

MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE

MASAR Standard Definitions

The definitions below are those adopted by the Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) for use in its standards and other documents. These definitions apply to MASAR and its members. These definitions do not necessarily match those of other individuals, groups, or agencies.

Air scent dog - A search dog that can detect airborne human scent.

Area of operation - the geographic region where a Unit (see definition below) performs search and rescue operations on a regular basis.

Alert – A characteristic change in a search dog’s ongoing behavior in response to a trained odor, as interpreted by the handler.

Article search - Search for any object or article on, above, or below ground that may belong to the search subject, may provide a clue to the subject’s location, or may provide a clue to a crime.

Avalanche search - Search for human victims buried by an avalanche.

Cadaver search – Land search using a dog to locate human remains above, on, or below the surface of the ground. Note that “human remains” is preferred over the word “cadaver”.

Contaminated area - An area containing the scent of a person or persons other than the search subject.

Disaster search - Search for humans, or human remains, in rubble or debris, such as from collapsed buildings.

Dog team - One handler with one dog.

Efficient search – A fast, systematic search of an area using techniques that produce a high probability of detection per searcher-hour of effort. Usually referred to as a “Type II” search.

Handler - A person who controls and directs a dog during a search. This person is not necessarily the owner or trainer of the dog.

Hasty search - A quick search of trails, roads, and other likely areas without specific boundaries. Usually referred to as a "Type I" search.

Heavy brush - Ground cover which provides difficult visual as well as physical obstacles to the search team.

Human remains detection - Land search using a dog to locate human remains above, on, or below the surface of the ground.

ICS - Incident Command System.

Indication - The final action or actions performed by a search dog, independently, without distraction, and as trained, which signify that it has detected human scent or the search subject

Individual training exercise – A training exercise planned by a unit member which involves a maximum of 1-3 unit members and/or trainees.

Joint training exercise – A training exercise planned by a unit for its members and members of another unit.

MASAR-certified - Formally recognized by MASAR as meeting one of MASAR's standards.

Moderate terrain - Terrain having average ease of walking, average visibility, and no extremes of topography.

Probability of Detection (POD) - The likelihood, expressed as a percentage, that if a subject was actually in the search area it would have been located by the search team.

Recognized resource/unit – A MASAR-certified unit which has certified members available for SAR missions.

Refind – When a dog leads its handler back to the search subject or article after locating the search subject or article.

Resident – Any legal resident of the State of Maine; any person attending a university, college, or other educational institution in the State of Maine for a semester or more; any full-time member of the military services stationed in the State of Maine.

Scent article - An item belonging to the search subject that holds the subject's scent and that has not been contaminated by the scent of another person.

Scheduled training - A unit training exercise planned and reported in advance to the I.F.& W. Recreational Safety Officer.

Supporting resource/organization – A unit not certified by MASAR; a unit which provides a resource for which MASAR does not have a certification standard.

Thorough search – A slow, highly systematic search, using thorough search techniques. Usually referred to as a “Type III” or grid search.

Tracking/trailing dog - A search dog that can follow the ground scent track/trail of a person who has passed through the area.

Trainee – A unit member in good standing, regularly involved in training for certification in his or her unit.

Training time – The time period during which a scheduled unit or individual training exercise takes place.

Unit - A group of single SAR resources existing for the purpose of assisting in search and rescue operations,.

Unit training exercise – A training exercise planned by a unit for its members alone.

Water search - Search for humans, or human remains, hidden below the water surface.

Worker’s Compensation-covered exercise - A training exercise sponsored by the Maine Warden Service or MASAR for training multiple units and their members; a scheduled unit training exercise; a scheduled joint training exercise.