

MAINE ASSOCIATION FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE

Unit Certification Standard

I. Introduction

- A. The Maine Association for Search and Rescue (MASAR) is dedicated to providing a centralized clearinghouse for volunteer ground search and rescue (SAR) resources in the State of Maine. As part of this effort, MASAR acts to insure that these resources are organized and trained to provide professional assistance in SAR operations. To this end, MASAR has developed the following standard for certification of volunteer units used in SAR incidents.
- B. This standard is intended to define the minimum requirements necessary for certification of any volunteer SAR unit.
- C. The certification issued under this standard is required for volunteer SAR units wishing to participate in the following:
 - 1. Wilderness search and rescue operations under the oversight of the Maine Warden Service.
 - 2. Certification of members under MASAR's standards.
 - 3. Dispatch of the unit's members by MASAR Duty Officers in an active, not support, role in SAR operations.
- D. Certification under this standard is required for units that wish to be Organizational Members (i.e. voting members) of the Maine Association for Search and Rescue.

II. Certification

- A. Unit certification shall be issued by the MASAR Standards Committee.
- B. Original certification is valid for 3 years.
- C. To apply for certification, a unit must make a request in writing to the MASAR Standards Committee. The following documentation must accompany the request for certification:
 - 1. Unit organizational structure;
 - 2. Unit by-laws and the date they were accepted;
 - 3. Unit standard(s) and the date they were accepted;
 - 4. List of unit members and their status, i.e. operational, in-training, support, inactive, etc.;
 - 5. Regularly scheduled training exercises for the past 6 months, including attendance;
 - 6. Provisions for ongoing training of members;
 - 7. Records of responses to recent searches or other SAR missions, if any;
 - 8. An agreement to abide by MASAR's Unit Operational Policies as long as the unit is certified by MASAR.

III. Recertification

- A. Recertification shall be issued by the MASAR Standards Committee.
- B. Recertification is valid for 3 years.

- C. To apply for recertification a unit must make a request in writing to the MASAR Standards Committee. The following documentation must accompany the recertification request:
 - 1. A current list of unit officers.
 - 2. The unit's by-laws, if any revisions have been made since certification or the last recertification.
 - 3. The unit's standards, if any revisions have been made since certification or the last recertification.
 - 4. A current list of unit members and their status, i.e. operational, in training, support, inactive, etc.
 - 5. Records of scheduled unit training exercises for the 6 months prior to the request for recertification, including attendance.
 - 6. Records of responses to searches or other SAR missions within the 6 months prior to the request for recertification, if any.
- D. Recertification will be provided only to units which have a minimum of 3 active members currently MASAR-certified as ground searchers.

IV. Revocation of Unit Certification

- A. A unit's certification may be revoked in any of the following situations:
 - 1. The unit informs MASAR and/or the MASAR Standards Committee that it no longer wishes to be certified by MASAR.
 - 2. The unit ceases to exist as a legal entity.
 - 3. The number of active members currently MASAR-certified as ground searchers drops below 3 for a period of 6 months or longer.
 - 4. The unit has committed any of the acts listed in Section XI, Removal, of MASAR's by-laws, has otherwise failed to abide by any other applicable provision(s) of those by-laws, or has violated any of MASAR's Unit Operational Policies.

V. Appeals

- A. A unit whose certification has been revoked by the MASAR Standards Committee may appeal the decision to the MASAR Board of Directors.
- B. 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 30 days after notice of revocation of certification has been received.
 - 3. A copy of the appeal must be sent to all members of the MASAR Board of Directors.
 - 4. The appeal shall provide sufficient information for the 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.
- C. The MASAR Board will have a total of 90 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.
- D. The decision by the MASAR Board will be written and sent to the appellant by certified mail (return receipt).
 - E. The decision of the MASAR Board will be final.

VI. Acceptance and Amendment

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