



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA SEARCH & RESCUE STANDARD 7600

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## TYPE 1 TRACKER - TRACKING SPECIALIST

VASARCO Tracking Standards Committee chaired by Rob Speiden & Theresa Crossland

**APPROVED BY THE VIRGINIA SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNCIL and  
THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

# 2016

This is the final document approved in 2016. It presents the certification standard for credentialing as a Type 1 – Tracking Specialist. It is accompanied by COVSAR Tracking Standards 7000 - 7900.

**7600 Type 1 Tracker - Tracking Specialist**

**7600** This standard establishes a certification named "Type 1 Tracker - Tracking Specialist" (T.S.) and outlines all applicable requirements for achieving this certification.

**7601 Scope:** These standards were developed to define the minimum qualification requirements necessary for certification as a T.S. by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Emergency Management (VDEM).

The certification issued under these standards is a requirement only for those personnel who wish to voluntarily participate in the search and rescue program of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management at the level indicated in this standard.

**7602 Purpose:**

7602.1 Outlined in the following standard are all the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) expected at the T.S. certification level.

**7603 General:**

7603.1 This standard uses Commonwealth of Virginia Search and Rescue (COVSAR) Standard 7500 as a minimum standard and incorporates all criteria of that standard as a basis in conjunction with the additional criteria in this standard.

**7604 Definitions:**

7604.1 The definitions used by this standard are listed and defined in COVSAR Standard 7200. They may or may not reflect the definitions used by other individuals, groups, agencies or publications.

**7605 Prerequisites:**

- 7605.1 All pre-requisites listed in COVSAR Standard 7500 are also included as a minimum for this standard.
- 7605.2 Applicants must be currently certified by VDEM as a Management Team Member (MTM) or an equivalent as recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Emergency Management Search and Rescue Program. Proof of current certification must be presented along with the application for certification as a tracking specialist.
- 7605.3 Applicants must have a certification of training or completion of Practical Search Operations, Management Team Leader (MTL) or an equivalent as recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Emergency Management Search and Rescue Program. Proof of such certification must be presented along with the application for certification as a tracking specialist.
- 7605.4 Applicant must have been certified as a Search Team Member or equivalent for at least five (5) years.
- 7605.5 Applicant must be currently certified as a Search Team Leader, and have been so certified for at least two (2) years.
- 7605.6 Applicant must be currently certified as a Type 3 Tracker – Operational Tracker or higher, and have been so certified for at least two (2) years.
- 7605.7 Applicants must have a background check completed within the last three years before applying for certification, and agree to allow VDEM or the applicant's member group to perform a background check when recertifying or three years from the last one, whichever is first.
- 7605.8 Current CPR and First Aid Certifications.

- 7605.9 Completion of the NIMS Courses; 100, 700, 800, and 809.
- 7605.10 Completion of the National Park Service Basic Search and Rescue course.
- 7605.11 It is recommended that the Tracking Specialist have training in Crime Scene Preservation.

**7606 Forms:**

- 7606.1 Application for Certification: Type 1 Tracker - Tracking Specialist
- 7606.2 Type 1 Tracker - Tracking Specialist Position Task Book

**7607 Testing:**

- 7607.1 Testing will include written and practical exam stations and will be conducted within the scope of the knowledge, skills and abilities conveyed in the Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting and Tracking Training Standard 7200.
- 7607.2 The tracking candidate must demonstrate a working understanding of the items listed under each subject and must be able to demonstrate the ability to perform and/or discuss the skills delineated in Tracking Standard 7200.
- 7607.3 Specific written and field tests have been designed to evaluate the candidate's knowledge and performance skills. The field tests and evaluation criteria are delineated in COVSAR Standard 7300.
- 7607.4 Each candidate will be individually evaluated on the following field evaluation stations during daytime – 7407.3.1, 7407.3.2, 7407.3.5, 7407.3.7, 7407.3.8.
- 7607.5 Each candidate will be individually evaluated on the following field evaluation stations during nighttime – 7408.3.2, 7408.3.3, 7408.3.7.
- 7607.6 Candidates will be evaluated on ten (10) categories (with associated subcategories) as delineated in Table 1 of standard section 7409.
- 7607.7 Scores from each evaluation station will contribute to an overall score for each category based on the respective ratios listed in Table 1 of standard section 7409.
- 7607.8 The candidate's certification will be based on an overall score averaged and weighted from all of the individual category and subcategory scores.
- 7607.9 All field tests must be completed within twenty-four (24) months of submission date of an application for certification/ recertification.
- 7607.10 If the candidate wishes to change their score on record, s/he may retake the relevant evaluation station(s) according to evaluators' availability.
- 7607.11 Any time a candidate completes an evaluation station, the score achieved in the latest station that s/he completed for evaluation will be the score on record for that person.
- 7607.12 Candidates may take evaluation stations as "Practice", and those scores will not replace the score on record.

