



Ground Search and Rescue  
National Certification Program

# **GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines governing certification**

## **Part 1: Organizational Structure and Participants**

## Legal Notice

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*Administrative Note Legal notice to be developed in consideration of ISO/IEC 17024, Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons, Clause 4 – General Requirements addressing legal matters, responsibility for decision on certification, management of impartiality, and finance and liability.*

GSAR-NCP-R&G-2.1:2024

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## **Part 1: Organizational structure and participants**



Ground Search and Rescue  
National Certification Program

Published by the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada  
24 McNamara Drive, Paradise, NL A1L 0A6

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## Preface

This is the first edition of the *GSAR-NCP-R&G-2.1:2024, GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines governing certification, Part 1: Organizational structure and participants*, a document that supports the Ground Search and Rescue Certification Program (GSAR-NCP). The *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines governing certification* are hereinafter referred to as the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines*. It is replacing the *GSAR-NACP Requirements and guidelines governing accreditation and certification Part 1: Organizational Structure and Participants*.

The Ground Search and Rescue Certification Program (GSAR-NCP) is intended to support Provincial and Territorial Ground Search and Rescue organizations and the Authorities Having Jurisdiction in satisfying development, updating and the enhancement of training requirements.

The content of the GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines fall within national/international industry standards for certification programs, thus supporting and evaluating competencies of Ground Search and Rescue (SAR) volunteers for three (3) core roles in ground search and rescue operations: Searcher, Team Leader, and SAR Manager.

Users should understand that the GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines do not have the force of law unless mandated by legislation or referenced in regulations of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). Users are advised to contact the AHJ in their area to determine the extent that this document is referenced.

The GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines were developed through a highly collaborative effort between the SARVAC, AHJ's, and the SAR Community as a whole. Numerous manuals and reference materials were consulted in the development of this document.

CSA Group gratefully acknowledges the financial and in-kind support from SARVAC, and financial support of the Government of Canada through the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SARNIF).

Interested parties may request copies of *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines by email* ([nacpadmin@sarvac.ca](mailto:nacpadmin@sarvac.ca)) through the GSAR-NCP Administration Office or on the SARVAC website: [www.sarvac.ca](http://www.sarvac.ca)

### Notes:

- 1) Use of the singular does not exclude the plural (and vice versa) when the sense allows.
- 2) Although the intended primary application of the GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines is stated in the Scope, it is important to note that it remains the responsibility of the users of the GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines to judge its suitability for their particular purpose.
- 3) The GSAR-NCP model was developed by consensus, which is defined by CSA Policy governing standardization – Code of good practice for standardization as “substantial agreement”. Consensus implies much more than a simple majority, but not necessarily “unanimity”.
- 4) All inquiries regarding this publication should be addressed to the GSAR-NCP Administration Office, Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada, 24 McNamara Drive, Paradise, NL A1L 0A6, [www.sarvac.ca](http://www.sarvac.ca).

# **GSAR-NCP-R&G-2.1:2024**

## ***GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines governing certification, Part 1: Organizational structure and participants***

### **0. Introduction**

#### **0.1 Procedural documentation**

The GSAR - NCP Requirements and guidelines governing certification (GSAR-NCP-R&G-2.2:2024, GSAR-NEP-R&G-2.3:2024, and this document) set forth the requirements and guidelines of the Ground Search and Rescue National Certification Program (GSAR-NCP).

#### **0.2 Proposals for change to this part of the GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines**

Proposals for change to this part of the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines* should be submitted in writing to the GSAR-NCP Administration Office at [nacpadmin@sarvac.ca](mailto:nacpadmin@sarvac.ca).

### **1. Scope**

#### **1.1 Purpose**

This Part of the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines* sets forth the policies and procedures of the GSAR-NCP regarding the organizational structure and operations of:

- a) the SARVAC Board of Directors,
- b) any Committees or Panels deemed necessary; and
- c) the GSAR-NCP Administration Office.

#### **1.2 Application**

This part of the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines* also sets forth policies and procedures of the GSAR-NCP regarding participation in certification activities. This includes the selection, appointment, roles, and responsibilities of the participants.

