

# Search and Rescue Flight Officer Standard

## 1. Operational Standards

- 1.1. Be capable of performing airborne helicopter search and rescue functions under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions.
- 1.2. Adhere to all FAA regulations with regard to:
  - 1.2.1. Aircraft and flight operations
  - 1.2.2. Aircraft airworthiness and maintenance

## 2. Accreditation. The following knowledge and performance expectations apply:

- 2.1. *Competence with operating the following communications equipment.*
  - 2.1.1. FAA radios and protocols
  - 2.1.2. VDEM radio frequencies and protocols
- 2.2. *Competence with operating the following helicopter equipment.*
  - 2.2.1. Basic helicopter systems
  - 2.2.2. Ropes
  - 2.2.3. Landing zone equipment
- 2.3. *Competence with operating the following additional equipment.*
  - 2.3.1. Night vision goggles
  - 2.3.2. GPS
  - 2.3.3. Aviation maps
  - 2.3.4. Topographic maps
- 2.4. *Competence with helicopter landing zone (LZ) and safety.*
  - 2.4.1. Helicopter safety
  - 2.4.2. Helicopter ingress/egress
  - 2.4.3. Rotor wash and tail rotor dangers
  - 2.4.4. Landing zone setup
  - 2.4.5. Hand signals
  - 2.4.6. Communications between the flight crew and LZ officer
  - 2.4.7. Airspace restrictions
  - 2.4.8. Fueling locations
  - 2.4.9. Other support vehicles and equipment appropriate for the situation
  - 2.4.10. Wind, weather, and debris
  - 2.4.11. Safety for other providers and citizens
  - 2.4.12. Crew safety
- 2.5. *Competence with helicopter pre-flight activity.*
  - 2.5.1. Helicopter EMS/equipment checkout
  - 2.5.2. Weather briefing between Pilot and Flight Officer with resulting decision concerning safety
  - 2.5.3. Coordinate with requesting agency concerning locations, LZ, and area weather
  - 2.5.4. Use of SPOT Personal Tracker
  - 2.5.5. Flight following by FAA to provide safety and air traffic concerns
  - 2.5.6. Notify appropriate airspace controllers and request permission to use restricted airspaces: FAA, agency, Potomac Tracon, National Capital Region Command and Control Center (NCRCC)
- 2.6. *Competence with helicopter search tactics for a missing person.*

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- 2.6.1. Based on assignment from requesting agency if available. Otherwise start at last known point (LKP) using an expanding square search 0.25-0.50 miles from LKP
  - 2.6.2. Receive task briefing from the Operations Section.
  - 2.6.3. Track using GPS
  - 2.6.4. Use SAR search patterns as defined in the group standard
  - 2.6.5. Perform searches under the following conditions and terrain types:
    - 2.6.5.1. Visual flight rules (VFR) during day and night
    - 2.6.5.2. Over wooded and open terrain (open, moderate, thick cover)
    - 2.6.5.3. Over urban locations
    - 2.6.5.4. Over lakes, rivers, and streams
    - 2.6.5.5. In mountainous terrain
    - 2.6.5.6. Along coastlines recognizing that search over open waters and tidal waters remain the jurisdiction of the US Coast Guard
  - 2.7. *Competence with night vision devices.*
    - 2.7.1. Operation, checks, focus, safety
    - 2.7.2. Batteries
    - 2.7.3. Cleaning
    - 2.7.4. Infrared (IR)
    - 2.7.5. Head set and helmet set
    - 2.7.6. Night LZ identification
    - 2.7.7. Wires and hazards
  - 2.8. Brief/debrief tasks in person with Operations, in person or over the radio.
3. **Qualification.** In addition to completing the Accreditation requirements set forth in Section 2, members shall meet the following administrative requirements:
- 3.1. Be an Active member in a SAR group that has an MOU with VDEM
  - 3.2. Be at least 18 years old
  - 3.3. Be at least a Field Team Member (FTM)
  - 3.4. Completed the VDEM required NIMS courses (currently IS-100, IS-700, IS-800, IS-809)
4. **Approval Process.** Upon successfully meeting the Accreditation and Qualification requirements, a member must successfully pass a written and practical evaluation.
- 4.1. Complete a written test
  - 4.2. *Complete a practical evaluation.* The purpose of the practical evaluation is to demonstrate proficiency with the skills identified in Section 2.
    - 4.2.1. VDEM will provide scenarios
    - 4.2.2. VDEM will provide/approve evaluators
  - 4.3. Equivalent training and/or experience
    - 4.3.1. Members who possess the necessary knowledge and skill based on prior training and/or experience may be permitted to challenge the course by successfully passing the written and practical evaluations.
  - 4.4. Re-test
    - 4.4.1. Members who complete the required training but fail either the written or practical evaluation are eligible to re-test.

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- 4.4.2. The member is responsible to make re-test arrangements with VDEM
- 4.4.3. If the member fails any portion of the re-test the entire course must be repeated

### **5. Credentialing**

- 5.1. Upon Accreditation/Qualification or Re-Qualification, a certificate will be issued to the member. The certificate does not constitute a license to practice the skills taught in the course but signifies only that the member has met the established standard of knowledge and performance and should be capable of functioning in a competent manner at the level indicated on the certificate.
- 5.2. The credential shall be valid from the date of issue and shall expire after a period of three years.
- 5.3. Re-Qualification
  - 5.3.1. Members are responsible for ensuring they maintain a current credential

### **6. Accreditation Authority**

- 6.1. The authority for Accreditation and Qualification is VDEM.
- 6.2. The authority for Credentialing is VDEM.