



**Tonto Rim Search and Rescue (TRSAR)  
Tracking Skills Development Program  
Standard Operating Procedures  
P.O. Box 357, Pine, AZ 85544**

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**SECTION I. MISSION**

The mission of the Tonto Rim Search & Rescue (TRSAR) Tracking Skills Development Program is to provide the Gila County Sheriff’s Office with highly trained, qualified, and results-focused volunteer personnel capable of utilizing specialized tracking skills during ground search operations.

**SECTION II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to define the training, evaluation, certification, and ongoing maintenance requirements for TRSAR personnel proficient in tracking skills. Successful completion of these requirements result in Tracking Skills Development Program certification and authorizes participation as tracking resources in search operations.

**SECTION III. REFERENCES**

**A. External Certifications**

TRSAR personnel may obtain certifications from recognized external agencies. Such certifications may be used to support, but do not replace, the Tracking Skills Development Program certification requirements unless specifically approved by the Program Leader and the TRSAR Board of Directors. External certifying bodies may include, but are not limited to:

- Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association (ASARCA)
- National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR)

**B. Training and Evaluation References**

Internally developed and peer reviewed TRSAR training material, compiled from information from the following publications, guide Tracking Skills Development Program training and evaluation. TRSAR may adapt, modify, or limit practices contained in these references to meet operational needs.

- Fundamentals of Mantracking - The Step-by-Step Method: An Essential Primer for Search and Rescue Trackers; Third Edition (2014): Albert “Ab” Taylor and Donald C. Cooper
- Foundations for Awareness, Signcutting & Tracking; Second Edition (2018); Robert Speiden
- Visual Mantracking for Law Enforcement and Search & Rescue; First Edition (2016); Fernando Moreira
- Fundamentals of Search and Rescue; Second Edition (2019); The National Association for Search and Rescue

#### **SECTION IV. CERTIFICATION LEVELS**

TRSAR maintains a singular Tracking Skills Development Program certification level to ensure personnel are enabled to operate as tracking resources at an advanced level of competency.

#### **SECTION V. CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

The TRSAR Tracking Skills Development Program certification process is structured as a progressive system to build foundational and tactical knowledge, develop and refine skills, gain experience, and maintain operational readiness. Participants in the Program are expected to actively pursue certification in a timely manner.

##### **A. Classroom Training** (reference based, instructor led)

1. Part 1 - four (4) hours duration
  - a. Unit I - Introduction
  - b. Unit II - Basics
2. Part 2 - four (4) hours duration
  - a. Unit III - Details
  - b. Unit IV - Additional
3. Supplemental

##### **B. Field Training** (team based, instructor monitored)

The monthly Field Training sessions consist of exercises to demonstrate and perform various tracking skills and tactics including sign cutting, step-by-step tracking, and navigation.

##### **C. Certification Testing**

1. Prerequisites: Completion of Classroom Training (Parts 1 and 2) and eight (8) Field Training sessions
2. Written exam (individual evaluation, reference based)
3. Field test (team based)
  - a. Evaluation of performance of individuals in various team roles
  - b. Success of team in evidence discovery

#### **SECTION VI. SAFETY STANDARDS**

Safety standards for the Tracking Skills Development Program are those generally accepted for Search and Rescue environments and operations (personal preparedness, situational awareness, and standard precautions).

#### **SECTION VI. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Equipment requirements for the Tracking Skills Development Program are those set forth as the TRSAR Recommended Standard Pack List, supplemented for tracking per the Training and Evaluation References identified in this SOP.

#### **SECTION VIII. MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION**

##### **A. Annual Requirements**

In order to maintain certification, personnel must participate in no fewer than four (4) Field

Training sessions.

**B. Documentation**

All training, evaluations, and mission participation will be documented and maintained by TRSAR.

**Approved by:** TRSAR Board of Directors

**Effective Date:** 04/07/2026

**Review Cycle:** Every two (2) years