

Human Remains Detection Certification Evaluation

Purpose

The purpose of the Human Remains Detection Certification Evaluation is to accurately and uniformly assess a canine team's ability to effectively search for, accurately locate, and indicate various scent sources of human remains, both above and below ground and in both rural and urban settings.

Objectives

The overall objectives of the above ground, buried and urban components of this certification evaluation are to evaluate a canine teams ability to:

- Safely conduct search operations
- Plan and execute and effective search strategy
- Demonstrate proper search techniques
- Demonstrate team Stamina

Evaluators will also assess the effectiveness of the dog and handler as a team in searching an area and in locating human remains scent sources.

Criteria

In order to be eligible for the Human Remains Detection Certification Evaluation the canine team must have successfully completed:

- Prerequisites as stated in *Section 2.2*
- Canine Obedience Evaluation (see *Section 3*)
- Canine Agility Evaluation (see *Section 4*)
- Crime scene preservation training.

The handler must also have a human remains detection training log completed and present it to their unit's Evaluation Officer (or equivalent) prior to requesting an evaluation.

Definitions

- **Passive Indication** – The dog indicates to the handler the positive scent source through passive means, such as sit or down.
- **Active Indication** – The dog indicates to the handler the positive scent source through active means, such as barking, touching, or recall/refind.

Evaluation Procedures

- A minimum of two (2) ARDA evaluators are required to conduct the Human Remains Detection Certification Evaluation.
- The evaluators will determine the testing area.
- The certification evaluation will consist of four (4) components:
 - Indication Evaluation
 - Above Ground Evaluation
 - Buried Evaluation
 - Urban Evaluation
- The entire evaluation may be conducted on the same day or the evaluation of each component may be conducted on different days. However, the handler must successfully complete the indication evaluation before they are eligible to take any other portion of the evaluation. If the components of the

evaluation are taken at different times, the canine team must successfully complete the entire evaluation in no more than six (6) months. If the entire evaluation is not completed within this timeframe the handler will have to start the entire evaluation process again.

- Efforts shall be made to ensure consistent test conditions for all testing teams.
- Both active and passive indications are acceptable. The handler must describe the canine's trained indication to the evaluators. It is up to the handler to correctly interpret the canine's indications and/or body language. A canine's indication is not considered valid until the handler identifies it to the evaluators as an indication of human remains.
- The handler/dog team will be allowed a specific amount of time to search each test area. The handler will be given a 2 minute warning. The handler may declare an area completed before the allotted time has expired, but having done so may not re-enter the area later to re-search it.
- Positive scent sources will be of human origin and may be placed in a container (*e.g.*, PVC pipe, jar, bag, *etc.*), attached to articles of clothing (*e.g.*, shoes, shirt, *etc.*), or attached to an instrument that might be used in a crime (*e.g.*, knife, club, hammer, *etc.*). The types of materials used as well as the vehicles used to contain them will be determined by the evaluators and may contain:
 - Soil sample from where a body has decomposed
 - Clothing items or cloth from a decomposing body
 - Bone with tissue
 - Tissue
 - Decomposing blood
 - Hair or teeth mixed with other approved scent material

Positive scent sources may not include:

- Dry, bleached bone only
- Ashes
- Synthetic scent

- Teeth only
- Hair only

Note: The safety of the dog is to be taken into account by the evaluators when selecting and placing articles and human remains material.

- Excessive urinating/defecating to mark areas will result in the failure of the canine team.
- The canine may not compromise the human remains material at anytime. Compromise is defined as eating, rolling in, or urinating/defecating on the scent source. If at any time during the evaluation the canine compromises the scent source, the canine team will automatically fail the evaluation.

Indication Evaluation

Rationale

Due to the varied and stressful demands of human remains detection, an enthusiastic and obvious indication is imperative. An active (*e.g.*, barking, digging, nose poke) or passive (*e.g.*, sit or down) indication are both acceptable.

Course Construction

The search area will be 25 x 25 yards square, clearly delineated by flagging or cones at all four corners. The area should be flat and clearly visible to the handler from all boundaries. The odor source should be placed as near to the center of the area as possible. The odor source will be concealed (*e.g.*, in a bark box, under pallets, *etc.*). There should be no known distractions to the canine in the area.

Scent Source Placement

The odor source shall be in place at least 10 minutes before the canine is sent.

Required Skills

- The canine performs its trained indication at the location of the positive scent source. Trained indication may be either active or passive.
- The canine stays at the positive scent source and does not return to the handler until after the 10 second alert period is complete.

- The following behaviors will result in an immediate fail at any point in the exercise (including after the 10 second alert period, before and as dog is removed from the area):
 - Eating, rolling in, or urinating/defecating on the scent source.

