

# K9 Search and Rescue Team Inc.

35 Railroad Avenue, Dolores, CO, 81323 | (970) 882-4746 | Email: k9@k9team.org

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## AIR SCENT MISSION-READY TEST, LEVEL 1

The test shall last a minimum of two (2) hours and the team shall be allowed four (4) hours to complete the search assignment. Additional subjects may be placed if the team completes the assignment in less than two (2) hours.

### 1. Evaluator

The evaluations shall be conducted by the Team Commander, Training Unit Leader or their designee.

### 2. Setting Up the Test

*The test area shall be approximately 160 acres (Approximately 0.8 Km) OR an area of at least 30 acres (approximately 300 meters) of heavy brush, handlers choice.*

*If dense brush is chosen, the evaluator is to provide an area that has vegetation thick enough to block any visual find, be at a height of over the dogs back and be physically passable with moderate to difficult resistance without having to crawl. The area's boundaries will be defined and recognized by some form of confinement, either natural or manmade.*

*One target shall be placed thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the evaluation. No more than two decoys may be placed. One decoy may be mobile or in a tree. They will be carefully concealed and will not wear bright clothing; camouflage is preferred. The handler should not be able to see target from a minimum distance of 7 meters. The target will be given the scenario, including target condition so that they may answer questions pertinently. The target and decoys will be unfamiliar to the dog and/or people with whom the dog does not normally train. The test shall be set-up out of the normal training area of the team being tested.*

### 3. Area Search Problem

The search dog team should arrive on time with appropriate equipment at search base, and sign in with the Incident Commander. **The team must have checked-off all mandatory prerequisites prior to the test.** The team will be given a scenario and pertinent information. The handler will develop a search plan, based on the scenario and information given and information obtained from interviewing the reporting party. The handler will advise base camp of this plan. The handler will keep base camp informed of progress in the field, plan changes, location, wind change, and any clues or evidence found.

The search area must be successfully searched for *one* target, *eliminating the decoys*. Timing of the test shall commence when the handler has completed development of a search plan and advised the Incident Commander. The test shall last a minimum of two (2) hours and the team shall be allowed four (4) hours to complete the search assignment. Additional subjects may be placed if the team completes the assignment in less than two (2) hours. If the team fails to locate *and identify* the target, the team will have failed.

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, *scent discrimination*, and interviewing skills. The evaluator shall assess and report the team's performance with EXCELLENT, SATISFACTORY, UNSATISFACTORY or N/A (not applicable or not observed). If N/A or UNSATISFACTORY is reported, then an explanation of the circumstances should be included. **Any assessment item that receives a "UNSATISFACTORY" rating by the evaluator will result in a failure of the test.**

## EVALUATOR GUIDELINES FOR 160-ACRE MISSION READY TEST, Level 1

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- I. **Mandatory Prerequisites:** All the following must be checked off before the team is eligible to take the mission ready test. An officer will certify that everything has been checked prior to the test; however, the team being tested must bring everything to the test site. Evaluators may make spot checks and must check for current logbook. Field uniform may be worn on the test.
- Has complete field uniform
  - Has complete pack
  - Handler certification in CPR and first aid is current
  - Preliminary Requirements Complete
  - Team has completed *Air Scent Mission Ready, Level 2* within 12 months
  - Physical fitness requirement complete within 12 months
  - Logbook checked
- II. **Mandatory Performance Requirements:** The handler will record the weather, wind conditions and features of the terrain that influence scent conditions. The following skills are to be assessed by the evaluator to the extent that conditions allow. The report on the team's performance will be either EXCELLENT, SATISFACTORY, UNSATISFACTORY or N/A where N/A indicates not applicable or not observed. The evaluator should provide an explanation for N/A or UNSATISFACTORY reports in the comments section of the evaluation form. An UNSATISFACTORY rating by the evaluator on any of the performance parameters will result in failure of the test.
- A. **Handler Skills Evaluation Guidelines.** The list below summarizes the guidelines for evaluating critical handler skills. Each skill should receive a YES/NO report unless conditions are such that the skill is not observable or required for the test. It is expected that teams will excel in some areas and perform satisfactorily in others. The evaluator is encouraged to provide constructive feedback to the team being tested in those areas where their performance meets the threshold criteria but falls short of the ideal.

## Skill Criteria for Evaluation Report

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
Conduct of Initial Interview	Does not interview or take notes	Conducts satisfactory interview. Gets basic description and enough information to conduct search	Conducts excellent but concise interview, asks all relevant questions about target, conditions of search area, resources available, prior search efforts
Collection of Scent Article	<i>Does not collect a scent article, or contaminates article with decoy scent</i>	Collects scent article in a manner that may contaminate the article but not confuse the scent with a decoy	Collects scent article without any contamination
Initial Plan of Action	Has no real plan other than following dog to target or plan reflects lack of understanding of search strategy	Has satisfactory plan, which shows basic understanding of weather, map reading and search strategy including techniques of hasty search, contouring, grid searching, and perimeter search	Has excellent plan that shows good understanding of map reading and search strategy factors. Can articulate good reasons for choosing or rejecting techniques such as hasty search in light of conditions
Demonstration of Radio Skills	Does not use radio or uses inappropriately. Does not know how to communicate information on location, target condition, etc	Uses radio appropriately when called and when locates target. Communicates satisfactorily with	Excellent use of radio. Imparts information clearly, concisely. Lets base camp know about changes in plan, clues located,

