

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
SEARCH AND RESCUE PROGRAM'S
STANDARD FOR FIELD TEAM LEADER (FTL)**

I. PURPOSE:

The Field Team Leader (FTL) standards were developed to define the minimum requirements necessary to perform the following functions in the general environment of the Commonwealth of Virginia (in addition to the requirements of Field Team Member).

1. Lead various types of field teams to perform
 - a. Missing person search
 - b. Ground search portion of missing aircraft search
 - c. Non-technical rescue
2. Participate in semi-technical rescues as a belayer or as a litter team member.

B) The FTL should be capable of performing these functions anytime of the year, day or night, and in all weather conditions experienced in the Commonwealth. In order to accomplish this, the FTL should be able to:

1. Lead FTMs and other less qualified searchers.
2. Ensure that the team is properly equipped and ensure compliance with all safety and operational protocols.
3. Understand how field teams interface with the mission staff
4. Understand the operational significance of assigned tasks

II. COURSE ADMISSION CRITERIA

A) Age

Minimum age for FTL is 18.

B) Affiliation

Applicants for FTL training should be active members in a professional SAR group, or an established emergency services organization, such as a law enforcement agency, rescue squad, or fire department. First consideration for training will be given to these applicants. Additional factors such as prior experience, potential for use of training, number of SAR missions per year and other criteria may also be considered.

C) Applicant must hold a current FTM certification or ***VDEM recognized equivalent.***

D) Applicant should hold a valid Basic First Aid or equivalent or higher rating.

III. KNOWLEDGE AND PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The FTL will demonstrate an understanding of the items listed under each subject. Some items may require the performance of manual skills.

Field Team Leaders are expected to fully meet the expectations of Part III of the FTM Standards. The items listed here are additional.

A) SAR Operations

1. Discuss the steps that must take place during the initial response to a search and rescue incident including:
 - a. Logistical setup
 - b. Investigation and incident command structure
 - c. Resource deployment
2. Define the role of the field team for these types of missions.
 - a. Lost person search
 - b. Downed aircraft
 - c. Disaster assistance
3. List the various types of resources in each of the following categories that may be utilized in a typical SAR event.
 - a. Ground search
 - b. Air search
 - c. Logistics
 - d. Communications
 - e. Command
 - f. Rescue

B) Search Strategy and Tactics

1. Describe the responsibilities of the field team leader when carrying out a field task.
2. Explain the execution of these search tactics
 - a. Containment
 - b. Attraction
 - c. Survey search
 - d. *Expanding circle search***
 - e. *Purposeful wandering***

- f. Hasty search (scratch search)
- g. Sweep search (open grid search)
- h. Line search (closed grid search)
- i. Signcutting
- j. Interviewing
- k. Area search with air scent dogs
- l. Mantracking
- m. Electronic search.

3. Describe the tasks that must be completed once the field team returns to base.

C) Search Management

1. Outline search strategy for

- a. Downed aircraft**
- b. Lost person, rural and wilderness**
- c. Lost person, urban and suburban**

D) Rescue Operations

- 1. Describe how to formulate a rescue plan.
- 2. List the primary phases of a rescue mission.
- 3. Describe the major factors a team leader must consider once a subject is located.
- 4. Describe the manpower and equipment requirements and the team organizational structure necessary to accomplish a semi-technical rescue operation.
- 5. Describe the principles of safe interactions with aircraft commonly used in SAR operations.**

E) Equipment

- 1. Describe basic team equipment, other than required personal gear, for a wilderness SAR team.

F) Mission Performance

- 1. Demonstrate the ability to manage a **mixed** team traveling cross country on foot, in any weather conditions, navigating by map and compass, all without compromising the assigned task.
- 2. Demonstrate the ability to organize and execute the tactics listed under Part III, B, 2.

