



# Standard Guide for Level 1 (Basic) Mounted Search and Rescue (MSAR) Responder<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F2794; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This guide establishes the minimum knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) required for an MSAR responder and their equine during the deployment involving lost or missing persons and related non-technical rescue skills used to stabilize or minimize a missing person (subject) from remaining in peril.

1.2 MSAR users of the guide shall meet or hold the certified equivalent KSA defined in Guide [F2209](#).

1.3 Users of this standard should, at minimum, have pre-existing basic horsemanship skills that are equivalent to what is published within: The United States Pony Club Manual of Horsemanship: Basics for Beginners/D Level **(1)**.<sup>2</sup>

1.4 Users of this standard should be aware of other MSAR standards, requirements, guidelines, policies, procedures, or protocols, or combinations thereof that have been established and which may be under the jurisdiction of federal, state, tribal, local, or other regional authorities (for examples of two (USA) state level MSAR standards, see Refs **2 and 3**).

1.5 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety issues (or safety plans) 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 or as defined within a (regional or geographical) response region.*

1.6 This standard is created without bias to the type of tack, gear, packs, first aid supplies, personal protective equipment (for self or equine), or riding discipline that is practiced by the MSAR responder.

1.7 This standard does not address the mounted evacuation of a subject, although an AHJ may determine when and if a mounted evacuation would be appropriate and what local protocols will be implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> 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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<sup>2</sup> The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to a list of references at the end of this standard.

## 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:<sup>3</sup>

[F2209 Guide for Training of Level I Land Search Team Member](#)

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard*:

3.1.1 *ponying, n*—the act of leading another equine while the rider is mounted on an equine

3.1.2 *response region, n*—the normal area of operation where MSAR responders primarily respond. Some local regions may also refer to such a response area as their “first due area” or may include potential for crossing county, state/province or even national borders, or both.

3.1.3 *tack, n*—specialized gear or equipment attached to the MSAR equine, which could include bridle with reins, girth saddle, or saddle bags, or combinations thereof.

## 4. Significance and Use

4.1 This guide establishes minimum standards criteria for MSAR personnel. Users of this guide shall have the ability to be a self-supporting deployable resource (for self and equine) and should be self-supporting while at base camp for a minimum duration of 24 h.

4.2 At no time will this standard supersede any established protocol of international, national, federal, state, tribal, local, or regional governments.

4.3 MSAR responders work with a variety of individuals and organizations, including law enforcement, fire and rescue, casual volunteers and family members of the missing subject(s).

4.4 This standard does not address the wearing of a riding helmet while deployed on an MSAR mission. However, users of this standard shall be aware that many AHJ's require the

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<sup>3</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

wearing of riding helmets while deployed on an MSAR mission and out of area response may require wearing a riding helmet.

## 5. Performance Requirements (Procedures)

5.1 This standard does not address any particular species, breed, size, or gender of the equine family (the most common equines used in MSAR are horses and mules). All MSAR equines shall be in compliance of all regional veterinary requirements. However, the animal shall have the stamina for long hours of work under varied conditions of terrain and weather found within the response region. In order to be considered as an MSAR responder, the responder or equine or both shall be able to:

5.1.1 Equine to demonstrate the ability to be well-mannered, sociable, non-aggressive, and controllable in situations involving individuals or crowds, noise, traffic, flashing lights, other equines, dogs or other domestic animals, and other distractions encountered.

5.1.2 Equine to demonstrate the ability to be transported between search sites easily with the ability to safely load and unload into and from a transportation rig/vehicle or trailer, and while deployed stand quietly while tethered.

5.1.3 Demonstrate the ability to work independently of other equines while under saddle, as well as with other equines.

5.1.4 Demonstrate the ability to willingly move forward in a variety of gaits (that is, walk, trot, rack, or canter, or combinations thereof) and stop on command by the rider.

5.1.5 Demonstrate the ability to turn left and right on command by the rider.

5.1.6 Demonstrate the ability to turn 180 degrees within close quarters by the rider.

5.1.7 Demonstrate the ability to move backwards on command by the rider.

5.1.8 Demonstrate the ability to ford creeks/streams, and cross bridges and roadways.

5.1.9 Rider and equine demonstrate the ability to safely negotiate obstacles or hazards commonly found within the normal response region or both.

5.1.10 Equine demonstrates the ability to be ponied by another equine as well as pony another equine. Rider demonstrate the appropriate related KSA.

5.1.11 Demonstrate the ability to stand quietly while under saddle on varied terrain conditions up to angles of 40 degrees.

5.1.12 Rider and equine must demonstrate the ability to perform in the environments commonly found within the response area (that is, rain, fog, heat, cold). Nothing within this guide precludes an Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) or Responsible Authority from adding additional requirements for MSAR responders within their region. Some AHJ's may require a higher KSA level for MSAR night deployment.

## 6. Equine and Rider Field KSA Evaluation Process

6.1 In order to validate basic MSAR knowledge, skills, and abilities (see Refs 1-3), equine and rider evaluations should be conducted in a controlled environment on an individual basis. It is recommended that two MSAR evaluators observe each equine and rider during the evaluation or validation process.

6.2 MSAR equine and rider shall be evaluated prior to becoming a deployable resource and should retest an evaluation every 3 years, or at the recommended intervals as prescribed by the AHJ.

6.3 MSAR personnel with more than one mount shall test on each additional equine at intervals as prescribed by the AHJ.

## 7. Keywords

7.1 equine; horse; mounted; MSAR; ponying

## REFERENCES

- (1) The United States Pony Club Manual of Horsemanship: Basics for Beginners/D Level (Howell reference books, by Susan E. Harris, ISBN: 978-0-87605-952-4), or an equivalent basic horsemanship manual used within an MSAR region of operation.
- (2) Virginia Department of Emergency Management, 2006 Equine SAR Standards <http://www.vasarco.net/VASARCO/Standards/EquineStandardsFinal2006.pdf>.
- (3) Maine Association for Search and Rescue Mounted SAR Standard. Rev 0 – 8 February 2004 [http://emahosting.com/masar/MASAR\\_Documents/Mounted%20Team%20Certification/Mounted%20Team%20Certification%20Standard%20Rev%200.pdf](http://emahosting.com/masar/MASAR_Documents/Mounted%20Team%20Certification/Mounted%20Team%20Certification%20Standard%20Rev%200.pdf).

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