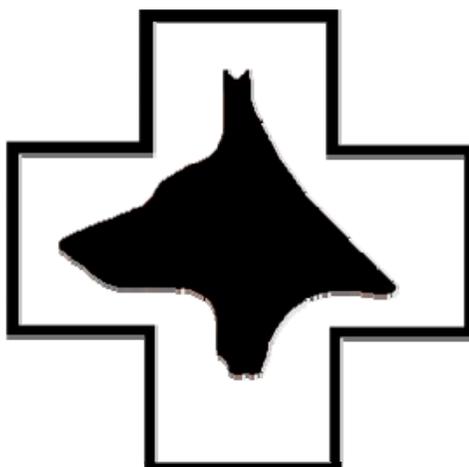


# American Rescue Dog Association

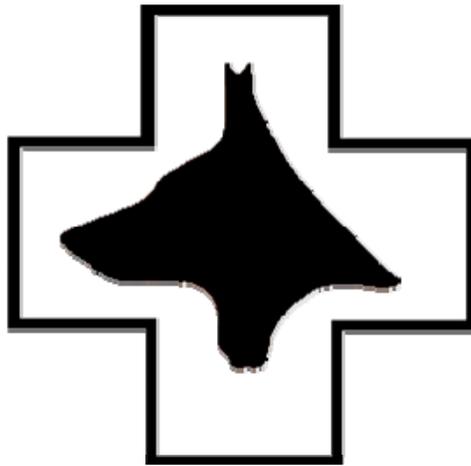


## Standards and Certification Procedures

November 2014



# American Rescue Dog Association



## Section II – Area Search Certification

November 2014



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# Area Search Certification

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## Recommended Basic Field Assessments

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The following Basic Field Assessments are not prerequisite to requesting an Area Search Certification Evaluation but are highly recommended in preparation to taking the certification evaluation.

### Objective

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The basic area search field assessments are used as a means to measure the progress of the Canine Search Specialist Team trainees as they learn the skills necessary to achieve area search certification. Each problem is used to assess the team's ability to perform specific skills. The assessments are meant to be given in the order listed below because the specific skills necessary for successful completion will build as the team progresses through the assessment process. Once this process is complete, the team should possess the necessary expertise critical to the high level of performance necessary to successfully complete the area search certification evaluation.

### Guidelines

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- It is recommended that the Canine Search Specialist Team trainee successfully complete the following basic field assessments prior to requesting an Area Search certification evaluation:
  - Open Field
  - Trail
  - Light Brush
  - Dense Brush

Note: Either the light brush or dense brush assessment will include a simulated emergency medical scenario to assess the handler's first aid knowledge and skills in the field. The other assessment will include a simulated crime scene to assess the handler's knowledge of crime scene preservation. The medical emergency and the crime scene preservation skills will not be assessed during the same problem.

- The assessments should be completed in the order specified above. It is recommended that the canine team being assessed not wait until they are near

operational performance level to begin this process, but that each assessment be completed as the team masters the skills necessary to successfully complete the problem.

- Specific criteria for each assessment will be identified as “critical elements” or “non-critical elements”. The list of critical elements will increase as the team progresses through the assessment process (e.g., there are more critical elements on the light brush assessment than are on the trail assessment).
  - Critical elements are those that are considered to be important enough, at the level of development expected for that assessment, that they must be met at a satisfactory level for the canine team to pass the assessment.
  - Non-critical elements are those that are not required at the level of development expected for that assessment. However, if applicable to the assessment and if performed, they will be assessed as a courtesy to the handler to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- The assessor will weigh the significance of any mistakes and decides for each if it warrants an unsatisfactory mark for the element. Any weaknesses that are seen in an assessment are to be noted and must be corrected or show significant improvement by the next assessment. Upon completion of all assessments, the canine team should have demonstrated a high level of performance for all criteria.
- At the conclusion of each assessment, the assessor is responsible for completing the appropriate assessment forms and for reviewing the team’s performance with the handler. The assessor will be responsible for collecting all paperwork from the handler (e.g., maps and notes) and turning all paperwork over to the appropriate person within their Unit (typically the evaluation director or secretary).

