



Standard Guide for Training First Responders Who Practice in Wilderness, Delayed, or Prolonged Transport Settings¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers minimum training standards for first responders who may care for sick or injured persons in the specialized pre-hospital situations of the wilderness, delayed, or prolonged transport settings, including catastrophic disasters.

1.2 This guide establishes supplemental or continuing education programs that will be taught to individuals trained to the first responder level by an appropriate authority.

1.3 This guide does not provide training to be used, ordinarily, in the traditional EMS or ambulance transportation environments.

1.4 Included in this guide is a standard for the evaluation of the knowledge and skills defined within this guide.

1.5 Successful completion of a course based on this guide neither constitutes nor implies certification or licensure.

1.6 This guide does not establish medical protocols, nor does it authorize invasive procedures without specific authorization and medical control.

1.7 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard.

1.8 Operating within the framework of this guide may expose personnel to hazardous materials or environments, procedures, and equipment or all of these.

1.9 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

F 1177 Terminology Relating to Emergency Medical Services²

F 1287 Guide for Scope of Performance of First Responders Who Provide Medical Care²

F 1453 Guide for the Training and Evaluation of First Responders Who Provide Medical Care²

F 1490 Terminology Relating to Search and Rescue²

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F-30 on Emergency Medical Services and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F30.02 on Personnel, Training and Education.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 13.01.

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *access, n*—the process of reaching the patient/subject and establishing physical contact.

3.1.2 *basic life support/cardiopulmonary resuscitation (BLS/CPR), n*—a set of skills that includes airway management, chest compressions, and others as defined by the American Heart Association.

3.1.3 *definitive care, n*—a level of therapeutic intervention capable of providing comprehensive health care services for a specific condition. (See Terminology F 1177.)

3.1.4 *evacuation, n*—the process used between the time of extraction and transportation. (See Terminology F 1490.)

3.1.5 *extraction, n*—the process of initial assessment, treatment, stabilization, and packaging of the patient as well as the removal of the patient/subject from the immediately hazardous environment. (See Terminology F 1490.)

3.1.6 *first responder, n*—an individual trained in accordance with Guide F 1453.

3.1.7 *transportation, n*—the use of a dedicated vehicle for the removal of the patient to a medical facility or definitive care facility.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *delayed or prolonged transport, n*—when time between patient injury and arrival to a definitive care facility is greater than 60 min.

3.2.2 *non-traditional EMS environment, n*—environments not readily accessible to a ground ambulance.

3.2.3 *wilderness first responder (WFR), n*—an individual trained to meet the requirements of this guide.

3.2.4 *wilderness setting, n*—situations in which EMS delivery is complicated by one or more of the following four factors: (1) remoteness as far as logistics and access; (2) a significant delay in the delivery of care to the patient; (3) an environment that is stressful to both patients and rescuers; and (4) a lack of equipment and supplies.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Individuals will be initially or concurrently trained in accordance with U.S. D.O.T. Course Guide for First Responders³ and Guide F 1453.

³ U.S. D.O.T. HS 900-025, *Course Guide, Emergency Medical Services, First Responder Training Course*, March 1979.

4.2 This guide does not suggest a particular training sequence.

4.3 This guide may be used by individuals developing training programs for non-traditional EMS environments.

4.4 This guide acknowledges the need to provide additional specific training for first responders who will practice in the wilderness, delayed or prolonged transport settings.

4.5 Individuals responsible for training first responders should identify those who will practice in the wilderness, delayed or prolonged transport settings and must ensure that such personnel are competent in all skills needed for the unique settings.

5. Illustrative Examples

5.1 *Wilderness Settings:*

5.1.1 In May 1983, two climbers were at about 18 000 ft, near Denali Pass, on Mount McKinley, Alaska. These climbers took a tumbling 800 ft fall before coming to rest. One of the climbers was only responsive to pain, with a lacerated face and the pick end of his ice axe impaled in the right side of his chest, just below the nipple line. A nearby climbing party responded. They first attempted to stabilize the ice axe in place as per standard EMS protocols. They improvised a rescue toboggan using two plastic sleds, but moving the patient was very difficult with the ice axe still in his chest. And, with temperatures ranging from -50 to -70°F (in accordance with National Park Service reports), rescuers were unable to keep him from rapidly cooling. The danger of cold exposure and the difficulty with transportation created by the impaled ice axe led rescuers to remove it.

5.1.2 After removing the ice axe, the patient began to rewarm, the rescuers were able to evacuate him expeditiously, and he went on to make a full recovery.

5.2 *Rural (Delayed/Prolonged Settings)*—A man was driving along a gravel road in a remote rural area of Northern Idaho. He stooped to clear a fallen tree from the road, and in the attempt, he fell and dislocated his right shoulder. He managed to call for help with his CB radio. About 2 h later, an ambulance arrived. The EMTs on the ambulance checked the pulse and sensation in his right arm, and found them to be normal. The man pleaded with them to pull on his shoulder and relocate it; he had a similar dislocation of the left shoulder in the past, and he knew that it could be reduced with a little help. However the EMTs, mindful of their training, insisted on “splinting it in position” and drove him six hours to the nearest hospital, mostly along bumpy secondary roads. The patient was moaning and intermittently screaming the entire time, in severe pain. Later he wrote to various authorities criticizing the care provided to him.

5.3 *Disaster (Delayed/Prolonged Settings):*

5.3.1 It was rush hour, and the freeways were crowded, but otherwise the day was like any other. Suddenly the earth shook, and a freeway collapsed, entombing motorists in a mass of concrete and twisted metal.

