

SWGDOG SC2 - GENERAL GUIDELINES

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

INITIAL TRAINING

1. The canine shall be trained by a competent individual or entity through a structured curriculum with specific training and learning objectives.
2. The handler shall be trained by a competent individual or entity through a structured curriculum with specific training and learning objectives.
3. The canine/handler team's training shall be continued to achieve a level of operational proficiency until certification evaluation.
4. The training shall be structured to meet the typical mission requirements of the canine/handler team's department/organization.

CANINE/HANDLER TEAM CERTIFICATION

1. Certification for the named canine/handler team shall be valid for one year.
 - 1.1. Certification does not relieve the canine/handler team from regular maintenance training and following other recommended SWGDOG guidelines.
2. The certifying officials shall *not* be routinely involved in the day to day training of the canine/handler team being tested.
3. The canine/handler team shall achieve at least 90% proficiency for successful certification, unless otherwise dictated by the specific discipline.

4. A mission oriented test environment shall be used.
5. Certification shall consist of a number of assessments that together form the full test.
 - 5.1. Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.
 - 5.2. Aids/targets to be used in the certification process shall not have been used in the day to day training activities of the team being certified.
6. The certification shall include at least two of the following types of assessments:
 - 6.1. Odor recognition assessment
 - 6.1.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search.
 - 6.1.2. The handler shall know the number of target objects, but not placement.
 - 6.1.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
 - 6.2. Comprehensive assessment
 - 6.2.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search, yet shall not know the desired outcome.
 - 6.2.2. The handler shall not know the number or placement of the target objects.
 - 6.2.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
 - 6.2.4. The assessments shall include a negative search.
 - 6.3. Double-blind assessment
 - 6.3.1. No participant or observer present at the assessment location(s) shall be aware of the parameters of the search.
 - 6.3.2. The assessments shall include a negative search.
7. Each assessment will address the following areas:
 - 7.1. Systematic Search Pattern.
 - 7.2. Handler shall demonstrate control of the canine and the ability to complete a systematic search.
 - 7.3. Animal Response Interpretation.
 - 7.3.1. Handler shall accurately interpret the canine's change in behavior.
 - 7.3.2. Handler shall indicate when the canine has made a final response.
 - 7.4. Final Response Interpretation.
 - 7.4.1. The canine/handler team shall locate the source of the target odor or interpret the absence of the target odor.

8. A canine/handler team which fails to complete the certification process shall complete a corrective action plan before making another attempt to certify.
9. Any competent individual or entity may enhance the recommended SWGDOG guidelines in order to make the requirements more stringent.

MAINTENANCE TRAINING

1. The canine/handler team shall conduct regular objective-oriented training sufficient to maintain operational proficiency.
 - 1.1. Training is meant to improve and enhance the performance of the handler, canine and the canine/handler team. In training, situations are purposely sought where mistakes are made because learning is a process of trial and error.

PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

1. The canine/handler team shall perform periodic proficiency assessments as outlined in section 6 of the Canine Handler Team Certification, including odor recognition assessment, comprehensive assessment, and double-blind assessment.

DOCUMENTATION

1. The handler/department/organization shall maintain training, proficiency assessment, seizure, and/or deployment/utilization records.
 - 1.1. Records shall contain discipline-related specifics.
 - 1.2. Records shall be standardized within the department/organization.
 - 1.3. Deployment/utilization/seizure information shall be separated from training and testing information.
 - 1.4. Supervisory review is recommended.
 - 1.5. Digital format is recommended to facilitate compiling and analyzing data.
2. Reliability of the canine/handler team shall be based upon the results of certification and proficiency assessments.
 - 2.1. Training records do not necessarily reflect reliability.
 - 2.2. Training records are necessary to illustrate the type and amount of training that the team has experienced before and after certification.
 - 2.3. Confirmed operational outcomes can be used to determine capability.

- 2.4. Unconfirmed operational outcomes shall not be used to determine capability in that they do not correctly evaluate a canine/handler team's performance (i.e. residual odor can be present or concealment may preclude discovery).
3. Training Aid Records
 - 3.1. Training aids shall be clearly labeled in a manner to support accountability.
 - 3.2. Appropriate records shall be maintained by the handler/department/organization.
4. Each animal shall undergo an annual veterinary examination.
 - 4.1. Medical records shall be maintained in a manner such as they are accessible to the handler/department/organization.