

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**  
**SEARCH AND RESCUE PROGRAM**

**STANDARDS FOR**  
**AIR SCENT SEARCH DOG TEAMS**

**May, 1997**

**I. SCOPE**

- A. These standards are intended to define minimum qualification requirements for area search by the air scent dog team.
- B. The authorization issued under this standard is a requirement only for those personnel who wish to voluntarily participate in the search and rescue program of the Department of Emergency Services at the level indicated in the standard.
- C. The Air Scent Search Dog Team should be able to perform the following functions in the general environment of the Commonwealth of Virginia:
  - 1. Search for missing persons in wilderness, rural, suburban and urban areas using air-scent techniques.
  - 2. Assist with the evaluation, organization and investigation of missing person incidents.
- D. The team should be capable of performing these functions anytime of the year, day or night, and in all weather conditions experienced in the Commonwealth. The team may work with a variety of individuals and organizations, including law enforcement, fire and rescue, casual volunteers and family members of the missing subject(s). In order to do this the handler should be able to:
  - 1. Understand the search and rescue system used in the Commonwealth.
  - 2. Understand the theory and practice of missing person search.
  - 3. Plan, execute, debrief and document a variety of dog search tasks.
  - 4. Navigate accurately on land.
  - 5. Survive an unexpected wilderness emergency.
- E. Categories Of Dogs
  - 1. The types of dogs most commonly used for the purpose of locating missing persons, regardless of the environment or circumstances of loss, are the tracking dog, the trailing dog and the air scent dog.
  - 2. These standards do not address any particular breed of dog since many breeds can be trained to do search work. However, it is important that the dog have the stamina for long hours of searching in all kinds of weather. In addition, the dog must be sociable and controllable in situations involving crowds, noise, other dogs and a variety of distractions.

## II. TERMINOLOGY

The definitions listed here are for the purpose of these standards only. They may or may not reflect the definitions used by other individuals, groups, or agencies.

**Air scent dog** - A search dog that will detect airborne human scent.

**Aggressive Dog Behavior** - Biting or lunging and growling at people or other controlled animals.

**Alert** - The dog's response, recognizable to the handler, to its detection of human scent.

**Area search** - Search of a specific geographical area. The area could be urban, suburban, rural or wilderness.

**Article search** - Search for any object or article that may contain human scent which may be above or below ground.

**Cadaver search** - Search for human remains that are on the surface or buried on land.

**Disaster Search** - Search for humans in rubble or debris, such as collapsed buildings and debris piles, that are a result of natural or human-caused disasters.

**Dog team** - 1 trained handler with 1 trained dog.

**Handler** - The person who controls and directs the dog during a search.

**Heeling** - The dog walking with the handler, on command, at the handler's side, either on or off lead.

**Indication** - Dog's method of communicating to the handler that the subject has been found. Examples: returns from subject with bringsel in mouth, stays with subject and barks, returns to handler and jumps on him/her.

**Probability of Detection (POD)** - The percentage of probability that if a subject was actually in the search area that he would have been located (detected) by the search effort.

**Refind** - When the dog has made a find, it returns to the handler and directs the handler back to the subject.

**Rural** - Country often given to farming or to woodland and sparsely to moderately populated.

**SAR Dog Standards Committee** - A committee of representatives of each search dog unit that has an MOU with the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. Each dog

unit may have up to two voting members on the committee. The Virginia Department of Emergency Services may also appoint a member to the committee.

**Scent discriminating dog** - A search dog that will locate the scent of a specific individual.

**Tracking dog** - A search dog that will follow almost exactly the ground scent track of a person.

**Trailing dog** - A search dog that will follow the ground scent of a person, but not necessarily precisely where that person has walked.1 Trailing dogs are almost always scent discriminating.

**Urban, suburban** - Moderately to heavily populated areas given primarily to business and residential development.

**Water search** - Search for humans who are under water, such as a drowned victim.

**Wilderness** - An area generally uncultivated and uninhabited, and often inaccessible by road.

### **III. HANDLER KNOWLEDGE AND PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

In order to attain state recognized air scent search dog team status, the handler will demonstrate an understanding of the items listed under each subject and the ability to perform the skills listed. Specific tests designed for this purpose are described in Section V. TEST METHODS, and are included as part of these standards.

