



Standard Guide for Minimum Training of Dispatchers and Telecommunicators of SAR Incidents¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide establishes the minimum training standard as it relates to general and specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA), for existing dispatchers (who have met the requirements of Practice F1258), 911 (emergency) operators, and telecommunicators to be trained for the processing and dispatch of potential and actual search and rescue incidents.

1.2 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

F1258 Practice for Emergency Medical Dispatch

2.2 *Other Documents:*³

Triage and Dispatch for SAR Managers and Telecommunications

U.S. National SAR Plan

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *agency, n*—an SAR or emergency response entity such as an SAR team, military unit, or emergency management, police, or fire service with SAR responsibilities.

3.1.2 *automatic aid, n*—aid given by another agency, automatically upon dispatch, when written into dispatch guidelines or protocols. Automatic aid is generated by your Communications Center by simultaneously requesting or notifying the

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.02 on Management and Operations.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from Kovacs, Tim and Mountain Rescue Association, http://www.mra.org/training/Dispatch_SAR_MRA_05.pdf

outside resource upon initial dispatch of incidents. Automatic aid should be arranged for search and rescue incidents and programmed into your CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system.

3.1.3 *“emergency” and/or “lights and siren” response, n*—an Emergency and/or Lights and Siren response is where an appropriately trained person operates and responds in a vehicle equipped with emergency lights and siren in order to enable a more timely response to a scene or other location.

3.1.4 *follow-up report and information, n*—critical or valuable supplemental information gathered and reported to responders after initial dispatch.

3.1.5 *mutual aid, n*—aid given by another agency, case by case, when requested by a member of a responding agency.

3.1.6 *SRD, Search and Rescue Dispatcher, n*—a dispatcher who processes calls for potential and actual search and rescue incidents (See Triage and Dispatch for SAR Managers and Telecommunications).

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This guide establishes the minimum training standard as it relates to general and specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA), for existing dispatchers, 911 operators and telecommunicators to be trained in the processing and dispatching of potential and actual search and rescue incidents. A person trained to this guide is a Level I (basic) SAR Dispatcher.

4.2 Every person who is identified as an SAR Dispatcher shall have met the requirements of this guide.

4.3 This guide is to be used by individuals and agencies having jurisdiction who wish to identify the minimum training standards for Level I SAR dispatcher.

4.4 This guide is only the first level of training for Search and Rescue Dispatcher (SRD) personnel, and as such, only establishes the minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities required for a person to perform SAR Dispatch.

4.5 Nothing in this guide precludes a user of this guide from adding additional requirements for its own members.

4.6 This guide by itself is not a training document. It is only an outline of the topics required for training or evaluating a Level I SRD, but it can be used to develop a training document or program.

4.7 It is up to the training authority to determine the depth or detail of training to meet its needs.

4.8 This guide does not stand alone and must be used with the referenced documents to provide the specific information needed by the user.

4.9 This guide can be used to evaluate a book or other document to determine if its content meets the necessary topics for training an SRD. Likewise, the guide can be used to evaluate an existing training program to see if it meets the requirements of this guide.

4.10 The knowledge, skills, and abilities requirements presented in the following sections are not presented in any particular order and do not represent a training sequence.

4.11 Except where a physical skill needs to be shown, it is up to the instructor, evaluator, or tester to determine the best way to evaluate a person's knowledge. This may be by written exam, oral exam, demonstration, or by some combination of the three.

5. General Knowledge

5.1 *An SAR dispatcher shall have knowledge of:*

5.1.1 Differences between urban and rural/wilderness SAR dispatch, including unique factors influencing selection of resources such as terrain, weather and unique medical considerations.

5.1.2 SAR Dispatch case studies, examples, or lessons learned, or combinations thereof.

5.1.3 SAR Dispatch legal issues.

5.1.4 Legally mandated and authorized agencies for SAR affecting the area of operations.

5.1.5 Local, automatic, and mutual aid SAR resources.

5.1.6 Considerations and limitations of wireless phones and their battery power, skips, tracing, and related issues in SAR environments, including the need for rapid gathering and triage of information, and giving critical information to the caller before power or signal may be lost.

5.1.7 Proactive and earlier alert or dispatch of SAR resources rather than other public safety practices of "reactive" and "minimalist" dispatch of resources.

5.1.8 Hazards of premature cancellation of specialized SAR resources.

5.1.9 Useful rural and wilderness geography and landmarks in the user's areas of operations.

5.1.10 Basic use of printed-type maps and map directories.

5.1.11 Limitations and challenges of traditional Computer Aided Dispatch, triage cards and card "prompts" in SAR incidents.

