

# ASRC Conference Training Officer Report

10/15/2011 – ASRC Board of Directors Meeting

Prepared by Chris Ruch, ASRC CTO

## **IS/IC Promotions:**

- Don Scleza has submitted an application for Incident Commander Type 1. The CTO has reviewed the application and found it to be complete, with the exception of receiving a majority vote of the Incident Commanders present at an IC meeting. It is expected this vote will take prior to or at the Board meeting. It is recommended that the Board approve this application.
- Andrew Hower has submitted an application for Incident Staff. The CTO has reviewed the application and found it to be complete. This candidate has not taken PSO, but has sufficient experience and equivalent training to meet the requirement for this certification, in the opinion of the CTO. As part of the application, Andrew has included a highly detailed history of the challenge of being able to the PSO class and the alternative education that he has taken in its place. It is recommended that the Board approve this application. (Please see the CTO's statement on PSO equivalence below).
- Chris Ruch, the CTO, has re-submitted an application for Incident Staff. This is the same application submitted in July 2010, but which the Board failed to take any action on at that time. The concern expressed at that time was lack of the PSO class and the Board would not recognize or identify an alternative or equivalent to this required class. In the 15 months since that time, PSO has not been offered nor has any equivalent class been identified. The application includes documentation of 120 hours of search and incident management training, 14 shifts as IC and 5 shifts in IS roles in place of this single class.

\*\*Note that all of the above candidates have submitted their applications under the current ASRC Training Standard version 6.3 but all also meet the all of the requirements for these positions under the new draft ASRC Training Standard version 7.0.

## **IS/IC Recertifications**

A number of IS/IC members are up for renewal in on 1 January 2012. All members up for renewal have been contacted and provided with the renewal check sheet to be completed before the next board meeting. The members up for renewal at the beginning of 2012 include:

- Robert Koester, IC-I
- Andrew Dorsett, IC-III
- Rita Krenz, IS
- Pepper Broad, IS

- Dan Patterson, IS
- Dawn Smith, IS

### **PSO Class Equivalent**

In July 2010 the Board expressed an interest in creating a new class that would be specifically designed as an equivalent to PSO. To date, no progress has been made in this effort. At the same time, the PSO class has not been offered for since Spring of 2009. As PSO is not available and the Board has not recognized any other class or any combination of experience for this class, it has effectively been impossible for the last 2.5 years for any members to meet the requirements to become Incident Staff and to get on the path to Incident Commander. And for members outside of VA, it is been at best very difficult to achieve for years before that. This has resulted in a shortage of certified IS members and has created a situation where highly trained and qualified search managers cannot progress beyond the FTL level under the current ASRC training program. A look at the IS/IC certification statistics over the past several years paints a clear picture of the failure of the ASRC to be able to certify new Incident staff:

- 5 new IS certifications issued in 2008
- 4 new IS certifications issued in 2009
- 2 new IS certifications issued in 2010 (both to members who took PSO in 2009)
- 0 new IS certifications issued in 2011

There are two outstanding applications for IS, both from members who do not have PSO, even though they attempted to take to enroll in the class only to have it cancelled and have gone on to receive incident management training through other means. Additionally, the search and incident management world has evolved to expect a standard set of NIMS classes for search staff and management (ICS-300 and ICS-400) and some of the states that ASRC teams are based in have adopted other required classes, most notably Maryland.

I believe strongly that the ASRC Board needs to remove PSO as a specifically required class in the Training Standard or identify widely available approved educational and/or experience equivalents for this class. The pending draft Training Standards version 7.0 specifically does this, identifying a wide variety of classes that would fulfill the ASRC incident staff and search manager education requirements while also meeting NIMS guidelines. However, if this new version of the Training Standards is not implemented, it is imperative that the Board take immediate action to establish approved equivalents so that the organization can continue to all members to progress through the training and operational ranks.

## **Training Manual Re-Write**

A draft of the new Trainings Standards version was distributed for review in April and a second draft in October. Feedback has been received from a number of people and incorporated in the latest draft. No more significant modifications are expected at this point, only minor typographical and formatting changes.

A suggested implementation plan has also been distributed for review.

Following the approval/implementation of the new Training Standards, the CTO will kick off an effort with the GTO's to:

- Develop a common/standardized tests, both written and practical, for FTM and FTL certifications
- Develop a training program for test evaluators
- Create position specific task books for all certification levels
- Begin collecting common training materials that can be used by all teams
- Create new certification and recertification checklists for Search Manager candidates

A longer term project will be to move away from the current GTO based testing/certification based program and to a system that is based on a cadre of ASRC certified Instructor-Evaluators. This will be a larger shift in the ASRC's structure and will require both policy and Bylaw changes.