

Cadaver Committee responses to the remarks sent by the SAR community regarding the proposed State Cadaver Standards. Many comments were similar in nature so we consolidated those and have replied accordingly.

The Cadaver Committee responses are written in Purple.

From: B Barkley [<mailto:findemk9@earthlink.net>]

Sent: Sunday, June 19, 2005 8:20 AM

1. Particular attention should be made to the storage of testing material.

The standards should clearly state what medium the material is stored in (glass, plastic, etc.), how the medium was prepared (glass boiled then handled with tongs, plastic tubes prepared with gloves on preparer, containers and putting the material in containers done in the 'open air'), etc. Storage is also an issue as plastic bags or containers, or even metal that has had material stored in it, will transfer molecules to the containers of the training material. Even the most careful preparation will be contaminated (unless done in 'lab-like' conditions). The point is: if the standards state how the testing material is handled and stored, the testee can prepare the dog for the circumstances, fair is fair.

The Cadaver Committee agreed to add this to the "Additional Training Suggestions" area.

2. Detail (I emphasize again) must be stated as to the type of soil and current soil conditions in the standard where buried testing material is mentioned. Dry clay or wet loam? The difference is vast for the dog who is searching for scent. Some may make a case for using the predominant soil a

dog is likely to encounter - sandy for those near VA BCH, rock and loam  
for  
the mountains, clay for my area, etc., and that may be a consideration  
--  
but my main point is., all other things being equal, something buried  
in 6"  
of sandy soil is going to be FAR easier to find than something buried  
in 6"  
of clay soil.

The Cadaver Committee realizes the soil types are important and  
discussed this in detail when first developing these standards. It was  
decided at that time that since these standards are being developed for  
Virginia, then soil types will be consistent with areas where these  
teams will be searching. There is an amount of trust that must be put  
into the evaluator's hands when they are setting up the tests. These  
issues can be covered during "State Evaluator" meetings if there are  
problems.

3. Attention must be paid to the manner of placement for the test. In  
most  
conditions it is easy for a dog to detect scent left by a person who  
walked  
in an area, stood, sat, knelt for a period of time while burying test  
material, and 24 to 28 hours of dissipation will not make too much  
difference in normal weather. Something should be included in the  
detail  
advising the testers to walk all around the testing area, pausing,  
touching  
trees, disturbing the dirt here and there (I think that was addressed)  
so  
that the dog will not use surface scent to find the area of burial,  
hanging,  
etc. While conditions of recent surface scent may exist in some real  
life  
searches, experience shows that we mostly search long after surface  
scent is  
gone. Including both scenarios would be advantageous, but then I like

to

include many possibilities.

This information is covered in the "Evaluator Guidelines".

I have also commented on the document itself in color. I am sorry, as I know this may seem a bit complicated at first. But I know I would want to read what was originally written to be able to compare it to any suggested wording. This was the best way I could come up with doing it. This way you do not have to have two documents open at once to see both the original and the suggested wording.

**Red is what was originally written that I disagree with. To read what was originally written, read black and red.**

**Blue is a suggested changing of wording. To read my suggestion read black and blue.**

**Green is discussion and comments.**

The Cadaver Committee only reviewed those comments pertaining directly to the proposed standards (the red comments)

## **PREREQUISITES**

In order to be eligible to test to become a certified "Virginia **[Enter Specialty Here] Recovery (or Human Remains) Cadaver** Canine Team" the handler shall:

Committee voted – majority wanted to keep Cadaver (Cadaver is synonymous with human remains)

Under Prerequisites:

- a) **Have taken a state approved crime scene preservation class. I do agree with this but it would have to include what the state is going to consider as an approved preservation class. This can put the approval of this standard behind if it has to wait on an additional document from the state, unless it is already prepared. A standard cannot be approved without all the content requirements being clear and readily available for teams to act on. A further suggestion would be to consider wording such as listed below, and when the state does have it set up as to what they will consider an approved class, then it can be changed back. But until then, the**

standards and training could go forward without the state having to set up a list of approved venues.

This is being addressed by VDEM

Attended a minimum of a four-hour crime scene preservation class with a bonafide professional crime scene technician/officer, active with a law enforcement agency, or a sworn law enforcement detective or higher. This can be with any law enforcement agency including but not limited to: local police departments, County Sheriffs departments, and State Police. The training must pertain to how cadaver K-9 teams should approach a find, scene safety, secure the scene, proper evidence collection, chain of custody, courtroom testimony, and any other pertinent information deemed necessary by the instructor. The official crime scene attendance form must be completed by the instructor and presented for review at certification. This can be a simple class/instructor style basic form with some areas of training listed and checked off.

b) **Provide documentation of current canine immunizations.**

Alternant suggestion.

This is a Unit thing.

Provide a letter or statement from the attending vet, of acceptable and safe health for the dog to perform an active job, with an attached copy of all law required vaccinations, city license (where applicable), and other record of appropriate vaccinations as deemed necessary by the vet.

c) **Have obtained the Field Team Member certification with current CPR and First Aid Certification.**

## 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.

**Critical Incident Stress Syndrome**- Natural emotional reaction to destruction, injury and death related to a disaster environment.

To our knowledge this is not a syndrome – but now that I read the definition we have we are probably defining the syndrome associated with CIS. We need to look into it.

**Indication** - Canine's trained method of communicating to the handler that the subject or scent source has been found. **This might be a re-find (defined below), or a passive alert, such as a sit, or a sit and bark, at the subject or source.**

We repeatedly agreed at the meeting that the definition of "indication" in this document was "trained indication" as defined here – is separate from a "re-find".

**Tracking dog - A canine that will follow almost exactly the ground scent track of a person. A “modern day” tracking dog can follow a person nearly foot-step by foot-step, by following the crushed vegetation, ground disturbance, and the unique scent of that track.**

**Trailing dog - A canine that will follow the ground scent trail of a specific person, using ground scent, tracking ground disturbance, and or air scent methods, one or all may be used, but not necessarily precisely where that person has walked. Trailing canines are almost always scent discriminateing.**

We removed the definition of tracking and trailing as they are not used in this document

**Unit** - The organization that a team represents.

We are defining this word as it is used in this document only. See sentence immediately after the title Terminology.