5.1.12 Ability to operate in "manual mode" (when computers and related aids are inoperable or not available).

5.1.13 Multi-jurisdictional, automatic aid and mutual aid issues.

5.1.14 Processing, dispatching and prioritizing simultaneous and multiple different SAR calls.

5.1.15 Guidelines for determining responses, including emergency lights and siren responses and non-emergency responses.

5.1.16 Guidelines for dispatching SAR resources out of primary jurisdiction or area of operations.

5.1.17 The need for call monitoring of medical and fire calls for latent SAR calls.

5.1.18 Need for automatic and mutual aid and interface with law enforcement, EMS (Emergency Medical Dispatch), and Fire dispatch agencies for SAR (Search and Rescue) calls.

5.1.19 Differences between disaster and urban SAR resources versus civil (non-military combat SAR) SAR resources under the U.S. National SAR Plan or the country's equivalent.

5.1.20 Dispatch guidelines (See Triage and Dispatch for SAR Managers and Telecommunications) for the following SAR scenarios followed by their corresponding sample call code and reference-resource guide (a CAD window, reference card or reference page for the user to find the scenario-specific guide for minimum call-gathering information, triage, dispatch, and pre-arrival instructions):

5.1.20.1 Stranded or injured on a cliff, ledge, building, tree, or rock face: "High Angle Rescue."

5.1.20.2 Vehicle into ravine or over embankment requiring rough hike or rope: "High Angle Rescue."

5.1.20.3 Injured/ill and further than eyesight of a 2wd road or trailhead: "Rescue."

5.1.20.4 In trouble in water: "Water Rescue."

(1) This includes responses to dry creek beds during any storm warnings (per national weather service), monsoon and storm seasons (almanac) and runoff seasons (spring, etc.).

(2) Trapped in or on a vehicle or object.

(3) Stranded, drowning, floating in moving water.

(4) Drowning or trapped in still water.

(5) Flooding house, building, mobile home, trailer; with/without collapse or fire hazard.

(6) In, on, or under ice involving flowing or still water.

5.1.20.5 In a confined or underground space (active or abandoned mine, cave, tunnel, pipe, tank, canyon, silo, sewer, well, trench, crevice, crevasse, structural collapse, industrial space, vessel, etc.): "Confined or Underground Space Rescue."

5.1.20.6 Involved in Hazardous Materials situation: "HazMat."

5.1.20.7 Requests for a helicopter search or rescue: "Helicopter Search or Rescue."

5.1.20.8 Other agency request for technical SAR resource: "Other Agency SAR Request."

5.1.20.9 Aircraft Crash. Usually more than 400 feet from a 2wd road or involving technical rescue, or multiple patients: "Aircraft Crash."

5.1.20.10 Multi-casualty incident or disaster, natural disaster, Terrorism SAR (See U.S. National SAR Plan), Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD): "MCI-Terrorism-WMD."

5.1.20.11 Stranded in Blizzard/Snow. Stranded in home, building, vehicle, on foot: "Blizzard/Snow."

5.1.20.12 Avalanche involving hiker, skier, vehicle, snowrider, etc.: "Avalanche."

5.1.20.13 Stranded in heat/desert/dust storm: "Heat/Desert Rescue."

5.1.20.14 Lightning incidents: "Lightning Rescue."

5.1.20.15 Missing or overdue person, hiker, etc.: "Missing/Search."

5.1.20.16 Recovery of body, property, evidence from a technical or SAR environment: “Search/Recovery.”

5.1.20.17 Animal Rescue from any technical or SAR environment: “Animal Rescue.”

5.1.21 Training for minimum call-gathering information shall include SAR-specific or disaster-specific information that may help to:

5.1.21.1 Determine resource selection of appropriate responders and specialty units,

5.1.21.2 Determine urgency of response needed and what level of urgency by which responders and specialty units,

5.1.21.3 Prepare responders and agencies with additional tactical or situational details,

5.1.21.4 Determine the incident to require law enforcement involvement (for example, kidnap, terrorism, lost or stranded person is a suspect).

6. Skills

6.1 An SAR dispatcher shall demonstrate the ability to:

6.1.1 Perform, to the trainer’s satisfaction, a sufficient number and variety of actual or mock SAR incidents that are likely to occur in their area of operations, including the selection and dispatch of appropriate resources, and follow-up reports.

7. Keywords

7.1 911 operator; dispatch; dispatcher; search and rescue dispatcher; SRD; telecommunications

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