

K9 Search and Rescue Team Inc.

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

AIR SCENT SMALL AREA EVALUATION LEVEL 3

1. Evaluators

The training officer, team leader or their designee shall conduct the evaluations.

2. Setting Up the Test

The dog team must search a forty-acre (0.4 KM by 0.4 KM) area and locate one target in a maximum of two hours. The dog may track, trail, or air scent the target. The target shall be placed anywhere in the area 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 target from a distance of no more than 7 meters.

3. Area Search Problem

The search dog team shall arrive on time and check into search base with appropriate equipment. The evaluators shall check or verify the following items:

- Has complete field uniform
- Required items in search pack checked off
- Up to date logbook
- Handler Preliminary Requirements complete to the extent required
- Canine Preliminary Requirements complete, including vaccinations record
- Current CPR & First Aid
- Physical Fitness requirement complete

Prior to the evaluation, the handler shall describe the dog's alert sequence.

The team shall be given a scenario and pertinent information. The handler shall develop a search plan based on the scenario. The handler shall keep base camp informed of progress in the field, location, wind direction, plan changes, hazards, 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 target is located the handler will determine the target's condition, location, and request whatever resources are required.

If the target is found in less than one hour, the dog shall be required to work a minimum time of one hour. A second target may be placed so the dog can continue to search the required time.

To pass the evaluation, the dog shall locate the target within the two hours allowed and perform the alert sequence. The handler shall assess the target's condition and report their position accurately on the map by GPS, compass and one other mapping technique of their choice. All information shall be communicated to base camp.

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 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 SMALL AREA EVALUATION

- I. **Mandatory Prerequisites:** All the following must be checked off before the team is eligible to take the Small Area Evaluation. The training officer will certify that everything has been checked prior to the test; however, the team being tested must bring everything to the test site. The evaluator may make spot checks and must check for current logbook. Field uniform may be worn on the test.
 - Has complete field uniform
 - Has complete daypack
 - Handler certification in CPR and first aid is current
 - Handler Preliminary Requirements Complete (to extent required)
 - Dog preliminary requirements complete
 - Physical fitness requirement complete within 12 months
 - Logbook is current

- II. **Mandatory Performance Requirements:** The handler will record the weather conditions and features of the terrain that influence scent conditions. The following skills are to be assessed by the evaluators 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 and 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
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 of search area
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 appropriate ID/address, doesn't cut off message	Excellent use of radio. Imparts information clearly, concisely. Lets base camp know about changes in plan, clues located, condition and location of target
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.	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.

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
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	Adequate water/rest breaks given as needed	Water/rest breaks given which keep dog well hydrated and rested throughout search

- B. **Search Dog Skills Evaluation Guidelines.** The table 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 adequately 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 Target	Does not locate target or is led into target by handler	Locates 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
Makes Report to Handler	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.)	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	Dog does not go back to target	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)	Dog's agility inadequate for terrain	Dog's agility adequate for terrain	Dog shows excellent agility
Dog Demonstrates Adequate Stamina	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	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