# Open Field Assessment

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## Objective

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Direct observation of the canine team's basic search skills - specifically the handler's ability to execute a grid search based on existing conditions and the canine's ranging and air-scenting ability, as well as its eagerness to locate and engage with the subject for its reward.

## Setup

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An area 40 to 80 acres in size consisting of a field or fields containing little or no brush that would inhibit air flow.

## Guidelines

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- One (1) subject shall be placed anywhere within the area. The subject must be found by air-scenting, so it is critical that the problem be set up to minimize the likelihood of the canine scenting the subject's track (ground scent).
- Demonstration of the canine's ability to air-scent and range away from the handler are important components of this assessment. No scent articles or clues are to be intentionally placed as they may distract the canine from the primary target (the subject).
- The assessors will conduct a brief clothing and equipment check of the team before the start of the assessment. If the team is lacking in any important clothing or equipment that renders the team ineffective or unsafe in the field, the assessment will be terminated immediately.
- It is optional for the assessor(s) to provide the handler with a radio.
- The assessor(s) will provide the handler with a topographic map of the search area. The handler is required to have a compass as essential equipment. GPS is optional.
- The assessors will conduct a briefing in which the handler will be given pertinent information about the search scenario. The handler is expected to ask pertinent questions during the briefing.
- The assessors will assign the handler one or more tasks. The assessors will accompany the team on its task(s) and observe their performance and may or may not provide additional information and tasking as the search progresses.

- Time will start when the handler receives their initial briefing. The handler is expected to promptly leave base camp to start their task.
- The duration of this assessment may not exceed two (2) hours.
- The canine team must be actively searching for at least 40 minutes in order to demonstrate the canine's ability to concentrate on the task at hand without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- At the conclusion of the field exercise, the assessors will debrief the handler. The handler is expected to provide information about the search task(s) the team performed.
- The ARDA Standards Ground Rules, with the following exceptions, apply to Basic Field Assessments. (See *Section I, Ground Rules and Minimum Requirements*). The exceptions are:
  - There are no age requirements for the handler or the canine.
  - The basic field assessments do not have to be conducted by ARDA evaluators.

### **Criteria: Critical Elements**

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The following elements must be met at a satisfactory level in order to successfully complete this assessment:

- The canine team must be properly clothed and equipped to safely and effectively search the assigned area(s).
- The canine team must demonstrate an appropriate working stamina and pace for the duration of the field exercise(s).
- The canine team must locate the subject within the specified time limit.
- The handler must determine the search conditions (i.e., wind, weather, terrain, etc.) and, after being briefed and assigned a task, develop and explain a search plan logically based on the search conditions and the information gathered during the briefing.
- The handler must execute the search as planned and, as needed, explain any changes to that plan that occur after starting.
- The handler must thoroughly cover the assigned search area(s) using a grid pattern (parallel sweeps or zigzag) within the specified time limit.

- The handler must be capable of interpreting the canine's behavior and reacting accordingly (e.g., ability to recognize and follow-up on alerts).
- The handler must exhibit team leadership skills by taking proper care of him/herself, the canine, and anyone escorting the team. This includes:
  - Ensuring both humans and canine stay properly hydrated
  - Ensuring that neither humans nor canine become dangerously overheated or cold
  - Taking appropriate breaks.
- The canine must eagerly engage in, and remain focused on the task of locating the subject without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- The canine must range at a distance appropriate for the wind, temperature, and terrain while maintaining adequate contact with its handler.
- The canine must demonstrate long-range detection appropriate for the conditions.
- The canine must demonstrate the persistence to work the scent from the initial detection of target odor to the point of source (the subject).
- The canine must be willing to leave the handler to make the find via air scenting with no assistance from the handler or the subject.
- The canine must demonstrate a favorable reaction to the subject and approach the subject with little or no encouragement.
- The canine must demonstrate appropriate behavior toward the subject (e.g., the canine does nothing that may injure the subject).
- The canine must eagerly engage the subject for its reward.

### **Criteria: Non-Critical Elements**

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The following elements are not required in this assessment and do not affect the successful completion, but if applicable to the scenario and if performed, they will be assessed as a courtesy to the handler to indicate areas of strength and weakness.

