

TITLE 10 PUBLIC SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT
CHAPTER 24 SEARCH AND RESCUE
PART 1 CERTIFICATION FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE PERSONS

10.24.1.1 ISSUING AGENCY: Department of Public Safety.
[10.24.1.1 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.2 SCOPE: This rule applies to all persons who desire to obtain and maintain a certification with the New Mexico department of public safety, search and rescue (SAR).
[10.24.1.2 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Section 24-15A-5 NMSA 1978 and Section 9-19-6(E) NMSA 1978.
[10.24.1.3 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.4 DURATION: Permanent.
[10.24.1.4 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: June 27, 2017, unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
[10.24.1.5 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.6 OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this rule is to provide a system of certification and maintenance of certification of search and rescue persons.
[10.24.1.6 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.7 DEFINITIONS: In addition to the definitions set forth in the Search and Rescue Act, Section 24-15A-3 NMSA 1978, the following terms are defined:

A. Agency administrator means the chief of the New Mexico state police. The chief may appoint an agency administrator designee for search and rescue (SAR) matters.

B. Field coordinator means a SAR person certified by the department of public safety to act as incident commander for a SAR mission.

C. Incident command system means a standardized system for the command, control, and coordination of emergency response operations for search and rescue.

D. Incident commander means the person within the incident command system officially assigned to manage a SAR incident.

E. Probation status means the status of a certification of a SAR field coordinator, incident command system general staff, or SAR person or volunteer, when the certification is not current on maintenance of certification requirements, but is still eligible to meet the requirements at a later time.

F. SAR incident command system general staff means a SAR person working SAR management under the incident command system on a SAR mission.

G. SAR resource officer means the official located within the department of public safety responsible for coordinating SAR resources and administering the state SAR plan.

H. SAR review board means the policy advisory committee whose duty it is to evaluate the operation of the New Mexico search and rescue plan, evaluate problems of specific missions, and make findings of fact and recommendations to the chief and other appropriate authorities.

I. SAR person means a person who volunteers or provides time and equipment to aid in SAR missions.

J. Section chief means a person who has the responsibility for a major functional area of a SAR mission, such as operations, plans, logistics, or finance and administration. Section chiefs report directly to the incident commander and are part of the incident command system general staff.

K. Special operations commander means the commander of the New Mexico state police special operations bureau.

L. Type means a graded management system that is based on experience and training for the selection of a SAR field coordinator or incident command system general staff. The measurement correlates to the level of complexity of the mission in which a SAR field coordinator or incident command system general staff may participate, with type I being the most complex.

10.24.1.8 SYSTEM OF CERTIFICATION:

A. Certification for field coordinator:

(1) Certification is required for SAR persons or volunteers in order to act as field coordinators. To be certified as a field coordinator an applicant must:

- (a) submit an application with the New Mexico department of public safety;
- (b) successfully complete a SAR management course and other criteria for qualifications as required by the New Mexico department of public safety;
- (c) complete the training standards for field coordinators which will comprise of a minimum of 40 hours of training, and may include, but is not limited to, management of SAR resources, development of goals and objectives, and search theory applications; and
- (d) receive final approval for certification from the SAR review board and the agency administrator.

(2) Levels of certification:

- (a) Field coordinators will be certified as type I, type II, type III or type IV according to experience and performance.
- (b) A field coordinator will initially be designated as type IV and may advance up to a type I certification.
- (c) The agency administrator will provide final approval of advancement to higher certification types.

B. Certification for incident command system general staff:

(1) Certification is encouraged and preferred, but is not required, for a person to be recognized and to act as a SAR incident command system general staff. Additionally, training and certification for section chiefs may be required in order to be a listed resource in the SAR resource directory. An applicant wishing to receive certification as a member of the incident command system general staff must:

- (a) submit an application supplied by the SAR resource officer;
- (b) successfully complete an incident command system general staff course and other criteria for minimum qualifications as required by the New Mexico department of public safety;
- (c) complete the training standards for incident command general staff which will comprise of a minimum of 16 hours of training, and which may include, but is not limited to, leadership and supervisory responsibilities, and development of search strategies and communications; and
- (d) receive final approval for certification from the SAR resource officer and agency administrator.

(2) Levels of certification:

- (a) Incident command system general staff will be certified as type I, type II or type III according to experience and performance.
- (b) Incident command system general staff will initially be designated as type III.
- (c) Requests to advance to a higher certification type will be reviewed and approved by the SAR resource officer.

C. Certification for SAR person or volunteer:

(1) Certification is encouraged, but not required, for a person to be recognized and to participate as a SAR person or volunteer. To become a certified SAR person or volunteer, an applicant must:

- (a) submit a questionnaire supplied by the SAR resource officer;
- (b) meet the criteria for minimum qualifications as established by the agency administrator;
- (c) successfully complete training as required by the New Mexico department of public safety;
- (d) complete the field certification training, which will comprise of a minimum of eight hours of training, and which may include communications, navigation and gear requirements, and other training as determined necessary by the SAR resource officer; and
- (e) receive approval for certification by the SAR resource officer and agency administrator.

(2) Levels of certification: There are no specified levels of certification developed for the SAR person or volunteer.

D. Levels of certification established: The agency administrator may develop additional levels of certification for volunteers with search and rescue beyond those described above.

