

Definitions of Policies and Procedures for Search and Rescue K9 units in
Del Norte County, California
Revised 04/06/2007

Definitions of Canine Disciplines

AIR SCENT/AREA SEARCH DOG: Is used to search a specific area. It is not expected that an area search dog will require a scent article prior to searching but a scent article may be used at the discretion of the handler. The air scent or area dog will generally work off lead and search for clues such as human scent in an area.

TRAILING DOG: Is generally used to identify one particular individual's scent from any other person. Trailing is the following of an individual scent trail from a particular person. This dog is generally worked on lead, requires a scent article to begin searching, will follow the trail of the selected individual, and will identify the subject using an alert readable by the handler at the end unless the individual left the area. Trailing dogs are more appropriate for SAR missions than tracking dogs.

CADAVER DOG: Searches for and detects decomposing human remains.

WATER DOG: Searches for and detects human remains in water.

AVALANCHE DOG: Searches for and detects a subject recently buried under snow.

DISASTER DOG: Searches for and detects inaccessible subjects and indicates with an alert compatible with the typing of the dog.

Other Definitions

ALERT: Behavior of the dog when it identifies the subject's scent. This behavior is recognizable by the handler and is considered a clue.

TRACKING DOG: Follows the odor of crushed vegetation and disturbed soil organisms.

Sporting titles cannot be used as a search and rescue qualification.

****NOTE**** these definitions will appear throughout this document.

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K9 EQUIPMENT

In addition to the DNSAR personal equipment list, the dog handler will also have the following items available:

- Collar
- Leash
- Shabrack
- Harness
- Chemical light stick or equivalent
- Two K9 food rations
- Additional water as required

Additional optional equipment:

- Dog harness and long line
- Dog boots
- Dog sling
- Bringsel
- Dog medications
- Dog brush
- Dog treats
- Dog dish
- K9 first aid equipment

TERRAIN AND TEAM TYPING

Typing will conform to the State of California OES terrain and team typing.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS

1. Log Book

The handler shall maintain and keep current a log book documenting the training he/she has done with his/her dog. The log book shall be checked prior to testing and must contain at least six months of current training records.

2. Day Search Pack and Equipment

The handler shall maintain a day search pack that he/she will carry on searches. The required content is listed in the Equipment definition. It should also include items needed for the current weather conditions and winter equipment as appropriate. Handlers qualified for multi-day deployments shall maintain a 72 hour pack consistent with the environment needs.

3. Land Navigation

The handler shall explain and demonstrate the following skills:

- Explain declination
- Explain the UTM system
- Explain Geographic Coordinate system (Latitude/Longitude and UTM)
- Demonstrate orienting a map and compass to the terrain
- Demonstrate obtaining and following a simple compass bearing
- Demonstrate relating a specific compass bearing to the map
- Demonstrate relating a map direction to a specific compass bearing
- Demonstrate point-to-point navigation with GPS and with compass
- Communicate position with GPS and with map/compass
- Demonstrate route finding with GPS and with map/compass
- Demonstrate marking a waypoint with the GPS
- Demonstrate changing between Lat/Long and UTM with the GPS
- Demonstrate matching map and GPS datum

SAR Tech II certification will meet the Map and Compass portion of this requirement, but GPS skills must still be demonstrated before these skills are signed off.

4. Man tracking

The handler shall demonstrate his or her skills and understanding of man tracking fundamentals by successfully performing the following exercises for an evaluator.

- Describe and document the track
- Demonstrate the use of a tracking stick
- Demonstrate the labeling of tracks

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- Describe the importance of light and the techniques for dealing with poor conditions (i.e. high sun angle, cloudy days)
- Demonstrate the process of man tracking for a set of 8 to 10 contiguous steps laid in an area that provides both complete and partial prints, such as a dusty trail
- Discuss the following terms and concepts:
 - Sign and sign-cutting
 - Jump tracking
 - Step-by-step tracking
 - Track trap
 - Preservation or protection of sign

SAR Tech II certification will meet this requirement

5. Knowledge of Scent

The handler shall be interviewed by a Mission Ready handler and asked questions regarding scent guides and scent behavior. The interview shall include the following items of discussion:

- Techniques for collecting a scent guide
- Instructions for another person to collect a scent guide with cautions about clothes hamper & shared closets, etc.
- Techniques for collecting scent from a car seat using sterile gauze pads
- Appropriate containers for storing a scent guide
- Adverse impact of car exhaust and road flares on scent
- Scent behavior near edge of lakes, streams, steep slopes, and conditions that lead to inversion layers.
- Factors that will tend to extend or attenuate the scent such as sunlight, wind, humidity, etc.
- Factors that will lead to chimney effect
- Factors that will lead to discontinuous scent from the subject
- Factors that will lead to looping scent from the subject
- Strategies for placing area search dogs on ridges/canyon floors to detect subject

6. Helicopter Safety Class

The handler is required to attend a lecture on safety in entering and leaving the helicopter and handling his/her dog in an appropriate manner.