Handler Information

- The team will have five (5) minutes to perform the exercise. The handler may send the canine from any location outside the search area. The handler will remove the canine's leash before the exercise begins. The canine may be given a hand signal and/or voice command to send the canine to the odor source location. If the canine does not go directly to the odor source location, the handler may use additional commands, as necessary, to direct the canine to the odor source location. The handler may not enter the search area but may move around the perimeter as necessary.
- The handler may direct the canine toward the odor source location but once the canine has reacted to the odor, the handler may not communicate with the canine in any way.
- Once the canine has committed to the odor source location, it must remain focused and perform a trained alert for ten (10) seconds.
- There will be two official timers. One timer will start timing the exercise as soon as the handler sends the canine. The second timer will start timing as soon as the canine begins the alert. The handler will be told when he or she may go to the canine. The canine will not be allowed access to the odor source. The exercise is considered complete after the 10 second alert period. When the exercise is over, the handler may praise or reward the canine, put on the leash and quickly leave the area.

Above Ground Evaluation

Rationale

The objective of the above ground evaluation is to assess the ability of the team to search for human remains or articles over an extended period of time in a large area.

Course Construction

- Three 2-acre search areas composed of fields, wooded areas, and a variety of vegetation and terrain features with marked boundaries. There will be a minimum of 150 feet between the each search area.
- Two of the search areas will contain a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 2 positive scent sources. The positive scent sources may or may not be accessible to the dog (e.g., bones may be placed in a cage in order to preserve the material).
- The third test area will contain no positive scent source. An empty container (e.g., PVC, bag, etc.) with no human remains material contamination will be placed in this test area.
- There will be a total of five (5) disturbed areas (e.g., false holes) spread across the three (3) search areas.

Scent Source Placement

- All positive scent sources are to be placed a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 48 hours prior to the start of the evaluation.
- All scent sources will be placed out of plain sight.
- At least 1, but no more than 2 of the positive scent sources will be a high hide and should be hung between 2 and 4 feet off of the ground.
- At least 1, but no more than 3 of the positive scent sources will be placed at ground level.
- One of the search areas will contain a dead animal scent source.

Note: Evaluators should make every effort to ensure that the scent of the positive scent source and the dead animal scent source do not overlap.

Required Skills

- The team will have a maximum of 1 hour to search each area.
- The areas will be presented to the team being evaluated in random order; the team will not be told which areas contain a positive scent source(s).
- The canine must locate all of the scent sources.
- The canine performs its trained indication at the location of the positive scent source. Trained indication may be either active or passive.
- The canine may search on or off-lead.
- If the canine indicates on a blank container or the dead animal scent source it will result in failure.
- Taking into the account both terrain and weather conditions, the handler must be able to determine and identify the location, within reasonable proximity, of all positive scent sources.
- The following behaviors will result in an immediate failure at any time during the search.
 - Eating, rolling in, or urinating/defecating on the scent source.

Buried Evaluation

Rationale

The objective of the buried evaluation is to assess the ability of the team to search for scent sources buried in shallow graves.

Course Construction

- Two ½ - acre sites comprised of fields, wooded areas to include a variety of vegetation and terrain features.
- One of the search areas must contain 1 scent source. The other search area may contain 0 to 1 scent sources.
- Each search area must contain a minimum of 1 false hole. There will be no more than 3 false holes in either search area.

Scent Source Placement

- All positive scent sources are to be placed a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 48 hours prior to the start of the evaluation.
- Scent sources will be covered by a minimum of 6 inches and a maximum of 10 inches of loose soil and/or vegetation. The area immediately around the buried scent source should blend in with the surrounding soil and vegetation.
- One of the search areas will contain a dead animal scent source.

Note: Evaluators should make every effort to ensure that the scent of the positive scent source and the dead animal scent source do not overlap.

Required Skills

- The team will have a maximum of 30 minutes to search each area.
- The areas will be presented to the team being evaluated in random order.
- The canine must locate all of the scent sources.
- The canine performs its trained indication at the location of the positive scent source. Trained indication may be either active or passive.
- The canine may search on or off-lead.
- If the canine indicates on the dead animal scent source it will result in failure.
- Taking into the account both terrain and weather conditions, the handler must be able to determine and identify the location, within reasonable proximity, of all positive scent sources.
- The following behaviors will result in an immediate failure at any time during the search.
 - Eating, rolling in, or urinating/defecating on the scent source.

Urban Evaluation

Rationale

The objective of the urban evaluation is to assess the ability of the team to search for scent sources in non-wilderness/non-rural areas.