#### **1.3 Terminology**

In this part of the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines*, “shall” is used to express a requirement, i.e., a provision that the user is obliged to satisfy in order to comply with the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines*; “should” is used to express a recommendation or that which is advised but not required; “may” is used to express an option or that which is permissible within the limits of the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines*; and “can” is used to express possibility or capability. Where the term “authorize” has been used, a motion by the appropriate committee, or permission by designated GSAR-NCP administration staff, is required. Where the term “approve” has been used, a recorded vote is required.

## **2. Definitions and abbreviations**

### **2.1 Definitions**

The following definitions apply in this Part of the *CSA Directives and guidelines*:

Alternate — an individual who is authorized to act for a member of a committee in that member's absence.

Committee member — an individual or the representative of a stakeholder interest that supports the scope of the committee, and who has been appointed to a committee because of special knowledge/expertise.

Consensus — substantial agreement. Consensus implies much more than a simple majority, but not necessarily unanimity.

Interest — the perspective of a committee member in the context of the purpose and scope of the committee.

Matrix — the total membership of a committee expressed in terms of interest categories (e.g., Practitioners, Authorities Having Jurisdiction, Public Safety Canada) rather than specific names or affiliations.

SAR Group – individuals establishing an organized GSAR response: consisting of Searchers, Team Leaders, SAR Managers and possibly specialized SAR trained personnel.

Stakeholder — an individual, group, or organization that is or will be directly and demonstrably affected by certification activities conducted under the authority of the SARVAC Board.

### **2.2 Abbreviations**

The following abbreviations apply in this document:

AHJ - Authority Having Jurisdiction

CSA - Canadian Standards Association

GSAR - Ground Search and Rescue

SARNIF – Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund

GSAR-NCP - Ground Search and Rescue National Certification Program

P/T – Province/Territory

SARVAC - Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada

GSAR – NEP – Ground Search and Rescue National Endorsement Program

### **3. References**

*CSA Z1620-24 Core competency standards for ground search and rescue operations: Searcher, Team Leader, and SAR Manager*

*CSA Z1625-24 Training curriculum standards ground search and rescue operations: Searcher, Team Leader, and SAR Manager*

*ISO/IEC 17024 Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*

GSAR-NACP Requirements and guidelines governing certification, Part 2: Certification process – Searcher, Team Leader, SAR Manager, 2024

## 4. Organizational Structure

### *Administrative Note*

*Guidelines (current and updated) to be developed in consideration of ISO/IEC 17024, Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons, Clause 5 – Structural Requirements addressing management and organization structure and structure of the certification body in relation to training.*

### 4.1 Scope

This requirement describes the organizational structure, including procedures for the preparation and approval of organizational or advisory committees/panels.

### 4.2 Organizational Structure

#### 4.2.1 General

Certification activity is facilitated and conducted through a formal organizational structure consisting of:

- a) the SARVAC Board of Directors;
- b) any Committees or Panels deemed necessary (See clauses 4.2.3); and
- c) the GSAR-NCP Administration Office.

Where necessary, this structure may be complemented by other groups, such as Committees and Panels.

This organizational structure reflects three key roles: governance oversight, strategic leadership for the program, and operational and technical development.

#### 4.2.2 Governance oversight level — SARVAC Board of Directors

The governance oversight level (the SARVAC Board of Directors) provides leadership and strategic direction for the national facilitated GSAR-NCP. SARVAC approves, maintains, and governs policy related to certification activities. It also approves the technical standards supporting certification requirements.

##### *Note:*

*Technical Committees, managed under directives accepted by the SARVAC Board of Directors, provide the expertise to understand relevant subject matter and ensure the technical integrity of published standards.*

#### 4.2.3 Strategic leadership level - Committees or Panels (when deemed necessary)

Committees or panels may provide broad-based direction for the national facilitated certification program to ensure that the strategic direction of the program is consistent with the needs of the GSAR community of practitioners, the AHJ, and other agencies that employ these practitioners. The committees or panels will consist of SARVAC Provincial and Territorial appointments.

#### **4.2.4 Operational and Technical level —GSAR-NCP Administration**

The operational level for the administration of the GSAR-NCP provides for the management and delivery of certification activities through a nationally facilitated program supported by technical standards approved by the SARVAC Board of Directors.

### **5. SARVAC Board of Directors**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The SARVAC Board of Directors provides oversight, guidance and required approval to the GSAR-NCP as described herein.

