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Standard Guide for Hazard Awareness for Search and Rescue Personnel¹

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INTRODUCTION

Recognition of hazards associated with search and rescue operations is critical to the decision-making process as it relates to personal safety, the urgency of response, and resource requirements. This guide is intended to ensure that emergency personnel responding to incidents outside their normal operating area are aware of the hazards associated with response to unfamiliar environments.

1. Scope

1.1 This guide is intended for training those who normally work in natural environments solely subject to terrain and weather-related risks who may be asked to respond to, or who may encounter, the operations defined in 1.2.

1.2 This guide identifies and describes hazardous situations and environments, and the associated risks affecting search and rescue personnel who may be working on or around the following:

- 1.2.1 Land search;
- 1.2.2 Land rescue;
- 1.2.3 Structural collapse;
- 1.2.4 Rope rescues;
- 1.2.5 Confined spaces;
- 1.2.6 Water, both still and moving; and
- 1.2.7 Trench or excavation collapse.

1.3 The knowledge conveyed in this guide is intended to enable search and rescue (SAR) personnel to recognize situations that may require skills or capabilities they have not been trained to perform. This understanding will allow them to seek more knowledgeable personnel to mitigate the hazard and perform such rescues or other activities required to complete their mission.

1.4 This guide is not intended to suggest that all search and rescue personnel must have the training identified within it. However, wherever the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) deems this training to be appropriate, this document can be used as a guide.

1.5 The AHJ shall determine what level of training constitutes sufficient competence for search and rescue personnel to enter areas or carry out missions, which include the hazards described in this guide.

1.6 This guide identifies some of the known disciplines of SAR and their associated hazards. It does not, however, attempt to list all hazards or risks of which a person must be aware to operate safely and effectively in and around any of the areas listed in 1.1.

1.7 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.8 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

F1773 Terminology Relating to Climbing, Mountaineering, Search and Rescue Equipment and Practices (Withdrawn 2024)³

F2209 Guide for Training of Land Search Team Member

3. Terminology

3.1 *Acronyms:*

3.1.1 *AHJ*—Authority Having Jurisdiction

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.03 on Personnel, Training and Education.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.