- During the initial briefing, the handler must ask pertinent questions to fill in any gaps in the information provided (e.g., subjects appearance, fitness and health, mental state, likelihood of being armed, circumstances leading up to the disappearance, etc.).

- The handler must demonstrate the ability to navigate in wilderness to include: using a map and compass to get to and stay in the assigned search area, determining location via grid coordinates (i.e., UTM, USNG, or latitude/longitude), and using GPS to track path of travel and mark waypoints.
- The handler must use a systematic method to mark boundaries (e.g., flagging tape, light sticks, GPS).
- The handler must use appropriate communication protocol. This element includes the handler's understanding of when to initiate communication and relay pertinent information.
- The handler must complete a hand-drawn map after the completion of each assigned task. The map should include all pertinent information: name of handler, name of canine, date, north arrow, wind direction and speed, start point and time, end point and time, PLS (if in sector), POD, terrain and prominent features, the path of travel (track), gaps in coverage, location of any clues, alerts, indications, and subjects found.
- The handler must relate pertinent information during debriefing.
- The canine must demonstrate its trained indication when it locates the subject.

# Trail Assessment

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## Objective

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Observation of the handler's ability to search along an assigned trail and the canine's ability and eagerness to detect and follow the human scent of a stranger.

## Setup

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A trail at least one (1) mile (1600 meters) in length, in which approximately 90% of the trail runs through an area that consists of ground cover and/or vegetation which will moderately inhibit airflow (e.g., light brush).

## Guidelines

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- Due to the navigational criteria included in this assessment, the problem needs to be set up so that there is a need to use a map and compass to get to and stay on the correct trail.
- One (1) subject, who is a stranger to the canine, shall be placed so that the canine team has to cover at least one (1) mile before making the find. The subject may or may not cross the trail and will be hidden no more than one hundred (100) feet from either side of the trail. Effort should be made to place the subject so that their airborne scent will cross the trail. If this is not possible, the subject must cross the trail in order to give the canine the opportunity to use both ground and air-scent to locate the subject.
- There will be at least one (1) but no more than two (2) articles (clues) placed within six feet of either side of the trail. A few footprints may also be intentionally left as clues. **Note:** It is not a failure of the assessment if the clues are not located.
- The assessors will conduct a brief clothing and equipment check of the team before the start of the assessment. If the team is lacking in any important clothing or equipment that renders the team ineffective or unsafe in the field, the assessment will be terminated immediately.
- The assessor(s) will provide the handler with a radio.
- The assessors(s) will provide the handler with a topographic map of the search area. The handler is required to have a compass as essential equipment. GPS is optional.

- The assessors will conduct a briefing in which the handler will be given pertinent information about the search scenario. The handler is expected to ask pertinent questions during the briefing.
- The handler is to be told that the team is responsible for coverage of the entire trail as well as 100 feet on either side of the trail.
- The assessors will assign the handler one or more tasks. The assessors will accompany the team on its task(s) and observe their performance and may or may not provide additional information and tasking as the search progresses.
- Time will start when the handler receives their initial briefing. The handler is expected to promptly leave base camp to start their task.
- The duration of this problem may not exceed two (2) hours.
- The canine team must be actively searching for at least 40 minutes in order to demonstrate the canine's ability to concentrate on the task at hand without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- At the conclusion of the field exercise, the assessors will debrief the handler. The handler is expected to provide information about the search task(s) the team performed.
- The ARDA Standards Ground Rules, with the following exceptions, apply to Basic Field Assessments. (See *Section I, Ground Rules and Minimum Requirements*). The exceptions are:
  - There are no age requirements for the handler or the canine.
  - The basic field assessments do not have to be conducted by ARDA evaluators.

### **Criteria: Critical Elements**

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The following elements must be met at a satisfactory level in order to successfully complete this assessment:

- The canine team must be properly clothed and equipped to safely and effectively search the assigned area(s).
- The canine team must demonstrate an appropriate working stamina and pace for the duration of the field exercise(s).
- The canine team must locate the subject within the specified time limit.

