



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA SEARCH & RESCUE STANDARD 7900

TRACKING INSTRUCTOR

VASARCO Tracking Standards Committee chaired by Rob Speiden

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

2019

This is the final document approved in 2019. It presents the certification standard for credentialing as a Tracking Instructor. It is accompanied by COVSAR Tracking Standards 7000 - 7800.

COVSAR Standard 7900 Tracking Instructor

7900 This standard establishes certifications for Provisional Tracking Instructor (P.T.I.), Tracking Instructor (T.I.) and Lead Tracking Instructor (L.T.I.) for the Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking (F.A.S.T.) Course and outlines all applicable requirements for achieving these certifications. The FAST course is described in COVSAR Tracking Standard 7200.

7901 **Scope:** These standards were developed to define the minimum qualification requirements necessary for certification as an Instructor 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 participate in the visual tracking component of the search and rescue program of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management at any of the levels indicated in this standard.

7902 **Purpose:** Outlined in the following standard are all the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) expected at various Instructor certification levels.

7903 **General:**

- 7903.1 The Instructor is willing to safely perform the following functions in the general environment of the Commonwealth of Virginia any time of the year, day or night, and in most weather conditions and terrain experienced in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In order to accomplish this, the Instructor will be able to:
- 7903.2 Demonstrate familiarity with the COVSAR tracking standards by completing the Tracking Instructor Quiz with a minimum score of 90%.
- 7903.3 Conduct FAST classroom and field exercises according to COVSAR FAST standard 7200,
- 7903.4 Assess and debrief candidate trackers during class activities;
- 7903.5 Interface with and instruct other searchers, search staff and local agencies on the abilities of Trackers, and tracking team tactics that might be utilized;
- 7903.6 Demonstrate the ability to explain to other searchers and staff on being clue, sign and track aware and the importance of each;
- 7903.7 Perform other activities which may be required based upon the Instructor's knowledge, skills, abilities, training and experience.

7904 **Definitions:** The definitions used by this standard are listed and defined in COVSAR Standard 7200 – Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking. They may or may not reflect the definitions used by other individuals, groups, agencies or publications.

7905 **Prerequisites:**

- 7905.1 Instructors must be at least 21 years of age or older.
- 7905.2 Applicants must hold a current certification as a Search Team Member and Operational Tracker or higher 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 applicant's application for certification as an Instructor.
- 7905.3 The candidate should be a member of a search and rescue group with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management or a member of a SAR group that is a member of the VaSARCo.
- 7905.4 The candidate should demonstrate the ability to perform, and have a general knowledge of the art and skills associated with signcutting, tracking, and search and rescue operations that are related to the lectures or to the field exercises which the

candidate will be instructing and must have the ability to work under the direct supervision of the VDEM F.A.S.T. Lead Tracking Instructor or a F.A.S.T. Tracking Instructor.

7905.5 The candidate should have completed the Instructors Workshop sponsored by the VDEM.

7905.6 Additional certifications are required for different levels of Instructor.

7905.7 Applicants must agree to allow the VDEM or the applicant's member group to perform a background check every three (3) years. A background check must be completed and on record before a candidate is allowed to teach.

7906 Requirements: An Instructor candidate must, at a minimum, complete each of these steps in order before being certified to instruct particular FAST course modules:

- 7906.1 Successful completion of the FAST class with a minimum score of eighty percent (80%) on the written test.
- 7906.2 Watch class presentations and field exercises being conducted by an Instructor after completing 7906.1.
- 7906.3 Conduct each presentation and field exercise under the supervision of an Instructor and receive a favorable evaluation from that Instructor.
- 7906.4 Receive written approval from a Tracking Instructor, preferably a Lead Tracking Instructor, that a Provisional Tracking Instructor is approved to conduct each particular presentation and exercise.
- 7906.5 The candidate should be recommended by the VDEM F.A.S.T. Lead Instructor and approved by the VDEM SAR Chief and the VDEM SAR Training Specialist.