#### **A. SAR Operations**

1. Understand how state missions are originated.
2. List several resources that might be utilized during a SAR event.
3. Demonstrate the ability to develop basic search dog assignments for a search incident and provide appropriate recommendations for additional resource support to the incident.
4. Understand the functions of these field team positions.
  - a. Field Team Member
  - b. Field Team Leader
5. Understand proper searcher conduct as it relates to law enforcement, the family of the missing subject(s) and the media.
6. Understand general safety considerations in SAR operations, including dealing with critical incident stress.
7. Understand the provisions of the Virginia Search and Rescue Council "Standard Operating Procedures. "

#### **B. Legal Aspects of Search and Rescue**

1. Understand SAR responsibilities at the state level.
2. Identify the limitations of the "Good Samaritan law.

3. Understand several methods of reducing liability exposure.
4. Understand the circumstances when entry upon private property may be justified

#### C. Survival

1. Understand the basic principals of clothing and equipment selection for the search environment. See APPENDIX A for guidelines for a personal equipment list.
2. Demonstrate the ability to bivouac overnight in the out-of-doors. See APPENDIX B for guidelines for an overnight bivouac.

#### D. Scent Transport Theory - understand the following concepts

1. Lofting
2. Pluming
3. Fumigating
4. Coning
5. Looping
6. Fanning

#### E. Land Navigation

1. Define the following terms or concepts:
  - a. True north and magnetic north
  - b. Declination
2. Demonstrate the ability to read and interpret topographic map border information, colors and symbols.
3. Demonstrate the ability to use a compass to plot a course on a map.
4. Demonstrate the ability to use the following plotting methods to determine the coordinates of a given point.
  - a. UTM
  - b. ASRC
  - c. Ungrided map
5. Demonstrate the ability to perform the following navigational functions.
  - a. Obtain and follow a simple compass bearing.
  - b. Determine a reciprocal.
  - c. Move around obstacles.
  - d. Measure distance by pacing.
  - e. Determine position by terrain feature identification.
6. Describe how to use these land navigation concepts.
  - a. Catching features
  - b. Collecting features
  - c. Aiming off

#### F. Search Skills

1. Demonstrate an understanding of these search tactics:
  - a. Attraction
  - b. Containment
  - c. Contour search
  - d. Hasty search
  - e. Sweep search (Open grid search)
  - f. Line search (Closed grid search)

- g. Sign cutting
    - h. Interviewing
    - i. Ridges/Drainages
    - j. K-9 grid search
    - k. Corridor search
  - 2. Describe procedures for working with tracking or trailing dogs and mantrackers.
  - 3. Given a search dog task, discuss and demonstrate the ability to plan the task considering wind direction and other weather conditions, visibility, terrain characteristics and desired POD.
  - 4. Demonstrate the ability to perform the task planned above.
  - 5. Demonstrate the ability to translate field activity onto a topographic map, including route taken, areas searched and not searched, alerts, clues located, wind direction, times for all of the above and estimated POD for the task.
  - 6. Demonstrate the ability to accurately debrief the task, providing the debriefer all of the information listed in (F. 5).
- G. Clue and Site Procedures
  - 1. Describe the proper approach to a site containing clues or a subject.
  - 2. Describe methods to preserve clues and to secure a site.
  - 3. Explain the importance of accurate documentation of clues and of subject's location.
- H. Helicopter Operations
  - 1. Understand the hazards to ground personnel working around a helicopter
  - 2. Understand the proper approach to a helicopter, including direction of approach and communication with the crew.
- I. Field Communications
  - 1. Define the common problems associated with the field use of portable radios and list some possible solutions.
  - 2. Describe basic Virginia SAR Council radio procedures.
- J. First Aid
  - 1. Human
    - a. The handler must have current Basic First Aid, or equivalent, or higher.
    - b. The handler must have current 1-person CPR Authorization.
    - c. The handler must be able to define the following environmentally-related problems and their recognition, treatment and prevention
      - i. Hypothermia
      - ii. Hyperthermia
      - iii. Frostbite
      - iv. Dehydration
  - 2. Canine
    - a. The handler must recognize and know how to treat the following:
      - i. Excessive bleeding
      - ii. Heat stroke
      - iii. Bloat

- iv. Shock
- v. Dehydration
- b. The handler must know which human medications carried in his pack may be shared with the dog and which may not be.

