

# SWGDOG SC2 - GENERAL GUIDELINES

Posted for public comment 12/16/06 – 2/16/06. Approved by the membership 4/2/2006.  
**1<sup>st</sup> - Revision** - Posted for Public Comment 6/24/09 – 8/22/09. Approved by the membership  
9/15/2009.

**Statement of Purpose:** To establish consensus-based best practice general guidelines for training, certification, and documentation pertaining to all canine disciplines. Discipline specific guidelines are found within the corresponding subcommittee documents.

## ***1. INITIAL TRAINING***

- 1.1. The handler training shall be conducted by a competent trainer from an entity that utilizes a structured curriculum with specific training and learning objectives.
- 1.2. The canine training shall be conducted by a competent canine trainer from an entity that utilizes a structured curriculum with specific training and learning objectives.
- 1.3. Initial training shall include sufficient obedience training to ensure the canine will operate effectively based on mission requirements.
- 1.4. The canine shall be trained to perform an effective and controlled search.
- 1.5. The initial training of the canine shall include training of a determined specific final response (active or passive alert).
- 1.6. Initial training shall include exposing the canine team to a variety of locations, expected situations and searches.
- 1.7. The training shall be structured to meet the typical mission requirements of the canine team's department/organization.
- 1.8. The canine team's training shall be continued to achieve a level of operational proficiency until certification evaluation.

## ***2. CANINE TEAM ASSESSMENTS***

- 2.1. Assessments are part of certification, maintenance training and proficiency testing.
- 2.2. Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.
- 2.3. The canine team shall be assessed in the following ways:
  - 2.3.1. Odor recognition assessment.
    - 2.3.1.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search.

- 2.3.1.2. The handler may know the number of target objects, but not the placement.
- 2.3.1.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
- 2. 3.2. Comprehensive assessment (single-blind assessment).
  - 2.3.2.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search, yet shall not know the desired outcome.
  - 2.3.2.2. The handler shall not know the number or placement of the target objects.
  - 2.3.2.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
  - 2.3.2.4. The assessments shall include a blank search.
- 2. 3.3. Double-blind assessment.
  - 2.3.3.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search.
  - 2.3.3.2. No participant or observer present at the assessment location(s) shall be aware of the desired outcome of the search.
  - 2.3.3.3. The assessments may include a blank search.
- 2.4. Each assessment will address the following areas:
  - 2. 4.1. Demonstration of the canine's ability to perform a systematic search.
  - 2. 4.2. Demonstration of the handler's control of the canine during the execution of a systematic search.
  - 2. 4.3. Demonstration of the handler's ability to accurately interpret the canine's changes in behaviors associated with odor detection and identification.
  - 2. 4.4. Demonstration of the handler's ability to determine whether or not the canine has made a final response.
  - 2. 4.5. In a double blind assessment it may not be possible to include all of the handler and canine assessment areas listed above.

### **3. CANINE TEAM CERTIFICATION**

- 3.1. Certification for the named canine team shall be valid for one year.
  - 3.1.1. Certification does not relieve the canine team from regular maintenance training, periodic proficiency assessments, and following other recommended SWGDOG guidelines.
  - 3.1.2. The certifying official(s) shall not be routinely involved in the day to day training of the canine team being evaluated.
  - 3.1.3. For successful certification, the canine team shall achieve at least a 90 % positive alert rate, unless otherwise dictated by the specific discipline, combined with a false alert rate as identified by the sub-disciplines (distinct objects search versus continuous area search). Positive and false alerts are defined and calculated as follows:
    - 3.1.3.1. A positive alert is defined as the trained detection alert in the presence of the target odor. The rate is calculated as the number of positive alerts divided by the number of available targets. For example, if the certification has ten target odors and the canine team identifies nine odors, it will have achieved a 90 % positive alert rate.

- 3.1.3.2. A false alert is defined as an alert in the absence of the target odor. This is determined in one of 2 ways and shall be defined before the evaluation, depending upon the nature of the detection task involved in the certification (distinct objects search versus continuous area search):
  - 3.1.3.2.1. In sub-disciplines in which certification involves searching a defined number of distinct objects (i.e., pieces of luggage, odor recognition cans, scent boxes, parcels, persons, vehicles) the false alert rate is calculated as the number of false alerts divided by the number of non-target objects, not to exceed 10 %. For example, if the certification test involves searching a set of 24 pieces of luggage in which 4 pieces contain targets and 20 are non-target objects, and the canine team exhibits one false alert on a non-target piece of luggage, then the team's false alert rate is calculated as 1/20, or 5 %.
  - 3.1.3.2.2. In sub-disciplines in which certification primarily involves searching continuous areas (i.e., warehouses, vehicle lots, aircraft, buildings) the number of distinct search objects within the continuous search area is immeasurable. The number of false alerts should not exceed one per continuous searchable area as defined by the specific discipline (refer to SC8 and SC9 documents).
- 3.1.4. Handler errors, when excessive may result in failure of the team.
- 3.1.5. A mission oriented test environment shall be used.
- 3.2. Certification shall consist of a number of assessments that together form the full test.
  - 3.2.1. Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.
  - 3.2.2. Aids and/or targets used in the day to day training activities of the team being certified should not be used in the certification process.
  - 3.2.3. The certification shall be comprised of a comprehensive assessment together with either an odor recognition assessment or a double-blind assessment, or both.
- 3.3. A canine team that fails the certification process shall complete a corrective action plan before making another attempt to certify.