E. Training Standards and Lesson Plans: The search and rescue resource officer will determine training standards, and will prepare and update lesson plans for optimal educational teaching effectiveness. The SAR review board will review the training curriculum and recommend approval to the agency administrator.
[10.24.1.8 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.9 MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION:

A. Maintenance of certification for field coordinator:

- (1) Annual maintenance training is required to maintain field coordinator certification.
- (2) The maintenance of certification training programs for field coordinators shall provide a minimum total of eight hours of training.
- (3) Any field coordinator that is unable to complete the maintenance of certification training within the year will be placed on probation status and must attend the next maintenance of certification training provided in order to be removed from probation status.
- (4) If the maintenance of certification training is not completed within the next 12 months, it shall be basis for removal from the field coordinator position and from certification as field coordinator.
- (5) A certification that is on probation status is still active and valid unless the certification is suspended or has been revoked.

B. Maintenance of certification for incident command system general staff:

- (1) Training is required every three years to maintain incident command system general staff certification.
- (2) The maintenance of certification training programs for the incident command system general staff shall provide a minimum total of eight hours of training.
- (3) Any person certified in an incident command system general staff position that is unable to complete the maintenance of certification training within the year after it becomes due will have his or her certification placed on probation status and must attend the next maintenance of certification training provided in order to be removed from probation status.
- (4) If the maintenance of certification training is not completed within the next 12 months after it is due, it shall be basis for removal from incident command system general staff certification status.
- (5) A certification that is on probation status is still active and valid unless the certification is suspended or has been revoked.

C. Maintenance of certification for SAR persons or volunteers:

- (1) Training is required every three years to maintain SAR person or volunteer certification.
- (2) The maintenance of certification training programs for SAR persons or volunteers shall provide a minimum total of two hours of on-line training or in person training.
- (3) If the maintenance of certification training is not completed within the three-year period, the certification will be placed on probation status.
- (4) If the maintenance of certification training is not completed within the next 12 months after it is due, it shall be basis for removal from SAR person or volunteer certification status.
- (5) A certification that is on probation status is still active and valid unless the certification is suspended or has been revoked.

[10.24.1.9 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.10 ADDITIONAL CERTIFYING ORGANIZATIONS:

This rule shall not prevent the New Mexico department of public safety from entering into a written agreement for search and rescue certifications and trainings through an outside certifying body. The SAR review board will review the training curriculum and recommend approval to the agency administrator. That certifying body's program for certification, as agreed upon by the department of public safety, would then take the place of the system of certification or maintenance of certification within this rule and shall be adhered to by the field coordinators, incident command system general staff, and SAR person or volunteers.

[10.24.1.10 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

10.24.1.11 DENIAL OF CERTIFICATION, DECERTIFICATION, AND REVIEW:

A. Denial, suspension, or revocation of certification: SAR persons seeking certification as a field coordinator, incident command system general staff, or SAR person or volunteer may have their request for

certification denied within the discretion of the agency administrator for not having met the criteria as established in this rule. SAR persons holding any certification issued by the New Mexico department of public safety can be decertified, or have their certification suspended, as determined within the discretion of the agency administrator for lack of compliance with the standard of care, performance considerations, or improper conduct. Upon decertification, the individual will be required to return any identification cards and equipment that he or she possesses that was issued to the individual by the department of public safety related to that certification.

B. Procedure for denial, suspension, or revocation of certification of field coordinator, incident command general staff, or SAR person or volunteer:

(1) A decision to deny, suspend, or revoke certification will be recommended by the search and rescue resource officer to the agency administrator through the special operations commander.

(2) After reviewing the facts and circumstances, the special operations commander may accept or reach a different outcome than the recommendation of search and rescue resource officer.

(3) If a decision is made to deny, suspend, or revoke a certification, the special operations commander will issue or have a letter issued to the volunteer whose certification is impacted.

C. Procedure for requesting informal meeting:

(1) The volunteer whose certification is impacted will have 30 calendar days from the date of delivery to make a written request to the special operations commander to reconsider the decision to deny, suspend, or revoke a certification. The request shall include the basis for reconsideration and documents or items to be considered.

(2) After a written request for reconsideration of the decision is received, an informal meeting with the volunteer and special operations commander will be arranged to determine whether to continue with the decision to deny, suspend, or revoke a certification.

(3) The decision by the special operations commander will be made within 10 business days from the date of the informal meeting, unless more time is needed based on the complexity of the facts and circumstances.

(4) The decision of the special operations commander to deny, suspend, or revoke certification will be reported to the SAR review board subsequent to either the informal meeting or the expiration of time to request an informal meeting, in the event an informal meeting was not requested.

D. SAR review board review of denial, suspension, or revocation of certification:

(1) After the SAR review board receives the decision of the special operations commander to deny, suspend, or revoke certification, it will make a recommendation to the agency administrator on a course of action to take regarding the volunteer's certification.

(2) A volunteer whose certification is impacted may make a written request to be heard by the SAR review board if the volunteer previously requested an informal meeting and the request is made before a recommendation is reached. The volunteer will be provided an opportunity to be heard for a period of time as permitted by the SAR review board.

(3) The agency administrator will have notification sent to the volunteer of the final decision concerning the matter after having reviewed the facts and circumstances, along with the recommendation of the SAR review board.

[10.24.1.11 NMAC - N, 6-27-17]

HISTORY OF 10.24.1 NMAC: [Reserved]