

SWGDOG SC 9 – HUMAN SCENT DOGS

Pre-Scented Canines - Location Check

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Location checks are used to identify the presence or absence of the scent of a specific person to the exclusion of all other scents at a given location. In this discipline, the canine is used to scent match a “pre-scented” object or pad to the scents present at the check site. This technique may be used for subject exclusion or inclusion scent checks. Dogs may indicate a scent match and follow the scent trail or may indicate a match by a passive or active response.

Statement of purpose: To provide recommended guidelines for training, certification and documentation pertaining to canines trained to conduct location checks.

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. Handler training shall include the following:
 - 1.2.1. Environmental conditions affecting scent dispersion.
 - 1.2.2. Techniques for collecting human scent evidence.
 - 1.2.3. Techniques for conducting and interpreting location checking.
 - 1.2.4. Relevant canine legal aspects.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. Initial training shall include sufficient obedience training to ensure the canine will operate effectively based on mission requirements.
- 1.5. The canine shall be trained to perform an effective and controlled search.
- 1.6. The initial training of the canine shall include training of a specific final negative and a specific final positive alert.
- 1.7. Initial training shall include exposing the canine team to a variety of locations, expected situations and searches.
- 1.8. The training shall be structured to meet the typical mission requirements of the canine team’s department or organization.
- 1.9. Training shall include exposing the canine to a variety of different types of locations, noise distractors, scent distractors and environments.

1.10. The canine team's training shall be continued until a level of operational proficiency is achieved and the team is certified.

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:

2.3.3. Comprehensive assessments shall test the following:

2.3.3.1. The ability of the canine to indicate the presence or absence of the target human scent.

2.3.3.2. The handler's interpretation of the canine's behavior.

2.3.3.3. The canine's alert.

2.3.3.4. The handler's interpretation of the canine's alert.

2.3.4. Comprehensive assessments shall be set up as described below:

2.3.4.1. At least six location checks, with the scent of at least two different human targets, in at least three different areas, with different human distractors shall be performed in this assessment.

2.3.4.2. At least half of the location checks shall be negative.

2.3.4.3. A negative location check shall have scent or a scent trail present, but the human scent traces on the pre-scenting article will not match the scent trail.

2.3.4.4. A positive location check shall have scent or a scent trail present that matches the human scent traces on the pre-scenting article.

2.3.4.5. Each location check shall be conducted in an environment similar to that where the canine usually works.

2.3.4.6. The matching scent shall be aged in accordance with requirements set by the assessing agency.

2.3.4.7. If a trail is used, it shall be a minimum of 45 meters (\approx 50 yards) in length.

2.3.4.8. The handler shall be informed of the start location.

2.3.4.9. The handler shall be provided with a new scent sample from a matching target or a non-matching target at each location check.

2.3.4.10. The handler shall specify the type of scent sample (object, scent pad) prior to the assessment.

2.3.4.11. Each location check shall be completed in less than 5 minutes.

2.3.4.12. The assessor shall know the correct outcome of each location check.

2.3.4.13. The handler shall not know the correct outcome of each location check, nor the number of checks to be conducted.

2.3.4.14. The canine shall be required to correctly indicate the presence or absence of the matching scent at each start location.

2.3.4.15. The handler must be able to discern the canine's final alert and communicate this to the assessor.

- 2.3.4.16. At least 80% of the location checks shall be performed correctly.
- 2.3.5. Double-blind assessments demonstrate the proficiency of the canine team in an operational setting.
 - 2.3.5.1. One or more targets may be utilized to create a scent location or lay scent trails in the search area.
 - 2.3.5.2. The search area or trail age and scent sample shall be appropriate to operational requirements.
 - 2.3.5.3. The assessment will include negative scent match check locations.
 - 2.3.5.4. Neither the handler, nor the assessor, nor any individual present with the canine team shall know the correct outcome of any portion of the assessment, including whether there is a scent match.
 - 2.3.5.5. The assessment may or may not be timed.
 - 2.3.5.6. The assessor shall observe the canine team and compare the search results with the parameters of the search at the conclusion of the assessment. This may be done immediately after the handler concludes his canine has made its trained alert, or after the conclusion of the whole assessment.

3. *CANINE TEAM CERTIFICATION*

- 3.1. Certification for the named canine team shall be valid for one year.
- 3.2. Certification does not relieve the canine team from regular maintenance training, periodic proficiency assessments, and following other recommended SWGDOG guidelines.
- 3.3. The certifying officials shall not be routinely involved in the day to day training of the canine team being evaluated.
- 3.4. Handler errors, when excessive may result in failure of the team.
- 3.5. A mission-oriented test environment shall be used.
- 3.6. Certification shall consist of a number of assessments that together form the full test.
- 3.7. Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.
- 3.8. Targets used in the certification process shall not have been used in the day to day training activities of the team being certified.
- 3.9. The certification shall be comprised of a comprehensive assessment which incorporates scent recognition to such an extent that a separate scent recognition test is not necessary. The comprehensive assessment may be combined with a double-blind assessment.