#### **5.2 SARVAC Board of Directors accountability**

The SARVAC Board of Directors consists of appointed P/T GSAR members and is accountable to their P/T Associations and/or AHJ, and SARVAC.

#### **5.3 SARVAC Board of Directors responsibilities**

The SARVAC Board of Directors provides leadership, strategic direction, and oversight of the certification program. This includes but not limited to:

- a) oversight of any committees or panels;
- b) approving certification program principles and policies;
- c) approving technical standards development policies; and
- d) providing feedback on major additions to GSAR-NCP subject and operational areas.

### **6. GSAR-NCP Committees or panels (when deemed necessary)**

#### **6.1 Scope**

Upon the requirement by SARVAC to establish committees or panels to support the GSAR-NCP, this clause describes the procedures/policies and roles and responsibilities of members/stakeholders dedicated to committees or panels.

#### **6.2 Establishing the GSAR-NCP Committee or panel**

The establishment of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel will be based on member selection guidance provided by CSA's Committee Selection Matrix. Any GSAR-NCP committee or panel shall be established with the approval of the SARVAC Board of Directors. The terms of reference of the GSAR-NCP committee or panel, including amendments, shall also be approved by the SARVAC Board of Directors.

#### **6.3 GSAR-NCP Committee or Panel Terms of Reference**

Any GSAR-NCP committee or panel Terms of Reference (Appendix A) shall include:

- a) a note indicating that the Terms of Reference is supplementary to the *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines*;
- b) broad objectives of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel activities with respect to certification activities;
- c) broad responsibilities with respect to the organization and operation supporting the GSAR-NCP;
- d) liaison with other stakeholders and supporting committees, as required;

- e) a representation matrix;
- f) the term of appointment of members to any GSAR-NCP committee or panel; and
- g) specific responsibility for oversight of the entire program.

*Note:*

*The GSAR-NCP committee or panel Terms of Reference shall be reviewed and updated as necessary and at least every five (5) years.*

## **6.4 Rules of operation**

Subject to the approval of the SARVAC Board of Directors, any GSAR-NCP committee or panel may establish additional rules of operation, provided they are consistent with these *Requirements and guidelines*. They shall be documented in the GSAR-NCP committee or panel Terms of Reference.

## **6.5 Responsibilities of any GSAR-NCP Committee or panel (when deemed necessary)**

GSAR-NCP committee or panel responsibilities shall include:

- a) working collaboratively with the SARVAC Board of Directors;
- b) identifying the needs and priorities of, and developing effective strategies, within the GSAR-NCP;
- c) reviewing and ensuring that GSAR training programs meet or exceed core competencies identified within the CSA GSAR Standards for Searchers, Team Leaders, and SAR Managers;
- d) assessing and providing feedback on the effectiveness of the GSAR-NCP in meeting the needs of stakeholders;
- e) in consultation with SARVAC Board of Directors, developing/recommending supporting technical committees and their work programs;
- f) receiving recommendations/issues/concerns brought forth by the SARVAC Board of Directors with regard to GSAR training programs;
- g) establishing and maintaining continuing liaisons as appropriate; and
- h) encouraging the promotion of GSAR-NCP and offering input concerning such promotional activities.

## **7. GSAR-NCP National Committee or panel participation**

### **7.1 Scope**

This clause describes the responsibilities of members of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel.

### **7.2 Participation**

#### **7.2.1 General**

The GSAR-NCP provides an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in its activities, including but not limited to any committee or panel membership. Participants shall be supportive of the program and be willing to invest the necessary time and effort.

## **7.2.2 Stakeholders**

Stakeholders may be provided the opportunity to participate in the GSAR-NCP. Stakeholders may be requested to participate in supporting activities for the purpose of consultation and review within the GSAR- NCP (See Clause 6.3).

## **7.2.3 GSAR-NCP Administration Office**

GSAR-NCP Administration Office is the operational and administrative support for the GSAR-NEP and its committees/panels as required. The Administration Office is not a decision-making body and does not participate as voting members within the GSAR-NCP.