Course Construction

- The test site must include two of the following: building, lumber pile, crawl space, debris pile, vehicles or dumpsters.
- The total search area must be a minimum of 500 and a maximum of 1,000 square feet.
- The search area will contain 1 to 3 positive scent sources.

Scent Source Placement

- All positive scent sources are to be placed a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 48 hours prior to the start of the evaluation.
- The positive scent sources will be placed between 6 inches below the surface and 48 inches above the surface. Any buried positive scent sources will be covered with loose soil and/or non-hazardous man-made materials.
- The positive scent source may or may not be accessible to the dog.
- An empty container (e.g., PVC, bag, etc.) with no human remains material contamination will be placed in this test area.
- The search area will contain a dead animal scent source.

Note: Evaluators should make every effort to ensure that the scent of the positive scent source and the dead animal scent source do not overlap.

Required Skills

- The team will have a maximum of 45 minutes to search the assigned area(s).
- The canine must locate all of the scent sources.

- The canine performs its trained indication at the location of the positive scent source. Trained indication may be either active or passive.
- The canine may search on or off-lead.
- If the canine indicates on the empty container or the dead animal scent source it will result in failure.
- Taking into the account both terrain and weather conditions, the handler must be able to determine and identify the location, within reasonable proximity, of all positive scent sources.
- The following behaviors will result in an immediate failure at any time during the search.
 - Eating, rolling in, or urinating/defecating on the scent source.

Evaluation Guidelines

Evaluators will consider not only the successful conclusion of the evaluation, but also the following:

Handler Skills

- Taking into the account both terrain and weather conditions, the handler must be able to determine and identify the location, within reasonable proximity, of all positive scent sources.
- The handler must “call” the dog’s indication for a “find” to count. If the handler decides not to call what appears to be an indication by the dog, it will not count as an indication. Only the handler is qualified to interpret their dog’s behavior and discern between the dog’s behavior on a distraction as opposed to its behavior on a positive scent source. Upon calling the indication, the handler has committed to declaring a “find”.
- The team must clear any area which contains no positive scent source without declaring a “find”.
- The handler must not declare a “find” on anything except a positive scent source.
- The handler must assess the scenario provided by the evaluators and ask appropriate questions to aid in the formulation of a search strategy.

- The handler will execute and communicate an effective search strategy based on the scenario, the search area, wind conditions, time of day, etc.
- The handler must describe the canine's trained indication prior to the test and shall advise the evaluators when the canine alerts and indicates during the evaluation.
- The handler cannot assist the dog in the indication.
- The handler must be able to differentiate when the canine is alerting on a positive scent source versus when the canine is reacting to a non-positive (distraction) scent source.
- If the canine cannot pinpoint the source of scent, the handler must be able to read the canine and taking into account both terrain and weather conditions, identify the location, within reasonable proximity, of all positive scent sources.
- The handler must demonstrate crime scene preservation techniques.
- The handler must demonstrate adequate land navigation skills (if appropriate).
- The handler must draw a map of the areas searched, including the position of any positive scent source(s), distractions, vegetation and other pertinent information. The handler must also accurately mark on a map the direction of travel and wind direction.
- The handler must demonstrate proper radio skills.
- The handler must debrief at the end of each evaluation. The debrief should include a description of the weather and search conditions, search area covered, start and end time, findings and clues, POD and any other pertinent information.

Canine Skills

- The canine will be responsive to handler direction and control.
- The canine will remain focused while searching.
- The canine must successfully locate and perform its trained indication for each positive scent source.
- The canine must be actively searching. The canine should move out in front of (away from) the handler and should not be consistently behind or close to the handler.

- The canine must be focused during the search and should continue to search despite common distractions associated with the search environment. Brief registering of interest is permissible as long as it does not interfere with the orderly conduct of the search.
- The canine must give a recognizable trained indication to the handler.
- Upon finding each scent source, the canine must give the previously described indication of a find, even if unable to pinpoint the exact location of the source.
- The canine shall not indicate on an empty container or dead animal scent. Doing so shall result in failure of the test.

Proof of Test

If a team does not locate all of the positive scent sources, the handler has the right to request a demonstration of the validity of the scent sources using a certified human remains detection canine. Said canine should be available within 15 minutes of the request or a “no-test” will be decalred.

Recertification

Upon the successful completion of the Human Remains Certification Evaluation, the Human Remains Detection Canine Search Specialist Team will receive a certificate of completion which will be valid for two (2) years from the date of the certification evaluation. In order to retain this certification the Human Remains Detection Canine Search Specialist Team will be required to successfully complete the Human Remains Certification Evaluation in its entirety every two (2) years. Once the canine is 10 years old, the Human Remains Detection Canine Search Specialist Team must recertify annually.