



Ground Search and Rescue
Certification Program

National Certification Appeals Process

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Complaints and Appeals	1
Grounds for a complaint or appeal.....	1
Submitting a Complaint or Requesting an Appeal.....	2
1 Complaints	2
2 Procedural appeals	2
2.1 General	2
2.2 Submitting a procedural appeal	2
2.3 Processing a procedural appeal	3
2.4 Review.....	3
2.5 Meetings	4

Complaints and Appeals

The SARVAC Ground Search and Rescue National Certification Program (GSAR-NCP) is committed to fair, transparent and effective processes which include internal appeals. The internal appeals process provides an opportunity to re-examination decisions made by the GSAR-NCP Administration Office and SARVAC board.

Grounds for a complaint or appeal

There must be a legitimate reason or grounds for a complaint or request for an appeal; simply disagreeing with a decision is not sufficient. The purpose of a complaint or an appeal is not to repeat the original subject, application or procedure. Generally, for a complaint or an appeal to be considered, the following conditions would apply:

- a) The individual did not have a fair opportunity to present their case;
- b) The agency or individual making the original judgment was not/were not impartial;
- c) The process, policy or rule that was applied is flawed, unfair, or unreasonable. Here the process or rule itself is challenged rather than the specific application of the process;
- d) The correct facts were not considered and contributed to an error in the decision; and/or
- e) The correct rule or policy was not applied when making the decision.

Complaints or appeals will be considered from any party associated with the original subject or application. Individuals who were not a party to the original application and procedures cannot appeal the decision of the GSAR-NCP Administration Office or SARVAC board.

Submitting a Complaint or Requesting an Appeal

To file a complaint, a person must direct their issue and outline the grounds for the complaint to the GSAR-NCP Administration Office. The complaint must be writing and may be delivered by email, or by mail within 30 calendars days from the date the decision or action that is subject to the complaint was made.

To file a request for an appeal, a person must complete the *Request for an Appeal Form*, which asks the appellant to provide details on the grounds for the complaint or appeal as well as the solution or remedy they would propose.

The Request for an Appeal must be submitted to the GSAR-NCP Administration Office within 30 calendar days from the date the decision that is being appealed was made. It may be delivered by email, or by mail directly to the GSAR-NCP Administration Office. There is no cost for requesting an appeal.

1 Complaints

Complaints shall be directed to the GSAR-NCP Administration Office for action in accordance with internal procedures and shall be provided impartial treatment.

SARVAC GSAR-NCP procedures shall:

- a) deal with complaints and appeals promptly;
- b) provide accessibility to the process to materially interested parties; and,
- c) identify the SARVAC Board's role in the appeal process.

2 Procedural appeals

2.1 General

After having a complaint managed through the complaints process in Clause 1, any individual who believes that activities associated with certification were subject to procedures that do not conform to the GSAR-NCP Requirements and Guidelines (2.2 Certification) may appeal to the SARVAC board for a review.

A procedural appeal shall be based on procedural matters and not on technical considerations.

2.2 Submitting a procedural appeal

Before an appeal regarding procedures is brought to the SARVAC board. the appellant should discuss the matter with GSAR-NCP Administration Office as this may lead to improved understanding and to a resolution that requires no further action.

All procedural appeals shall be submitted in writing, addressed to the chair of the SARVAC board, and should

- a) define the specific item that, in the opinion of the appellant, did not receive proper consideration;
- b) quote the specific requirement or guideline (by clause number) that allegedly was not followed; and
- c) include documentation in support of the appeal.

2.3 Processing a procedural appeal

On receipt of an appeal, the GSAR-NCP Administration Office shall advise the Chair of the SARVAC board, and request copies of documents be submitted within 21 days, showing all action taken in relation to the subject of the appeal.

The Chair of the SARVAC board shall review available documentation and, through discussion with the GSAR-NCP Administration Office, appellant, and other parties as appropriate, recommend a course of action acceptable to the parties involved.

Appeals to the SARVAC board shall be handled by correspondence except that, when the chair of the SARVAC board deems it necessary, a meeting of the SARVAC board may be called to review a particular appeal (see Clause 2.5).

If the matter cannot be resolved as a result of action taken in accordance with Clause 2.3.2, the Chair of the SARVAC board, shall forward copies of the appellant's submission to all members of the SARVAC board, and shall request their decision within 21 days.

Affirmative votes by at least two-thirds of the total voting membership of the SARVAC board shall be required to uphold the appeal.

The appellant shall be notified of the decision of the SARVAC board and GSAR-NCP Administration Office staff shall implement the decision as necessary.

2.4 Review

The decision of the SARVAC board shall be final.

If an appeal and the decision of the SARVAC board, more specifically, addresses the suspension or revocation of an individual's certification and/or associated membership, as a result of any disciplinary activities, the SARVAC board of Directors may, by special resolution, rescind or alter the action.

2.5 Meetings

When, in the opinion of the Chair of the SARVAC board, a meeting of the SARVAC board is necessary to review a particular appeal, the Administration Office, acting as a Secretary for the SARVAC board, shall call a meeting within 21 days.

Note: Consideration should be given to inviting the appellant, and GSAR-NCP Administration Office staff.