

SWGDOG SC 9 – HUMAN SCENT DOGS

Pre Scented Canines - Location Check

For Public Comment 1/19/2010 – 3/19/2010

Location checks are used to identify the presence or absence of the odor of a specific person to the exclusion of all other odors at a given location. In this discipline, the canine is used to odor match a “pre-scented” object or pad to the odors present at the check site. This technique may be used for subject exclusion or inclusion odor checks.

Statement of purpose: To provide recommended guidelines for training, certification and documentation pertaining to canines trained to conduct location checks.

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 Handler training shall include the following:
 - 1.2.1 Human scent behavior
 - 1.2.2 Techniques for collecting human scent evidence.
 - 1.2.3 Techniques for conducting and interpreting location checking.
 - 1.2.4 Relevant canine case law.
 - 1.2.5 Legal preparation.
 - 1.2.6 Court testimony
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 Initial training shall include sufficient obedience training to ensure the canine will operate effectively based on mission requirements.
- 1.5 The canine shall be trained to perform an effective and controlled search.
- 1.6 The initial training of the canine shall include training of a determined specific final negative and positive alerts.
- 1.7 Initial training shall include exposing the canine team to a variety of locations, expected situations and searches.
- 1.8 The training shall be structured to meet the typical mission requirements of the canine team’s department/organization.
- 1.9 The canine team’s training shall be continued to achieve a level of operational proficiency until certification evaluation

- 1.10 Training shall include exposing the canine to a variety of different types of locations, noise distracters, odor distracters and environments.
- 1.11 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 that test the following:
 - 2.3.1.1 The ability of the canine to scent discriminate and follow the odor trail matching the human target.
 - 2.3.1.2 The canine's alert.
 - 2.3.1.3 The handler's interpretation of the canine's alert.
 - 2.3.2 An odor recognition assessment shall be set up as follows:
 - 2.3.2.1 The canine team shall be tested on at least 4 locations with a separate human target and separate human distracters for each location.
 - 2.3.2.2 For each location check, one human target and one or more human distracters are utilized to lay human odor tracks/trails in an environment similar to where the canine usually works (e.g., urban/suburban/rural).
 - 2.3.2.3 The handler shall be informed of the start location and not given the direction of travel taken by the target.
 - 2.3.2.4 The handler shall be provided an odor sample from the human target.
 - 2.3.2.5 Prior to the assessment, the handler shall specify the type of odor sample (object, scent pad) used to train his canine.
 - 2.3.2.6 The assessor shall know the correct outcome of each scent check.

- 2.3.2.7 The handler shall not know the correct outcome of each scent check.
- 2.3.2.8 A successful completion of a location check is the ability to find the correct direction of travel and follow the odor trail beyond the turn.
- 2.3.2.9 The assessor may take into consideration environmental influences on odor in determining whether or not the canine team has successfully completed the location check.
- 2.3.2.10 The canine team shall properly scent discriminate matching odor in at least 75% of the locations checked.

2.3.3 Comprehensive Assessments test the following:

- 2.3.3.1 The ability of the canine to indicate the presence or absence of the target human odor.
- 2.3.3.1 The handler's interpretation of canine behavior.
- 2.3.3.2 The canine's alert.
- 2.3.3.3 The handler's interpretation of the canine's alert.

2.3.4 Comprehensive assessments shall be set up as following:

- 2.3.4.1 At least 6 location checks, with the odor of 6 different human targets, in at least 3 different areas, with different human distracters shall be performed in this assessment.
- 2.3.4.2 Each location check shall be conducted in an environment similar to the one where the canine usually works.
- 2.3.4.3 At least half of the location checks shall be negative location checks.
- 2.3.4.4 A negative location check shall have no matching odor trail.
- 2.3.4.5 A positive location check shall have a matching odor trail aged approximately 24 (20-28) hours with no human target at the end.
- 2.3.4.6 The trail shall be a minimum of 45 meters (50 yards) in length.
- 2.3.4.7 The handler shall be informed of the start location and not given the direction of the target's travel.

- 2.3.4.8 The handler shall be provided with a different odor sample from a matching target or a non-matching target at each location check.
- 2.3.4.9 The handler shall specify the type of odor sample (object, scent pad) prior to the assessment.
- 2.3.4.10 Each location check shall be completed in less than 5 minutes.
- 2.3.4.11 The assessor shall know the correct outcome of each location check.
- 2.3.4.12 The handler shall not know the correct outcome of each location check, nor the number of checks to be conducted.
- 2.3.4.13 The canine shall be required to correctly indicate the presence or absence of the matching odor at each start location.
- 2.3.4.14 The handler must be able to discern canine's final alert and communicate this to the assessor.
- 2.3.4.15 At least 80% of the location checks shall be performed correctly.
- 2.3.5 Double-Blind Assessments demonstrate the proficiency of the canine team in an operational setting.
 - 2.3.5.1 One or more targets may be utilized to lay odor trails in the search area.
 - 2.3.5.2 The search area, trail age and odor sample shall be appropriate to operational requirements.
 - 2.3.5.3 The assessment will include negative scent match check locations.
 - 2.3.5.4 Neither the handler, nor the assessor, nor any individual present with the canine team shall know the correct outcome of any portion of the assessment, including whether there is a scent match.
 - 2.3.5.5 The assessment may or may not be timed.
 - 2.3.5.6 The assessor shall observe the canine team and compare the search results with the parameters of the search at the conclusion of the assessment. This may be done immediately after the handler concludes his canine has made its trained alert, or after the conclusion of the whole assessment.

