

Search and Rescue Council of New Jersey

TRAINING STANDARDS For AIR SCENTING K-9 SEARCH AND RESCUE DOG and HANDLER

Canine (K9) teams (handler and dog) who are members of Search and Rescue organizations affiliated with the Search and Rescue Council of New Jersey (SARC NJ) shall comply with or exceed the requirements detailed in these standards.

K-9 HANDLER

- a. The handlers must be at least 18 years of age and physically fit.
- b. The handler must have a current certification in SAR Tech – Type III or equivalent, CPR and Basic First Aid.
- c. The handler must be trained to the level of NIMS/ICS as required by the agency.
- d. The handler must be trained to the “Awareness” level in Hazardous Materials, IS-5 Hazardous Materials: A Citizen’s Orientation or equivalent.
- e. The handler must have the knowledge and ability to evaluate hazards, select safe routes and follow safe work procedures within their assigned work environment.
- f. The handler must be able to use a map and compass effectively to navigate between two points.
- g. The handler must be competent with USGS Topographical maps and be able to read a back azimuth.
- h. The handler must demonstrate basic competency in land navigation and provide documentation of formal classroom and field training.
- i. The handler must be able to estimate distances in the outdoors and across water.
- j. The handler must be competent with portable radio operations.
- k. The handler must be able to explain and demonstrate knowledge of K-9 health maintenance and first aid.
- l. The handler must be able to translate field activity to the command post at the end of their search, including the route taken, areas left uncovered, alerts, wind direction, and probability of detection of victim.
- m. The handler must be able to communicate to the dog the end or conclusion of a search or operation period in a positive manner.
- n. The handler must attend formal classroom instruction for preservation of a crime scene.
- o. The handler must be able to report the location of a find using map coordinates (UTM, Lat-Long, topomap markings, etc.), without assistance from electronic equipment.

AIR SCENTING SEARCH DOG

- a. The dog may be any suitable breed of sound physical structure and temperament and of adequate size and strength to negotiate the terrain encountered in wilderness areas.
- b. The dog must be non-aggressive toward people and other dogs.
- c. The dog shall have received appropriate in-team training to meet the standards set forth in this document. A minimum of 6 months of training log details shall be available for review.
- d. The dog shall have an annual veterinary check-up and medical record, including but not limited to: current vaccinations (rabies mandatory) as recorded by a licensed veterinarian, annual municipal licensing and examinations.
- e. The dog shall display positive qualities that will aid in completing the assigned mission, i.e., energy, curiosity, confidence, solid work ethic and obedience.
- f. The dog shall be under the control of the handler in a manner that allows the dog to participate in SAR operations without interfering with other search operations.
- g. Dog shall be able to work and travel quietly in all types of vehicles, including boats.
- h. Dog shall be acclimated to vehicle, generator and similar noises.
- i. Dog must have a trained recognizable indication upon finding the subject.
- j. The dog, on command, shall be able to leave a person found to search for additional subjects.
- k. Agility requirements shall be established according to team standards. Minimum requirements are in Appendix III.

K9 TEAM

- a. A K9 team shall be composed of one handler and dog.
- b. The team shall respond to search with enough food and water to supply themselves, including K9, for at least 24 hours.
- c. The team shall be physically capable of searching in all types of terrain for 8 to 10 hours with adequate rest periods.
- d. The team shall have adequate equipment for overnight stay and complete clothing changes.
- e. The team must be able to complete field and agility problems listed at the end of this document. See Appendix I, II, II.
- f. Each search team shall have a programmable VHF portable radio with SARCNJ frequencies.
- g. The team must take measures to recognize and protect a possible crime scene.
- h. The team shall have the ability to navigate, day or night, and in all types of weather and terrain.

APPENDIX I — OBEDIENCE

[Refer to ASTM F1847 – 98 (2005)]

- a. Heeling on a loose lead
- b. Able to sit or lie quietly in a group of people or other dogs.
- c. Come immediately when called by handler. (Recall from a sit or down stay)
- d. Demonstrate right, left, about turns, slow, fast and stop with the dog in a heel position, off lead.
- e. Drop on recall (Emergency down) starting from a distance of 50 feet.
- f. Demonstrate a down-stay for 3 minutes with the handler out of sight.

APPENDIX II — AGILITY TEST

- a. Pass through a barrel type tunnel at least 6 feet in length and has a 90 degree bend.
- b. Walk an inclined plank to a landing at least 4 feet above the ground.
- c. Jump onto a platform 2.5 feet high on command.
- d. Swimming in open water for 50 ft.
- e. Crawl under an obstacle that is not higher than 3/4 the dog's height.
- f. Long jump over a ditch, which is as wide as the height of the dog's withers.

APPENDIX III — FIELD TEST

- a. The K9 Team shall have completed a minimum of two night search problems in order to qualify for this evaluation.
- b. Search area shall be at least 60 acres.
- c. Evaluation shall be conducted during daylight hours.
- d. The area should have variety of topography and cover terrain.
- e. The victim shall be placed at least one half hour before the start.
- f. The victim shall be stationary for air scenting search dogs.
- g. A defined search area shall be given to the handler.
- h. The team has 4 hours to make a find.

APPENDIX IV — EVALUATION

The handler must complete the following to the satisfaction of the evaluation team:

- a. The handler gathers data properly and develops a search plan. The handler may deviate from the search plan and make adjustments for changing conditions.
- b. The handler must demonstrate appropriate land navigation skills.
- c. Handler periodically checks wind direction and direction of travel with compass.
- d. The dog works under control and works the area for scent.
- e. The handler can describe and define coverage at end of search.
- f. The dog has an identifiable trained indication upon find or leads handler to find.
- g. Handler reports find correctly via portable radio.
- h. Handler carries proper gear and is in appropriate attire.

APPENDIX V - EVALUATORS

Evaluations shall be conducted with an “outside evaluator” (not on the same team) and at least one other evaluator. The “outside evaluator” shall be selected from a list of approved evaluators provided by the K9 Standards Committee or a recognized K9 certifying organization. Evaluations for certification shall be conducted by evaluators who have expertise in the discipline being evaluated.

The K9 Standard Committee shall approve and create a list of other acceptable evaluations meeting these requirements.

APPENDIX VI – OPERATIONAL STATUS

The K9 Team operational status shall only be designated by the organizational unit when the K9 Team meets the organizational unit requirements and these K9 Standards.

APPENDIX VII – OTHER EVALUATIONS

SARCNJ accepts evaluations done by any nationally recognized standard that complies or exceeds SARCNJ K9 standards.