3. *Demonstrate a general knowledge of clue awareness including the following:*
 - a. *Define roles and responsibility of the FTL as they apply to clues, sign, the identification and collection thereof.*
 - b. *Define the protocols available through mission base with regards to possible clue handling and disposition.*
4. Demonstrate the ability to properly secure a scene, extricate and treat a patient, and evacuate the patient using the method most appropriate for a given situation.
5. *Demonstrate the ability to brief and debrief a team.*
6. *Define the FTLs responsibility with regards to team personnel and conflict resolution.*

G) Ropes and Technical Hardware

1. Demonstrate the ability to correctly tie these knots (in addition to those listed in the FTM Standards):
 - a. *Butterfly*
 - b. *Munter Hitch*
 - c. *Redundant Seat Harness*
2. Demonstrate the ability to safely direct a litter team in moving a litter up and down a slope, using a belay system.
3. **Demonstrate the ability to build a mechanical lower and basic three to one hauling system.**

H) Belaying

1. Demonstrate proper belay techniques including:
 - a. *Anchors and anchor systems*
 - b. *Stance*
 - c. *Calls*
 - d. *Uphill and downhill travel*
 - e. *Tree wrap, munter hitch, and mechanical brakes*

I) *Electronic Search*

1. *Demonstrate an understanding of the operational principles of the use of a Global Positioning Device.*

2. *Demonstrate an understanding of the operational principles of the ELT and PLB, and of the SAR system that exists to locate activated ELT's and PLB's.*
3. *Describe the basic principles of DF search.*
4. *Define problems associated with DF search.*
5. *Demonstrate the ability to do a simple ELT or PLB search using DF'ing equipment.*

IV. TEST METHODS

A. Written Test

1. The test consists of at least 100 multiple choice questions representative of the material presented in the course.
2. The test is administered at the beginning of the course as a pre-test and again at the end of the course as a post-test. Students who pass the pre-test are not required to take the post-test. Passing score is 80 percent.
3. Failure of the post-test constitutes failure of the course.

B. Practical Testing

1. The practical test consists of several stations that test certain skills presented in the course. Students are requested to perform those skills in the presence of a state examiner.
2. Each station has specific requirements and well defined criteria for pass/fail.
3. A student who fails a practical station(s) may repeat that station(s) once on the same day. Failure of a second attempt constitutes failure of the course.

C. Retesting

1. Students who complete the required training, but fail either the written or practical test, are eligible for retesting.

2. The student is responsible for making arrangements for retesting with the course coordinator on an individual basis.
3. If a student fails any portion of a retest, the record reverts to inactive and the course must be repeated or challenged.

V. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A. The following criteria must be met in order to qualify for certification as a Field Team Leader.

1. Attend a complete FTL training course.
2. Pass the FTL written test with a score of at least 80 percent.
3. Pass the FTL practical test within the limits defined for each station.

B) Equivalent Training and/or Experience

Those individuals who, by virtue of past training and experience, possess the necessary knowledge and skills may be permitted to challenge the class. Upon successful completion of the written and practical exam, the individual will be certified as an FTL.

C) Certification

Upon successful completion of training, a certificate will be issued to the trainee by VDEM. This certificate does not constitute a license to practice the skills taught in the training program, but signifies only that the person holding the certificate has met an established standard of knowledge and performance and should be able to function in a competent manner at the level indicated on the certificate.

VI. RECERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A) Notification of Expiration of Certification

1. ***Six (6) months prior to the expiration date, a letter will be sent noting the expiration date and defining the recertification procedure.***
2. ***A second letter will be sent during the expiration month stating that if recertification is not accomplished within six (6) months of expiration, certification will be dropped.***

3. ***Individuals applying for recertification must meet or exceed the following continuing education credits (CEUs). CEUs will be a combination of training, missions and demonstration of practical skills to recertify.***
 - a. ***Presentation of a copy of his/her log book documenting the following continuing education credits (one hour per credit) documenting a minimum of 24 hours of training over a three year period, signed off by an organization's training officer.***
 - b. ***Demonstration of participation in a minimum of nine (9) real or simulated mission) over the three year period. Mission records should be signed off by Mission Operations or Training Officer; the mission sign in sheets will also be recognized.***

B) Procedure

1. Certification may be renewed by successfully completing the written and practical tests, and meeting any other requirements for certification for Field Team Leader that exist at the time of recertification.
2. Each person is responsible for making individual arrangements for recertification testing with the VDEM Search and Rescue Coordinator.
3. Certification will be valid for three (3) years from date of issue.