

# MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE

## Search Team Member 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 members of ground search teams used in SAR incidents.
- B. This standard is intended to define the minimum requirements necessary for any member of a ground search team.
- C. Certification issued under this standard is required for those who wish to participate in search and rescue incidents managed by the Maine Warden Service. The exception is an uncertified trainee who may be allowed to take part in an actual search if the following requirements are met:
  1. This person has met the requirements of Section III, Part A, subparts 3, 4, 5, and 6 below.
  2. Participation is approved by the unit officer responsible for the trainee's instruction to date.
  3. The trainee works under the direct supervision of a MASAR-certified search team member. A certified search team member may not supervise more than one uncertified person at one time.
- D. Testing of an individual for certification will be done within 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 F-2209-03, "Standard Guide for Training Level I Land Search Team Members".

### II. Certification

- A. The certification shall be issued by the MASAR Standards Committee.
- B. The certification is valid for three years, following which the person must be re-certified by the Standards Committee.
- C. Limited Certification
  1. 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 shall define that member's capabilities and which activities they are not capable of performing.

- D. To apply for certification a person must do one of the following:
  - 1. Have certification requested for him or her by a unit officer;
  - 2. Have certification requested for him or her by an instructor of a Maine BASAR course or MASAR-accepted equivalent; or
  - 3. Request certification, in writing, from the MASAR Standards Committee
- E. Suspension and Revocation of Certification
  - 1. Suspension
    - a) 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.
    - b) The Standards Committee may suspend anyone who does not request inactive status when some deficiency impedes that person's effectiveness.
      - (1) 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.
      - (2) 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.
      - (3) The committee may take one of the following courses of action upon the challenge of a ground searcher's competence.
        - (a) The committee may confirm that person's continued certification.
        - (b) The committee may require that the person in question complete the re-certification process before the normal re-certification time.
      - (4) 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.
  - 2. Revocation
    - a) The committee shall have the option of permanently revoking a ground searcher's certification in the following circumstances.
      - (1) Retirement of the ground searcher from active service.
      - (2) Serious misconduct on the part of a ground searcher which endangers the operation or credibility of the SAR enterprise.

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

- A. For initial certification the applicant must provide the Standards Committee with copies of the following:
  - 1. Proof of knowledge and field competency by one of the following:
    - a) Passage of a Maine BASAR course within the past two years.
    - b) Passage of a MASAR-accepted equivalent to the Maine BASAR course within the past two years.
    - c) A score of 70% or better on a written test, and successful

- completion of all field evaluation objectives, administered by a MASAR-certified unit. The written test will be provided by the MASAR Education Director. The field evaluation testing objectives are defined in Appendix C of this standard.
2. Documentation from unit officer showing that applicant has a complete ready pack, equipped per MASAR recommendations in Appendix D.
  3. Certification of completion of the following FEMA courses\*:
    - a) IS-100 "Introduction to Incident Command System";
    - b) IS-700 "National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction".
  4. Current certification in basic first aid or a higher level of emergency medical training.
  5. Current certification in CPR from the Red Cross, American Heart Association, National Safety Council, or an equivalent organization.
  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 this standard.
  7. Letter of recommendation from a unit officer or the instructor of a MASAR-accepted course.
- B. The applicant must provide the Standards Committee with copies of the following for recertification:
1. Proof of continuing training as shown by one of the following:
    - a) Written records from the Training Officer (or equivalent), the President, or the Director of a MASAR-certified unit attesting to the successful continuance of a SAR training program administered by that unit.
    - b) Successful completion of a course or courses in SAR subjects which include competency tests that encompass all the requirements of the certification procedures contained in this standard. If this method is used for recertification, written proof of successful completion must be furnished to the MASAR Standards Committee prior to the issuance of the certification. This method of recertification is predicated on the existence and approval of training programs that meet the MASAR standard.
    - c) Passage of a Maine BASAR course or its MASAR-accepted equivalent within the preceding two years.
    - d) A score of 70% or better on a written test, and successful completion of all field evaluation objectives, administered by a MASAR-certified unit. The written test will be provided by the MASAR Education Director. The field evaluation testing objectives are defined in Appendix C of this standard.
  2. Current certification in basic first aid or a higher level of emergency medical training.
  3. Current certification in CPR from the Red Cross, American Heart Association, National Safety Council, or equivalent organization.
  4. If not provided previously, proof of completion of IS-700 - "National

- Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction".\*
5. 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 this standard.
  6. Request for recertification from a unit officer or the instructor of a MASAR-accepted course.
- C. The Standards Committee reserves the option to independently test applicants with an evaluation team of its own choosing.

#### **IV. 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.

#### **V. Acceptance and Amendment**

- A. This standard will take effect immediately upon acceptance by majority vote of the MASAR membership present at a regularly scheduled MASAR meeting.
- 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 will be accepted by a majority vote of the MASAR membership present at a regularly scheduled MASAR meeting.
- C. Any MASAR Organizational Member may propose amendments by the same process outlined in Section V, 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 from any county EMA office or the National Park Service.