#### **4. MAINTENANCE TRAINING**

- 4.1. The canine team shall conduct regular objective-oriented training sufficient to maintain and enhance operational proficiency. Maintenance training shall include the following:
  - 4.1.1. Correcting identified deficiencies or operational concerns.
  - 4.1.2. A variety of search locations, location sizes and environmental conditions.
  - 4.1.3. Varied duration of search times.
  - 4.1.4. Varied times of day/night.
  - 4.1.5. A variety of blank searches.
  - 4.1.6. A variety of distractions in the search area.
  - 4.1.7. A variety of set times.
  - 4.1.8. A variety of target odors, amounts, number of targets and different sources of targets where applicable.

- 4.1.9. A variety of methods of concealment.
- 4.2. Training conducted solely by the handler to maintain the canine's proficiency is acceptable, but should be periodically combined with supervised training.
  - 4.2.1. Supervised training, by a qualified trainer/instructor, is recommended in order to monitor and improve performance, identify and correct training deficiencies, and perform proficiency assessments.
- 4.3. A canine team shall complete a minimum of sixteen (16) hours of training per month to maintain and improve the proficiency level of the team.
- 4.4. The canine team shall undergo periodic proficiency assessments as outlined in section 2 of the Canine Team Assessments. These assessments should include a variety of odor recognition assessments, comprehensive assessments and/or double-blind assessments.

## **5. RECORD KEEPING AND DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1. The handler/department/organization shall document training, certification, proficiency assessments and discipline-related deployment data.
  - 5.1.1. Training and proficiency assessment records may be combined or maintained separately.
  - 5.1.2. Discipline-related deployment records shall be maintained separately from training, certification and proficiency assessment records.
  - 5.1.3. Training and discipline-related records should be standardized within the department/organization.
- 5.2. Training records may include, but are not limited to, the following data:
  - 5.2.1. Name of handler and canine.
  - 5.2.2. Name(s) of individual(s) conducting/assisting training.
  - 5.2.3. Time and date training took place.
  - 5.2.4. Location and environmental conditions.
  - 5.2.5. Training design (non-blind, single-blind or double-blind).
  - 5.2.6. Description and number of target(s).
  - 5.2.7. Location of target(s).
  - 5.2.8. Set time.
  - 5.2.9. Size of search area.
  - 5.2.10. Length of session.
  - 5.2.11. Search results.
  - 5.2.12. Deficiencies and corrective measures implemented.
  - 5.2.13. Other information required by department/organization.
- 5.3. Certification records shall be maintained by the certifying authority and the handler, and include the following information:
  - 5.3.1. Name of canine and handler.
  - 5.3.2. Date team certified.

- 5.3.3. Certification authority, i.e., agency, professional organization, and/or individual(s).
  - 5.3.4. The standard or guideline under which the canine team is certified.
  - 5.3.5. Name of individual(s) awarding certification.
  - 5.3.6. Search area types included in certification assessment.
  - 5.3.7. Type and amount of materials included in certification assessment.
  - 5.3.8. Location of certification.
  - 5.3.9. Set time.
- 5.4. Proficiency assessment records maintained by the handler/department/organization may include, but are not limited to, the following data:
- 5.4.1. Name of handler and canine.
  - 5.4.2. Name(s) of individual(s) conducting assessment.
  - 5.4.3. Time and date assessment took place.
  - 5.4.4. Location and environmental conditions.
  - 5.4.5. Assessment design (single-blind or double-blind).
  - 5.4.6. Search area types included in the proficiency assessment.
  - 5.4.7. Type(s) and amount(s) of material included in the proficiency assessment.
  - 5.4.8. Set time.
  - 5.4.9. Size of search area.
  - 5.4.10. Proficiency assessment results.
  - 5.4.11. Other information required by department/organization.
- 5.5. Supervisory review of all records is recommended.
- 5.6. Digital format is recommended to facilitate compiling and analyzing data.
- 5.7. Records may be discoverable in court proceedings and may become evidence of the canine team's reliability. Record retention policy shall be determined by department/organization guidelines.
- 5.8. Training records are necessary to illustrate the type and amount of training that the team has experienced before and after certification.
- 5.9. Confirmed operational outcomes can be used as a factor in determining capability.
- 5.10. Unconfirmed operational outcomes shall not be used as a factor in determining capability in that they do not correctly evaluate a canine team's proficiency, i.e., residual odor can be present or concealment may preclude discovery.
- 5.11. Training Aid Records
- 5.11.1. Training aids shall be clearly labeled in a manner to support accountability.
  - 5.11.2. Appropriate records shall be maintained by the handler/department/organization in accordance with federal/state/local requirements.
- 5.12. Veterinary Records

- 5.12.1. Veterinary records shall be maintained in a manner such as they are accessible to the handler/department/organization.
- 5.12.2. Vaccinations required by state or local law should be documented in the veterinary record of the canine.