## **7.3 Responsibilities of all members**

### **7.3.1 Ethics and conflict of interest**

All members and GSAR-NCP Administration Office alike are expected to carry out their activities in an ethical manner and to establish positive relationships with all stakeholders. It will be responsibility of committee or panel members and the GSAR-NCP Administration Office, to disclose to any GSAR-NCP committee or panel chair any actual or potential conflicts of interest connected with their role and responsibilities. A copy of the Code of Ethics can be located in the operational documents posted on [www.sarvac.ca](http://www.sarvac.ca).

### **7.3.2 Sensitive material and personal information**

Within the certification process, it is possible that GSAR-NCP Administration Office and any GSAR-NCP committee or panel members will be given access to sensitive materials identified as confidential, private or proprietary. Providers shall indicate the level of sensitivity of such material. The GSAR-NCP Administration Office and any GSAR-NCP committee or panel members are expected to respect this sensitivity at all times.

### **7.3.3 Support for achieving consensus**

Committee or panel members are expected to conduct themselves in a collaborative manner with the aim of achieving consensus. Inherent in this process is an obligation to:

- a) allow all committee or panel members the opportunity to have their viewpoints expressed;
- b) respect the opinions presented during committee or panel deliberations;
- c) refrain from behavior that obstructs the progress of the work; and
- d) adhere to the requirements found in *GSAR-NCP Requirements and guidelines*.

### **7.3.4 Member indemnity**

An endorsement for professional liability related to education has been added onto the existing "SARVAC Directors and Officers" (D&O) policy which provides indemnification of GSAR-NCP Committee Members and Employees.

## **7.4 Role and responsibilities of any GSAR-NCP National Committee or Panel Chair**

### **7.4.1 Selection and appointment**

The SARVAC Board of Directors will select and appoint a Chair of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel using the criteria outlined below.

### **7.4.2 Criteria for selection of any GSAR-NCP Committee or Panel Chair**

The evaluation for the selection of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel Chair shall ensure that the candidates are:

- a) able to be objective and act neutrally;
- b) knowledgeable in the subject concerned;
- c) progressive persons who are interested in the development of the GSAR community of practitioners;
- d) able to provide leadership through effective group-dynamics skills; and
- e) prepared to devote the time and resources necessary to meet the requirements of the program.

### **7.4.3 Chair conflict of interest**

The Chair has an obligation to the committee or panel to act impartially and to ensure that the program and associated processes operates impartially. If at any time, the Chair finds themselves in an actual or potential conflict of interest, they shall disclose this to the SARVAC Board of Directors. Substantiated allegations of conflict of interest by a Chair shall be cause for their removal as Chair.

### **7.4.4 Chair responsibilities**

A Chair shall:

- a) ensure that all members of the Committee or panel have the opportunity to express their viewpoints;
- b) conduct periodic reviews of the committee or panel membership and recommend changes as necessary;
- c) monitor the work program of the committee or panel, including progress against agreed target dates;
- d) assist the committee or panel in establishing subsidiary or supporting committees or panels and discharge the same upon completion of their work; and
- e) continuously monitor other program-related activities and establish liaisons where appropriate;
- f) authorize the appointment of all members to any committee or panel;
- g) review all requests from guests to attend meetings, and decide who should be permitted to attend; and
- h) review recorded vote results from committee actions, taking the necessary steps to address comments, and to deal with any negative votes.

***The Chair shall not be a designated voting member unless the situation arises where a tie-breaker vote is required.***

#### **7.4.5 Term of appointment of Chair**

Any GSAR-NCP committee or panel chair shall be appointed for a term consistent with the SARVAC Board of Director Chair position. Where there is an exception on the appointment of the SARVAC Board of Directors Chair, the selected Chair shall be appointed for a two-year term, and shall be eligible for reappointment. Reappointment shall use an open process. Any GSAR-NCP committee or panel chair appointment beyond the two-term limit, can only be authorized by the SARVAC Board of Directors.

#### **7.4.6 Removal of a Chair**

Regardless of the term of office, a Chair may be removed from office if such action is warranted and is in the best interest of the GSAR-NECP. SARVAC Board of Directors has the authority to remove the Chair via a majority vote.

### **7.5 Responsibilities of any GSAR-NCP Committee or panel Vice-Chair**

#### **7.5.1 Selection and appointment**

The SARVAC Board of Directors is expected to select and appoint the vice-chair of any GSAR-committee or panel who can ably represent the interests of Authorities Having Jurisdiction or a relatively similar stakeholder.

