



Standard Classification of Human Search and Rescue Resources ¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This classification is intended to aid search and rescue (SAR) managers in ordering resources for search and rescue incidents and to aid in communicating the types of tasks for which search and rescue crews have been trained.

1.2 This classification is intended as a supplement to the resource typing specifications of the Incident Command System and specifically as a means of typing human resources used in search and rescue activities.

1.3 This classification is suitable for classifying search and rescue crews for a wide variety of emergency management purposes.

1.4 This classification does not attempt to classify individuals or put forth standards of performance or training for individuals, nor is it meant to convey certification, skill proficiency or other measures of the level of performance of the resource. These qualifications are the responsibility of the local agencies responsible for utilizing the resource.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

F 1633 Guide for Techniques in Land Search²

F 1848 Classification of Search and Rescue Dog Crews/Teams²

2.2 NFPA Standard:

NFPA 1670 Operation and Training for Technical Rescue Incidents³

2.3 International Fire Service Training Association Standard:

ICS 420 Incident Command System Field Operations Guide⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Terminology not defined in this guide but referenced in the text can be found in Guide F 1633 and Classification F 1848.

¹ This guide 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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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 13.02.

³ Available from National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, PO Box, 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

⁴ Available from the International Fire Service Training Association, Fire Protection Publications, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

3.1.1 *wilderness, n*—an uncultivated, uninhabited and natural area, usually but not necessarily, far from human civilizations and trappings.

3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—Wilderness areas often include collections of various environments such as forests, mountains, deserts, natural parks, animal refuges, rain forests and so forth. Depending upon terrain and environmental factors, a wilderness can be as little as a few minutes into the backcountry or less than a few feet off the roadway. (NFPA 1670)

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Typing of human resources in SAR is based upon the building and deployment of crews and teams for specific tasks. Because of the wide variety of tasks which are performed during SAR incidents, three common types of resources are acknowledged: search; rescue; and untrained resources.

4.2 The nature of typical search and rescue incidents in local jurisdictions and the financial resources of the local jurisdiction will dictate which types and kinds of resources will be maintained by the jurisdictions. Not all types or kinds of resources are expected to be available in all jurisdictions.

4.3 Kind classifications of human resources are based upon the specific environments in which SAR crews are asked to work. Specialties, of which there are many, within each of the kind classifications are not acknowledged by this classification. It is up to the jurisdiction ordering resources to ascertain whether additional subcategories of kind classifications are appropriate for the task at hand. These categories might include special capabilities for weather or terrain extremes, or for any other unusual circumstances or requirements.

4.4 SAR crews may be classified as more than one kind but not as more than one type.

5. Classification of Human Search and Rescue Resource Types

5.1 There are four types of human search and rescue resources, as follows:

5.1.1 *Type I*—Crews trained in both search and rescue techniques,

5.1.2 *Type II*—Crews trained in search techniques,

5.1.3 *Type III*—Crews trained in rescue techniques, and

5.1.4 *Type IV*—Crews untrained in either search or rescue techniques.

6. Classification of Human Search and Rescue Resource Kinds

6.1 There are twelve kinds of human search and rescue resources, as follows:

6.1.1 *Kind A*—Wilderness; crew/team trained to work in wilderness areas of varied terrain,

6.1.2 *Kind B*—Urban; crew/team trained to work in urban areas,

6.1.3 *Kind C*—Mountainous; crew/team trained to work in mountainous and alpine terrain and with both high and low angle rescue systems,

6.1.4 *Kind D*—Disaster/collapsed structure; crew/team trained to work in failed manmade structures and natural debris fields (including confined spaces),

6.1.5 *Kind E*—Inland water; crew/team trained to work in and along bodies of water including swift-water and ice,

6.1.6 *Kind F*—Marine water; crew/team trained to work in and along oceans,

6.1.7 *Kind G*—Cave; crew/team trained to work in the confined spaces of caves,

6.1.8 *Kind H*—Mine; crew/team trained to work in mines,

6.1.9 *Kind I*—Avalanche; crew/team trained to work in and around avalanche debris fields,

6.1.10 *Kind J*—Evidence/cadaver; crew/team trained to search for inanimate objects and human remains,

6.1.11 *Kind K*—Aircraft; crew/team trained to search for missing aircraft, and

6.1.12 *Kind L*—Unclassified; a search or rescue crew that does not have any of the above specialties.

7. Keywords

7.1 incident command system; resource typing

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