7907 Forms:

- 7907.1 Application for Certification: Tracking Instructor
- 7907.2 Tracking Instructor presentation approval form

7908 Certification / Recertification / Reciprocity:

- 7908.1 Initial certification will be accomplished by completing all prerequisites and requirements outlined in this standard.
- 7908.2 Certification will be for a period of three (3) years.
- 7908.3 Recertification – Tracking Instructors and Lead Tracking Instructors shall teach and document a minimum of ten hours a year of class and field instruction in the FAST class – twenty hours in two years – as a part of the recertification requirements.
- 7908.4 Instructors will recertify in the Level-specific required VDEM certifications described in section 7909 to recertify as an instructor.
- 7908.5 Reciprocity – There will be no reciprocity with other programs outside of the COVSAR program for any level of instructor described in this standard.
- 7908.6 Instructors in place at the time of the approval of this standard will be considered Tracking Instructors or Lead Tracking Instructors.

7909 Level-Specific Certifications

- 7909.1 Provisional Tracking Instructor (PTI)
 - 7909.1.1 PTI candidates must complete, at a minimum, the prerequisites described in section 7905 of this standard.
 - 7909.1.2 The PTI is not allowed to make schedule changes or to offer the F.A.S.T. course to SAR Groups without permission from the F.A.S.T. Lead Instructor.
 - 7909.1.3 The PTI may not appoint any Instructors. All recommendations must be submitted to the F.A.S.T. Lead Instructor.

- 7909.1.4 The PTI is only allowed to lay out, conduct or assess the field exercises under the supervision of a Tracking Instructor or Lead Tracking Instructor.
- 7909.1.5 The PTI must be approved for each lecture or field exercise in which the Provisional Tracking Instructor assists or instructs from the F.A.S.T. Lead Instructor and/or the Tracking Instructor of that F.A.S.T. Course.
- 7909.1.6 The PTI may not change, reprint, or publish, nor give permission to change, reprint or publish any of the written material, either in part or in whole, of any Guidebook, Workbook, Manual or Book for the VDEM Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking Course without the written permission of the VDEM.
- 7909.2 Tracking Instructor (T.I.)
The T.I. shall:
- 7909.2.1 Be currently certified as a VDEM Search Team Leader, VDEM Management Team Member, VDEM Tracking Technician and VDEM Search Team Instructor.
- 7909.2.2 Be approved to conduct at least half of the classroom presentations and half of the field exercises.
- 7909.2.3 Supervise Provisional Tracking Instructor
- 7909.2.4 Assess students' knowledge and capabilities
- 7909.2.5 Not change, reprint, or publish, nor give permission to change, reprint or publish any of the written material, either in part or in whole, of any Guidebook, Workbook, Manual or Book for the VDEM Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking Course without the written permission from the VDEM.
- 7909.3 Lead Tracking Instructor (LTI)
The LTI shall:
- 7909.3.1 Be currently certified as a VDEM Search Team Leader, Tracking Technician, Management Team Member and Search Team Instructor.
- 7909.3.2 Coordinate the Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking course
- 7909.3.3 Oversee and instruct the F.A.S.T. Tracking Instructors and P.T.I.s
- 7909.3.4 Be able to instruct all lectures and field exercises.
- 7909.3.5 Be able to lay out all field exercises and assess the candidates.
- 7909.3.6 Appoint and recommend Instructors
- 7909.3.7 Produce class schedules and Instructor assignments
- 7909.3.8 Interface with VDEM SAR Coordinator, the VDEM SAR Training Specialist and other VDEM Instructors and Lead Instructors as needed
- 7909.3.9 Ensure that all training and instruction materials are up to date.
- 7909.3.10 Uphold the integrity of the Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking Course, comply with the COVSAR Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking Standards 7000, 7100, 7200, 7300, 7400, 7500, 7600, 7800 and 7900, and ensure that these standards are being complied with and taught.
- 7909.4 Tracking Instructors and Lead Tracking Instructors shall have demonstrated competent adult instructional abilities in the classroom and in the field. Failure to continue to demonstrate competent instructional abilities will result in review of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities and potential suspension or removal from Instructor position.