#### **7.5.2 Responsibilities of Vice-Chair**

The Vice-Chair shall act for the Chair when:

- a) the Chair cannot attend a meeting;
- b) the Chair wishes to participate in the discussion and therefore must relinquish the position in order to maintain its neutrality; and
- c) supervise and coordinate committees or panels as required.

### **7.6 Responsibilities of GSAR-NCP Administration Office**

The responsibilities of GSAR-NCP Administration Office regarding the management of committees shall include:

- a) ensuring the efficient and effective operation of any committee or panel;
- b) ensuring that the policies and procedures are followed;
- c) provide data management for certification records;
- d) provide regular reports to any committee or panel and SARVAC Executive Director as required;
- e) providing meeting management/logistical support including arranging meetings and preparing agendas in consultation with the Chair;
- f) recording meeting discussions; and distribution of minutes and ensure that minutes are distributed in accordance with the privacy policy and that;
- g) a copy of all material related to committee activities is forwarded any GSAR-NCP committee or panel and the SARVAC Board of Directors.

## **7.7 Committee or panel members**

### **7.7.1 Appointment of GSAR-NCP committee or panel members**

Any GSAR-NCP committee or panel members shall be approved by the SARVAC Board of Directors, in accordance with the representation matrix. The member shall be notified of their appointment by the SARVAC President or Executive Director.

The Chair may conduct periodic reviews of the membership; from the point of view of expertise, representation of stakeholders, geographical representation, and individual contribution. The Chair will take into account changes in the nature of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel's scope and/or changes in the interest of its members.

### **7.7.2 Restrictions on appointments**

An organization may be, for example, an Association, an Authority Having Jurisdiction, or an institution. On an exception basis, (approved by the SARVAC Board of Directors), more than one member from the same organization may be appointed, where an acceptable rationale is provided to the SARVAC Board of Directors and is approved.

### **7.7.3 Members changing affiliation**

Committee members may retire their position within a committee/panel at any time. Upon notice of this retirement, the Chair of the committee/panel may request a change in representation or termination of the position.

### **7.7.4 Termination of membership**

After inquiry, the Chair (on behalf of the committee or panel) should recommend to the SARVAC Board of Directors that a GSAR-NCP committee or panel member be removed from the committee or panel, if the member has failed to:

- a) attend three consecutive meetings;
- b) respond to three consecutive recorded votes; or
- c) be actively and effectively involved in the work and responsibilities of the committee or panel.

Notice of pending termination should be sent to that member by the Chair.

Such termination may be appealed to the SARVAC Board of Directors, whose decision is final.

## **7.8 Alternates**

### **7.8.1 Nomination and notice**

When unable to attend a meeting, a GSAR-NCP committee or panel member may nominate an alternate to attend that meeting and, where appropriate, to vote on their behalf. The alternate's expertise should correspond to the member's representation and responsibilities. The Chair shall be notified in writing of such nominations and may issue authorization. The alternate may attend the meeting provided authorization has been granted, in writing, before the meeting.

### **7.8.2 Basis**

Alternates should be considered only on a meeting-by-meeting basis.

### **7.8.3 Representation**

The alternate may represent the member on all topics, or may be restricted to specific subjects.

### **7.8.4 Preparation**

It is the responsibility of the member to brief their alternate, and to provide appropriate documentation before the meeting, and to debrief the alternate after the meeting to be properly informed of the participation made on their behalf.

## **7.9 Liaison**

### **7.9.1 Establishing a liaison**

Any GSAR-NCP committee or panel may establish liaisons, or a liaison committee, if required, for coordination in those areas where its activities overlap those of other agencies or organizations.

### **7.9.2 Liaison member**

An incoming liaison member from another agency or organization should be nominated by that agency or organization. Such liaison members should be formally identified, and charged with carrying out the liaison duties with the GSAR-NCP committee or panel.

Any committee or panel may appoint a person to be an outgoing liaison member on behalf of the program, with another agency or organization.

## **7.10 Frequency of any GSAR-NCP Committee or panel meetings**

Any GSAR-NCP committee or panel should meet at least twice annually. Such meetings may be face-to-face, by teleconference, or videoconference, as appropriate.

## **7.11 Reports to the SARVAC Board of Directors**

The GSAR-NCP committee or panel Chair shall report to the SARVAC Board of Directors on its organization and activities as directed by the SARVAC Board of Directors.