- During the initial briefing, the handler must ask pertinent questions to fill in any gaps in the information provided (e.g., subjects appearance, fitness and health, mental state, likelihood of being armed, circumstances leading up to the disappearance, etc.).
- The handler must determine the search conditions (i.e., wind, weather, terrain, etc.) and, after being briefed and assigned a task, develop and explain a search plan logically based on the search conditions and the information gathered during the briefing.
- The handler must execute the search as planned and, as needed, explain any changes to that plan that occur after starting.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to navigate in wilderness to include: using a map and compass to get to and stay in the assigned search area and determining location via grid coordinates (i.e., UTM, USNG, or latitude/longitude).
- The handler must thoroughly and systematically cover the assigned trails (being responsible for up to 100 feet either side of the trail) within the specified time.
- The handler is to actively look for clues (e.g., footprints, dropped articles, etc.). If found, clues are to be marked and communicated to search management.
- The handler must be capable of interpreting the canine's behavior and reacting accordingly (e.g., ability to recognize and follow-up on alerts).
- The handler must exhibit team leadership skills by taking proper care of him/herself, the canine, and anyone escorting the team. This includes:
  - Ensuring both humans and canine stay properly hydrated
  - Ensuring that neither humans nor canine become dangerously overheated or cold
  - Taking appropriate breaks.
- The handler must complete a hand-drawn map after the completion of each assigned task. The map should include all pertinent information: name of handler, name of canine, date, north arrow, wind direction and speed, start point and time, end point and time, PLS (if in sector), POD, terrain and prominent features, the path of travel (track), gaps in coverage, location of any clues, alerts, indications, and subjects found. The handler is also to draw in any trails branching off from their assigned trail if not shown on the topographic map.
- The handler must relate pertinent information during debriefing.

- The canine must eagerly engage in, and remain focused on the task of locating the subject without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- The canine must range at a distance appropriate for the wind, temperature, and terrain while maintaining adequate contact with its handler.
- The canine must demonstrate long-range detection appropriate for the conditions.
- The canine must demonstrate the persistence to work the scent from the initial detection of target odor to the point of source (the subject).
- The canine must be willing to leave the handler and trail to make the find with minimal assistance from the handler and no assistance from the subject.
- The canine must demonstrate a favorable reaction to a stranger and approach the subject with little or no encouragement.
- The canine must demonstrate appropriate behavior toward the subject (e.g., the canine does nothing that may injure the subject).
- The canine must eagerly engage the subject for its reward.

### **Criteria: Non-Critical Elements**

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The following elements are not required in this assessment and do not affect the successful completion, but if applicable to the scenario and if performed, they will be assessed as a courtesy to the handler to indicate areas of strength and weakness.

- The handler must demonstrate the ability to navigate in wilderness to include: using GPS to track path of travel and mark waypoints.
- The handler must use a systematic method to mark boundaries, alerts, and clues (e.g., flagging tape, light sticks, GPS).
- The handler must use appropriate communication protocol. This element includes the handler's understanding of when to initiate communication and relay pertinent information.
- The canine must demonstrate its trained indication when it locates the subject.

# Light Brush Assessment

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## Objective

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Observation of the handler's ability to effectively plan and execute a search of a small area consisting of light brush as well as the canine's ability to maintain focused for an extended period of time on the task of locating a missing subject.

## Setup

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- An area 40 to 80 acres in size in which at least 80% of the total area consists of ground cover and/or vegetation which can moderately inhibit airflow. At least 1 boundary of the search area shall not be defined by an obvious man-made or natural terrain feature (e.g., road, trail, power line, creek, etc.).

## Guidelines

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- One (1) subject, who is a stranger to the canine, shall be placed in an area of light brush anywhere within the search area.
- The subject may not have a canine reward of any type.
- There will be at least two (2) but no more than three (3) clues placed within the search area. **Note:** It is not a failure of the assessment if the clues are not located.
- This assessment is to contain either a simulated medical emergency or a crime scene but may not contain both.
- The assessors will conduct a brief clothing and equipment check of the team before the start of the assessment. If the team is lacking in any important clothing or equipment that renders the team ineffective or unsafe in the field, the assessment will be terminated immediately.
- The assessor(s) will provide the handler with a radio.
- The evaluator(s) will provide the handler with a topographic map of the search area and a GPS if the handler does not have their own. The handler is required to have a compass as essential equipment.
- The assessors will conduct a briefing in which the handler will be given pertinent information about the search scenario. The handler is expected to ask pertinent questions during the briefing.