7. Unexpected Night Out Course

The handler will take a course designed to prepare the team for an unplanned night out while searching. The course shall include at least the following:

- Survival attitude
- Minimum gear
- Food/water issues
- Clothing
- Shelter building
- Dog needs

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8. Monthly Workouts

The handler shall participate in at least six regional or cooperating county training group workouts, pre-approved by their mentor, as well as attend local trainings on a regular basis. These shall be documented in the handler's log book for search dog training.

18. Field Observation Experience

The handler shall be required to complete 10 hours of field observation experience (without their dog) on at least two separate wilderness missions. Hours may be accrued from the time a DNSAR team member becomes a K9 handler apprentice. Field observation hours must be completed and the K9 Unit leader advised before a Mission Ready test can be arranged. Handlers shall complete the 10 observation hours by observing a DNSAR or other mutual aid mission ready K9 team in the discipline in which they are training. The K9 handler, with mentor recommendation, may petition the K9 team to approve any exceptions. A majority vote of handlers present at a K9 meeting will be required to waive observation hours. Apprentices are encouraged to accumulate additional hours in their own or other disciplines. The signature of the mission ready handler on the Field Observation log sheet is required for each search. Field experience is defined as that time spent observing the mission ready team search the area assigned, briefing and debriefing, and does not include transportation to and from the search or sitting at base camp.

AREA SEARCH DOG FOUNDATION SKILLS

The following list of canine skills and tasks are to be completed prior to the initial Mission Ready test. The dog shall meet the minimum age requirement of nine months for sign-offs. The K-9 team must successfully complete the Foundation Skills before progressing to the 40 Acre Field evaluation. Each Foundation Skill is valid for 2 years unless the team has become Mission Ready. Mission Ready teams must have the obedience and agility skills signed off again no more than 6-months before (may be concurrent with) their next Area Search Mission Ready recertification test.

1.0 OBEDIENCE

All of the following exercises are to be performed off lead, except where stated.

The use of prong collars or electronic collars shall not be permitted.

1.1 Heeling On Lead

The dog must heel on lead in a controlled manner through a scattered group of people and dogs. The dog should be responsive to the handler, who may talk or give repeated commands as necessary.

1.2 Heeling Off Lead

The dog must heel off lead in a controlled manner through a scattered group of people and dogs. The dog should be responsive to the handler, who may talk or give repeated commands as necessary.

1.3 Sit and Down

The dog shall demonstrate a sit and a down.

1.4 Recall

The dog shall be left at sit or down while handler goes approximately 25 yards. The dog shall remain as placed until signaled, then shall come with one command or signal.

1.5 Stop on recall

The dog shall be placed on a "stay" at least 25 yards from the starting line. After calling the dog, the handler shall stop the dog approximately halfway.

1.6 Long Wait

The handler shall tether the dog to a fixed object and shall leave the immediate area and remain out of sight for a period of ten minutes. At the end of the first five minutes an evaluator shall move and tether the dog in another location for the remaining portion of the exercise. This second location will also be out of sight of the handler. At some point during the exercise a person unfamiliar to the dog shall walk past the dog in the manner of someone simply passing by. The dog shall not exhibit aggression or undue apprehension during the exercise.

1.7 Long down

The long down exercise can be done individually or with a group of dogs, but dogs shall be placed at least 15 feet apart. The dog's leash must be removed, but the dog may be placed next to the handler's pack. Upon direction of the evaluator, the handler

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shall leave the dog and walk out of the dog's sight until told to return. Timing starts when the handler is out of sight. The dog must remain in place for 5 minutes. The dog may sit, stand, or shift positions, but may not move more than his body length in any direction from where he was placed. The dog must be under the supervision of a monitor throughout the exercise.

2.0 AGILITY

The dog shall demonstrate each of the following agility skills in an unfamiliar area.

2.1 Plank Walk

The dog will walk along a 10-inch wide, 10-foot long plank or log. Plank must be elevated at least 3-feet off the ground.

2.2 Climb/Balance

The dog shall demonstrate confidence when climbing and balancing on a pile of debris (i.e. rocks, a firewood pile). Debris pile should be at least 3 feet high and 5 feet long.