## **7.12 Disbanding the GSAR-NCP committee or panel**

The disbanding of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel shall only be authorized by the SARVAC Board of Directors.

## **8. Other Committees and Panels**

### **8.1 Scope**

This clause describes the roles and responsibilities of other committees and panels.

## **8.2 Sub-Committees**

Sub-committees may be established for specific assignments (e.g., to study specific problems, create draft material, etc.) as required. Sub-committees may include individuals having expertise not available within the committee or panel and shall continue to exist only until the assignment is completed.

*Note: Should it be necessary to readdress the same subject after sub-committees have been disbanded, consideration should be given to appointing the same members to new sub-committees, where possible.*

Sub-committees will be managed by a GSAR-NCP committee or panel designate. The Chairs of all sub-committees shall be the GSAR-NCP committee or panel designate.

## **8.3 Consultation mechanisms and peer groups**

In some cases, it may be desirable, or necessary for public and stakeholder consultation to be broadened to include input from other experts. This may include advisory groups, focus groups, public consultation forums, electronic discussion groups, and/or survey research. The results of consultations will be considered and utilized with the discretion of the GSAR-NCP committee or panel.

## **9.0 Procedures of Committees**

### **9.1 Scope**

This clause describes the procedures for any GSAR-NCP committee or panel and all sub-committees therein, including communications; the distribution of committee documents; and conducting business electronically.

### **9.2 Communications/Promotion**

#### **9.2.1 External communications**

Inquiries made to any committee or panel members about a committee or its activities shall be directed to the Chair. Information to the general public or stakeholder group concerning any GSAR-NCP committee or panel activities shall be done only with the explicit consent of the Chair or a designated authority.

#### **9.2.2 Press/Media relations**

Media relations activities will be coordinated via the SARVAC Media Officer, all releases of media may require approval from the SARVAC Board of Directors, and may include the following:

- a) issuing press releases;
- b) writing and/or reviewing articles for trade publications\*;
- c) responding to media inquiries† about committee work or requests for interviews with committee members;
- d) identifying a spokesperson‡ for media interviews;
- e) providing background information; and
- f) handling any other communications that could result in media coverage.

\* The term "trade publications" is intended to include any periodicals and association newsletters. It does not include internal community and organization newsletters.

† Prior to discussing committee or panel work with the media, members will contact the SARVAC Communications designate.

‡ It is important that any spokesperson discussing issues with the media identify themselves as a Board member of SARVAC.

## **9.3 Distribution of committee or panel documents**

### **9.3.1 Consent**

Committee or panel documents may be available with the consent of the SARVAC Board of Directors.

### **9.3.2 Distribution**

Committee or panel documents shall be distributed through the GSAR-NCP Administration Office to all members listed on the committee membership list.

### **9.3.3 Recipients**

Committee or panel documents distributed to members are not to be used for any purpose other than the work of the committee or panel. Document distribution outside of the committee /panel requires the approval of the SARVAC Board of Directors.

### **9.3.4 Originators**

Originators of committee or panel documents wishing to distribute them more widely shall receive approval from the GSAR-NCP committee or panel of their intentions.

### **9.3.5 Distribution of minutes**

SARVAC owns copyright in the minutes of any GSAR-NCP committee or panel meetings. Minutes are intended for Committee use only. Accurate interpretation of minutes requires familiarity with the subject and knowledge of the committee work and status, and should be done within the context of the ongoing committee or panel discussions.

## **9.4 Coordination**

Adequate liaison should be maintained with other community stakeholders and organizations, etc., as appropriate, to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to permit complementary activities.

## **10.GSAR-NCP Administration**

### **10.1 Scope**

This clause describes the responsibilities of the GSAR-NECP Administration Office.

### **10.2 Establishing the GSAR – NCP Administration Office**

The GSAR-NCP Administration Office shall be established under the authority of the SARVAC Board of Directors and is the administrative support for GSAR-NCP. The Administration Office is responsible for the daily operation of the GSAR-NCP.