- The assessors will assign the handler one or more tasks. The assessors will accompany the team on its task(s) and observe their performance and may or may not provide additional information and tasking as the search progresses.
- Time will start when the handler receives their initial briefing. The handler is expected to promptly leave base camp to start their task.
- The duration of the assessment may not exceed four (4) hours.
- The canine team must be actively searching for at least 80 minutes in order to demonstrate the canine's ability to concentrate on the task at hand without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- At the conclusion of the field exercise, the assessors will debrief the handler. The handler is expected to provide information about the search task(s) the team performed.
- The ARDA Standards Ground Rules, with the following exceptions, apply to Basic Field Assessments. (See *Section I, Ground Rules and Minimum Requirements*). The exceptions are:
  - There are no age requirements for the handler or the canine.
  - The basic field assessments do not have to be conducted by ARDA evaluators.

### **Criteria: Critical Elements**

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The following elements must be met at a satisfactory level in order to successfully complete this assessment:

- The canine team must be properly clothed and equipped to safely and effectively search the assigned area(s).
- The canine team must demonstrate an appropriate working stamina and pace for the duration of the field exercise(s).
- The canine team must locate the subject within the specified time limit.
- During the initial briefing, the handler must ask pertinent questions to fill in any gaps in the information provided (e.g., subjects appearance, fitness and health, mental state, likelihood of being armed, circumstances leading up to the disappearance, etc.).
- The handler must determine the search conditions (i.e., wind, weather, terrain, etc.) and, after being briefed and assigned a task, develop and explain a search

plan logically based on the search conditions and the information gathered during the briefing.

- The handler must execute the search as planned and, as needed, explain any changes to that plan that occur after starting.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to navigate in wilderness to include: using a map and compass to get to and stay in the assigned search area, determining location via grid coordinates (i.e., UTM, USNG, or latitude/longitude), and using GPS to track path of travel and mark waypoints.
- The handler must thoroughly and systematically cover the assigned search area within the specified time limit with no significant gaps (e.g., areas inadequately covered by the canine team). **Note:** Exception will be given to any areas that are not safe to search. If this occurs, the handler is to mark the area(s) on their map and be prepared to explain this omission during their debriefing.
- The handler is to actively look for clues (e.g., footprints, dropped articles, etc.). If found, clues are to be marked and communicated to search management.
- The handler must use a systematic method to mark boundaries, alerts, and clues (e.g., flagging tape, light sticks, GPS).
- The handler must use appropriate communication protocol. This element includes the handler's understanding of when to initiate communication and relay pertinent information.
- The handler must be capable of interpreting the canine's behavior and reacting accordingly (e.g., ability to recognize and follow-up on alerts).
- The handler must exhibit team leadership skills by taking proper care of him/herself, the canine, and anyone escorting the team. This includes:
  - Ensuring both humans and canine stay properly hydrated
  - Ensuring that neither humans nor canine become dangerously overheated or cold
  - Taking appropriate breaks.
- The handler must complete a hand-drawn map after the completion of each assigned task. The map should include all pertinent information: name of handler, name of canine, date, north arrow, wind direction and speed, start point and time, end point and time, PLS (if in sector), POD, terrain and prominent features, the path of travel (track), gaps in coverage, location of any clues, alerts, indications, and subjects found.

- The handler must relate pertinent information during debriefing.
- The canine must eagerly engage in, and remain focused on the task of locating the subject without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- The canine must range at a distance appropriate for the wind, temperature, and terrain while maintaining adequate contact with its handler.
- The canine must demonstrate long-range detection appropriate for the conditions.
- The canine must demonstrate the persistence to work the scent from the initial detection of target odor to the point of source (the subject).
- The canine must be willing to leave the handler to make the find with minimal assistance from the handler and no assistance from the subject.
- The canine must demonstrate its trained indication when it locates the subject.
- The canine must demonstrate a favorable reaction to a stranger and approach the subject with little or no encouragement.
- The canine must demonstrate appropriate behavior toward the subject (e.g., the canine does nothing that may injure the subject).
- The canine must eagerly engage the subject for its reward.