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		appropriate ID/address, doesn't cut off message	condition and location of target of search area
Demonstration of Map & Compass Skills	Does not know how to relate map to actual terrain. Cannot coordinate compass use with map. Does not use basic skills. Even if finds target, cannot locate area on map or give base camp general location	Has basic skills. Can relate map to actual terrain. Coordinates compass use with map. Uses compass in field. If asked, can determine location on the map and point out areas covered and missed	Has excellent skills. Uses map and compass to formulate good search plan and keep track of drainages, landmarks, areas searched/missed etc. Finds location of target on map and can describe accurately to base camp
Implementation	Search shows little planning other than wandering around with dog. Even if originally described satisfactory plan of action, does not actually carry it out or explain changes. Hasty search appropriate for area but not used and no explanation given. Scent article not used or used inappropriately	Carries out original plan of action or explains changes. Does hasty search if appropriate or explains why not using. Plan would be satisfactory to clear area with good POD. <i>Scent article used</i>	Carries out original plan/explains changes. Good understanding of contouring, grid patterns, etc. Uses hasty search or has good reason not to. Plan makes best use of terrain, wind, etc. Is flexible and communicative about changing with changing conditions. Plan maximizes POD. <i>Scent article used for initial identification and reinforcement</i>
Adjusts Search for Wind Conditions	Makes little effort to use wind appropriately. Lowers POD by failure to monitor grid pattern for wind direction, wind force etc. Doesn't understand lofting or other wind conditions that affect dog's ability to follow scent	Reasonably conscious of wind conditions. Generally increases POD by proper grid. Understands loft, deflection and other conditions; can help dog work out problems following scent	Very conscious of wind direction in employing grid patterns. Helps dog work out scent problems by using superior knowledge of wind conditions. Understands effect of wind conditions on POD. However, does not attempt to constantly alter search plan in area where wind constantly changes direction
Alertness to Surroundings and Visual Clues	Shows no interest in possible clues/tracks. Does not check track traps	Checks for possible clues/tracks, aware of track traps	Finds clue/track. Intelligently decides whether to change plan or re-deploy dog. Recognizes that a dog handler is not a man-tracker and does not become consumed with tracking
Coverage of Search Area	Leaves many holes, doesn't find/check perimeters, grid pattern too wide for wind conditions. If finds target, appears to have stumbled upon he/she fortuitously	Covers search area satisfactorily. Checks sector perimeters (unless finds target first). Does hasty search if appropriate. Does not leave major holes without satisfactory explanation and plan to return	Excellent coverage of search area. Maximizes POD by use of appropriate grid pattern, ridges/drainages, hasty search, etc
Ability to Interpret Dog's Alerts, Interest	Cannot read dog, calls dog off scent, does not know when dog needs help/encouragement	Satisfactory reading of dog, encourages dog when dog needs help working out interest	Excellent job of reading dog. Knows how to help dog work out problems, knows when dog has clue or target, knows when dog needs to be told to get back to work
Ability to Direct and Control Dog	Little control of dog. Can't send dog to search specific areas, can't redirect distracted dog. Dog runs search	Satisfactory control of dog. Can send to specific areas	Excellent control of dog. Can send out to specific areas; give directions while dog is in field

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Physical Condition of Handler	Handler in poor condition. Terrain is too much for handler who cannot keep pace Satisfactory to search area with reasonable POD	Handler condition Satisfactory for conditions	Handler in excellent condition, can handle rough terrain and steep grades
Provision of Appropriate Breaks for Dog	Dog's physical condition, motivation or ability to search suffers from handler's failure to provide appropriate water/rest breaks.	Satisfactory water/rest breaks given as needed.	Water/rest breaks given which keep dog well hydrated and rested throughout search.

## Search Dog Skills Evaluation Guidelines

The list below summarizes the guidelines for evaluating critical search dog skills. Each skill should receive a YES/NO report unless conditions are such that the skill is not observable or required for the test. It is expected that teams will excel in some areas and perform satisfactorily in others. The evaluator is encouraged to provide constructive feedback to the team being tested in those areas where their performance meets the threshold criteria but falls short of the ideal.

## Handler Skills Evaluation Guidelines

The list below summarizes the guidelines for evaluating critical handler skills. Each skill should receive a YES/NO report unless conditions are such that the skill is not observable or required for the test. It is expected that teams will excel in some areas and perform satisfactorily in others. The evaluator is encouraged to provide constructive feedback to the team being tested in those areas where their performance meets the threshold criteria but falls short of the ideal.

## Skill Criteria for Evaluation Report

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
Locates And Identifies Target	Does not locate target or is led into target by handler. Dog does not identify target.	Locates and identifies target by scent cone, track or by going into area as directed by handler.	Locates target from significant distance by following scent cone, track, or searching ridge, drainage, clump of bushes as directed by handler. Works out any problematic scent conditions. Clearly identifies the target.
Makes Report to Handler	<i>Dog makes no discernible report, just leaves target and continues with search, stays with target unseen by handler or returns to handler without any indication that target found. (Bark and hold at the target is not acceptable.)</i>	Dog makes re-find known to handler in a manner that shows that dog has located target.	Dog comes all the way back to handler and does report which makes it obvious to evaluator that dog has located target and meets above criteria.
Takes Handler All the Way to Target	<i>Dog does not go back to target.</i>	Dog takes handler all the way to target but may require more than one command and some encouragement.	Dog immediately takes handler on first command without detour.
Dog's Ability to Handle Terrain (Agility)	<i>Dog's agility inadequate for terrain</i>	Dog's agility satisfactory for terrain	Dog shows excellent agility

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<b>Dog Demonstrates Satisfactory Stamina</b>	<i>Dog too tired to complete search or, if target located before time up, it is clear that even after rest break could not continue with search and alert very weak due to dog's exhaustion.</i>	Dog's stamina adequate. Although depleted in energy and enthusiasm by the time target is located, shows ability to continue, Satisfactory alert.	Dog has excellent stamina. Shows enthusiasm and willingness to go on after target is located.
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