**This is an area in conflict with our unit guidelines/standards, which actually uses the word TEAM to reflect what you describe here as UNIT. These two need to work together. Suggestion made at beginning of document. I like this one best though.**

## **SCOPE**

- a) These standards are intended to define minimum qualification requirements for area search by a land cadaver canine team.
- b) The **Human Remains** “Land” **Cadaver** Canine Team should be able to perform the following functions in the general environment of the Commonwealth of Virginia:

- 1) Search for human remains or deceased persons in wilderness, rural, suburban, and urban areas using *whatever air-scent techniques are best suited for that individual environment.*

The Committee voted to remove everything that is in italics

- 2) Assist with the evaluation, organization, and investigation of missing person incidents.
- c) The team should be capable of performing these functions any time 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 search theory of disarticulated human remains and deceased person search.
- 3) Plan, execute, debrief, and document a variety of dog search tasks.
- 4) Navigate accurately on land.
- 5) **Survive an unexpected emergency. Have basic survival**

**skills.**

Took comments into consideration and decided there was no difference

### **HANDLER KNOWLEDGE AND PERFORMANCE** **EXPECTATIONS**

- a) Understand general safety considerations in SAR operations, including dealing with **Critical Incident Stress Syndrome.**

Checking into this.

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

- a) Understand SAR responsibilities at the state level.
- b) Understand training, reporting, certification, and courtroom testimony associated with industry standards.**

We voted that this is covered in liability exposure below.

Understand several methods of reducing liability exposure.

- c) Understand the circumstances when entry upon private property may be justified.

#### **Survival**

- a) Understand the basic principals of clothing and equipment selection for the search environment:
  - 1) Choice of clothing material
  - 2) **Wet Water**proof / windproof
  - 3) Layering

Changed

## First Aid

### Human

- a) The handler must have current basic first aid, or equivalent, or higher certification.
- b) The handler must have current CPR certification.

### Canine

- a) The handler must recognize and, if possible, know how to treat the following:
  - 1) Excessive bleeding
  - 2) Hypothermia (spelling change)
  - 3) **Bloat, Understand Bloat.**
  - 4) Shock
  - 5) Dehydration **and over heating issues.**

Done

No change needed

We did not discuss this – just missed it – though having over heating issues sounds like a good idea to me. It is the single biggest potential threat to our dog's health on a summer search in Virginia. I recommend adding it in.

**The handler must know which human medications carried in his pack may be shared with the canine and which may not.**

## CANINE PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The objectives of the behavior, obedience, and agility evaluations are to help ensure that both the canine and the handler can work together as a team safely, efficiently and in conjunction with other teams and personnel.

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

## Behavior

### Aggression:

Each handler shall be responsible for assuring his or her canine does not exhibit **unprovoked** aggressive canine behavior, or the canine shall not be eligible for certification.

We covered/defined this in Terminology – no change necessary

**Indication:**

The canine must indicate to the handler by *a some trained method* that it has located the scent. *The method of indicating must be clear enough that the handler will not miss or is not likely to miss or mistake it.*

All italicized text removed. Indication defined as trained indication in terminology

**Canine Behavior Evaluation**

For **Evaluation Form** see Appendix C

Voted to keep as is.

**Requirement:** The canine must not display aggressive behavior, **as defined in the "Terminology" section.**

The canine and handler will load into *the back of* a vehicle *such as a pickup truck* along with at least two other canine teams. The vehicle will then be driven for a distance of at least one mile during which time the canine must not display aggressive or uncontrolled behavior. **All canine handlers in this test will keep control of their canines.**

Italicized text removed. The behavior of other dogs during a test will be covered in evaluator training at state evaluators workshop.

The canine search team completes a Figure "8" around two team handlers with their canines on lead, sitting at their sides positioned about eight feet apart. The testing team shall complete the pattern, on loose lead, passing within two feet of each of the post teams. **The post teams will remain still and their canines will not interfere with the testing team, nor will the canines attempt to initiate contact with the testing dog.**

Same as above

## Canine Obedience Evaluation

For **E**valuation **F**orm see Appendix D.

The canine shall be placed on a stay/wait command a minimum of 40 feet from the handler and the evaluator. Upon direction from the evaluator, the handler shall call his/her canine. The handler will then stop the canine when directed by the evaluator. Once the stop command has been given, an immediate change in gait is required and the canine must then come to a stop within 20 feet. The canine may **drop down**, sit, or stand. **and will be judged by the quickness of its response.**

Wording changed to read: stop/halt. Quickness covered above in “immediate change of gait”

## 20-Acre Evaluation

For **E**valuation **F**orm see Appendix F

Be able to measure distance **and relate it on the map. in paces and state distance in meters.**

Kept original text added blue text

(The lesson should not be mathematics. It should be to ensure the handler understands how to relate the distance they went onto a map and mark it; how they do it should be their own choice - paces are a choice of measuring distance as not everyone counts paces. Relating feet to meters is irrelevant if you can correctly place the location on the map.)

### **Evaluation:**

- a) An evaluator shall choose the 20-acre site. The area shall consist of a variety of terrain features in order for handler to effectively use the map & compass. The area will be drawn on the base map and the handler must be able to transfer the area to their map. The handler will have 15 minutes (Define the "starting point" of the 15 minutes – Is it from the point of map drawing transfer or from the point they are done with the

**transfer or before the transfer begins?)** to look over the area and come up with a search strategy based on temperature, wind direction, etc. The handler must be able to explain the search strategy that they have chosen and why.

- b) The handler will then walk the area without their canine, identify and describe terrain features within sight as requested by evaluator within sight. The evaluators will pick four points within the search area and mark them on the handlers map. The handler must navigate to all four points and then return to base. Time limit is 1.5 hours for this step.