5.3.2 For four days, rescuers attacked the mass of rubble with every tool available from pliers to massive construction equipment. They had given up hope of finding any one else alive when they found a 57 year old construction worker alive, his lower extremities being trapped and crushed.

5.3.3 No medical personnel were available to render care such as IV hydration, so the construction workers immediately extricated him. Despite later attempts at hydration, he later developed kidney failure and then sepsis; he died a few days later.

5.4 *Borderline Wilderness Settings:*

5.4.1 Several years ago, a light civil aircraft crashed near the top of Tinker Mountain in southwest Virginia. Atop Tinker Mountain’s rugged, cliff-strewn ridgeline is the Appalachian Trail; the area is a favorite of hikers and climbers. The aircraft was located from the air, and a team responded to the site. The quickest way to reach the site was from a road near the bottom of the ridge. Those responding to the site fell into two groups: mountain rescue team members and “regular” fire/EMS personnel. Protocols for the fire/EMS personnel required them, when responding to an air crash, to wear full turnout gear and self-contained breathing apparatus, and to carry fire suppression equipment. The standard practice for the mountain rescue was to carry minimal lightweight equipment, to dress appropriately for the weather and brush, to drink plenty of fluids, and to pace themselves.

5.4.2 The Virginia summer weather was particularly hot and humid, and the mountainside very steep. Soon many of the fire/EMS personnel were disabled from heat exhaustion, and one even had to be evacuated. The mountain rescue personnel were able to handle all necessary extrication and fire suppression with what they had carried and whatever they could improvise at the scene.

5.4.3 Survivors were treated appropriately for burns and shock, evacuated and then transported to a local hospital.

6. Educational Objectives

6.1 Wilderness First Responders shall be trained to perform the following (these objectives do not suggest any specific training order):

6.1.1 Describe the specific differences between the training of First Responders who practice in the traditional EMS environment and those who practice in the wilderness, prolonged or delayed transport settings where traditional patient care is not sufficient or appropriate.

6.1.2 Recognize the differences in patient care required by practice in the wilderness, prolonged or delayed transport settings.

6.1.3 Describe any additional or specialized anatomy or physiology knowledge required.

6.1.4 Identify and demonstrate the management of the following medical problems in the wilderness, delayed or prolonged transport settings:

6.1.4.1 Abdominal pain,

6.1.4.2 Vomiting,

6.1.4.3 Diarrhea,

6.1.4.4 Diabetes,

6.1.4.5 Seizure disorders,

6.1.4.6 Respiratory distress (for example, asthma, altitude),

6.1.4.7 Allergies,

6.1.4.8 Hypertension,

6.1.4.9 Cardiac emergencies, and

6.1.4.10 Dental emergencies.

6.1.5 Identify and demonstrate the management of illness or

injury related to or caused by the environment in the wilderness, delayed or prolonged transport settings, including the following:

6.1.5.1 Altitude (for example, acute mountain sickness, high altitude pulmonary edema, high altitude cerebral edema, solar radiation),

6.1.5.2 Barotrauma,

6.1.5.3 Cold (for example, hypothermia, frostbite),

6.1.5.4 Heat (for example, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, burns),

6.1.5.5 Electrical and lightning,

6.1.5.6 Exposure to plant or animal (for example, insect, reptile, arachnid, marine) toxins,

6.1.5.7 Drowning, near-drowning, and cold water immersion, and

6.1.5.8 Dehydration.

6.1.6 Describe the proper disinfection of water and identify and manage illnesses associated with improper water disinfection.

6.1.7 Describe and demonstrate the skills needed to manage open wounds in the wilderness, delayed, or prolonged transport settings.

6.1.8 Describe and demonstrate the skills needed to manage orthopedic problems in the wilderness, delayed or prolonged transport settings, including dislocations, fractures, and open fractures.

6.1.9 Describe and demonstrate the skills needed to manage spinal injuries and associated problems in the wilderness, delayed, or prolonged transport settings.

6.1.10 Describe and demonstrate the skills needed to manage specific problems associated with cardiorespiratory arrest in the wilderness, delayed, or prolonged transport settings.

6.1.11 Describe the uses, side effects, administration concerns, and needed authorities for non-prescription and prescription medications in the wilderness, delayed, or prolonged transport settings.

6.1.12 Describe measures necessary to prevent illness or injury occurring in the wilderness, delayed, or prolonged transport settings, including management of immediate stress reactions.

6.1.13 Describe specific problems related to rendering care in severe weather, in environmental extremes, when equipment is not readily available, when access is limited, and when there is little or no additional assistance.

6.1.14 Describe and demonstrate as feasible, clothing, survival, emergency communications and bivouac skills necessary in environmental extremes.

6.1.15 Demonstrate patient packaging skills in the wilderness, delayed, or prolonged transport settings.

6.1.16 Describe and demonstrate documentation requirements for recording patient care.

6.1.17 Describe any unique or specialized requirements or obligations imposed by the EMS system or other legal principles.

6.1.18 Describe any medical control requirements and processes.

6.1.19 Describe the principles of disease transmission and body fluid isolation and demonstrate the use of personal protection techniques.

7. Evaluation

7.1 Policies for evaluation, grading, pass/fail criteria, remediation and re-education shall be established and distributed to all students.

7.2 End of course cognitive and psychomotor evaluations that measure the competency of the WFR in the objectives of this guide shall be given.

8. Keywords

8.1 delayed; first responder; pre-hospital; prolonged; wilderness

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