

Section IV Trailing K-9 Specialist Evaluation:

A. Trailing Search – Rural or Wilderness:

In addition to the prerequisites identified in Section III, the team is able to meet the following expectations for the specific types of search evaluations identified:

1. The handler, canine and navigator, if used, will be in good physical condition and able to work in moderate terrain for a minimum of eight (8) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period.
2. The handler understands search strategy and how best to utilize the canine in searching an assigned area.
3. The handler will be able to identify and protect the scene when a clue or the lost subject is found. It is suggested the handler take a Scene Awareness and Preservation Course.
4. The handler and navigator, if used, must be able to use a map and compass/GPS unit to navigate during the day or night, and identify and document the course taken during the search. The handler and navigator, if used, are able to read topographic maps and relate the actual terrain to the map. The handler and navigator, if used, are able to report to the command post, their location and the location of clues in terms of map coordinates. At the end of their operation period, the handler and navigator, if used, will be prepared to be debriefed by the search planning section. The handler and navigator, if used, are able to translate their search activity onto an incident operational map, including route taken, areas left uncovered, alerts, clues, wind direction and probability of detection.
5. The handler is responsible, as task leader, for ensuring the highest level of medical care available from within their task be provided to the subject until further assistance arrives.
6. The handler must demonstrate the canine's agility on unusual or unsteady surfaces, such as slippery wood, loose gravel, boulders or debris; and exhibit the canine's willingness to cross streams. The canine must demonstrate a willingness to respond to handler instruction and direction.
7. The handler must be able to recognize when the team is not working efficiently. It is the handler's responsibility to control their canine and provide for its care and safety at all times. If any behavior problems arise, it is the handler's responsibility to resolve the problem. The handler must be able to interact and work effectively with other SAR resources.
8. The SAR dog Team must pass (2) two search evaluations, which replicate situations they are likely to encounter. Teams will be re-evaluated every three (3) years.

B. Trailing Evaluation Scenarios – Rural Wilderness

The following evaluations represent typical searching scenarios in Pa rural or wilderness situations. A scent article will be provided for each trailing problem meeting the following criteria:

- The article must be worn by the trail-layer/subject next to the skin for a minimum of 2 hours within the last 12 hours.
- The article must be preserved by the trail-layer in an uncontaminated (unscented) bag appropriate for the scent article.
- The scent article, in the preserved bag, will be placed within 20 feet from the start of the trail.

1. Day Trailing Problem: At least 1 mile, no greater than 1.5 miles, including at least one 90 degree turn covering variable surfaces including, but not limited to dirt, woodlands, field, gravel and pavement. It must not have any major obstacles such as fences, fast moving water or unsafe inclines or declines. This trail will be aged 6-10 hours and contain one area of heavy contamination, defined as cross tracks laid by 2 or more individuals 1 hour after the trail was laid. The handler may stop and rest the canine if needed then resume the trail. When located, the handler and navigator, if used, must assess the subject for injury, accurately place the subject on the map, call the coordinates into the base and recommend any medical assistance required. Candidate handler and canine partner will be evaluated using a maximum time limit of 2.5 (two and one-half) hours.

Night trail problem: At least 0.5 miles and no greater than 1 mile, including at least one 90 degree turn covering variable surfaces including, but not limited to dirt, woodlands, field, gravel and pavement. It must not have any major obstacles such as fences, fast moving water or unsafe inclines or declines. This trail will be aged 4 - 8 hours and contain one area of contamination, defined as cross tracks laid by 1 or more individuals 1 hour after the trail was laid. The handler may rest the canine during the trail if needed then resume the trail. When located, the handler and navigator, if used, must assess the subject for injury, accurately place the subject on the map, call the coordinates into the base and recommend any medical assistance required. Candidate handler and canine partner will be evaluated using a maximum time limit of 2 (two) hours.

Section V Evaluation Procedure:

A. Briefing:

The evaluator will brief the handler on subject description, condition, point last seen, mental state, known hazards, and other important data. Handler will be provided with a topographical map of the area to be searched. The handler will provide briefing as the task leader and describe his or her search strategy.

C. The evaluation will be terminated under the following conditions:

1. Failure by handler and navigator, if used, to present for evaluation with appropriate attire and supplies for self and canine partner.
2. Rough or inappropriate treatment of the dog by the handler
3. Unsafe changes in terrain or weather
4. Failure to complete the task in the designated time.
5. Inability of the team to locate the subject in the designated time.
6. Inability of the handler and navigator, if used, to report the location of the subject on the topo map to the evaluator.

**Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council (PSARC)
Performance Expectation Guidelines &
Trailing K-9 Specialist Evaluation Standards**

Section I: General

The Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council Trailing K-9 Specialist Evaluation Standards and Performance Expectation Guidelines are developed to:

1. Provide user agencies and SAR managers with recommended performance expectations for both the SAR dog and the handler at a search scene
2. Provide an operating guideline for teams that are in line with nationally accepted guidelines for the performance of SAR teams
3. Designate minimum skill standards for Air Scent Search and Rescue Dogs in Pennsylvania.

Section II: Performance Expectation Guidelines

This section provides user agencies with the capabilities that are expected from the SAR Dog/Handler Teams and Units. Agencies are encouraged to identify local SAR Dog/Handler Units who have met the standards identified in this document (or their equivalent) and develop a working relationship with these Teams/Units. Individuals not affiliated with a SAR Dog Unit or Team should be scrutinized carefully. .