## Above Ground Evaluation

For evaluation form see Appendix G

### **Purpose:**

The objective of the three above ground 2-acre sites is to assess the ability of the team to search for human remains or articles over an extended period of time in a large area.

- a) The handler must debrief at the end of the task and give a realistic POD of the search area.

### **Canine Skills:**

Must give a recognizable **trained** indication to the handler.

Indication is defined in terminology as “trained”. Left as is

If you have described indication in your terminology section as “trained” then it should reflect it here, or maybe say.

### **Test Procedure:**

There will be a one-hour time limit to search each sector with a 15-minute rest period in between. Each sector will be debriefed, including estimation of POD after the 15-minute rest and prior to proceeding to the next sector. **However, at the discretion of the evaluators, the time may be extended due to the variability of available test search sites provided the team is actively working.**

Added to appendix A

**Copied from Urban evaluation test procedures. You should have the same extension on all of them.**

The evaluators shall assess the effectiveness of the canine and handler as a team in searching a large area for an extended period of time. **Strengths and weaknesses should be included in the critique.** The evaluators shall assign a pass/fail, which will be recorded in the handler’s training record kept by his/her unit. **A Critique will be performed listing areas of improvement. The team is encouraged to do extra training in these areas to be a well-rounded team.**

Changed “in critique” to “in comment section” kept rest.

**If you pass the test you have demonstrated strength. The word "weaknesses" is in itself is a statement of potential liability and should not be included in a Standard.**

## Buried Evaluation

For **E**valuation **F**orm see Appendix H

**Purpose:**

The objective of the Buried Evaluation is to assess the ability of the team to search for scent sources buried in shallow graves.

1. **Human Remains Cadaver** scent may not include: **b, d, and e, all should be able to be detected alone by a FHRD.**

**Left as is. For test situation and fairness these were kept out.**

- a) Dry, bleached bone only
- b) Ashes
- c) Synthetic scent
- d) Teeth only
- e) Hair only

**Test Procedure:**

f) There will be a 1-hour time limit to search each sector, with a 20-minute rest in between. Each sector will be debriefed, including estimation of POD after the 20-minute rest and prior to proceeding to the next sector. **However, at the discretion of the evaluators, the time may be extended due to the variability of available test search sites provided the team is actively working.**

**Added to Appendix A**

**Copied from Urban evaluation test procedures.**

g) The evaluators shall assess the effectiveness of the canine and handler as a team in searching an area and in locating buried human remains scent sources. **Strengths and weaknesses should be included in the critique.**

**See note above**

**Urban Evaluation**

For **E**valuation **F**orm see Appendix I

**Purpose:**

The objective of the urban evaluation is to assess the ability of the team to search for scent sources in confined urban (**the term Urban is used singly here and I believe it should be described more thoroughly in the terminology section alone**) site areas. These sites may include but are not limited to: **buildings (safe, and not collapsed), lumber piles, crawl spaces (all crawl spaces should be investigated and deemed safe to enter by the handler), debris piles (small, less than 2,000 square feet of debris, less**

**then five feet tall),** vehicles, dumpsters etc.

Moved to test procedures below, and changed to read 400-800 sqft total area. Also again commonsense and evaluator education

**I have added additional description as indicated because they border line on disaster work. This way there is no doubt, that teams that have passed this section, realize they are still not qualified for disaster work.**

#### **Canine Skills:**

d) During the evaluation, the handler may be asked to call the canine. The canine must return promptly to the handler. The evaluators will not ask the handler to call the canine during an active alert unless a dangerous condition exists. **(The handler has the authority to refuse the command if he or she believes the canine is on an alert, during an indication, or that the canine would be harmed in some way by following the command. The handler should be able to articulate this to the evaluator, who can then at a later time, request the command again.)**

#### **Commonsense and evaluator training**

**This is assuming the evaluator recognizes the active alert, and sees all dangers. The handler should have the authority to refuse a command from the evaluator if it is during an alert, indication, or they believe that following such a request would put the animal in harm's way.**

#### **Test Procedure:**

g) The evaluators shall assess the effectiveness of the dog and handler as a team in searching the interior and exterior of a building and in appropriately finding and pinpointing the source of human remains scent. **Strengths and weaknesses should be included in the critique.** The evaluators shall assign a pass/fail, which will be recorded in the handler's training record kept with his/her unit.

#### **Same change as 2x before**

**A Critique will be performed listing areas of improvement. The team is encouraged to do extra training in these areas to be a well-rounded team. (If you pass a test, you have demonstrated strength. The word "weaknesses" is in itself is a statement of potential liability and should not be included in a Standard.)**

h) Should the canine not find the sources, the handler has the right to request a demonstration of the validity of the scent sources using an operational cadaver dog. Canine **that** should be available within 15 minutes or a no-test will be declared.

Not addressed, not sure what the purpose of this is.

**(As previously stated, a "no-test" needs to be defined.)**

## Evaluator Information

### Retesting

c) If, after receiving a failed rating on a retest, the evaluatee feels that he/she is being unfairly rated, he/she may request a retest with two different evaluators. The evaluators who rated the team “fail” may observe the retest, but will have no input on the evaluation results. This request for retest must be submitted by the evaluatee, in writing, to any of the unit’s officers, **within \_\_\_\_\_ weeks from the date of the initial test.**

Handled at unit level.

(See above comment in section a regarding time limits.)

## Recertification Procedure

a) Each team must recertify **every 2 years annually.**

Stays the same until State mandates it for all SAR. Units are always free to mandate an annual recertification within the Unit.

## Authorization Procedures

### Prerequisites

The applicant must have satisfactorily completed all of the written and practical evaluations described in TEST METHODS.