### **Criteria: Non-Critical Elements**

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The following element is not required in this assessment and does not affect the successful completion, but will be assessed as a courtesy to the handler to indicate areas of strength and weakness.

- The handler must take appropriate action when faced with either a simulated medical emergency or crime scene.
- **Note:** If the handler fails to take appropriate action when faced with either the simulated medical emergency or crime scene, although the team may have passed the light and dense brush assessments, the handler should not attempt the Area Search Evaluation until those shortcomings have been corrected and tested in a simulation.

# Dense Brush Assessment

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## Objective

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Observation of the physical capabilities and adroitness of the team when presented with an area of dense ground cover. The handler's navigation skills and the canine's willingness to work in and forge through dense brush to locate the subject will be assessed.

## Setup

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An area 20 to 40 acres in size in which at least 60% of the total area consists of ground cover and/or vegetation which can significantly inhibit airflow. Ideally some areas should be impenetrable so that the handler must maneuver around them.

## Guidelines

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- One (1) subject, who is a stranger to the canine, shall be placed within an area of dense brush anywhere in the search area.
- The subject may not have a canine reward of any type.
- There will be at least two (2) but no more than three (3) clues placed within the search area. **Note:** It is not a failure of the assessment if the clues are not located.
- This assessment is to contain either a simulated medical emergency or crime scene (whichever this team was not tested in the light brush assessment), but may not contain both.
- The assessors will conduct a brief clothing and equipment check of the team before the start of the assessment. If the team is lacking in any important clothing or equipment that renders the team ineffective or unsafe in the field, the assessment will be terminated immediately.
- The assessor(s) will provide the handler with a radio.
- The evaluator(s) will provide the handler with a topographic map of the search area and a GPS if the handler does not have their own. The handler is required to have a compass as essential equipment.

- The assessors will conduct a briefing in which the handler will be given pertinent information about the search scenario. The handler is expected to ask pertinent questions during the briefing.
- The assessors will assign the handler one or more tasks. The assessors will accompany the team on its task(s) and observe their performance and may or may not provide additional information and tasking as the search progresses.
- Time will start when the handler receives their initial briefing. The handler is expected to promptly leave base camp to start their task.
- The duration of this problem may not exceed four (4) hours.
- The canine team must be actively searching for at least 80 minutes in order to demonstrate the canine's ability to concentrate on the task at hand without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- At the conclusion of the field exercise, the assessors will debrief the handler. The handler is expected to provide information about the search task(s) the team performed.
- The ARDA Standards Ground Rules, with the following exceptions, apply to Basic Field Assessments. (See *Section I, Ground Rules and Minimum Requirements*). The exceptions are:
  - There are no age requirements for the handler or the canine.
  - The basic field assessments do not have to be conducted by ARDA evaluators.

### **Criteria: Critical Elements**

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The following elements must be met at a satisfactory level in order to successfully complete this assessment:

- The canine team must be properly clothed and equipped to safely and effectively search the assigned area(s).
- The canine team must demonstrate an appropriate working stamina and pace for the duration of the field exercise(s).
- The canine team must locate the subject within the specified time limit.
- The canine team must demonstrate the willingness and ability to maneuver in dense brush while maintaining their search pattern.

