

# **SWGDOG SC8– SUBSTANCE DETECTOR DOGS**

## **Agricultural Substance Detection**

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**Statement of purpose:** To provide recommended guidelines for training, certifying and documenting the performance of agricultural substance detection canine teams.

### **1. Initial Training**

- 1.1. Training shall be conducted by a competent, qualified detector canine trainer from an entity which utilizes a structured curriculum with specific training and learning objectives.
- 1.2. The training course shall include the training of canines to detect agricultural materials whose illegal importation is deemed a threat to agricultural interests. Additional materials can be trained as they are identified as potential threats to an area's agribusiness.
- 1.3. The training shall include varying concentrations of the target odors.
- 1.4. The training shall include exposing the canine to various heights and depths of training aid placement in different training scenarios to simulate working environments. Packaging methods shall vary according to the search application.
- 1.5. The initial training shall continue until the agricultural substance detection team is certified or deemed not certifiable.
- 1.6. Initial training shall represent all conditions that could be encountered during a certification process.

### **2. Canine/Handler Team Certification**

- 2.1 Certification shall be conducted in accordance with SWGDOG General Guidelines utilizing the following parameters:
  - 2.1.1. The agricultural substance detector canine shall be tested on the substance odors on which the team was trained.
  - 2.1.2. The test shall be designed in a manner that resembles the normal operational searches in which the teams were trained and may include the following:
    - 2.1.2.1. Luggage (typically 50 to 75 pieces within 5 to 10 minutes).
    - 2.1.2.2. Vehicle searches with various types of vehicles (typically 3 to 4 vehicles in 7 to 10 minutes).
    - 2.1.2.3. Parcel inspection (typically 100 to 150 pieces on a moving conveyer belt).
    - 2.1.2.4. Cargo (typically 15 to 20 pallets in 7 to 10 minutes).

- 2.1.3. The test shall include a variety of searches designed to evaluate the canine's ability to recognize the odor, respond to the odor, and the handler's ability to recognize the response.
  - 2.1.4. For successful certification, the canine/handler team shall achieve at least an 80% confirmed alert rate for initial certification, and shall exceed an 85% confirmed alert rate for annual certification, and a false alert rate not to exceed 5%, as defined and calculated in SC 2.
  - 2.1.5. Excessive handler errors, as defined by the certifying authority, shall result in failure of the team.
- 2.2. Distracters are necessary to prove goal is met.
    - 2.2.1. Natural distracters are normally present in the testing area.
    - 2.2.2. Placement of distracters in the certification area is required when no natural distracters are present and may include various non-target food items.
  - 2.3. Certification for agricultural substance detection dogs shall be comprised of a comprehensive assessment. Additionally, certification shall include elements of odor recognition or double blind testing as outlined in SWGDOG General Guidelines.

### **3. Maintenance Training**

- 3.1. Maintenance training is meant to sustain and enhance the performance of the handler, canine and the canine team.
- 3.2. In training, situations are created to simulate realistic environmental scenarios.
- 3.3. Maintenance training shall include:
  - 3.3.1. A variety of locations, environments, times of day, durations of searches.
  - 3.3.2. A variety of training material amounts or concentrations of odors.
  - 3.3.3. A variety of heights, depths, containers and distraction odors. Packaging methods shall vary according to the search application.
  - 3.3.4. Various types of searches including vehicle, building, parcels, and luggage searches.
  - 3.3.5. A varied duration of set times
  - 3.3.6. A varied duration of search times.
  - 3.3.7. A variety of environmental scenarios that include blank or negative exercises.
- 3.4. Because routine training is essential in order to maintain mission readiness, a canine team shall spend a minimum of 4 hours per week training.
  - 3.4.1. Routine training, conducted by the handler to maintain the dog's proficiency and to reinforce odor recognition, is an acceptable form of training but shall be combined with supervised training on a regular basis.

- 3.4.2. Supervised training is conducted by a qualified trainer, other than the handler. The goal is to improve performance, identify and correct training deficiencies and perform proficiency assessments. This is considered a best practice.
- 3.5. If additional target materials are identified as necessary to meet mission specific requirements, then maintenance training shall be conducted on these materials.

#### **4. Training Materials**

- 4.1. Handling and storage of training aids shall be conducted in a manner that prevents odor contamination.
  - 4.1.1. Target materials shall be stored in separate, labeled containers.
  - 4.1.2. Target materials shall be stored separately from non-target and masking odors.
  - 4.1.3. Training aid material shall be appropriately disposed of and replenished frequently due to the perishable nature of the material.

#### **5. Documentation:**

- 5.1. The handler, department and organization shall maintain training records, proficiency assessments, seizure records, deployment utilization and certification records.
- 5.2. Recommended training records shall contain the following data:
  - 5.2.1. Date training took place.
  - 5.2.2. Name of individual conducting the training.
  - 5.2.3. Amount of time spent training.
  - 5.2.4. Type and amount of training aid used.
  - 5.2.5. Height or depth of hide.
  - 5.2.6. Location where training took place.
  - 5.2.7. Type of training.
  - 5.2.8. The training objectives (e.g., introduction of new odors, new environments, proficiency issues or challenges and justification for change).
  - 5.2.9. Results of training.
  - 5.2.10. Any additional information required by the agency or organization.
  - 5.2.11. The names of both the canine and handler.
- 5.3. Deployment, utilization and seizure records shall document the specifics of the activity attended by the canine handler team and include the following:
  - 5.3.1. Date and time team was utilized.
  - 5.3.2. Location where action took place.
  - 5.3.3. Results of action.
  - 5.3.4. Description of the activity.
  - 5.3.5. Information regarding any seizures.
  - 5.3.6. Other information required by the organization and/or agency.

- 5.3.7. The name of the canine and handler.
- 5.4. Certification records shall be kept by the certifying authority and the handler and include the following information:
  - 5.4.1 Date certified.
  - 5.4.2 Certification authority i.e., agency or professional organization.
  - 5.4.3 Name of certified individual.
  - 5.4.4 Type of materials.
  - 5.4.5 Location of certification.
  - 5.4.6 Name of canine and handler.

## **6. Use of Records and Documentation**

- 6.1. Reliability of the canine/handler team shall be based upon the results of certification and proficiency assessments.
- 6.2. Training records do not necessarily reflect reliability of the team.
- 6.3. Training records are necessary to illustrate the type and amount of training that the team has experienced before and after certification.
- 6.4. Confirmed operational outcomes can be used to determine capability.
- 6.5. Unconfirmed operational outcomes shall not be used to determine capability in that they do not correctly evaluate a canine/handler team's proficiency.