3. CANINE TEAM CERTIFICATION

- 3.1 Certification for the named canine team shall be valid for one year.
- 3.2 Certification does not relieve the canine team from regular maintenance training, periodic proficiency assessments, and following other recommended SWGDOG guidelines.
- 3.3 The certifying official(s) shall not be routinely involved in the day to day training of the canine team being evaluated.
- 3.4 Handler errors, when excessive may result in failure of the team.
- 3.5 A mission oriented test environment shall be used.
- 3.6 Certification shall consist of a number of assessments that together form the full test.
- 3.7 Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.
- 3.8 Targets used in the certification process shall not have been used in the day to day training activities of the team being certified.
- 3.9 The certification shall be comprised of a comprehensive assessment together with either an odor recognition assessment or a double-blind assessment, or both.
- 3.10 A canine team which fails the certification process shall complete a corrective action plan before making another attempt to certify.
- 3.11 Any competent individual or entity may enhance the recommended SWGDOG guidelines in order to make the requirements more stringent.

4. MAINTENANCE TRAINING

- 4.1 The canine team shall conduct regular objective-oriented training in areas to include:
 - 4.1.1 Enhancing the proficiency level of the team.
 - 4.1.2 Correcting identified deficiencies or weak areas.
 - 4.1.3 A variety of locations, environmental conditions and size of search area.
 - 4.1.4 A varied duration of search times and time of day.

- 4.1.5 A variety of blank search areas.
- 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 targets and articles used for pre-scenting the canine.
- 4.2 Routine training conducted solely by the handler to maintain the canine's proficiency is acceptable but shall be combined with supervised training on a regular basis.
- 4.3 Supervised training by a qualified trainer/instructor, is recommended in order to improve performance, identify and correct training deficiencies and perform proficiency assessments.
- 4.4 A canine team shall conduct a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training per month to maintain and improve the proficiency level of the team.
- 4.5 The canine team shall perform periodic proficiency assessments throughout the certification period as outlined in section 2 of the Canine Team Assessments, including a variety of odor recognition assessments, comprehensive assessments and/or double-blind assessments.

5. RECORDS AND DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The handler/department/organization shall document training, certification, proficiency assessments and discipline-related deployment records.
- 5.2 Proficiency assessments and training records may be combined or separate documents.
- 5.3 Discipline-related deployment records shall be separated from training, proficiency assessment, and certification documentation.
- 5.4 Training and discipline-related records should be standardized within the department/organization.
- 5.5 Training records may include, but are not limited to the following data:
 - 5.5.1 Name of handler and canine.
 - 5.5.2 Name/s of individual conducting/assisting training.
 - 5.5.3 Time and date of training.

- 5.5.4 Location and environmental conditions of training.
 - 5.5.5 Training design (non-blind, single-blind or double-blind).
 - 5.5.6 Description of target(s).
 - 5.5.7 Location of target(s).
 - 5.5.8 Set time.
 - 5.5.9 Size of search area.
 - 5.5.10 Length of training session.
 - 5.5.11 Search results.
 - 5.5.12 Deficiencies and corrective measures implemented during training regimen.
 - 5.5.13 Other information required by department/organization.
- 5.6 Certification records shall be kept by the certifying authority and/or the handler and include the following information:
- 5.6.1 Name of canine and handler.
 - 5.6.2 Date team certified.
 - 5.6.3 Certification authority i.e., agency, professional organization, and/or individual(s).
 - 5.6.4 The standard or guideline to which the canine team is certified.
 - 5.6.5 Name of individual(s) awarding certification.
 - 5.6.6 Search area types included in certification assessment.
 - 5.6.7 Name and description of target(s) and location(s) included in certification assessment.
 - 5.6.8 Location of certification
- 5.7 Proficiency assessment records kept by the handler, organization and/or department may include but not be limited to the following data:

- 5.7.1 Name of handler and canine.
- 5.7.2 Name/s of individual conducting assessment.
- 5.7.3 Time and date of assessment.
- 5.7.4 Location and environmental conditions of assessment.
- 5.7.5 Assessment design (single-blind or double-blind).
- 5.7.6 Description of target(s).
- 5.7.7 Location of target(s).
- 5.7.8 Set time.
- 5.7.9 Size of search area.
- 5.7.10 Proficiency assessment results.
- 5.7.11 Other information required by department/organization.
- 5.8 Supervisory review of all records is recommended.
- 5.9 Digital format is recommended to facilitate compiling and analyzing data.
- 5.10 Records may be discoverable in court proceedings and may become evidence of the canine team's reliability. Record retention policy shall be determined by department/organization guidelines.
- 5.11 Training records are necessary to illustrate the type and amount of training that the team has experienced before and after certification.
- 5.12 Confirmed operational outcomes can be used as a factor in determining capability.
- 5.13 Unconfirmed operational outcomes shall not be used as a factor in determining capability in that they do not correctly evaluate a canine/handler team's proficiency.
- 5.14 Veterinary Records.
 - 5.14.1 Veterinary records shall be maintained in a manner such as they are accessible to the handler/department/organization.

5.14.2 Vaccinations required by state or local law should be documented in the veterinary record of the canine.