### Team Authorization Application Instructions:

- a) The candidate must submit an application for certification to the office of the State SAR Coordinator.
- b) The applicant, a state evaluator, and a unit officer must sign the application form in Appendix J.
- c) Upon receipt of the above documentation of requirements, the State SAR Coordinator will send confirmation of certification to the individual canine handler.
- d) Upon completion of all of the requirements outlined in this document, the certified team is eligible to respond as a **VDEM [Enter Specialty Here] Recovery (or Human Remains), “Virginia Land Cadaver** Canine Team”, on a State Mission with a valid mission number designation, as a representative of the canine unit holding the MOU.

Committee elected to stay with Cadaver title thus the certification will follow suite.

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## APPENDIX A

## **EVALUATOR INSTRUCTIONS**

c) The objectives of the behavior, obedience and agility evaluations are to help ensure that both the canine 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.** \

*Italicized print removed all else stayed.*

**APPENDIX C**

**Commonwealth of Virginia**

**Search and Rescue Council**

**SAR Dog Standards Committee**

**VDEM [Enter Specialty Here] Recovery (or Human**

**Remains)**

*Nothing changed because this is the title of the document/standard*

**Land Cadaver Behavior Evaluation Form**

**Canine Handler** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Canine** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluators** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_

*I adjusted the lines some. More room will be needed for Canine Handler, and less for date. More room will be needed for location then Canine name. I evened out the Evaluator's name sections.*

**Behavior**

1.) The canine and handler are loaded into the back of a vehicle with at least two other canine teams.

a) The vehicle was driven for a distance of \_\_\_\_\_ mile(s). (Must be at least one mile.)

b) The canine shows no aggressive behavior. Pass    Fail

2.) Handler stands with the canine in the heeling position. A stranger approaches and engages the handler in conversation.

a) Canine remains in the heel position. Pass    Fail

b) Canine showed **ed** no aggressive behavior toward stranger. Pass    Fail

*Made change*

Overall Score: Passed \_\_\_\_\_

Failed \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ **Print** \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Evaluator's printed name is at the top of the document*

Evaluator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Print \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* (I think it's important that the handler also sign the evaluation forms to acknowledge that they were present and actively participated...think "potential liability" later. Needs to be on every form)**

**Having a section where the evaluators have to print their name, will help if their signature cannot be read.**

**\*\* Requirement satisfied via operational wilderness status (date) \_\_\_\_\_**

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Being made standard with others Twenty-Acre Evaluation Form\*\***

**Some line changing here as well.**

Handler \_\_\_\_\_ Canine \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Weather Conditions \_\_\_\_\_  
Time Started \_\_\_\_\_ Time Completed \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Starred items denote skills, which must receive a passing score.**

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 1) Was handler adequately attired and equipped for conditions?   | Pass |
| Fail   |      |
| 2) Was handler alert to visual clues?  | Pass |
| Fail   |      |
| 3) *Does handler demonstrate good land navigational field skills using map and compass?                            | Pass |
| Fail   |      |
| 4) Did handler demonstrate basic Virginia SAR Council radio procedures?  | Pass |
| Fail   |      |
| 5) *Did handler provide accurate coordinates to within 100 meters of a specific location without the use of a GPS. | Pass |
| Fail   |      |

## **APPENDIX J**

### **APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION**

**VDEM [Enter Specialty Here] Recovery (or Human Remains) Canine  
Team**

**Commonwealth of Virginia Land Cadaver**

Kept as is

Handler's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Canine's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Test	Test Score	Date Taken	Evaluator(s) Present
Written			
Behavior			
Obedience			
Agility			
20 Acre			
Above Ground			
Below Ground			
Urban			

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

The handler has the following first aid certification:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does canine have all immunizations required by **law, the standards, and** his/her unit current \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Officer Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

The team listed above has, in my opinion, qualified as a **VDEM [Enter Specialty Here] Recovery (or Human Remains) Virginia Land Cadaver** Canine Team under the standards of the State of Virginia. Therefore, I recommend that the team be allowed to participate on searches as a state resource in the capacity of a **VDEM [Enter Specialty Here] Recovery (or Human Remains) Virginia Land Cadaver** Canine Team.

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

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

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

## APPENDIX K

### Recertification Field Evaluation

**Purpose:**

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the ability of the team to search for scent sources above, on or below ground.

**Test Procedure:**

- g) The evaluators shall assess the effectiveness of the dog and handler as a team in searching an area and in locating human remains scent sources. **Strengths and weaknesses should be included in the critique.** The evaluators shall assign a pass/fail, which will be recorded in the handler's training record kept with his/her unit.

Same as previous comments

(Please see comments from previous sections as stated above regarding potential liability when using the term "weaknesses.")

## APPENDIX N

### GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

This has changed significantly. Pls refer to changed std when it is published

### OTHER SUGGESTED PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(I realize this list will be somewhat different, however, it should still be done with the updated FTM list in mind.)

This list has also changed, please see latest version of proposed standards.

These items are not required but are suggested equipment. Equivalent gear would be acceptable and this list may be modified to adapt to 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.

## APPENDIX O

**VDEM [Enter Specialty Here] Recovery (or Human Remains)**

**CANINE LAND CADAVER TEAM GUIDELINES FOR OVERNIGHT BIVOUAC**

Kept as is

\*\* Requirement satisfied via operational wilderness status  
(date)\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Handler Evaluator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Only requiring the evaluator to sign, other variations are up to the individual Units

State Land Cadaver Stds-2004   11 comments   gmcmaah Logout			
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The following comments are owned by whomever posted them. This site is not responsible for what they say.

State Land Cadaver Stds-2004

Authored by: janservais on Thursday, June 16 2005 @ 04:34 PM EDT

I don't know where to start other than to say that I think that this 51 page **this is a stand alone document, hence the length** document is going to give may folks out there an excuse not become part of the Virginia DEM system but instead to take a NASAR or NAPWDA cadaver evaluation and then work with their local law enforcement agency. The team field skill evaluations involve 7 different areas with the size of a single area 2 acres and total time allotted 7 hours not including rest periods. I thought the state standard was to establish minimum proficiency requirements.

