

# SWGDOG SC8– SUBSTANCE DETECTOR DOGS

## Pest and Insect Detection

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**Statement of purpose:** To provide recommended guidelines for training, certification and documentation pertaining to **pest and insect** detector canines.

### *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 detection training course shall include training the canine to detect specific pests and insects (refer to Appendix 8.6) as required to meet the mission, regional and operational deployment needs.
- 1.3. Training shall include exposing the canine to a variety of different types of searches and locations.
- 1.4. The initial training should continue until the detection canine team is certified or deemed not certifiable.
- 1.5. Initial training shall represent all conditions that could be encountered during a certification process.

### *2. CANINE TEAM CERTIFICATION*

- 2.1. Parameters of the test for certification:
  - 2.1.1. The detector canine shall be tested on the target odors for which it is trained.
  - 2.1.2. All odors for which the dog will be certified must be tested.
  - 2.1.3. The test shall be designed to resemble normal operational searches by using appropriate structures and living environments in which the pests and insects are commonly found.
  - 2.1.4. Certification testing shall be conducted with sufficient amount of substance to be detected (refer to Appendix 8.6).
  - 2.1.5. The test shall include a variety of searches designed to evaluate:
    - 2.1.5.1. The canine's ability to recognize the odor.
    - 2.1.5.2. The canine's ability to respond to the odor.
    - 2.1.5.3. The handler's ability to recognize the canine's response.
  - 2.1.6. The test shall include scenarios resembling searches within the normal operational environment and include at least three (3) different searches (see categories below). Not all odors will necessarily be in each type of

search and some search areas shall contain no odors (blanks). Types of searches and suggested maximum search times are listed below:

- 2.1.6.1. Parcels/Baggage searches with 2-6 articles per odor. It should take no more than 1 minute to search 2-6 bags.
  - 2.1.6.2. Building/room searches - the room may contain 0-3 aids depending upon the size and environmental conditions. Rooms that are 9.3 – 93 m<sup>2</sup> (100-1000 sq. ft.) with furniture should take 1.5 minutes per 9.3 m<sup>2</sup>/ 28 m<sup>3</sup> (100 sq.ft./1000 cu. ft.).
  - 2.1.6.3. Vehicle searches including interiors and exteriors - 3-6 vehicles per search using passenger cars and trucks, should take 3 minutes per vehicle).
  - 2.1.6.4. Exterior area/article/perimeter searches of 9.3 – 93 m<sup>2</sup> (100-1000 sq. ft.) per search, should take 1-3 minutes per 93 m<sup>2</sup> (1000 sq. ft.).
  - 2.1.7. The canine team must demonstrate the ability to detect all trained odor(s).
  - 2.1.8. For successful certification, the canine team shall achieve at least a 90% confirmed alert rate for certification, and a false alert rate not to exceed 10%, as defined and calculated in SC 2.
  - 2.1.9. Excessive handler errors, as defined by the certifying authority, shall result in failure of the team.
  - 2.1.10. Disqualification due to time should be left to the discretion of the certifying authority. The test should end if the certifying authority determines that the canine team is no longer working (e.g., Observable behaviors to be added in final annotated version).
- 2.2. Use of distractors.
    - 2.2.1. Natural distractors are normally present in the testing area.
    - 2.2.2. Placement of distractors as it relates to a specific pest and/or insect (refer to Appendix 8.6) in the certification area is required when no natural distractors are present.
    - 2.2.3. Care must be taken not to place artificial distractions in a manner that causes contamination of the test substance odor.
  - 2.3. Proofing/verification of certification area should be conducted prior to the actual certification using a certified canine team who is not participating in the certification. This practice is designed to show that the target odor is present in the target locations and nowhere else, including the blank areas.
  - 2.4. Certification should not be conducted in areas in which the detection canine teams have recently trained or certified.
  - 2.5. Certification for the canine team should be comprised of a comprehensive assessment, which includes elements of odor recognition as outlined in SWGDOG General Guidelines.
    - 2.5.1. Odor recognition assessment

- 2.5.1.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search.
- 2.5.1.2. The handler shall know the number of target objects, but not the placement.
- 2.5.1.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
- 2.5.2. Comprehensive assessment
  - 2.5.2.1. The handler shall be advised of the parameters of the search, yet shall not know the desired outcome.
  - 2.5.2.2. The handler shall not know the number or placement of the target objects.
  - 2.5.2.3. The evaluating official shall know the desired outcome of the search.
  - 2.5.2.4. The assessments shall include a blank search.
- 2.5.3. Double-blind assessment
  - 2.5.3.1. No participant or observer present at the assessment location(s) shall be aware of the parameters of the search.