- During the initial briefing, the handler must ask pertinent questions to fill in any gaps in the information provided (e.g., subjects appearance, fitness and health, mental state, likelihood of being armed, circumstances leading up to the disappearance, etc.).
- The handler must determine the search conditions (i.e., wind, weather, terrain, etc.) and, after being briefed and assigned a task, develop and explain a search plan logically based on the search conditions and the information gathered during the briefing.
- The handler must execute the search as planned and, as needed, explain any changes to that plan that occur after starting.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to navigate in wilderness to include: using a map and compass to get to and stay in the assigned search area, determining location via grid coordinates (i.e., UTM, USNG, or latitude/longitude), and using GPS to track path of travel and mark waypoints.
- The handler must thoroughly and systematically cover the assigned search area within the specified time limit with no significant gaps (e.g., areas inadequately covered by the canine team). **Note:** Exception will be given to any areas that are not safe to search. If this occurs, the handler is to mark the area(s) on their map and be prepared to explain this omission during their debriefing.
- The handler is to actively look for clues (e.g., footprints, dropped articles, etc.). If found, clues are to be marked and communicated to search management.
- The handler must use a systematic method to mark boundaries, alerts, and clues (e.g., flagging tape, light sticks, GPS).
- The handler must use appropriate communication protocol. This element includes the handler's understanding of when to initiate communication and relay pertinent information.
- The handler must be capable of interpreting the canine's behavior and reacting accordingly (e.g., ability to recognize and follow-up on alerts).
- The handler must exhibit team leadership skills by taking proper care of him/herself, the canine, and anyone escorting the team. This includes:
  - Ensuring both humans and canine stay properly hydrated
  - Ensuring that neither humans nor canine become dangerously overheated or cold
  - Taking appropriate breaks.

- The handler must complete a hand-drawn map after the completion of each assigned task. The map should include all pertinent information: name of handler, name of canine, date, north arrow, wind direction and speed, start point and time, end point and time, PLS (if in sector), POD, terrain and prominent features, the path of travel (track), gaps in coverage, location of any clues, alerts, indications, and subjects found.
- The handler must relate pertinent information during debriefing.
- The canine must eagerly engage in, and remain focused on the task of locating the subject without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- The canine must range at a distance appropriate for the wind, temperature, and terrain while maintaining adequate contact with its handler.
- The canine must demonstrate long-range detection appropriate for the conditions.
- The canine must demonstrate the persistence to work the scent from the initial detection of target odor to the point of source (the subject).
- The canine must be willing to leave the handler to make the find with minimal assistance from the handler and no assistance from the subject.
- The canine must demonstrate its trained indication when it locates the subject.
- The canine must demonstrate a favorable reaction to a stranger and approach the subject with little or no encouragement.
- The canine must demonstrate appropriate behavior toward the subject (e.g., the canine does nothing that may injure the subject).
- The canine must eagerly engage the subject for its reward.

### **Criteria: Non-Critical Elements**

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The following element is not required in this assessment and does not affect the successful completion, but will be assessed as a courtesy to the handler to indicate areas of strength and weakness.

- The handler must take appropriate action when faced with either a simulated medical emergency or crime scene.
- **Note:** If the handler fails to take appropriate action when faced with either the simulated medical emergency or crime scene, although the team may have passed the light and dense brush assessments, the handler should not attempt

the Area Search Evaluation until those shortcomings have been corrected and tested in a simulation.

# Area Search Certification Evaluation

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## **Objective**

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The purpose of the Area Search Certification Evaluation is to accurately and uniformly assess the evaluation candidate canine team's ability to perform the skills necessary to locate missing persons in a wilderness, rural, or suburban environment, day or night.

## **Parts of the Evaluation**

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The evaluation shall have a problem involving multiple lost subjects in which the canine team is to actively search for a long duration.

The evaluation shall contain a night problem in which the canine team is to actively search in darkness (after sunset or before dawn).

The night problem may be included as part of the long multiple subject problem or may be run as a separate evaluation at a different time and place. If included as part of the long problem, the setup and guidelines of the night problem described below must be met.

The long multiple subject problem and the night problem use the same criteria for evaluating the canine team's performance.

Upon the successful completion of the two parts of the Area Search Certification Evaluation, the Canine Search Specialist Team will receive a certificate of completion which will be valid for two (2) years from the date of completion of the first problem if the two problems are tested on different dates.

The recertification evaluation should be scheduled prior to the expiration of the current certification. The recertification evaluation uses the same criteria for evaluating the canine team's performance as is used for the initial certification.