## 7608 Certification

Candidates that meet or exceed the minimum scoring in this section, in addition to completing the prerequisites and requirements in this standard, will be certified as a Tracking Specialist.

7608.1 Candidate scores a ninety-five percent (95%) or higher on the written test. Candidates must wait a minimum of three (3) months between test taking opportunities if they wish to retake the test.

7608.2 Candidate achieves a minimum score in the following categories (with associated subcategories) as shown in Table 4 according to scoring described in COVSAR Standard 7300 – Criteria for Field Evaluations within the last twenty-four (24) months preceding submission of application for Tracking Specialist.

Table 4. Listing of Knowledge, Skill and Ability categories, subcategories and minimum score for achieving certification.

|     | <b>Category and Subcategory</b> | <b>Minimum Certification Score</b> |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1   | <b>TOOLS</b>                    | 5.0                                |
| 2   | <b>INTERVIEWING</b>             | 4.0                                |
| 3   | <b>PLS /LKP</b>                 | 4.0                                |
| 4   | <b>DETECTION / AWARENESS</b>    | ---                                |
| 4.1 | TRACK DETECTION                 | 4.5                                |
| 4.2 | CLUE AWARENESS                  | 4.5                                |
| 5   | <b>INTERPRETATION</b>           | ---                                |
| 5.1 | HUMANIMAL                       | 4.5                                |
| 5.2 | IDENTIFICATION                  | 4.5                                |
| 5.3 | AGING                           | 4.0                                |
| 5.4 | DIRECTION OF TRAVEL             | 4.5                                |
| 6   | <b>RECORDING/DOCUMENTATION</b>  | ---                                |
| 6.1 | PHOTOGRAPHING                   | 4.0                                |
| 6.2 | DRAWING                         | 4.0                                |
| 6.3 | CASTING                         | 4.0                                |
| 6.4 | REPORTING                       | 4.0                                |
| 7   | <b>TRAILING</b>                 | 4.0                                |
| 8   | <b>CLUE MANAGEMENT</b>          | 5.0                                |
| 9   | <b>PROFESSIONALISM</b>          | 4.5*                               |
| 10  | <b>COMMUNICATION</b>            | 4.0                                |

\*At least three Tracker Recommendation Forms submitted for candidate (scores averaged)

7608.3 Candidate achieves a combined overall weighted score of **4.5** or higher in all of the categories described in section 7408 Table 1 (according to scoring described in COVSAR Standard 7300 – Criteria for Field Evaluations).

- 7608.4 Candidate achieves a minimum score of 4.0 points in categories 2, 3, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7 and 10. A score of less than 4.0 points in those categories prevents the candidate from being certified as a Tracking Specialist, even if s/he has achieved an overall evaluation score of 4.5 points or more.
- 7608.5 Candidate achieves a minimum score of 4.5 points in categories 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, and 9. A score of less than 4.5 points in those categories prevents the candidate from being certified as a Tracking Specialist, even if s/he has achieved an overall evaluation score of 4.5 points or more.
- 7608.6 Candidate achieves a score of 5.0 points in categories 1 and 8. A score of less than 5.0 points in those categories prevents the candidate from being certified as a Tracking Specialist, even if s/he has achieved an overall evaluation score of 4.5 points or more.
- 7608.7 A tracking candidate may challenge or take the written test and/or field evaluation stations at any time that they are offered (with regard to 7608.1).
- 7608.8 Certification - Initial certification will be accomplished by completing all prerequisites and requirements outlined in this standard.
- 7608.9 Certification will be for a period of three (3) years, and will expire after three years from date of issuance.
- 7608.10 At any time that a pre-requisite certification possessed by the certificate owner expires, the person's Tracker certification also expires.

**7609 Recertification** - Recertification will be accomplished by completing the following steps:

- 7609.1 Completing the T.S. Position Task Book (COVSAR 7606.2), and all prerequisites outlined within section 7605.
- 7609.2 The Tracker will submit his/her PTB to the tracker's Group Training Officer for approval.
- 7609.3 Upon successful review the Group Training Officer will obtain signatures and forward document 7606.1 - Application for Certification for Type 1 – Tracking Specialist to the VDEM SAR Training Specialist or appropriate person(s). VDEM will then issue a new certification. That certification expires three (3) years after the date of issue.
- 7609.4 Retesting in the following field evaluation stations with scores, in combination with other field station scores on record, that meet or exceed those described in section 7608:
- A. 7407.3.1 Aging Station
  - B. 7407.3.3 PLS/LKP Station
  - C. 7407.3.4 Sign Cutting Station
  - D. 7407.3.6 Sign Squares Station
- 7609.5 Field tests for recertification (described above) must be completed within twenty-four (24) months of date of application for recertification.

**7610 Reciprocity**

Reciprocity will be handled on a case by case basis due to the varying degree of possible experience and previous training individuals may have. Typically this process will involve evaluating the individual against the Position Task Book and their current abilities. Once any gaps are identified a training plan can be developed and the individual can work toward certification.