealing with Hazardous Materials, as defined by OSHA [29 CFR 1910.120(Q)(6)(i)]\*\*.
  6. Proof that within the past six months the applicant has met the requirements of an aerobic fitness evaluation test equivalent to one of those in Appendix A of the MASAR Search Team Member certification standard.
  7. Letter of recommendation from an officer of the unit in which this person is a member.
- C. The Standards Committee reserves the option to independently test applicants with an evaluation team of its own choosing.

## **V. Appeals**

- A. A person that fails any test in this standard when that test is provided by the MASAR Standards Committee may appeal the decision to the MASAR Standards Committee.
- B. A person that fails any test in this standard when that test is administered by the MASAR Standards Committee may appeal the decision to the MASAR Board.
- C. Appeals must be made in the following fashion:
  1. The appeal must be submitted in writing.
  2. The appeal must be postmarked no later than 15 days after the failed test(s) or receipt of the contested decision(s).
  3. A copy of the appeal must be sent to all members of the MASAR

Standards Committee, or to the members of the MASAR Board of Directors in the case of an appeal of a decision of the MASAR Standards Committee.

4. The appeal shall provide sufficient information for the Standards Committee or MASAR Board to make a decision. Such information may include but is not limited to:
  - a) Affidavits
  - b) Written statements of relevant parties, witnesses, and experts.
  - c) Complete description of the reason for the appeal.
  - d) The suggested remedy.
- D. The Standards Committee or the MASAR Board will have a total of 60 calendar days in which to investigate, obtain testimony (if necessary), question the parties involved, obtain outside professional assistance, or take other actions which the committee deems necessary and appropriate in the circumstances.
- E. The decision by the MASAR Standards Committee or MASAR Board will be written and sent to the appellant by certified mail (return receipt).
- F. The decision of the MASAR Board will be final, and may not be appealed for 1 year.

## **VI. Acceptance and Amendment**

- A. This standard will take effect immediately upon acceptance by majority vote of the MASAR membership present in conformance with the current MASAR by-laws.
- B. The MASAR Standards Committee may recommend amendments to the MASAR membership to improve or expand this standard.
  1. The committee will present suggestions for amendment in writing to the MASAR membership.
    - a) MASAR members will have 30 days during which to comment on proposed amendments.
    - b) Amendments will be discussed and voted on at the next scheduled MASAR meeting after the comment period has ended.
  2. Amendments must be accepted by a two thirds majority vote of the MASAR membership present in conformance with the current MASAR by-laws.
- C. Any MASAR Organizational Member may propose amendments by the process outlined in Section VI, Part B.

\*These courses may be taken on-line or taught by a certified instructor. The on-line courses may be found at the web site of the Federal Emergency Management Agency: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>. The course materials and tests may also be obtained through any county EMA office or the National Park Service.

\*\*Awareness-level training for dealing with hazardous materials may be available from a local fire department, EMA office, or local US Department of Transportation office.