- 3.10. 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 that includes:
 - 4.1.1. Enhancing the proficiency level of the team.
 - 4.1.2. Correcting identified deficiencies or weak areas.
 - 4.1.3. A variety of locations, environmental conditions and search area sizes.
 - 4.1.4. A varied duration of search times at different times of day.
 - 4.1.5. A variety of blank search areas.
 - 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 targets and articles used for pre-scenting the canine.
- 4.2. Routine training conducted solely by the handler to maintain the canine's proficiency is acceptable but should be combined with supervised training on a regular basis.
- 4.3. Supervised training by a qualified trainer or instructor is recommended in order to improve performance, identify and correct training deficiencies and perform proficiency assessments.
- 4.4. A canine team shall conduct a minimum of 16 hours of training per month to maintain and improve the proficiency level of the team.
- 4.5. The canine team shall perform periodic proficiency assessments throughout the certification period as outlined in section 2 - the Canine Team Assessments, including a variety of scent recognition assessments, comprehensive assessments and double-blind assessments.

5. RECORDS AND DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

- 5.1. The handler and his or her department or organization shall document training, certification, proficiency assessments and discipline-related deployment records.
- 5.2. Proficiency assessments and training records may be combined or separate documents.
- 5.3. Discipline-related deployment records shall be separated from training, proficiency assessment, and certification documentation.
- 5.4. Training and discipline-related records should be standardized within the department or organization.

- 5.5. Training records may include, but are not limited to the following data:
 - 5.5.1. Name of handler and canine.
 - 5.5.2. Names of individuals conducting or assisting with training.
 - 5.5.3. Time and date of training.
 - 5.5.4. Location and environmental conditions of training.
 - 5.5.5. Training design (non-blind, single-blind or double-blind).
 - 5.5.6. Description of targets.
 - 5.5.7. Location of targets.
 - 5.5.8. Set time.
 - 5.5.9. Size of search area.
 - 5.5.10. Length of training session.
 - 5.5.11. Search results.
 - 5.5.12. Deficiencies and corrective measures implemented during training regimen.
 - 5.5.13. Other information required by canine team's department or organization.
- 5.6. Certification records shall be kept by the certifying authority and the handler and shall include the following information:
 - 5.6.1. Name of canine and handler.
 - 5.6.2. Date team certified.
 - 5.6.3. Certification authority, i.e., agency, professional organization, or individuals.
 - 5.6.4. The standard or guideline to which the canine team is certified.
 - 5.6.5. Name of individuals awarding certification.
 - 5.6.6. Search area types included in certification assessment.
 - 5.6.7. Name and description of targets and locations included in certification assessment.
 - 5.6.8. Location of certification.
- 5.7. Proficiency assessment records kept by the handler and organization or department may include but are not limited to the following data:
 - 5.7.1. Name of handler and canine.
 - 5.7.2. Names of individuals conducting assessment.
 - 5.7.3. Time and date of assessment.
 - 5.7.4. Location and environmental conditions of assessment.
 - 5.7.5. Assessment design (single-blind or double-blind).
 - 5.7.6. Description of targets.
 - 5.7.7. Location of targets.
 - 5.7.8. Set time.
 - 5.7.9. Size of search area.
 - 5.7.10. Proficiency assessment results.
 - 5.7.11. Other information required by the canine team's department or organization.
- 5.8. Supervisory review of all records is recommended.
- 5.9. Digitally formatted records are recommended to facilitate compiling and analyzing data.

- 5.10. Records may be discoverable in court proceedings and may become evidence of the canine team's reliability. Record retention policy shall be determined by the canine team's department or organization guidelines.
- 5.11. Training records are necessary to illustrate the type and amount of training that the team has experienced before and after certification.
- 5.12. Confirmed operational outcomes can be used as a factor in determining capability.
- 5.13. Unconfirmed operational outcomes shall not be used as a factor in determining capability in that they do not correctly evaluate a canine/handler team's proficiency.
- 5.14. Veterinary Records.
 - 5.14.1. Veterinary records shall be maintained in a manner such as they are accessible to the handler and his or her department or organization.
 - 5.14.2. Vaccinations required by state or local law should be documented in the veterinary record of the canine.