

SARVAC GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE NATIONAL
ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION (GSAR-NACP) PILOT
PROJECT CERTIFICATION: SEARCHER, TEAM LEADER AND SAR
MANAGER



SARVAC Ground Search and Rescue National Accreditation and Certification (GSAR-NACP) Pilot Project Certification: Searcher, Team Leader and SAR Manager

UNDERSTANDING THE PILOT

Purpose

The Ground Search and Rescue National Accreditation and Certification Pilot is set to begin Certification of candidates as part of the Pilot Project in early 2022. This document is intended to provide participants with the information they need to know. If you are seeking further information or clarification on anything in this document you can refer to the Requirements and Guidelines Governing Accreditation and Certification (R&G 2.1 and 2.2). You can contact The Administration Office of the GSAR-NACP by email at nacpadmin@sarvac.ca or the Project Lead, Paul Olshefsky, at paulolshefsky@sarvac.ca for copies of these documents or any comments, questions or concerns.

Timeline of the Pilot

The Pilot will begin certification in early 2022. At this time the pilot will start with a sample of volunteers from one province at a time and will be certifying Searchers only. As the pilot progresses, additional provinces and territories will be added to undergo the Searchers Certification process. This will progress in a similar fashion with Team Leaders and then finally SAR Managers.

At this time, in the pilot the focus is on Certification. However, don't worry! Accreditation will be addressed at a later date in 2022.

What is Certification?

Certification as part of this program is **National** Recognition that a Searcher, Team Leader and/or SAR Manager have met and are fully trained to the *CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standards for ground search and rescue operations: Searcher, Team Leader, and SAR Manager*. (<https://sarvac.ca/core-training-competency-standards/>)

But my Association has its own standards or is already completing training?

It is evident through the past successes of GSAR in Canada that GSAR Volunteers are consistently training. This program is providing them with the resources to continue those efforts and an opportunity to have that dedication be recognized Nationally. The GSAR-NACP will also provide resources to Associations and Groups/Teams as to how to get started on meeting the National Standards and how to keep accurate and consistent training records for volunteers. The GSAR-NACP further promotes SARVAC's guiding principles for cooperation and collaboration between

Provinces and Territories by setting a minimum training standard. This program will provide a platform for volunteers meeting those standards to be rewarded. It is not meant to overstep the work Associations are doing for their own training. It is meant to be a national guide to training based on the meeting of the *CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standards*.

What about Technical Training (ex: swift water or high angle?) are these included in Certification?

At this time, National Certification and Accreditation from SARVAC is based only on the SARVAC *CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standards*. This project is not meant to overstep or replace any work that Associations or Groups are doing. The GSAR-NACP is meant to provide a opportunity for National recognition for meeting a baseline of training to assist uniformity across Canada. Groups/Associations/AHJ's should audit their current training practices to identify any gaps between how they currently train and what are required competencies for the program. Again, this program is not meant to replace current training, but rather reward it!

Associations and/or AHJ Role

- Review training standards for your province, compare to the *CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standards*.
- Assist groups in adjusting training to ensure the curriculum categories are met.
- Work with the GSAR-NACP National Committee and Administration office and individual groups to assign a "Qualified Assessor".
- Be familiar with the process' and policies outlined in R&G 2.1 and 2.2 documents.

SAR Group (Team) Role

- Review group training standards and practices, compare to the *CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standards*
- Assist individuals in accessing past training records to inquire what competencies have already been met.
- Work with Assessors to assist individuals requiring Accommodations for training.
- Be familiar with the process' and policies outlined in R&G 2.1 and 2.2 documents.

Who is a "Qualified Assessor"?

An Assessor, or Verifier, is simply someone who attests to the training groups have completed. The GSAR-NACP Administration Office will keep an updated "Qualified Assessor" list on the SARVAC website. Individuals who are applying for certification can review the list of "Qualified Assessors".

Most Associations and/or AHJ's will require multiple "Qualified Assessors" and may want several per region, one per group, etc. The project understands the varying needs across Canada and the R&G documents account for this.

There are several challenges that may present to also require more than one Assessor per Association and/or AHJ. These relate to potentially arising conflicts of interest.

The Assessor is the individual providing written confirmation to the GSAR-NACP Administration Office that the individuals training requirements have been satisfactorily met and that they are recommended for National Certification. The "Qualified Assessor" can be a Group/Team Coordinator, Training Officer, experienced long-standing member – whatever works best for the volunteers of the Association and/or AHJ.

Individuals Role

- Work with GSAR-NACP office to complete training timely manner
- Keep complete, organized and accurate training records to assist with the application of training
- Be familiar with the process' and policies outlined in R&G 2.1 and 2.2 documents.

What if there are issues taken with the process, the Administration Office, Assessors, etc...?

The GSAR-NACP National Committee will be responsible for any issues, dispute resolution, appeals, etc. individuals can contact the GSAR-NACP National Committee by emailing the GSAR-NACP Administration Office at nacpadmin@sarvac.ca to initiate the process.

The Steps to Certification



Step 1:

Visit the SARVAC website to obtain an application package.

Application Package will include:

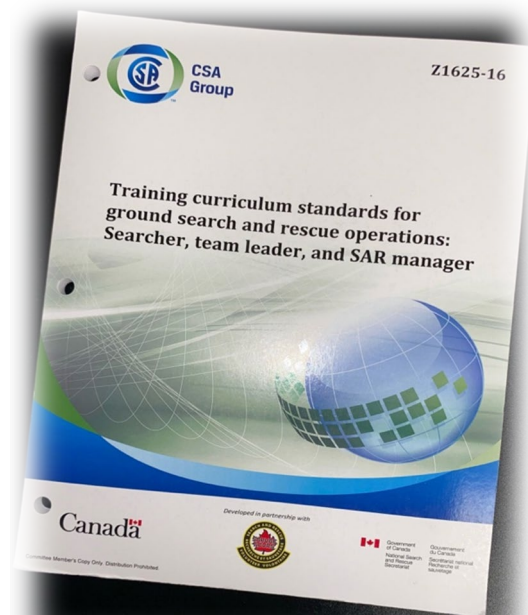
- Instructions to email the GSAR-NACP Administration Office to notify the office of your intent to apply for National Certification. nacpadmin@sarvac.ca
 - Remember: applications only have 12 months to complete the certification process. The 12 months starts from the time of their initial email to the GSAR-NACP Administration Office is received.
- Access the “Qualified Assessors” list from the SARVAC website and determine who will be the closest Assessor to them.



Step 2:

Complete the requirements outlined on in the Application Package, which are:

- All Searcher training as outlined in *CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standard (see checklist on next page)*.
- Have “Qualified Assessor” sign off on training completed.



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Step 3:

Complete the Application Package with other required information, including:

- Pre-requisite documents:
 - *CSA Z1620-15 Core competency standards checklist*
 - Field experience checklist
 - GSAR-NACP Online Exam Certificate
 - Certification of Age of Majority
 - Certification of Vaccination status met (to satisfy resident P/T or Federal requirements).
- Membership declaration
- Date of application and completion
- Age of Majority declaration

Step 4:

Send Application Package to GSAR-NACP Administration Office.

- Upon successful completion the GSAR-NACP Administration Office will provide feedback on certification within 20 business days of application
- Candidate must recertify every 2 years in order to keep their Certification in Good Standing.
 - Recertification will include attesting to continued training and education once contacted by the GSAR-NACP Administration Office to recertify.

Step 5:

Be proud of the National Certification designation and promote the designation to fellow SAR members across Canada!