2.3 Tunnel

The dog shall demonstrate the ability to go through a 6-10 foot tunnel or culvert.

2.4 Crawl

The dog shall demonstrate the ability to crawl under a fence or similar obstacle. The obstacle must be low enough to require the dog to truly crawl.

2.5 Lift Down

The dog shall calmly accept being lifted onto something (i.e. a boulder or truck bed) 3-4 feet in height, and then being lifted down. The handler may have the assistance of 1-2 helpers for the lifting/lowering exercises as needed.

2.6 Lift Over

The dog shall also calmly accept being lifted over a fence, from or into the arms of a helper. The handler may have the assistance of 1-2 helpers for the lifting/lowering exercises as needed.

3.0 SWIMMING

The handler may use any method he/she chooses to demonstrate the dog's ability to enter a body of water and swim a total distance of 50 feet.

4.0 TRANSPORT

The dog shall demonstrate the ability to be safely transported on lead with at least two other dog teams. Ideally the dogs should not know each other well. The transport vehicle and number of teams should be such that the teams are in close quarters, but each handler must have a seat belt. The dogs shall be under the control of their handlers at all times. Teams shall be transported on a bumpy or curvy road for at least five minutes. The dogs shall remain calm and not struggle or show aggression.

5.0 SOCIABILITY

DNSAR dogs must be able to behave appropriately around other dogs, people and animals. Verification of appropriate canine behavior must be obtained from the mentor of an Apprentice team (or from an approved evaluator in the case of a Mission Ready handler certifying a new dog). It is understood that dog behavior can change over time such that initial verification of sociability cannot replace on-going assessment.

5.1 Dog/Dog & Dog/Human Behavior

The mentor is expected to observe the behavior of apprentice team over an extended period of time. The mentor must verify that he/she has not observed, or been made

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aware of, any incidents of canine misbehavior from the team over the past 6-months. The mentor should only consider canine behavior associated with DNSAR events.

5.2 Dog/Animal Behavior

The mentor must verify that the dog has not exhibited excessive distractibility, fear, or aggression toward other animals during a DNSAR event in the past 3-months.

ALIVE V DEAD FOUNDATION SKILL

(OES Type 2 Cadaver)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this test is to show that a dog responding to a search in which the condition of the subject is unknown will locate the subject whether he is alive or deceased. This is NOT a stand alone certification.

GUIDELINES: This shall be completed by the dog and handler prior to becoming certified in Wilderness/Area search.

TEST CRITERIA: There shall be one evaluator who is cadaver or wilderness certified. The test site shall include open areas, brush, trees, grass/dirt and rocks. The live person shall be hidden so the handler cannot see the hidden subject. The area will be approximately 20 acres. The large cadaver scent source, or a combination of small sources, shall be hidden so the handler or dog cannot see the source. The source(s) will not be buried but shall be camouflaged. The dog must locate both the live subject and the scent source within one hour to pass this test. The dog shall not eat, pick up or urinate on the scent source.

RECERTIFICATION

Cadaver 2 certified teams shall re-certify every two years. Teams shall re-certify within 2 years of their last certification date. A grace period will be allowed through the end of the following month. Failure of a re-certification test will result in removal from the call-out list for Cadaver 2 type searches until the team passes the Cadaver 2 Mission Ready test. Dogs that are certified with DNSAR in Wilderness/Area and OES Cadaver 1-Cadaver Basic need not separately recertify as Cadaver 2-Large Area cadaver and shall be considered to be on the call-out list for this type of search.

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EVALUATOR GUIDELINES FOR 40-ACRE EVALUATION

I. Mandatory Prerequisites: All the following must be checked off before the team is eligible to take the 40-Acre Evaluation. A mentor will certify that everything has been checked prior to the test; however, the team being tested must bring everything to the test site. Field uniform may be worn on the test. Prior to setting up the 40-Acre evaluation, the mentor will ensure that the apprentice handler has the following:

1. A Class A uniform
2. A complete daypack
3. Current certification in CPR and first aid
4. Handler Preliminary Requirements (complete to extent required)
5. K9 Preliminary Requirements are complete
6. Physical fitness requirement is complete within 12 months
7. Training log is current

Prior to the commencement of the evaluation, the dog will demonstrate a simple alert and re-find of a concealed subject. (May use subject runaway to demonstrate.)

MANDATORY PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

The evaluators will record the weather conditions and features of the terrain that influence scent conditions. The handler and K9 skills are to be assessed by the evaluators to the extent that conditions allow. The report on the team's performance will be either YES, NO or N/A where N/A indicates not applicable or not observed. The evaluators should provide an explanation for N/A reports in the comments section of the evaluation form. A NO rating by either evaluator on any of the performance parameters will result in failure of the evaluation. Each skill should receive a YES/NO report unless conditions are such that the skill is not observable or required for the test. The evaluators are encouraged to provide constructive feedback to the team.