A. Definitions:

Air Scent Dog / Area Search Dog – This canine is used to search a specified area. The air scent or area search dog works off lead and searches for clues such as human scent in the area. The canine has a distinct human scent indication readable by the handler. When the canine finds a missing person he/she will perform a re-find, or provide another means of signaling the handler, until the handler and subject are together.

Bark Find – After finding the lost subject, the canine remains at the subject's location and barks until the handler or other searchers come to that location.

Re-find – After finding the lost subject, the canine will return to the handler, perform a trained alert and then lead the handler back to the subject.

Human Scent Alert – A readable action performed by the canine which indicates to the handler that the canine has located Human Scent.

Trailing Dog – This type of canine is generally used to identify a particular subject by scent and is considered a scent specific canine. This canine, working on or off lead, requires a scent article from the lost subject to begin searching. The canine follows the scent trail providing the lost subjects direction of travel and potentially finding the lost subject.

Air Scent Team – For the purpose of this document, a team is defined as one dog and one handler who train and work together.

Trailing Team – For the purpose of this document, a team is defined as one dog and one handler who train and work together, but may include a navigator.

Handler – The human member of the team. This person is responsible for the canine at all times.

Unit – A group of SAR handlers and their canine partners that train and work together. Support personnel may be included.

B. Performance:

1. Handler

A handler is cooperative and professional. He/She has met the qualifications of their Team or Unit to be assigned search responsibilities. The handler does not participate in any search efforts independent of their search team/unit or the designated search management agency for any incident. It is recommended that the handler successfully complete courses such as Managing the Lost Person Incident or MSO (Managing Search Operations) to fully understand the handling of the lost person incident.

2. Canine

The canine is friendly with people, non-aggressive toward other animals, and capable of working off lead (unless being used as a trailing dog). The canine is expected to be under the handler's control at all times, and capable of being controlled by others, if necessary.

C. Adaptability:

Responding SAR Dog Teams are expected to search under all weather conditions and search terrains deemed safe by the handler, and at night as well as day. The dog teams are required to work regardless of distracting conditions such as dust, noise, crowds, machinery, and the presence of other animals or humans.

D. Portability:

The SAR Dog Teams must be able to travel in all vehicles likely to be used by the unit. It is suggested the team obtain special training for operations in and around Helicopters

E. Equipment:

The handler is equipped and clothed in a manner consistent with the search terrain and weather conditions. The handler must provide enough equipment/supplies for his/her canine for the duration of his/her assignment at a search to last a minimum of 72 hours. The handler will have proper field gear appropriate to weather and terrain. Handler must assure that the appropriate field pack is with the team. The handler's field pack will contain supplies for self and canine rendering the team self sufficient on a task in the field for 24 hours.

F. Documentation:

The handler maintains a regular training log, which includes any training attended by the handler. This log includes date, time, location and type of training. If the particular training is with the canine, the log also includes a general description of the event such as the type of terrain and ground cover, time of day, how the canine worked, successes, challenges, areas for improvement and other information deemed appropriate. This log must be maintained neatly and made available for user agencies upon request.

G. Communication:

The SAR Dog Unit must be equipped to use portable communications and licensed when required by law. All personnel in the unit are proficient in the use of proper plain language communication protocol as outlined by NIMS.

Section III Trailing K-9 Specialist Evaluation Prerequisites:

1. The handler will provide the proper documentation to show the successful completion of:
 - a. PA-DCNR Field Team Leader, NASAR SARTECH II or other acceptable certification as defined by PSARC. (card or certificate)
 - b. NIMS IS-100, IS-200 and IS-700 (certificate required)
 - c. American Red Cross (or equivalent) Human Standard First Aid and CPR (current card)
 - d. AKC-Canine Good Citizen (certificate) required for all canines who will work off-leash.
 - e. Health certificate from a licensed veterinarian listing current vaccines and/or titers. A current Rabies vaccine is required by law in the state of PA.

2. The handler will present evidence of the completion of training by a veterinarian, or other qualified individual, in canine 1st aid and CPR demonstrating the following:
 - a. General health of the working dog including nutrition and physical fitness
 - b. How to muzzle a dog / how to create a gauze muzzle. The importance of muzzling an injured dog and proper restraint.
 - c. Normal ranges: heart rate, respiration, rectal temperature
 - d. How to check: heart rate, pulse, capillary refill
 - e. Life threatening Injures: hypothermia, hyperthermia, checking ABC's (Airways, Breathing, Circulation)
 - f. How to perform CPR, rescue breathing, Heimlich
 - g. Proper carry methods for sick/injured dogs from the field
 - h. Wound Care(how to stop bleeding until veterinary care can be obtained): abrasions, lacerations, punctures, deep wounds, impalements
 - i. Eye injuries
 - j. Sprains, strains, fractures: how to splint
 - k. Wild animal encounters: bite wounds (Rabies), snakes, porcupines
 - l. Insects: bee stings, spider bites, ticks (Lyme disease) and mosquitoes (heartworm)
 - m. Vomiting / Diarrhea

3. The handler will demonstrate sufficient knowledge in the following categories, by successfully completing a written exam administered by the PSARC evaluator(s) prior to the filed the evaluation process and; achieve a score of 80% or higher.
 - a. Canine Assessment and First Aid
 - b. Canine training and documentation
 - c. Scent Theory and Movement
 - d. Environmental Factors Affecting Scent
 - e. Search Strategy and Safety
 - f. Communications

4. The Handler will present all training log documentation as outlined in section II(F) to the PSARC evaluator(s) for review.