

BC Tracking Association Course Descriptions - Feb 2016

Track Aware (TA)

This is the Basic entry level, where novice students are introduced to the history, concepts and applications of Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) tracking. Successful completion of this phase of training does not certify the graduate as a Tracker. It certifies that the graduate is fully aware of how tracking skills can be employed in GSAR tasks and how this training makes him or her a much better and more effective searcher.

Students learn to identify clues and recognize signs of passage of a lost subject. They understand the importance of drawing a footprint card; learn to correctly set up and use a tracking stick; determine the direction of travel and report this information to a Team Leader and/or SAR Command. They are able to follow a single line of sign using the team step-by-step method, in most light and weather conditions, including at night. They demonstrate the ability to work effectively and efficiently as a member of a tracking team. Successful completion of this level of training typically requires about 60 hours of training. This may include local, in-house tracker training provided by GSAR Groups, in addition to the formal BCTA courses.

Certification to any level is not solely based on the number of hours of tracker training achieved or the number of courses taken. It is based on demonstrated performance during a course.

Tracker (previously TK1)

The Tracker is able to present himself/herself to SAR Management as a BCTA certified Tracker specialist, able to respond as a member of a tracking or search team in a variety of SAR tasks.

The Tracker Level is open to all Track Aware certified students. This level offers more advanced skills in tracking and develops basic multi-team sign cutting methods. At this level, students start to see even more of the significant advantages and usefulness of tracking in ground searches. While adding to the basic skills learned in Track Aware, students will learn to rapidly move single and multiple lines of sign, with controlled and efficient teamwork. Communication skills will become more important, as will common sense and reasoning. Students are introduced to interviewing, note-taking and report writing.

Trackers demonstrate the ability to work in two or more teams, to efficiently follow the appropriate lines of sign of one or more lost subjects. They use team step-by-step and team sign-cutting techniques, and are able to describe and use the best sign-cutting areas. They are able to reasonably assess the aging of sign and able to isolate the appropriate sign from false sign. In typical multi-team and multi-subject search scenarios, they demonstrate proper communication skills; expanded knowledge and usage of proper tracking terminology; conduct witness interviews and make useful field notes. They may also assist mentoring Novice and Track Aware students.

Advanced Tracker (previously TK2)

Upon the completion of this level of training, the graduate is able to present himself/herself to SAR Management as a BCTA certified Advanced Tracker, able to lead tracking teams in a variety of search tasks.

The Advanced Tracker course is available to all certified Trackers. At this level students will be able to participate and lead most tracking tasks. Emphasis is focused on analyzing the mission and enhanced skills in communication, common sense and reasoning, leadership and teamwork. Students will be expected to lead teams to move a line of sign much quicker but with discipline, control and accuracy. They will be able to use all their tracking skills in conducting an evidence search. Students will be allowed much more autonomy and will be challenged to make decisions with minimal input from Instructors. Combining all of the training obtained in Track Aware and Tracker training will be essential.