### **3. MAINTENANCE TRAINING**

- 3.1. The canine team shall conduct regular objective-oriented training sufficient to maintain operational proficiency on all trained odors.
- 3.2. Training is meant to sustain and enhance the performance of the handler, canine and the canine team.
- 3.3. In training, situations are purposely sought where the capabilities of the canine team is challenged within the operational environments for which the team may be deployed to improve and enhance their abilities.
- 3.4. Training shall include:
  - 3.4.1. A variety of locations.
  - 3.4.2. Varied amounts of specific pest and insect training material (as specified within Appendix 8.6).
  - 3.4.3. A variety of heights, depths, containers and distraction odors.
  - 3.4.4. Various types of searches (e.g., vehicles, buildings, parcels, luggage and blank areas).
  - 3.4.5. A varied duration of set times.
  - 3.4.6. Varied duration of search times.
- 3.5. The canine team shall spend an average of four hours per week in routine training to maintain the proficiency level of the team.
- 3.6. Routine training, conducted by the handler to maintain the canine's proficiency and to reinforce odor recognition, is an acceptable form of training but shall be combined with supervised training on a regular basis. Supervised training is conducted by a qualified trainer other than the handler, in order to improve

performance, identify and correct training deficiencies. Performing proficiency assessments is considered a best practice.

#### **4. TRAINING MATERIALS**

- 4.1. The training materials shall be packaged in a manner safe for the canine and handler throughout training.
- 4.2. The training materials shall be maintained in a manner to avoid loss or destruction.
- 4.3. Materials shall be stored in a manner that prevents odor contamination or physical contamination.
- 4.4. Required safeguarding procedures pertaining to the training materials shall be followed according to local, state and federal laws.
- 4.5. If required, permits shall be current and accurate records maintained.
- 4.6. Training materials shall be replaced if contaminated or compromised.
- 4.7. Disposal/destruction of training aids shall follow local, state and federal guidelines, if applicable.

#### **5. DOCUMENTATION**

- 5.1. The handler, department and organization shall maintain training records, certification records, proficiency assessments and deployment records.
- 5.2. Deployment/utilization records may be kept in accordance with agency policy.
- 5.3. Records shall contain discipline-related specifics.
- 5.4. Records shall be standardized within the department, agency and/or organization.
- 5.5. Documents shall be retained in accordance with state and federal and unit guidelines.
  - 5.5.1. Training records kept by the handler and/or the department shall contain but are not limited to the following information:
    - 5.5.1.1. Date training held.
    - 5.5.1.2. Name of individual conducting training.
    - 5.5.1.3. Type and amount of training aid used.

- 5.5.1.4. Length of training session.
- 5.5.1.5. Location of training.
- 5.5.1.6. Type of training (e.g., vehicle, luggage, building, open area).
- 5.5.1.7. Number of searches and results.
- 5.5.1.8. Name of canine and handler.
- 5.5.1.9. Other information as required by the organization and/or agency.
- 5.5.2. Certification records kept by the certifying authority and handler shall include the following information.
  - 5.5.2.1. Date team was certified.
  - 5.5.2.2. Certification authority i.e., agency or professional organization.
  - 5.5.2.3. Name of certified individual.
  - 5.5.2.4. Type of materials.
  - 5.5.2.5. Location of certification.
  - 5.5.2.6. Name of canine and handler.
- 5.6. Deployment/utilization information shall be kept separate from training and testing information.
- 5.7. Supervisory review of documents is recommended.
- 5.8. Digital formatting of records is recommended to facilitate compiling and analyzing data.

## **6. *USE OF RECORDS/DOCUMENTATION***

- 6.1. Reliability of the canine 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 may 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 team's proficiency.