**Tests can be taken one at a time no need to do them all in one day.**

Let's start with the document itself - I understand the desire to have a complete package however I think that the general requirements that apply to all canine search teams such as Handler Knowledge and Performance Expectation, canine Behavior, Obedience & Agility Evaluations, 20 acre Field Skills evaluation, guidelines for personal equipment and overnight bivouac should be separate. That way it can be easily updated and it will be much clearer to the handler to know the basic requirement they need to meet regardless of the canine discipline.

Now questions and general comments:

If the handler has taken a written test prior do they have to take another one for cadaver? **Yes – it's a different test**

In the scope b)2) As a land cadaver canine team it says that we should be able to perform "assist with the evaluation, organization, and investigation" - cadaver search is generally a law enforcement matter do we really want to be saying that we assist in the organization and investigation. **Changed wording so it sounds less like we are suggesting that handlers do police work.**

additional skills / training should include haz-mat awareness, handling of hazardous material, bloodborne pathogens, and decon of a dog and handler.

**Added to suggested training items**

the three cadaver evaluations described as Above Ground, Buried, and Urban. I totally agree that the cadaver standards should include these type of environments and that the team must be evaluated for their proficiency in

locating buried along with surface and hanging cadaver scent sources. In reading this document, I believe it could be simplified by setting forth the criteria, handler skills, canine skills, and testing procedures only once. And then under each type of evaluation list the purpose and any thing unique, such as the size of the area etc. I had to do alot of reading and going back and forth to see what was different under each category and quite frankly I did not see many differences. I certainly would like it clearer and up front the number of (or range) scent sources, size of the area, time limit, etc. **We tried to make a few changes to help clear this up. Each test is separate.**

I don't understand why "demonstrate adequate land navigation skills" is in the Buried Evaluation section which is 2 1/2 acre sectors but not in the Above Ground Evaluation section which involves 3 2 acre sectors. **Good catch – we fixed it**

Under handler skills, I would like to see added something to effect that the handler can not physically move anything to assist the dog in pinpointing the source or to confirm an indication prior to the handler calling 'a find'. **Added to “Test Methods”**

Why are the Above Ground and a Buried Evaluations separate? These are all wilderness environments. I think 3 sectors, one of which is negative, and the other 2 sectors should each contain 2 scent sources at least one of which must be buried will cover the minimum proficiency for wilderness. By doing this you eliminate 2 hours of evaluation time.

If I did my math correctly, 2 acres is slightly less than 100 yds by 100 yds. This is considerably larger that most other national or state cadaver standards especially in light of the fact that these proposed standards call for 3 sectors this size. Why are you proposing to exceed the size of the sectors other national and state cadaver standards require to establish a minimum proficiency? **Committee believes that 6 acres is an appropriate amount to test above ground. It will be covered in Evaluator education as to appropriate sent sources for this test.**

For the "Urban Evaluation" is it 2 separate areas or is it one area which contains buildings, lumber piles, crawl spaces, etc.? And what is the approximate size of the area to be used. A warehouse or a single family rambler style home with no basement? **It had been clarified. Now two areas that total 400-800 SqFt.**

One last question, why is the Recertification Field Evaluation an appendix and not in the main body of this document? **Added to main body**

I have other comments written down but will end here. The bottom line, if this proposal is passed as written, I and Mid-Atlantic D.O.G.S. will adhere to the standard.

Jane

P.S. If anyone on the committee would like to see my marked up copy of the proposed standards I will be glad to mail it to you.

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## **State Land Cadaver Stds-2004**

Authored by: [Kim Willis](#) on Wednesday, June 15 2005 @ 03:29 PM EDT

Human Remains Detection Dog “HRD” TYPES

VDEM is against typing, from a management point. These stds were written with all K-9s in mind and can be accomplished on lead.

Type 1-Wilderness, Rural,

Type 1a-Forensics Human Remains Detection Dog "FHRD", Wilderness, Rural

Type 2-Urban, Suburban

Type 2a-Forensics Human Remains Detection Dog "FHRD", Land, Suburbs, urban

Type 3-Water, Submerged, Floating, Shoreline

Obedience test 1, off lead

Obedience test 2, on lead

Based on the small amounts of sources we usually train on in Virginia, it would seem that what we are doing is closer to Forensics/Evidence type work, verses full body recovery. **Normally wilderness dogs are dispatched for whole body recovery eg lost persons, suicides, drownings** Even if the committee does not decide to go with forensics typing I would still ask that the amount of the source be defined. We need to train the way we will be working the dog and testing. If you train only on small amounts you will get an alert a good distance from a full body, more then four feet. If you train only for body recovery, a dog is likely to miss very small amounts that a FHRD would alert on; each are much different, HRD, and FHRD. If you want a four foot alert and then a pinpoint indication, with our without help, it will make a difference how the dog was trained and on what amount of source.

## OBEDIENCE

The current advanced obedience skills test for off lead dogs is good. I really do understand liabilities issues with the state, and agree with the test for all dogs working "off lead". I believe there is a middle ground that the state could agree to for on lead dogs. But, it would have to be proposed to them before anyone would know if it was acceptable. Even on lead dogs should have some basic skills and that is what I am leaning towards. As a middle ground, "on lead" dogs can be required to show controllability in such a test as similar to The American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen Test, (CGC). I am only referring to the obedience test, not the aggression test. The CGC shows controllability and basic obedience skills. Neither test gives guarantees that a dog will not be "just a dog" at any given time, but each test is fair for the task. **The committee believes that the standards you mentioned are not adequate.**

## TYPING AND CONFLICTS **Not wanted by VDEM at this time.**

I know typing is time consuming, but its benefits should outweigh the "hassle" by producing the greatest number of resources for properly trained dogs specially suited for a particular task. Typing also forces an organization to set up an overall standards plan (testing and organizational), which all works together. As is, the standards feel sporadic and in the future we will need to address the fact that there is not an umbrella plan set up. Some of the conflicts I already see are:

1. The required, and suggested equipment that is listed in each standard for those going into the field should be considered a basic ground searcher list for all. From there, additional items may be required and/or suggested, based on each specialty area. There was a comment made on FTM that our ground searcher gear list needs to be updated. I agree that both the basic and required list should be updated.