#### **IV. CANINE PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

The dog will demonstrate compliance with the expectations of this section. Specific tests designed for this purpose are described in Section V. TEST METHODS, and are included as part of these standards.

- A. Behavior The dog must not display aggressive behavior.
- B. Obedience
  - 1. The dog must respond appropriately to handler commands.
  - 2. The dog must demonstrate the ability to walk with the handler in the heeling position, maintain a sit-stay or a down-stay, even when the handler is not present, and return to the handler when called.
- C. Agility
  - 1. The dog must demonstrate the ability to negotiate obstacles and walk on unsteady or elevated surfaces.
  - 2. The dog must demonstrate the ability to jump onto and off of elevated surfaces.
- D. Search Skills
  - 1. The dog must demonstrate the ability and stamina to search effectively for at least two hours.
  - 2. The dog team must demonstrate the ability to search day and night in terrain and weather conditions typically encountered in the Commonwealth.
- E. Alert
  - 1. The dog must indicate and the handler must be able to recognize and describe or demonstrate to another individual the dog's behavior when it encounters human scent.
  - 2. The alert must be clear enough that the handler is not likely to miss it or to mistake it for a non-human alert.
- F. Indication
  - 1. Once the dog has located the subject, it must indicate to the handler by some method that it has located the subject. It must then direct the handler to the subject.
  - 2. The method of indicating a find may be visual or audible, but must be clear enough that the handler is not likely to miss or mistake it.

#### **V. TEST METHODS**

The following testing procedures are designed to provide a representative evaluation of the expectations listed in Sections III and IV.

A. Handler Written Test

1. The handler will complete a comprehensive written or oral test and will achieve a score of at least 70%.
2. The test of 100 multiple choice questions will be provided by VDES and will be randomly selected from questions supplied by the SAR Dog Standards Committee.
3. The test will be administrated by the unit's evaluator(s) and kept with the unit's records.
4. At a minimum, topics will include:
  - a. scent transport theory
  - b. canine first aid
  - c. land navigation
  - d. search theory
  - e. victim characteristics
  - f. topographical maps
  - g. search strategy
  - h. ASRC grid
  - i. clue and site protection procedures

B. Dog Behavior Evaluation

1. The dog and handler will load into the back of a vehicle, such as a pickup truck, along with at least two other people and two other dogs. The vehicle will then be driven for a period of at least one mile during which time the dog must not display aggressive or uncontrolled behavior.
2. The handler will stand with the dog in the heeling position. A stranger will approach and engage the handler in conversation. The dog must not show aggressive behavior toward the stranger.
3. The dog will be tied to a stationary point on a 6-foot lead. Another handler, with a dog at heel, will walk within 10 feet of the point where the dog is tied. The dog will show no aggressive behavior.

C. Obedience Evaluation

1. The dog will heel on command through a straight walk, a right turn, a left turn, and a 180 degree turn. The dog will be off lead or on a loose lead.
2. The dog will sit or stand in the heeling position when the handler stops.
3. The dog will remain in place without correction for a minimum of five minutes with the handler a minimum of 50 feet away. The dog will remain in place even if people or other dogs are present and moving around the dog. The dog will not be tied.
4. The dog will return to the handler immediately when called.
5. The handler must be able to stop the dog while it is in motion.

D. Agility Evaluation

1. The dog will jump onto an object, such as the tailgate of a pickup truck or an elevated platform, having a minimum height of 2.5 feet.

2. The dog will walk across a board that is at least 12 feet long, no more than 12 inches wide, and is at least 3 feet above the ground. Step 3 can be combined with Step 2.
3. The dog will go through a 36" diameter passageway at least 8 feet long.
4. The dog will perform steps 2 through 4 physically unaided.

#### E. Field Skills Evaluations

1. The team must successfully complete a 40 Acre Night Field Problem. See Appendix E for evaluation criteria.
2. The team must successfully complete a 160 Acre Field Problem. See Appendix D for evaluation criteria.

