

SWGDOG SC11 – TERMINOLOGY

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Terms in “track changes” are previously approved and being modified after required two year review.

Term	Meaning	Annotations
Behavior	Any measurable action of a dog.	
Behavior Modification	The application of a behavioral technique to modify or change a behavior.	Ex. The use of environmental manipulation to modify behavior. See also operant conditioning and classical conditioning.
Confidence	The ability to execute working tasks amidst distractions, environmental pressure, etc. May be an inherent trait or developed through conditioning/experience	The ability to overcome fear of heights, surfaces, or confined areas, etc. and work effectively. As an inherent trait also referred to as nerve strength. See also boldness and courage
Cueing the dog	Operational usage: A verbal or physical action (intentional or unintentional) by anyone, and/or any environmental stimulus that causes a detector dog to change its actions to respond to an area or item whether target odor is present or not.	Deliberate cueing may be used during initial training. Cueing the dog may be done in other circumstances such as obedience. Also called “keying the dog” or “prompting the dog”
Drop Aid	A target material used to motivate and assess a canine’s performance during extended operations	
Escape Learning	A conditioning technique in which the subject learns to escape an unpleasant stimulus by performing a desired response.	Ex. The dog grasps a bumper to terminate an ear pinch or returns to heel to terminate electric stimulation
False Alert		See false positive
False positive	A response identified by the handler that something is true or present when it is not. This can only be verified in a controlled testing scenario. Also referred to as false alert however the preferred term is false positive. . Scientific usage: Type I error.	Term false positive is used in reference to the canine team search, not just the dog’s behavior.
False response	Operational usage: In a controlled environment, the dog responds as if a trained substance was present when it is known that it is not.	Term false response is used in reference to the dog’s behavior, not the outcome of the canine team search.

	Scientific usage: A false response is a false positive or a false negative.	It is recommended to use the terms false positive and false negative rather than false response.
Keying the dog		See Cueing
Latency	The duration of time between the discriminative stimulus (SD) being presented and a response being emitted.	Ex. The amount of time between the dog finding the target odor and giving the trained response.
Nerve strength	The measure of the dog's ability to manage stressful situations including threshold to stress and recovery time.	For example, a dog with low nerve strength startles easily and takes a long time to recover. See also boldness and courage
Neutral Stimulus	Any stimulus that has no effect on behavior before conditioning.	Ex. Pavlov's dogs had no reaction to a bell prior to the bell being paired with food. The bell was a neutral stimulus initially.
Odor	Operational usage: The chemical mixture of volatile compounds that stimulates the olfactory neurons. Scientific usage: The sensation derived by the stimulation of the olfactory system by a mixture of volatile compounds.	See Scent. "Scent" has traditionally referred to human detection. "Odor" has traditionally referred to substance detection.
Odor recognition	The dog's change of behavior to a target odor(s).	
Odorant	Scientific usage: The chemical mixture of volatile compounds that stimulates the olfactory neurons.	
Prompt		See Cueing.
Sensory Threshold	Operational usage: Describes the amount of a stimulus which is necessary to elicit a response from the dog.	
Signature Odor	Characteristic profile of volatiles from a material	
Superstitious Behavior	Increase or decrease in a response(s) due to the delivery of non-contingent reinforcement or punishment.	Ex. While teaching a dog to sit the dog happens to bark and links the two behaviors together. The dog believes the bark is one of the behaviors being rewarded so the behavior continues.
Unconditioned	Scientific usage: See classical	

Response	conditioning. A response to a stimulus that does not require prior conditioning.	
Unconditioned Stimulus	Scientific usage: See classical conditioning. A stimulus that produces a response without previous conditioning.	