2. Terminology is not consistent throughout the VASARCO Standards System. For example, in the cadaver proposal "Unit" is described well, meaning our organization, or the group to which we belong as members. The word "Team" is also well defined, meaning one handler and one dog. But as seen in number three, below, the word Team is defined to be the organization or group to which we belong.

3. K9 Air Scent Team Standards, **This refers to one dog and one handler – and is correct** Revise name to "K9 Unit Standard". "List For New Teams", number 5, needs rewording so the human remains detection, and trailing testing standards will have unit guidelines by which to work. Within that standard any special requirements of certain disciplines can be listed. **For the Air Scent Stds Committee**

#### AREAS NOT ADDRESSED

1. Search and Rescue (SAR) members with teams that have MOU's with the state should all have background checks done annually. This may be coming in the future on a state level, but as a start, all canine handlers, especially human remains, should be doing this yearly at a unit level to insure potential criminal cases are not jeopardized. The first time a SAR handler testifies in court, and is found to have a record unbecoming that position, we will lose some of our law enforcement (LE) support across the board. **Refer this to SARCO**

2. No appeal, or disciplinary process; Our Unit Standards require that this be established at a unit level, however there is nothing to back that up should a unit fail to properly handle a situation. This process will be needed for any complaints or disagreements lodged from all tests taken, plus many other issues. It should also include a grievance format, and a sexual harassment policy, as well as a policy on how to address complaints lodged from organizations or individuals outside the Unit. This can be done at the state level or with VASARCO. All standards should reflect this procedure or have it attached. **Refer this to SARCO**

3. The scent sources should be defined by amount for testing purposes. **Commonsense and Evaluator education will prevail**

4. If our K9 training logbooks are to be judged in some way, **Not evaluated just reviewed at the unit level** then some kind of minimum requirements should be

set forth. Are they just being checked to see if they exist? I do believe there should be some minimum logbook requirements, especially for human remains work. This area is where I also suggest putting a minimum for time-spent on training, per industry standards, before being allowed to test for certification. What method a handler chooses to use as a logbook should be personal, but certain information should be present for court purposes, and should be predetermined by State Standards to provide consistency through out the State. This information could be detailed in the "K9 Unit Standards" for all dog teams.

5. A no-test. **Each test is separate, and this applies only to the test being taken at that time.** This needs to be defined. Does the term "no-test", only refer to the one test taken, and that test has to be retested, or is it a no-test for the entire process? If this has not been approached, I would suggest only repeating the test in question, and stating so clearly, so as not to burden the evaluators if the team passed everything else. Strange circumstances do come up at times and I could see where a no-test would be valid, but a time limit on a re-test should be set.

6. Re-test. **All separate tests** This also needs to be defined (see above). If a team passes all the tests but one, and fails, how will a re-test be approached; Just the one test, or the entire process? Shouldn't there also be some kind of time limit in-between the test and re-test, and should there be a time limit as to how long it can be taken up to, after which, a re-test can no longer be done, and the full process starts over? (That would be assuming that only part of the entire test was going to be repeated). If the entire test has to be repeated then that also needs to be well defined.

7. Under "Evaluation Information" (D). **Read no-test section** 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 following procedures under "Retesting". (Also referring to C of same section) Having two evaluators who compare scores negates the value of having the testing procedure. If the handler and canine went to court, it could look like collusion verses collaboration, because the test would appear more subjective in nature, thus leaving room for "a reasonable doubt" that the test should have been passed even with two evaluators.

8. I believe we should address some HR handling guidelines. **Suggestion taken and added to additional suggested training** These could be detailed in "K9 Unit Standards" (now defined as K9 Air Scent Team Standards), under a special section for units with HRD teams, or just addressed by requiring that units with HRD dogs develop HR handling procedures, which must be presented at certification.

REDUCING THE EVALUATORS TIME

**Committee does not believe that this is an appropriate way of evaluating a**

### K-9 search team.

We all know how time consuming doing a certification is. As VASARCO advances, this will get worse. One way of reducing the burden on a few is; if we “type” (just a little bit) we may be able to generate more operational handlers that may then be defined as evaluators. With disaster, and trailing standards on the way, I see burnout for the small percentage of evaluators that we have, because most will be those that already exist. A middle ground suggestion that may appeal to the state, and still give us the requirements we seek for overall quality is:

1. Have a “Skills Sign Off Checklist” for two areas of testing.

A. It would include almost all the skills in Handler Knowledge and Performance Expectations, such as the, 20-acre test, overnight test, all map and compass and basic ground search skills. All dog issues in that section would have to be observed by the evaluator and would remain as an observed test by the evaluator. All the requirements to be signed off on this checklist would be signed by the Unit Training Officer, which VASARCO and the State would have a list of. Prerequisites should include FTM, **when a K-9 team has met these standards their training will exceed FTM** which is also part of some of the search basics. **FTMs are taught to follow someone else in the field, the K-9 handler is the task leader.**

B. Have a Canine “Skills Sign Off Checklist” for some of the canine portion. It could include the obedience and agility skills in the Canine Performance Expectations section, and the designated Unit K9 Trainer would perform this sign off list. For the standards test it could still include the evaluator observing that the handler had proper control over the dog at all phases, but the actual obedience test would have been performed already. The checklist and skills requirement of K9 teams should be addressed in the “K9 Unit Standards”, now called “K9 Air Scent Team Standards”. **See comments above**

2. Limit the test to one evaluator. **Not objective enough** If a person has met the listed criteria, and is given the responsibility to test, they should be trusted to make the right decisions. If the handler is not happy with the evaluator’s decision they should have an appeal process. One well-trained evaluator is sufficient. With two it would appear to an unknowing person that the test is more subjective than it is, and that the governing body does not trust its evaluators. Could have some liability consequences in court should one evaluator influence another, the team pass, and later it comes out that one evaluator did not feel confident in the teams abilities. The above check off lists could be performed during trainings with in 60 to 90 days ahead of the actual test. The signed off lists would be provided, along with the K9 training logbook, and any other paperwork, to the final evaluator. Our units should be doing all these things during training anyway, and our experienced Unit Trainers should be trusted to make responsible testing decisions; the same as a qualified and valuable canine evaluator.

