

SWGDOG SC2 - GENERAL GUIDELINES

2nd Revision

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Statement of Purpose: To provide recommended best practice general guidelines for training, certification, and documentation pertaining to all canine disciplines. Discipline specific guidelines are found within the corresponding subcommittee documents.

1. INITIAL TRAINING

- 1.1. The handler training shall be conducted by a competent trainer from an entity that utilizes a structured curriculum with specific training and learning objectives.
- 1.2. The canine training shall be conducted by a competent canine trainer from an entity that utilizes a structured curriculum with specific training and learning objectives.
 - 1.3. Initial training shall include sufficient obedience training to ensure the canine will operate effectively based on mission requirements.
 - 1.4. The canine shall be trained to perform an effective and controlled search.
 - 1.5. The initial training of the canine shall include training of a determined specific final response (active or passive alert).
 - 1.6. Initial training shall include exposing the canine team to a variety of locations, expected situations and searches.
 - 1.7. The training shall be structured to meet the typical mission requirements of the canine team's department/organization.
 - 1.8. The canine team's training shall be continued to achieve a level of operational proficiency until certification evaluation.

2. CANINE TEAM ASSESSMENTS

- 2.1. Assessments are part of certification, maintenance training and proficiency testing.
- 2.2. Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.
- 2.3. The canine team shall be assessed in the following ways:
 - 2.3.1. Odor recognition assessment.
 - 2.3.1.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search.

- 2.3.1.2. The handler may know the number of target objects, but not the placement.
- 2.3.1.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
- 2.3.2. Comprehensive assessment (single-blind assessment).
 - 2.3.2.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search, yet shall not know the desired outcome.
 - 2.3.2.2. The handler shall not know the number or placement of the target objects.
 - 2.3.2.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
 - 2.3.2.4. The assessments shall include a blank search.
- 2.3.3. Double-blind assessment.
 - 2.3.3.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search.
 - 2.3.3.2. No participant or observer present at the assessment location(s) shall be aware of the desired outcome of the search.
 - 2.3.3.3. The assessments may include a blank search.
- 2.4. Each assessment will address the following areas:
 - 2.4.1. Demonstration of the canine's ability to perform a systematic search.
 - 2.4.2. Demonstration of the handler's control of the canine during the execution of a systematic search.
 - 2.4.3. Demonstration of the handler's ability to accurately interpret the canine's changes in behaviors associated with odor detection and identification.
 - 2.4.4. Demonstration of the handler's ability to determine whether or not the canine has made a final response.
 - 2.4.5. In a double blind assessment it may not be possible to include all of the handler and canine assessment areas listed above.

3. CANINE TEAM CERTIFICATION

- 3.1. Certification for the named canine team shall be valid for one year.
 - 3.1.1. Certification does not relieve the canine team from regular maintenance training, periodic proficiency assessments, and following other recommended SWGDOG guidelines.
 - 3.1.2. The certifying official(s) shall not be routinely involved in the day to day training of the canine team being evaluated.
 - 3.1.3. Specific assessment criteria are articulated by discipline.
 - 3.1.4. Handler errors, when excessive, may result in failure of the team.
 - 3.1.5. A mission-oriented test environment shall be used.
- 3.2. Certification shall consist of a number of assessments that together form the full test.
 - 3.2.1. Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.

- 3.2.2. Aids and/or targets used in the day to day training activities of the team being certified should not be used in the certification process.
- 3.2.3. The certification shall be comprised of a comprehensive assessment together with either an odor recognition assessment or a double-blind assessment, or both.
- 3.3. A canine team that fails to complete the certification process shall complete a corrective action plan before making another attempt to certify.