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40 ACRE EVALUATION

The dog shall meet the minimum age requirement of 12 months.

1. Evaluators

Tests and evaluations shall be given in accordance to the K-9 SAR Dog Evaluator Guidelines as stated in this document. This evaluation may be conducted in county by in county evaluators.

2. Setting Up the Test

The dog team must search a forty-acre (1/4 mile by 1/4 mile) area and locate one subject in a maximum of two hours. The boundaries shall be well defined. The dog may track, trail, or air scent the subject. The subject shall be placed at least 30 minutes prior to the evaluation and must be concealed. Camouflage clothing is preferred; bright colors are unacceptable. The handler shall not be able to see the subject from a distance of twenty feet. To ensure that the subject is not easily trackable by the handler, area tests shall not be set up (subject placed) when snow is on the ground (patchy snow OK) or when other similar conditions (i.e. mud, dew etc.) cannot be avoided which create easily visible tracks leading to the subject.

3. Area Search Problem

The search dog team shall arrive on time and check into search base with appropriate equipment. The apprentice handler will provide the required form signed by his/her mentor that verifies the following items:

- Complete Class A uniform
- Required items in search pack
- Up to date log book
- Handler Preliminary Requirements complete to the extent required
- K9 Preliminary Requirements complete
- Current CPR & First Aid certification
- Physical Fitness requirement complete

Prior to the evaluation, the handler shall describe and have the dog demonstrate the alert sequence. The dog shall be sent a minimum of 25 yards to a bush or suitable hiding place to find a concealed subject.

The team shall be given a scenario and pertinent information. The handler shall develop a search plan based on the scenario and information given and shall advise base camp of the plan. The handler shall keep base camp informed of progress in the field, plan changes, and any clues or evidence found. Timing of the evaluation will begin with the deployment of the search dog. The dog and handler shall demonstrate the ability to negotiate banks, logs, brush and other natural obstacles. During the evaluation, the handler shall have periodic radio communication with search base. When the subject is located the handler will determine the subject's condition, location, and request whatever resources are required. If the subject is found in less than one hour, the dog shall be required to work a minimum time of one hour. A subject may be placed so the dog can

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continue to search the required time. The dog shall not be failed if it does not locate the second subject.

To pass the evaluation, the dog shall locate the subject within the two hours allowed and perform the alert sequence. The handler shall assess the subject's condition and report their position accurately on the map. The team will be evaluated on essential search skills including: clue recognition and action taken by the team, handler and dog stamina, search plan and implementation, map and compass skills, radio communication skills, and interviewing skills. The evaluators shall assess and report the team's performance with YES, NO or N/A (not applicable or not observed). If N/A is reported, then an explanation of the circumstances should be included. **Any assessment item which receives a "NO" rating by one or both of the evaluators will result in a failure of the test.**

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AREA SEARCH MISSION READY TEST

1. Evaluators

For evaluator requirements refer to Evaluator Requirements in the Policies and Procedures.

2. Setting Up the Test:

The test area shall be approximately 100 – 120 acres in terrain appropriate for the “Type” being tested. All portions of the test area shall be accessible (i.e. via hiking through the area or by hiking the perimeter and sending the dog in). One to three subjects shall be placed thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the evaluation in widely separated areas. The number of subjects shall be unknown to the handler being tested. The subjects will be carefully concealed and will not wear bright clothing; camouflage is preferred. The handler should not be able to see the subject(s) from a distance of twenty (20) feet. To ensure that the subject(s) is/are not easily trackable by the handler, area tests shall not be set up (subjects placed) when snow is on the ground (patchy snow OK) or when other similar conditions (i.e. mud, dew etc.) cannot be avoided which create easily visible tracks leading to the subject(s). Type 3 Tests are tests that take place in gentle terrain environments. In Type 3 test areas, the difference between the high point and low point must be a minimum of 100 feet. Trees and/or light to moderate brush must cover at least 25% of the search area. No more than 10% of the area shall be heavy ground cover that substantially impedes progress. Type 2 Tests are tests that take place in rugged conditions. In Type 2 test areas, the difference between the high point and low point must be a minimum of 200 feet. No more than 25% shall be open area. No more than 10% of the area shall be heavy ground cover that substantially impedes progress. Type 1 Tests are tests that take place in extreme conditions. Type 1 tests must be administered above 7,000 feet. In Type 1 test areas, the difference between the high point and low point must be a minimum of 300 feet. No more than 25% shall be open area. No more than 10% of the area shall be heavy ground cover that substantially impedes progress. In addition, Type 1 teams must successfully complete the Type 1 Overnight Exercise prior to testing. This exercise must be completed every 24 months by each handler/dog team certifying as Type 1.