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Respectfully,  
Kim Willis

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#### State Land Cadaver Stds-2004

Authored by: [jhauden](#) on Wednesday, June 15 2005 @ 11:53 AM EDT

Previous Comment made by John Haudenshield Commonwealth SAR

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#### State Land Cadaver Stds-2004

Authored by: [jhauden](#) on Wednesday, June 15 2005 @ 11:37 AM EDT

Obedience I propose the acceptance of recognized (AKC or Fédération Cynologique Internationale) training titles to satisfy the Obedience evaluation. Minimum Examples: AKC Companion Dog (CD) SchH/IPO Begleithund (Bh) French/Mondio Ring Brevet Buried Evaluation & the Recertification Test Procedures: d) "... One sector shall contain false holes dug at the time the samples were placed." I feel that all of the sectors should have false holes dug. This will maintain the test uniformity across the sectors. By default, the 'hot' sector will have one hole dug, so it should also have at least one false hole. Therefore, the additional sector(s), hot or negative, should have false holes dug as well. I also agree with Chris Holleyman, regarding the use of 3 search sectors for the above-ground & buried tests. Overall, this looks like a solid evaluation. The Committee did a very good job. **If a dog is previously certified to the stds you mention here, then it should have no problem passing the obedience we have set forth. The requirement is not waived.**

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#### State Land Cadaver Stds-2004

Authored by: [Rick\\_Christ](#) on Tuesday, June 14 2005 @ 11:20 PM EDT

I agree with Beth about the problems defining "aggressive canine behavior." Are there acceptable existing standards and certifications like "Canine Good Citizen" and AKC Agility that we can use instead of creating our own? **They do not meet the proposed stds.**

Also, in reviewing handler knowledge of SAR operations, I'd be more comfortable saying they should hold current FTM certification. **Nice to have but not a substitute for these stds** That will reduce the need to specify most of the Handler requirements on pages 8-11. Given that a cadaver team is likely to be sent on a task with a deputy, and often not another FTM, it makes sense to require that the handler have a current FTM certification.

For evaluations, I don't think it's necessary that the evaluator be an existing wilderness evaluator of a canine SAR group with an MOU. I would prefer this be handled by the VDEM SAR office through state instructors, **Because this is an OJT learning method, and not a classroom/curriculum, VDEM instructors who are not operational K-9 handlers do not have the skills necessary to evaluate a K-9 team** as it is now done with FTM, FTL, FTS, MLSO and PSO certifications.

Rick Christ [training@tovsar.org](mailto:training@tovsar.org)

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## State Land Cadaver Stds-2004

Authored by: [gmcma](#) on Tuesday, June 14 2005 @ 07:05 AM EDT  
Comments on Proposed K9 Cadaver Standards for Virginia

By Chris Holleyman  
Email: [Holleyman@Compuserve.com](mailto:Holleyman@Compuserve.com)  
703-527-4654

### Dead Animal Distractions:

On both the above ground test and the buried test, the proposed standard says that there will be "AT LEAST" one dead animal scent source. I would revise that language to either specify an exact number or change it to something like "no more than (say) three dead animal scent sources". **Fixed to say "one"**

For the urban test, the proposed standard says there "MAY" be a dead animal scent source. At the same time, under the handler skills, the handler has to be able to differentiate between when his/her dog is alerting on animal vs. human. That seems to suggest that there has to be a dead animal scent source on the test. I would delete the word "MAY" and as with the buried and above ground evaluations specify an exact or maximum number of dead animals that will be on the test. **Fixed on all pert paragraphs**

### Placement of Scent Sources on Urban Test

Many urban/building searches involve looking for someone believed to be buried in a crawl space, in an unfinished basement, or under some type of concrete (patio, foundation, etc.). For this reason, I would probably allow for these types of buried placements to be used on the urban evaluation. **Commonsense use of training aids to fit scenario in eval. Evaluator education at State evaluators workshop will ensure appropriate placement and test consistency.**

### Scent Sources on Urban Test

Unless you are using a buried scenario, I'm not sure that I would allow soil samples on the urban test. It doesn't seem consistent with what is going to be encountered in reality. **training aids to fit scenario in eval. Evaluator education at State evaluators workshop will ensure consistency on tests**

### Scent Sources for Above Ground Test

I think the main purpose of the above ground test should be to test the ability of teams to find remains in the dry phase. My own experience with above ground

searches was that they involved looking for remains that had been out there for a while (more than a month) and were in the dry phase. With that in mind, I would think about two things: (1) placing some type of limitation on the quality of the scent source used for the above-ground test and (2) maybe adding an easier test that would evaluate the ability of teams to find sources in the bloating and decay stages. **Evaluators need to do the best that can do with the test set-up and make sure the scenario provided fits the test set up.**

## Hot and Negative Sectors

For both the buried test and the above-ground test **has 3 already**, my personal preference would be to use three sectors: one hot, one negative, and one left up to the discretion of the evaluators. Using this approach, there is no way for the handler to determine whether the next sector will be blank or not. In other words, it guarantees that there is a 50/50 chance of each sector being hot or cold. **The committee believes that these are written well, and this needs to be covered in evaluators workshop**

If you specify the number of hot and negative sectors, as with the proposed above ground standard, you can't really say that. This is especially true since the scent sources could be visible. The way things are, the blank can't really be the third sector searched (i.e., if the handler has strong finds in the first two sectors then the negative third sector is a give-away). So the blank is going to have to be in the first or second sector. Again, if the team finds in the first sector, then they will know that there is a strong possibility that the negative is in the second sector. If you are going to go ahead and use the two-hot, one blank specification for the above ground, I would strongly suggest placing all scent sources in uniform containers and then making sure that there are blank containers in all sectors of the test.