4. MAINTENANCE TRAINING

- 4.1. The canine team shall conduct regular objective-oriented training sufficient to maintain and enhance operational proficiency. Maintenance training shall include the following:
 - 4.1.1. Correcting identified deficiencies or operational concerns.
 - 4.1.2. A variety of search locations and sizes and environmental conditions.
 - 4.1.3. Varied duration of search times.
 - 4.1.4. Varied times of day/night.
 - 4.1.5. A variety of blank searches.
 - 4.1.6. A variety of distractions in the search area.
 - 4.1.7. A variety of set times.
 - 4.1.8. A variety of target odors, amounts, number of targets and different sources of targets where applicable.
 - 4.1.9. A variety of methods of concealment.
- 4.2. Training conducted solely by the handler to maintain the canine's proficiency is acceptable, but should be periodically combined with supervised training.
 - 4.2.1. Supervised training, by a qualified trainer/instructor, is recommended in order to monitor and improve performance, identify and correct training deficiencies, and perform proficiency assessments.
- 4.3. A canine team shall complete a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training per month to maintain and improve the proficiency level of the team.
- 4.4. The canine team shall undergo periodic proficiency assessments as outlined in section 2 of the Canine Team Assessments. These assessments should include a variety of odor recognition assessments, comprehensive assessments and/or double-blind assessments.

5. DOCUMENTATION

- 5.1. The handler/department/organization shall document training, certification, proficiency assessments and discipline-related deployment data.

- 5.1.1. Training and proficiency assessment records may be combined or maintained separately.
 - 5.1.2. Discipline-related deployment records shall be maintained separately from training, certification and proficiency assessment records.
 - 5.1.3. Training and discipline-related records should be standardized within the department/organization.
- 5.2. Training records may include, but are not limited to, the following data:
- 5.2.1. Name of handler and canine.
 - 5.2.2. Name(s) of individual(s) conducting/assisting training.
 - 5.2.3. Time and date training took place.
 - 5.2.4. Location and environmental conditions.
 - 5.2.5. Training design (non-blind, single-blind or double-blind).
 - 5.2.6. Description and number of target(s).
 - 5.2.7. Location of target(s).
 - 5.2.8. Set time.
 - 5.2.9. Size of search area.
 - 5.2.10. Length of session.
 - 5.2.11. Search results.
 - 5.2.12. Deficiencies and corrective measures implemented.
 - 5.2.13. Other information required by department/organization.
- 5.3. Certification records shall be maintained by the certifying authority and the handler, and include the following information:
- 5.3.1. Name of canine and handler.
 - 5.3.2. Date team certified.
 - 5.3.3. Certification authority, i.e., agency, professional organization, and/or individual(s).
 - 5.3.4. The standard or guideline under which the canine team is certified.
 - 5.3.5. Name of individual(s) awarding certification.
 - 5.3.6. Search area types included in certification assessment.
 - 5.3.7. Type and amount of materials included in certification assessment.
 - 5.3.8. Location of certification.
- 5.3. Proficiency assessment records maintained by the handler/department/organization may include, but are not limited to, the following data:
- 5.4.1. Name of handler and canine.
 - 5.4.2. Name(s) of individual(s) conducting assessment.
 - 5.4.3. Time and date assessment took place.
 - 5.4.4. Location and environmental conditions.
 - 5.4.5. Assessment design (single-blind or double-blind).
 - 5.4.6. Description and number of target(s).
 - 5.4.7. Location of target(s).
 - 5.4.8. Set time.
 - 5.4.9. Size of search area.

- 5.4.10. Proficiency assessment results.
- 5.4.11. Other information required by department/organization.
- 5.5. Supervisory review of all records is recommended.
- 5.6. Digital format is recommended to facilitate compiling and analyzing data.
- 5.7. Records may be discoverable in court proceedings and may become evidence of the canine team's reliability. Record retention shall be determined by department/organization guidelines.
- 5.8. Training records are necessary to illustrate the type and amount of training that the team has experienced before and after certification.
- 5.9. Confirmed operational outcomes can be used as a factor in determining capability.
- 5.10. Unconfirmed operational outcomes shall not be used as a factor in determining capability in that they do not correctly evaluate a canine team's proficiency (i.e., residual odor can be present or concealment may preclude discovery).
- 5.11. Training Aid Records
 - 5.11.1. Training aids shall be clearly labeled in a manner to support accountability.
 - 5.11.2. Appropriate records shall be maintained by the handler/department/organization.
- 5.12. Veterinary Records
 - 5.12.1. Veterinary records shall be maintained in a manner such as they are accessible to the handler/department/organization.
 - 5.12.2. Vaccinations required by state or local law should be documented in the veterinary record of the canine.