#### F. Field Evaluation Procedures

1. Field evaluations will be conducted on an individual team basis. Each team test will be observed by a minimum of two (2) evaluators, at least one of which must be authorized according to the requirements in Appendix G.
2. Each evaluator will have a check list for scoring each of the field teams. At the conclusion of each test, the evaluators will compare their conclusions.
3. Performance will be rated as either "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory". Both evaluators must agree on the rating for the test to be valid.
4. In the event there are conflicting ratings that the evaluators cannot resolve, the handler may be given a "NO TEST" rating and asked to repeat that test.
5. If any one of the field tests is scored "Unsatisfactory" by both evaluators, the procedures described under "G. Retesting" will apply.
6. Tests should be set up and conducted following the Evaluator instructions given in APPENDIX C.

#### G. Retesting

1. If the score on any test is below the passing score, the handler may arrange for a retest. The test may not be repeated on the same day.
2. In the case of retesting a field evaluation as the result of an "Unsatisfactory" rating, at least one of the evaluators that originally tested the team must be a participant in the retest. If only one state authorized evaluator was used during the first evaluation, then that evaluator must also participate in the retest.
3. After receiving an Unsatisfactory rating on a retest; if the evaluatee feels that he is being unfairly rated, then he may request a retest with two different evaluators. The evaluators who rated the team unsatisfactory may observe the retest but will have no input on the evaluation results. This request for retest will be submitted by the evaluatee, in writing, to any of the unit's officers.

#### H. Method of Conducting State Recognized Evaluations

Groups whose internal evaluation procedures meet or exceed these standards may use those procedures for authorization testing provided the following conditions are met:

1. The evaluations are observed and scored by at least one state authorized evaluators.
2. The checklists used are approved in advance by the SAR Dog Standards Committee.
3. The approved checklist/evaluation form is completed and signed by each evaluator for each field evaluation

## **VI. AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURES**

### **A. Prerequisites**

1. In order to be authorized as an "Air Scent Search Dog Team" the team must be an active member in good standing of a SAR group currently operating under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Commonwealth.
2. Dog must have current immunizations.
3. The applicant must have satisfactorily completed all of the written and practical evaluations described in Section V. TEST METHODS, A through F.

### **B. Team Authorization Application Instructions**

1. The candidate must submit an application for authorization to the office of the State SAR Coordinator.
2. The application form in Appendix I must be signed by the applicant, a state evaluator and a unit officer.
3. Upon receipt of the above documentation of requirements, the State SAR Coordinator will send confirmation of authorization to the individual dog handler.
4. Upon completion of all the requirements outlined in this document, the authorized team is eligible to respond as a state SAR resource on any State Mission with a valid mission number designation, as a representative of the unit holding the MOU.

### **C. Conditions of Authorization**

1. Provided that all requirements are met, the team will be issued a authorization by the Virginia Department of Emergency Services as an "Air Scent Search Dog Team"
2. This authorization does not constitute a license to practice the skills tested, but signifies only that the team holding the certificate has met an established basic standard of knowledge and performance and has demonstrated competency.
3. The authorization will be for the handler and dog (team) that completed the testing together. If the handler wishes to certify as a team with another dog, the entire testing procedure, with the exception of the written test, must be repeated with the new dog
4. The authorization will be valid with the state as long as the organizations MOU with the state is in good standing, and as long as the team is in good standing and meets the requirement of the parent organization .

5. The parent unit must promptly notify VDES of a change of status of any operational team member.

## **VII. RECERTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

- A. Every 2 years:
    1. The team must
      - a. be considered to be an active member in good standing within his organization.
      - b. take, and successfully complete, within three months before or after the anniversary date, a 40 Acre Recertification Field Evaluation (See APPENDIX F for evaluation criteria).
    2. An officer of the team's unit must complete the Recertification section of the form in APPENDIX I and submit it to VDES.
    3. Upon receipt of the form requesting recertification, VDES will renew the team's authorization for two additional years at which time the renewal process described in VII will apply.
  - B. Failure To Recertify
    1. If a team fails to recertify within three (3) months of the expiration date, the authorization is dropped and the candidate will be required to complete the entire application and testing process for authorization again.
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## **APPENDIX A**

### **GUIDELINES FOR SUGGESTED MINIMUM PERSONAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE AIR SCENT SEARCH DOG TEAM**

These items are not required but are suggested equipment. Equivalent gear would be acceptable and this list may be modified to adapt to the seasonal and special conditions. Not all of this would be carried into the field but should be available to the individual searcher on the mission in some form. This would include a vehicle cache or pack to be left at base.

