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Standard Practice for Workers' Compensation Coverage of Emergency Services Volunteers¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This standard defines the application of insurance benefits for Emergency Services Volunteers and Units in the manner and extent as provided for under the Workers' Compensation statutes of the state in which the Volunteer or Unit provides services.

1.2 This standard identifies the basic types of Emergency Service Volunteer, and the types of activities that should be covered by workers' compensation insurance.

1.3 This standard includes both Emergency Service Units who operate as organized resources to a public authority legally responsible for the provision of search and rescue and other emergency services, as well as those volunteers who respond to a general request to the Public for their services.

2. Terminology

2.1 *Workers' Compensation Insurance*—insurance required by law of employers for the medical expenses and loss of wages incurred by an employee by reason of a job-related injury, illness or death.

2.2 *Legal Authority (Agency)*—the individual or government agency given responsibility and authority for search, rescue, fire, and other emergency or disaster services by statute. Where multiple, concurrent or overlapping authorities exist, the term is used to refer to the legal authority ultimately empowering and accepting responsibility for the volunteer unit. For the purposes of this Standard, the terms Legal Authority and Agency shall bear the same definition of terminology and meaning.

2.3 *Emergency Services Volunteer (ESV)*—an individual who volunteers his/her services to, and whose services are accepted by, an Agency in response to a request for an emergency function for which no substantive monetary benefit is expected or received. The Legal Authority incurs Workers' Compensation Insurance responsibility for Emergency Ser-

vices Volunteers (ESVs) while the ESV is actively providing services to the Agency as defined in Section 5 of this Standard. This period of activity shall be considered to be employment as defined by the Workers' Compensation Statutes in the State in which the Agency exists.

Emergency Services Volunteers are presumed to be requested irregularly to provide special skills or assistance on behalf of the Agency. As such, these volunteers act as part-time employees of the Agency and are empowered to act to provide these services when specifically requested to do so, or pursuant to an approved plan or schedule, or under the supervision of a full-time employee.

2.3.1 *Search and Rescue Volunteer*—an individual who volunteers his/her services in the performance of searches and/or rescues, with the accompanying training proficiency. In addition to those specifically described in this Standard, this definition may be applied to air, ground or water search volunteers, search dog specialists and emergency managers, and others not included by specific reference.

2.3.2 *Volunteer Firefighter*—an individual who volunteers his/her services in the performance of fire suppression activities, with the accompanying training proficiency.

2.3.3 *Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Volunteer*—an individual who volunteers his/her services in the performance of emergency medical services, with the accompanying training proficiency.

2.3.4 *Disaster Services Volunteer*—an individual who volunteers his/her services to an agency upon a request for services upon the occurrence of an emergency or disaster, under the direct supervision of the agency, and with the appropriate training activity.

2.4 *Emergency Services Unit (ESU)*—an individual, or a collection of individuals forming an association, organization, group, team or similar resource organized or volunteering to provide search and/or rescue, fire or other emergency service activity for a responsible Agency. An individual or other single resource may be considered a unit if the service can be appropriately rendered (e.g. a dog handler or tracker, air search volunteer or emergency manager).

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of F32.02 on Management and Operations. Current edition approved July 10, 2000.

An Emergency Services Unit operates within a formal division of the legal authority as a recognized unit of the legal authority or agency, and is organized and recognized by that agency as a resource of its emergency and disaster services general plan.

Such a unit is expected to adopt a training program sufficient to maintain a skill level equal to or greater than recognized national standards or as acceptable to the Agency requesting their services, and will typically engage in community education programs.

Other examples of an ESU include, but are not limited to, volunteer search and rescue units, volunteer emergency medical squads, volunteer fire fighters or designated civilian volunteers who have formed organized and trained groups and who serve their city, county or state agency in the performance of their services.

2.5 Auxiliary Unit (AU)—an individual, or a collection of individuals forming a unit called to respond by a legal authority responsible for an emergency response function, which otherwise has no standing as a formal division or resource of that authority. For the purposes of this standard, the auxiliary status of an ESU means it has no legal responsibility for the services itself within the jurisdiction of the Agency, and no authority to provide them without acting under that of the Agency.

The Auxiliary Unit is typically organized as a division of an Agency (as defined in 2.2), or as a non-profit corporation as defined in IRS Section 501(c)3, and which has a command structure that enables it to fit within the Incident Command System of a requesting Agency.

Such a unit is expected to adopt a training program sufficient to maintain a skill level equal to or greater than recognized national standards or as acceptable to the Agency requesting their services, and will typically engage in community education programs.

Some examples of an AU are volunteer search and rescue resources, air search squads, emergency managers, search dog specialists, ambulance squads, fire fighters, disaster service workers and communication specialists who are asked to respond to assist another state, county or national park to provide their services to augment those available to the authorized requesting agency in that other state or jurisdiction.

2.6 General Public Emergency Volunteer (GPEV)—an individual who volunteers his/her services, and whose services are accepted, in response to a request to the Public for emergency assistance.

A GPEV is typically not a member of an organized emergency services unit, nor responding to a call for such organized units.

An example of a GPEV is an individual who is contacted pursuant to a radio or television broadcast for the assistance of the general public with instructions to respond to a search base to assist in a search operation.

2.7 Training—a curriculum of classroom education and field exercises designed to create a level of competence meeting national standards for such activity, or as acceptable to the agency requesting the services of such a volunteer.

Training will typically include equipment familiarity and maintenance, both at the storage and readiness facility, at areas removed from the facility, and as further defined in 3.8 of this document.

2.8 Community Education—activities generated by the ESU to contact the Public to increase the awareness and preparedness of the Public in areas of preventative search and rescue (PSAR), fire prevention, medical and disaster preparedness and survival.

2.9 Call-Out—the notice and request to activate an ESU or ESV by an Agency for the purpose of providing emergency services on behalf of the requesting agency.

If members are requested to respond directly, through radio paging, for example, then each member is considered to be called-out and responding as of that time.

2.10 Mobilization—the activity of an ESU or ESV as required to respond to the call-out in an equipped and prepared manner.

Mobilization typically includes travel to an equipment cache or vehicle readiness area to obtain equipment or to unite the ESU for responding as a unit, and the travel of the unit to the incident site or search base.

2.11 De-mobilization—the activity of an ESU or ESV as required to return from a call-out to the point of origin or to a non service-related stop enroute home or to the point of origin of the ESU or ESV after having been relieved of duty by the requesting legal authority.

De-mobilization typically includes equipment retrieval, mission debriefing, personnel review, and travel from the incident site or search base to an equipment cache, station or vehicle readiness area to return the vehicles and equipment to a condition of readiness for the next call-out.

2.12 Emergency Services—any activity requiring an increased level of urgency in the rendering of assistance to the entity requesting such assistance.

For the purposes of this Standard, emergency services are defined as those related to search and rescue, fire suppression, medical and disaster services.

2.13 Check-In—the process by which one party notifies a second of being in-service or responding to a request for services, and the second party acknowledges, typically by voice and entry in a formal log.

Check-in occurs when an individual ESV contacts the responding ESU, or when the ESU or ESV contacts the requesting legal authority.

Members of an ESU will typically be checked-in by the ESU upon first verification of their response to the call-out, either in person at a rendezvous point or search base, by radio, or other means dictated by the type of response.

The ESU will typically check-in with the legal authority either at the incident site or search base, or by radio once it is mobilized appropriately to establish itself as ready for deployment to the incident.

A GPEV is required to check-in at the response place designated for such volunteers, and to be marked as in service on the personnel log.