

RECORD KEEPING AND DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

The handler and department or organization shall document training, certification, proficiency assessments and discipline-related deployment records.

Proficiency assessments and training records may be combined or separate documents.

Discipline-related deployment records shall be separated from training, proficiency assessment, and certification documentation.

Training and discipline-related records should be standardized within the department or organization.

Training records may include, but are not limited to the following data:

Name of handler and canine.

Names of individual conducting or assisting with training.

Time and date of training.

Location and environmental conditions of training. Training design (non-blind, single-blind or double-blind).

Description of targets.

Location of targets.

Set time.

Size of search area.

Length of training session.

Search results.

Deficiencies and corrective measures implemented during training regimen.

Other information required by department or organization.

Certification records shall be kept by the certifying authority and the handler and include the following information:

Name of canine and handler.

Date team certified.

Certification authority, i.e., agency, professional organization, or individuals.

The standard or guideline to which the canine team is certified.

Name of individuals awarding certification.

Search area types included in certification assessment.

Name and description of targets and locations included in certification assessment.

Location of certification

Proficiency assessment records kept by the handler and organization or department may include but not be limited to the following data:

Name of handler and canine.

Name of individual conducting assessment.

Time and date of assessment.

Location and environmental conditions of assessment.

Assessment design (single-blind or double-blind).

Description of targets.

Location of targets.

Set time.

Size of search area.

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Proficiency assessment results.

Other information required by department or organization.

Supervisory review of all records is recommended.

Digitally formatted records are recommended to facilitate compiling and analyzing data.

Records may be discoverable in court proceedings and may become evidence of the canine team's reliability.

Record retention policy shall be determined by department or organization guidelines.

Training records are necessary to illustrate the type and amount of training that the team has experienced before and after certification.

Confirmed operational outcomes can be used as a factor in determining capability.

Unconfirmed operational outcomes shall not be used as a factor in determining capability in that they do not correctly evaluate a canine/handler team's proficiency.

Veterinary Records.

Veterinary records shall be maintained in a manner such as they are accessible to the handler and department or organization.

Vaccinations required by state or local law should be documented in the veterinary record of the canine.

MISSION READY TEST

This evaluation is designed to effectively evaluate a particular K-9 team's ability to track or trail a person through scent discrimination practices. The evaluation only tests a K-9 team's ability to identify and utilize a particular human scent to find that unique individual. The evaluation does not test any other form of K-9 work to include obedience, protection, or area search techniques.

The tests are in three separate levels to encourage more training and achievement in the areas of scent discrimination tracking/ trailing. Level 1 must be passed before continuing to the next level of testing. Each level is result oriented and does not evaluate a dog's behaviors or mannerisms while tracking/ trailing. It is simply a test of the dog's ability to get from point A to point B and find the correct person.

K-9 teams are not required to stay directly on the path or trail or the "suspect" as scent patterns may change depending upon conditions. However, the team must run in a generally parallel direction to that of the trail. Area search patterns are not permitted.

The age and distance of the trails are not exact as it is difficult if not impossible for a "suspect" to travel an exact distance in realistic conditions. The distances and ages are guidelines and will be adhered to as conditions dictate.

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Trailing is generally a K9 search method employing harness and long leads, (10-20'), however, it is clear that it is not the harness and the long lead that make the trail a success. Handlers may employ whatever tack or lack thereof necessary to work their own individual K9. Handlers may also employ whatever methodology, (other than area search), they choose to engage the K9 on the trail. Force techniques such as running the lead under the dog's leg to force the nose to the ground are highly discouraged.

In each of the trailing certifications listed below, the evaluator charged with administering these tests will not be allowed to see the laying of the trail. GPS with "bread crumb" capabilities will be employed by the trail layer subject should the trail or subject need to be found if the K9 fails. The evaluator may carry a mated GPS to the subject's and the handler will not be able to see the GPS until after the test.

One observer of the K9 teams' choosing may accompany the K9 team at the approval of the evaluator. The observer may act as a "cover man" and assist the K9 handler with obstacles, distractions, and dangerous situations. The observer may not communicate with the handler in regards to search strategy. Though the cover man may at times be needed to strategize with the handler and handle the K9 in real world situations, he or she will not be allowed to do so for the purposes of these tests.

Definitions:

- 1) **Scent article:** Any item or object holding human odor that targets the K9 onto the specific human trail.
- 2) **Uncontaminated:** Scent article that does not hold conflicting human odor; e.g. two or more people.
- 3) **Counter-measures:** As related to scent article use, methods such as "missing member" used to isolate and individual odor on a scent article and trail.
- 4) **Evidence Search:** As related to collection of a scent article. Using the K9 to locate an article with human odor.
- 5) **Scent article presentation:** The moment prior to starting the trail when the handler exposes the scent article to the K9
- 6) **Scent article protection:** Any method used to maintain a scent article in a relatively uncontaminated state; e.g. plastic bags, latex gloves, etc.
- 7) **Search Command:** A verbal or visual command to start a K9 on a scent trail.
- 8 **Subject:** The person whose scent matches the scent article.
- 9) **Trail:** Commonly confused with a "track". The trail is the path the suspect moved in not confined to the actual steps he or she walked. The trail is the path where the subject odor has fallen.
- 10) **Soft surface:** Grass, soil, sand, etc. Surface organic in nature.
- 11) **Hard surface:** A generally man-made surface such as concrete or black-top.