For the buried test, I really think there needs to be at least one negative. Too many cadaver handlers are wishy-washy about calling blanks with buried. The result is that LE spends a lot of time following up on searches that should have been called negative in the first place. And the fact is that most searches involve clearing areas, not finding. However, you can't really specify a negative sector if you are only using two sectors for the test. For example, what happens if the hot sector is the first one to be searched and the source is tampered with by an animal: if the team finds it, the handler would know that the next sector is blank.

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State Land Cadaver Stds-2004

Authored by: [B. Barkley](#) on Thursday, May 26 2005 @ 07:18 PM EDT

FIRST: There seems to be a great emphasis on "canine aggression." No where in the standards document is there a clear definition of unacceptable "canine aggression." What is "canine aggression" for these standards? Please note: Some dogs exhibit behavior that could be described as "canine aggression" BUT those acts are justified by circumstance. (Also note: I DO NOT have an

aggressive canine, by any standards.) Aggression is defined in "Terminology"  
[See terminology](#)

Second: Many of the requirements (obedience, agility, etc.) are duplications of the standards for wilderness (or FEMA). If the canine applicant has already certified in wilderness, why repeat these requirements? The testing takes a lot of TIME and there will be many applicants. Give the evaluators a break! [See test methods](#)

d) 'Team training log' – [per terminology "team" means 1 dog 1 handler](#) do you mean dog/handler team or the group that has the MOU team? Please clarify.

Alert is mentioned. Please state if you mean "natural alert" or "trained alert." [See terminology](#)

9 a) 'treatment for bloat' - ? - there is no treatment for bloat that is commonly considered field acceptable. SOME veterinarians will allow decompression with a large gauge needle as a field treatment, but it is NOT standard, and many veterinarians will tell you not to do it. Wording change, please. [See where it says "if possible" under directions in this paragraph](#)

9 b) WHAT? [ditto](#)

Behavior: "unwarranted aggressive canine"? Will someone be on hand to interpret the body language of other canines so that the canine being tested can be properly determined as expressing 'unwarranted aggression'? How about 'no contact' or no barking, or something that is QUANTIFIABLE from a human standpoint.

Policy: 'aggressive canine' - as noted above. A definition and examples are needed to give this phrase parameters. [Aggressive behavior is well defines in terminology. Test methods will be addressed in evaluator training. Unfair tests can be addressed through Retesting \(c\)](#)

Behavior Exam: The inclusion of 'pick up truck' has existed for 26+ years in standards. It needs to be struck. 99.99% of handlers have NO intention of placing their dog in an open pick up truck bed. Safety concerns should direct a revision. [paragraph changed to read "vehicle"](#)

In "Required Skills" can we please change to 'canine responsiveNESS' to stay in tense with the other items in the list? [Fixed](#)

In the 20 acre: item d) "6 digits?" As in fingers? Dialing a telephone? Or perhaps the numbers that are used for horizontal and vertical measurement on the standard map provided at DEM searches? (the one with the over laid grid). Clarity, please. [Committee sees no problem with how it is written](#)

Canine Skills: Please be consistent throughout with "recognizable" and "describable" for 'alerts.' Recognizable **see it** usually = natural alert. Describable **verbalize it** usually = trained alert. Definition needed up front.

Point: This has happened to me, so be warned: Scent sources placed or buried 24 to 48 hours in advance of the test have been removed by wild animals (who smelled it and removed it). Care must be taken to verify that the scent sources are there for the test! **If test is compromised it will be a no-test**

Buried Test: d) depth: no variation for soil type or conditions? For example, clay vs. loam, or wet (transports scent readily) vs. dry (does not transport scent readily). **Evaluators will be educated and tasked with using commonsense**  
f) one hour? for 1/2 ac. buried? Does this take into consideration heat/dryness/etc.? It should. **If person being evaluated thinks the test is unfair they can ask for operational dog to run the problem**

Urban: c) says U.E.P. will be described later, but it would be best described here, its first appearance in the document - standard procedure for documents.  
**Committee couldn't find what you referred to**

"Strengths/weaknesses" appears in all the evaluation instructions. This is also a phrase that has been there for 26+ years. Some (actually, most) evaluators have taken this to mean they have to criticize something AND praise something. It should really be changed to "any obvious strengths or areas requiring development" - OR whatever phrase indicates it is an optional observation.  
**"should" is suggested not mandatory**

Re-Evaluation and Re-Evaluation test: Same comments as above for f) and f) - 'read the canine' and '1 hour' **Fixed to require indication**

Appendix N: Is this authored by someone that should receive credit? The use of "I" in the document would indicate so. If not, please remove the "I." Also in 1. PLEASE remove the word 'pee' and use 'urinate' if you must describe the act. A better paragraph could be written without using cute words. Some how "pee" and an official Virginia document don't seem to go together. In 7. the phrase "need I say more" is also too casual and gets back to the 'I' use. In many parks now (including Prince William Forest Park) there is a 'bring it in, take it out' policy. Feces should be bagged and removed. Some places allow burial (take a collapsible trowel). A Virginia document should not ignore park regulations. In 12. the suggestion is made for 'moist dog food.' Moist dog foods contain inappropriate preservatives. It is better to carry a combination of good dry food and a container of 10% glucose (honey, sugar) with 90% water (replace before each search - it can get moldy). In 14. the use of the phrase 'other guy' is too casual for this document, and the use of 'I' again. **Fixed.**

Beth Barkley

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