1. Wind shell jacket with hood
2. Water resistant jacket or parka with hood. - A Gore-Tex or similar jacket can serve for both items 1 and 2
3. Rain pants or rain chaps - add gaiters for winter
4. Heavy \*wool shirts or sweaters as required
5. \* Wool pants
6. Long underwear of \*wool, silk, polypro or other suitable synthetic material - cotton thermal underwear is not acceptable

7. \*Wool stocking cap or balaclava - a scarf is recommended if a stocking cap is used
8. Heavy \*wool socks with lightweight liner socks
9. Leather gloves with \*wool liners - mittens required suggested for extremely cold weather
10. Backpacking or mountaineering boots appropriate to the terrain and conditions
11. Backpack or fanny pack suitable for day use
12. Canteens or water bottles containing a minimum of 2 quarts of water.
13. Multiblade pocketknife .
14. Whistle
15. Orienteering-type compass
16. Flashlight or head lamp with alkaline or lithium batteries, spare batteries and spare bulbs - head lamp preferred
17. Waterproof matches or disposable lighter
18. Personal first-aid kit, to include adequate supplies for the dog
19. Storm shelter: Tube tent, space blanket, lightweight tarp
20. Two 30-gallon leaf bags
21. One-day minimum supply of quick energy food for dog and handler.
22. A sleeping bag, an Ensolite or similar sleeping pad, and a suitable shelter will be needed for overnight bivouacs at base.

\*Wool or a comparable fabric that retains insulating properties when wet. Down is not acceptable.

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **AIR SCENT SEARCH DOG TEAM GUIDELINES FOR OVERNIGHT BIVOUAC**

1. The purpose of the overnight bivouac is to test the individual's ability to spend the night in the out-of-doors in a bivouac and still be able to function adequately the next day.
2. The reason for this requirement is that a search and rescue person may find themselves in a situation in the field where they are forced to spend the night with whatever equipment they happen to have with them.
3. In order to simulate this situation for an evaluation, the following guidelines should apply.
  - a. The individual's equipment should be restricted to what they normally carry in a "day pack" during an actual search.
  - b. The bivouac area should be typical terrain found in searches and far enough from roads and vehicles to create some sense of realism.
  - c. Access to vehicles and equipment caches during the bivouac should be denied.

- d. The individual must demonstrate the ability to build a fire and shelter.
  4. The bivouac should not become an exercise in raw survival. The evaluators should inspect each person's equipment and help ensure that it is at least minimally adequate for the environment.
  5. Safety is of paramount importance. The participating individuals should be monitored carefully during the night to ensure that problems such as hypothermia do not develop. The evaluators should have a contingency plan for such emergencies.
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## **APPENDIX C**

### **EVALUATOR INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Written test materials will be issued to the evaluator(s) by the State SAR Coordinator upon request. All test materials are confidential and security is the responsibility of the evaluator(s) to whom it is issued.
2. All tests and evaluations will be scored on forms approved by the SAR Dog Standards Committee and will be signed by the evaluator(s).
3. The objectives of the behavior, obedience and agility evaluations are to help ensure that both the dog and the handler can work together as a team safely, efficiently and in conjunction with other teams and personnel. Performance on these evaluations should be as written, but does not have to be to competition (dog trial) standards.
4. The objectives of the 40 acre and the 160 acre field evaluations are to evaluate planning ability search techniques and team stamina. The following guidelines should be observed.
  - a. It is the evaluator's responsibility to ensure that the subjects are properly dressed for the conditions and have adequate food, water and other necessary equipment to remain for the duration of the evaluation.
  - b. The subjects should be placed in the search area far enough apart that the team must search a substantial portion of the area before all of the subjects are located.
  - c. The goal is not just to locate the subject(s) but to evaluate planning and technique. It is possible for a team to do an adequate job of searching an area, and to achieve a high POD without finding all of the subjects.
  - d. It is also possible for the team to locate all of the subjects and still score an overall "Unsatisfactory" on the evaluation.
  - e. As subjects are located, they should immediately leave the area by a route that will not interfere with the continuing search effort.