### **10.3 Responsibilities of the GSAR-NCP Administration Office**

The responsibilities of the GSAR-NCP Administration Office regarding the management of certification and endorsement activities shall include:

- a) ensuring that the policies and procedures relative to Administration Office operations are followed;
- b) ensuring that certification processes are followed, see *GSAR-NCP-R&G-2.2*;
- c) ensuring that endorsement processes are followed, see *GSAR-NEP-R&G-2.3*;
- d) ensuring the efficient and effective operation and conduct of the Administration Office;
- e) creating business plans that respect available resources;
- f) providing meeting management support for any GSAR-NCP committee or panel;
- g) financial administration for the GSAR-NCP committee or panel is administered by SARVAC;
- h) translation of documentation as required;
- i) national data support for training records,
- j) committee or panel documentation;
- k) issue of national training certificates;
- l) report to any committee or panel on a regular basis and as required;
- m) communications support for any committee or panel; and
- n) general complaints handling.

## **Annex A – GSAR-NCP committee or panel (CP) Terms of Reference**

### **Definitions and abbreviations**

- AHJ - Authority Having Jurisdiction
- CSA - Canadian Standards Association
- GSAR - Ground Search and Rescue
- NCP – National Certification Program
- P/T – Provincial/Territory
- SAR - Search and Rescue
- SARVAC – Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada
- CP – Committee or Panel

### **Authorization**

The *Committee or Panels Terms of Reference* is supplementary to the NCP Requirements and guidelines (Organizational Structure and Participants, Section 6 – Committee or Panels) and operates under the direction of the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC) Board of Directors.

### **Role/Purpose**

The committee or panel shall provide leadership and guidance in identifying the needs and priorities of, and developing effective strategies within the NCP.

### **Term**

The *Committee or Panel Terms of Reference* are effective from April 1, 2024 and continues until terminated by agreement of the SARVAC Board of Directors and approved by the SARVAC Executive.

### **Member Term of Appointment**

Committee or panel members are requested to serve on the committee or panel for a five (5) year term. After 5 years of service, committee or panel members will have the opportunity to be reaffirmed as a committee or panel member upon approval from the SARVAC Board of Directors. New member appointment after the five (5) year term will go through the recommended selection process and be approved by the SARVAC Board of Directors.

### **Termination of Membership**

After inquiry, the Chair (on behalf of the committee or panel) should recommend to the SARVAC Board of Directors that a GSAR-NCP committee or panel member be removed from the committee or panel if the member has failed to

- a) attend three consecutive meetings;
- b) respond to three consecutive recorded votes or
- c) be actively and effectively involved in the work and responsibilities of the committee or panel.

Subsequent failure to comply with the requirements may result in termination.

Notice of pending termination should be sent to that member by the Chair.

The Chair may recommend the removal of any member. Such termination may be appealed to the SARVAC Board of Directors, whose decision is final.

## **Amendments**

Amendments to these terms of reference shall be prepared by SARVAC Board of Directors and referred to the SARVAC Executive for approval. The *committee or panel Terms of Reference* shall be reviewed and updated as necessary and at least every five years.

## **Scope**

The scope of the committee or panel does not include those issues which deviate from the terms and intent of NCP.

## **Membership Attributes**

Committees or panels will be comprised of individuals recommended by Provincial and Territorial GSAR Associations and approved by the SARVAC Board of Directors.

The following member attributes are identified to bring diverse experience, backgrounds and perspectives within the committee or panel:

- historical backgrounds and experience that reflect the GSAR Community and the CSA GSAR Standards;
- a variety of perspectives to support decisions that are balanced;
- or panel leadership experience in facilitating committee or panel meetings, developing a positive culture, conflict resolution, and fostering effective decision making;
- will understand how governance works, how committees or panels should function, and be able to think critically about committee structures and practices;
- national/regional diversity reflecting an understanding of GSAR Communities throughout Canada;
- to ensure that deliberations are informed, and decisions include and respect Indigenous people's perspectives; and
- Curriculum experience with programs, trends and innovations, developing, implementing and evaluating curriculum.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The membership of any committee or panel will commit to:

- Working collaboratively with the SARVAC Board of Directors;
- Attending all scheduled committee or panel meetings;
- Wholeheartedly champion the committee or panel and its network;
- Sharing communications and information across all committee or panel members;
- Making timely decisions and taking action so as to not impair committee or panel work; and

- Notifying members of the committee or panel, as soon as practical, if any matter arises which may be deemed to affect the work or decisions of the committee or panel.



Ground Search and Rescue  
National Certification Program