3. Area Search Problem

The team will be given a scenario, map of the search area (indicating 3 clearly defined boundaries and 1 undefined boundary based upon a compass bearing or contour line), and time to develop a search plan. Timing of the test shall commence when the handler deploys the dog. The test shall last a minimum of three (3) hours: if the team locates three subjects, or reports that they have completed the assignment prior to three hours, they shall continue to work the area until the minimum time has elapsed. The team shall be allowed a maximum of four (4) hours to complete the search assignment. Evaluators shall not inform the team as to whether or not they have located all the subjects until the 4-hour time limit has been reached. The teams must locate all the subjects in order to pass the test. The team will be evaluated on essential search skills including: clue recognition and action taken by the team, handler and dog stamina, search plan and implementation, map and compass skills, radio communication skills, and interviewing skills. The evaluators shall assess and report the team’s performance with YES- NO or N/A (not applicable or not observed). If N/A is reported, then an explanation of the circumstances

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should be included. **Any assessment item which receives a “NO” rating by one or both of the evaluators will result in a failure of the test.**

EVALUATOR GUIDELINES FOR MISSION READY TEST

1. General

The evaluators will record basic test information, including the stop and start time, minimum and maximum elevation, “Type”, and test location.

2. Mandatory Prerequisites

DNSAR Team apprentice’s mentor shall ensure that all of the following have been checked off before the team is eligible to take the Mission Ready test. The team being tested must bring everything to the test site. Field uniform may be worn on the test. Items 2, 4, and 6 are not applicable for mission ready teams taking a recertification test.

1. Has complete Class A uniform
2. Has complete day pack
3. Handler certifications in CPR and first aid are current
4. Handler Preliminary Requirements Complete and are not expired
5. Dog Foundation Skills Complete/Updated and are not expired
6. Team has completed 40-Acre Area Search Dog Evaluation within 12 months
7. Physical fitness requirement is current
8. Training log checked
9. For Type 1 tests, handler and dog have successfully completed the Type 1 Overnight Exercise within the past 24 months.

AREA SEARCH DOG FOUNDATION SKILLS

Testing and certification for type 1, 2 and 4

Refer to California OES Law Enforcement Branch Search and Rescue Mutual Aid -
Canine Guidelines Revised 1/18/2005 pp 18-21
To be revised here when appropriate

WATER SEARCH (CADAVER 3)

Refer to the State of California OES SAR MA Guideline - Dog Appendix C – Water
Dated Jan 2005
To be revised here when appropriate

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CROSS CERTIFICATION

In order to facilitate members cross certifying (a handler certifying with another handler's mission ready dog), the following requirements shall be met:

- If the handler has been a mission ready handler in the discipline in which the handler wishes to cross certify, the handler is **not** required to complete all of the preliminary requirements; however, he/she **must** take the Mission Ready test with the dog.
- If the handler has not been a mission ready handler in the discipline in which the handler wishes to cross certify, the handler must complete all of the preliminary requirements and take a Mission Ready test with the dog.

Only mission ready handlers shall be allowed to cross certify with another handler's dog. All cross certifications must be approved by DNSAR's K9 team prior to testing.

SAR DOG EVALUATOR GUIDELINES

1. It is recommended, but not mandatory, initial certification testing in any discipline be conducted with a minimum of two out of county evaluators and in an area unfamiliar to the team being evaluated, outside of Del Norte County. Recertification testing may occur out of county; however it is not required.
2. The evaluators shall be currently or have been previously certified in the discipline and type for the test being given.
3. One of the evaluators should have been deployed on a minimum of ten searches, in the discipline being tested, at the Level and Type equal to or higher than the Type being tested. This requirement may be modified in testing disciplines where search deployment is unusual, such as avalanche, cadaver, water and disaster. In Del Norte County, a water evaluator or cadaver evaluator shall have been deployed on a minimum of 5 searches in the respective discipline. Persons meeting these qualifications are also capable of signing off preliminary skills in the disciplines they are certified in.
4. The County SAR Coordinator, Agency must approve all evaluators in their jurisdiction. In order to preserve the highest standards of professionalism and to avoid any perceived conflict of interest between the evaluator and the K9 team, the evaluator may not have a monetary interest in the training of the K9 team being evaluated.