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **Search Skills Evaluation**

#### **160 Acre Problem**

1. An area of approximately 160 acres will be used for the evaluation. The area should contain mostly woods with at least some light to moderate underbrush. The area should not contain large areas of extreme terrain such as dense underbrush, swamps, or large streams, or be extremely steep. It should also not contain large areas of open fields.
2. The evaluation will be conducted during daylight hours. Weather conditions should not be extreme, such as heavy rain or snow, or high winds.
3. Two or three subjects will be placed by the evaluators in the search area. The subjects will remain quiet during the evaluation, either sitting or lying down, dressed in muted clothes, and not obvious beyond 25 feet. They are not to assist the team in locating them in any way.
4. The handler will be given a scenario and a map of the search area, and will not be told the number of subjects. He/she must describe to the evaluators how the area will be searched based on terrain, wind direction, visibility and any other pertinent factors.
5. The handler must describe to the evaluators how the dog will alert when it detects human scent. During the actual search, each time the handler observes the dog alerting he/she must clearly inform the evaluators of that fact.
6. The evaluation must last at least two hours from the start of the actual search, and a maximum of six hours. The evaluators may terminate the search at any time if unsafe conditions exist or if they have observed enough to determine if the team will, or will not, pass.
7. At the end of the search, the handler will debrief with the evaluators and will indicate on the map areas searched, areas not searched, wind characteristics, alerts, clues located, estimated POD for the area searched and any other pertinent information.
8. During the evaluation the dog should make a self directed air scent find and indicate on and/or refind at least one subject. If conditions are such that a self directed find is not probable, then the evaluators may direct the team to a known subject in another identified area, or may set up a smaller secondary problem to observe the dog's alert and refind.

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## **Appendix E**

## **Search Skills Evaluation**

### **40 Acre Night Problem**

1. An area of approximately 40 acres will be used for the evaluation. The area should contain mostly woods with at least some light to moderate underbrush. The area should not contain large areas of extreme terrain such as dense underbrush, swamps, or large streams, or be extremely steep. It should also not contain large areas of open fields.
2. The evaluation will be conducted during night time hours, and should begin at least one hour after sunset. Weather conditions should not be extreme, such as heavy rain or snow, or high winds.
3. One or two subjects will be placed by the evaluators in the search area. The subjects will remain quiet during the evaluation, either sitting or lying down, dressed in muted clothes, and not obvious beyond 25 feet. They are not to assist the team in locating them in any way.
4. The handler will be given a scenario and a map of the search area, and will be told the number of subjects. He/she must describe to the evaluators how the area will be searched based on terrain, wind direction, visibility and any other pertinent factors.
5. The handler must describe to the evaluators how the dog will alert when it detects human scent. During the actual search, each time the handler observes the dog alerting he/she must clearly inform the evaluators of that fact.
6. The evaluation may last a maximum of three hours. The evaluators may terminate the search at any time if unsafe conditions exist, or if they have observed enough to determine that the team will, or will not, pass. If the subject(s) is/(are) found within an hour, the evaluators may require the team to continue searching until the evaluators are comfortable with the handler's night skills.
7. At the end of the search the handler will debrief with the evaluators and will indicate on the map, areas searched, areas not searched, estimated POD for the area searched and any other pertinent information.
8. During the evaluation the dog must should make a self-directed air scent find and indicate/refind on at least one subject. If conditions are such that a self directed find are is not probable, then the evaluators may direct the team to a known subject in another identified area, or may set up a smaller secondary problem to observe the dog's alert and indication and/or refind .

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## **Appendix F**

### **Field Skills Reevaluation**

#### **40 Acre Field Problem**

1. An area of approximately 40 acres will be used for the evaluation. The area should contain mostly woods with at least some light to moderate underbrush. The area should not contain large areas of extreme terrain such as dense underbrush, swamps, or large streams, or be extremely steep. It should also not contain large areas of open fields.
2. The evaluation may be conducted at night or during daylight hours. Weather conditions should not be extreme, such as heavy rain or snow, or high winds.
3. Zero to two subjects will be placed by the evaluators in the search area. The number of victims will be unknown to the handler. The subjects will remain quiet during the evaluation, either sitting or lying down, dressed in muted clothes, and not obvious beyond 25 feet. They are not to assist the team in locating them in any way.
4. The handler will be given a scenario and a map of the search area, but will not be told the number of subjects. He/she must describe to the evaluators how the area will be searched based on terrain, wind direction, visibility and any other pertinent factors.
5. The handler must describe to the evaluators how the dog will alert when it detects human scent. During the actual search, each time the handler observes the dog alerting he/she must clearly inform the evaluators of that fact.
6. The evaluation must last at least 1 hour from the start of the actual search, and a maximum of three hours. The evaluators may terminate the search at any time if unsafe conditions exist or after 1 hour if they have observed enough to determine if the team will or will not pass.
7. At the end of the search the handler will debrief with the evaluators and will indicate on the map areas searched, areas not searched, wind characteristics, alerts, clues located, estimated POD for the area searched and any other pertinent information.
8. If a subject or subjects have been placed in the search area during the evaluation the dog must make a self-directed air scent find and indication/refind on at least one subject. If no subjects were placed in the search area, the team will be directed to a smaller secondary problem for the evaluators to observe the dog's alert and refind. If subjects are placed in the search area but conditions are such that a self-directed find is not probable, the evaluators may set up a smaller secondary problem to observe the dog's alert and indication/refind.