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- 12) **Obstacle:** An obstacle can be any inanimate object that impedes the K9 team's progress such as a fence, building, or wall.
- 13) **Negotiate or bypass:** As it relates to an obstacle. The K9 team can climb, crawl, ford, swim, or go around an obstacle.
- 14) **Upwind:** The condition where the wind is blowing the subject scent away from the K9 team.
- 15) **Downwind:** The condition where the wind blows the subject scent to the K9 team.
- 16) **ID:** The handler articulated action of the K9 that positively identifies the subject at the end of the trail.
- 17) **Human distraction:** Any live person engaged in any activity.
- 18) **Animal distraction:** Any live animal engaged in any activity.
- 19) **Ignore distraction:** The K9 cannot "ID" the distraction
- 20) **Successful completion:** The K9 starting as directed, following the trail of the subject, and identifying the subject in the allotted time.
- 21) **Area search pattern:** The method a handler would use to put the dog, on or off lead, into a position where he can "wind" the suspect through repetitive free roam commands.
- 22) **Evaluator:** Any K9 handler who has passed the level III test below and has a minimum of two years K9 trailing experience and certified by this governing board. The evaluator administers the K9 Trailing certifications below.
- 23) **Cover-man:** This governing body believes strongly in the use of a trained person who accompanies the K9 team on any search. As the handler of the team is often so engrossed in reading his or her dog, they may not be able to effectively deal with dangerous situations, distractions, and obstacles.

Level I

1) Scent evidence collection and use

- A) The handler is shown a mock crime or search scenario. The handler must correctly identify and collect scent article to start the K-9.
- B) The article may be fixed or moveable and must have been handled or touched by the subject.
- C) The handler must ensure the article was uncontaminated or take appropriate counter-measures if it was.
- D) The handler may use the K-9 in an evidence search mode in order to obtain a scent article.

2) Starting the K-9 on the scent material

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A) The K-9 must actively scent from the material by a handler-articulated activity, such as a hand-sweep.

B) The handler must give a search command when the K-9 takes scent.

3) The track/ trail

A) The trail will be on soft surface at least 600 yards with 2 turns and subject hiding and unmoving at the end. The age of the trail will be approximately one hour old.

B) The wind will not be in the K-9's favor. The subject will be up-wind.

C) Prior to trail commencement, the handler must articulate what the dog does when it finds the correct person.

D) 15 minute time limit for successful trail completion.

Level II

Article collection and use is the same as with level I.

1) The track/ trail

A) The trail will be at least 700 yards and not more than ½ mile of at least 2 different surfaces; dirt, grass, concrete, gravel, black-top, etc. At least 1 change of surface will occur coupled with 3 turns. There will be at least one obstacle that the K9 team will have to negotiate or bypass. The age of the trail will be no more than four hours old.

B) The subject will be up-wind and hiding.

C) The handler must articulate the dog's ID.

D) One distraction will be placed on the trail, either another animal or human. The dog must ignore the distraction or briefly check it and go back to work.

E) 30 minute time limit.

Level III

Article collection and use is the same as with Level I.

1) The track/ trail

A) The trail will be approximately 1500 yards and hard surface only coupled with 3 turns. There will be at least two obstacles the K9 team must negotiate or bypass. The age will be approximately 6 hours old.

B) The subject will be down-wind and hiding.

C) The handler must articulate the dog's ID.

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- D) 1 moving human or animal distraction will be placed directly on the trail.
- E) There will be 2 persons split approximately 50 yards apart somewhere at the trail end. The split person/ incorrect person, may or may not be visible to the dog. The dog must identify the correct person.
- F) 60 minute time limit.

DEPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

1. No handler will deploy without a deployment ready handling assistant
2. The handler and the handling assistant will carry all gear required under the equipment lists in the SOPs. An equipment check will occur before a handling team starts a trail.
3. The order of trailing of dog teams will be based on the following criteria:
Dogs on site with equal certification will be set on the trail based on their location on a rotating list. This list will start with a random ordering of dogs which will rotate each month. The dog on the top of the list will go first. After one month on the top of the list, the dog will go to the bottom of the list and all dogs will move up one place on the list.
4. While searching, the canine team will periodically conduct status reviews. These status reviews should occur every 20-30 minutes at opportune times on the trail and should include a discussion of how the dog is trailing, what is the condition of the dog, and what would be the most effective way to proceed.
5. While trailing, the handling assistant should systematically record waypoints on a GPS. These waypoints should be points on the trail when the dog appears to be clearly trailing. Emphasis should be put on areas that are physically recognizable when possible.
6. The handling assistant should record the location of each status review in a field notebook. This location can be used to report the location of the team to SAR managers.
7. The handling assistant will maintain radio contact with SAR managers and will manage all information provided by headquarters.

MAINTENANCE TRAINING

The canine team shall conduct regular objective-oriented training sufficient to maintain operational proficiency.

Training is meant to sustain, enhance, and promote the performance of the canine team. Canine teams shall be challenged during the regular maintenance training sessions within the operational environments for which the team may be deployed.

Training shall include:

- A variety of locations, terrain, search area sizes and weather conditions.
- A variety of distraction odors in the search area.

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A variety of articles (various shapes, sizes, manner and duration of contact, weights, materials, etc.) if required by the agency/organization.

A varied duration of search times and times of day.

A variety of blank search areas.

A variety of set times of target track or trails, articles and degrees of concealment.

A variety of human targets.

Routine training conducted solely by the handler to maintain the canine's proficiency is acceptable but should be periodically combined with supervised training.

Supervised training by a qualified trainer or instructor, is recommended in order to monitor and improve performance, identify and correct training deficiencies and perform proficiency assessments.

Tracking/trailing training shall be included in the minimum of 16 hours of training per month per K9 team to maintain and improve the proficiency level of the canine team.

The canine team shall perform periodic proficiency assessments throughout the certification period including a variety of odor recognition assessments, comprehensive assessments and double-blind assessments.