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## **APPENDIX G**

### **CRITERIA FOR STATE EVALUATORS**

In order to evaluate dog teams to these State Air Scent Dog Authorization Standards, an individual must satisfy the following criteria:

- A. The individual must be an active operational member of his unit.
  - B. The operational member must have been nominated by his unit to become a state evaluator.
  - C. The handler must have responded to a minimum of five (5) searches and performed or assisted in a minimum of ten (10) air scent dog search tasks.
  - D. Prior to performing evaluations as a state evaluator, the handler must participate in a state wide evaluators' seminar.
  - E. The state is responsible for advising evaluators of major changes in the standards/evaluation procedures.
  - F. The evaluator must remain a unit member in good standing.
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## **APPENDIX H**

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. Unit Recognition: Upon implementation of these standards, the units initially recognized as being state authorized organizations qualified to field state authorized dog handlers are:
    - 1. Blue & Gray Search and Rescue Dogs, Inc.
    - 2. DOGS-East, Inc.
    - 3. K-9 Alert Search and Rescue Dogs, Inc.
    - 4. Mid-Atlantic D. O. G. S. , Inc.
    - 5. Search Services America, Inc.
    - 6. Virginia Search and Rescue Dog Association, Inc.
  - B. Team Recognition: Upon implementation of these standards, for each of the identified organizations in Section A, above, each individual Dog Team that has met their unit's requirement for operational status will be recognized as state authorized air scent search dog teams. From the effective date of these standards, each of those dog teams will recertify as required by these standards and their organizations.
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**APPENDIX I**

**APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION**

**FOR AIR SCENT SEARCH DOG TEAM**

Handler Name \_\_\_\_\_ Dog Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

My dog and I have taken the following tests and wish to apply to be authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia to become an Air Scent Search Dog Team.

Type of Test

Test

Score

Date

Taken

Name of State Evaluator (s)

present

Written

40 Acre  
Night

160 Acre

Agility

Aggression

Obedience

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

The handler has the following First Aid Certification:

\_\_\_\_\_, currently holds a CPR certificate and is  
in good standing

with the unit. The dog has current inoculations against the following

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Unit Officer Signature

Title

Date

The team listed above has, in my opinion, qualified as an Air Scent  
Search Dog Team

under the standards of the state of Virginia. Therefore, I recommend  
that the team

be to participate on searches as a state resource in the capacity of  
Air Scent Search

Dog Team .

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Evaluator

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION FOR RECERTIFICATION  
FOR AIR SCENT SEARCH DOG TEAM**

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Handler Name \_\_\_\_\_ Dog Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

The team above successfully completed a 40 acre test, achieving a score of \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. The state evaluator(s) evaluating the test were \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_. The handler has the following First Aid Certification:

\_\_\_\_\_, currently holds a CPR certificate and is in good standing with the unit. The dog has current inoculations against the following \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Unit Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

The team listed above is in good standing in this unit, and in our opinion, remains qualified as an Air Scent Search Dog Team under the standards of the state of Virginia. Therefore, we recommend that the team be recertified as a state resource.

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

In order for groups to be considered as Agents of the Commonwealth, all persons within a group, working in this discipline, must at least adhere to these minimum standards and are encouraged to go above and beyond this level of training.

These Standards will be maintained by the Virginia Department of Emergency Services, Operations Division and will remain in affect until updated or rescinded by the Department.

*Definitions from Tracking Dog, Theory & Methods, by Glen Johnson Last Revised : May 31, 1997 Page # 1*