## Criteria for Area Search Certification and Recertification Evaluations

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The following elements must be met at a satisfactory level in order to successfully complete this evaluation:

- The canine team must be properly clothed and equipped to safely and effectively search in all types of terrain typical for their region as well as in varying weather and light conditions.
- The canine team must demonstrate an appropriate working stamina and pace for the duration of the field exercise(s).
- The canine team must locate all subjects within the specified time limit.
- During the initial briefing, the handler must ask pertinent questions to fill in any gaps in the information provided (e.g., subjects appearance, fitness and health, mental state, likelihood of being armed, circumstances leading up to the disappearance, etc.).
- The handler must determine the search conditions (i.e., wind, weather, terrain, etc.) and, after being briefed and assigned a task, develop and explain a search plan logically based on the search conditions and the information gathered during the briefing.
- The handler must execute the search as planned and, as needed, explain any changes to that plan that occur after starting.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to navigate in wilderness under varying light conditions to include: using a map and compass to get to and stay in the assigned search area, determining location via grid coordinates (i.e., UTM, USNG, or latitude/longitude), and using GPS to track path of travel and mark waypoints.
- The handler must thoroughly and systematically cover the assigned search area within the specified time limit with no significant gaps (e.g., areas inadequately covered by the canine team). **Note:** Exception will be given to any areas that are not safe to search. If this occurs, the handler is to mark the area(s) on their map and be prepared to explain this omission during their debriefing.
- The handler is to actively look for clues (e.g., footprints, dropped articles, etc.). If found, clues are to be marked and communicated to search management.
- The handler must use a systematic method to mark boundaries, alerts, and clues (e.g., flagging tape, light sticks, GPS).

- The handler must use appropriate communication protocol. This element includes the handler's understanding of when to initiate communication and relay pertinent information.
- The handler must take appropriate action when faced with either a simulated medical emergency or crime scene.
- The handler must be capable of interpreting the canine's behavior and reacting accordingly (e.g., ability to recognize and follow-up on alerts).
- The handler must exhibit team leadership skills by taking proper care of him/herself, the canine, and anyone escorting the team. This includes:
  - Ensuring both humans and canine stay properly hydrated
  - Ensuring that neither humans nor canine become dangerously overheated or cold
  - Taking appropriate breaks.
- The handler must complete a hand-drawn map after the completion of each assigned task. The map should include all pertinent information: name of handler, name of canine, date, north arrow, wind direction and speed, start point and time, end point and time, PLS (if in sector), POD, terrain and prominent features, the path of travel (track), gaps in coverage, location of any clues, alerts, indications, and subjects found.
- The handler must relate pertinent information during debriefing.
- The canine must eagerly engage in, and remain focused on the task of locating the subject without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- The canine must range at a distance appropriate for the wind, temperature, terrain, and light conditions while maintaining adequate contact with its handler.
- The canine must demonstrate long- range detection appropriate for the conditions.
- The canine must demonstrate the persistence to work the scent from the initial detection of target odor to the point of source (the subject).
- The canine must make the find with minimal assistance from the handler and no assistance from the subject.
- The canine must demonstrate its trained indication when it locates the subject.

- The canine must demonstrate a favorable reaction to a stranger and approach the subject with little or no encouragement.
- The canine must demonstrate appropriate behavior toward the subject (e.g., the canine does nothing that may injure the subject).
- The canine must demonstrate the ability and willingness to return to work, after making a find, and focus on locating additional subjects, if appropriate.

# Long Multiple Subject Problem

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## Objective

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Evaluate the canine team's ability to effectively plan and execute an area search that extends over a long period of time and requires a continued effort to find multiple subjects at multiple locations within the search area.

## Setup

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The total search area will consist of terrain typical to that encountered in the region where the evaluation is being conducted. It is preferable that the area consists of mixed ground cover (e.g., mixture of light and dense brush). The total size (acreage) of the search area may vary by region (e.g., 80 to 160 acres). It is the responsibility of the evaluators to determine the size of the search area based on the terrain, ground cover, season, and weather conditions and to ensure that the total size of the search area is such that it presents a challenge to the team and can be reasonably searched within the acceptable timeframe.

## Guidelines

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- In order to be eligible to participate in the Area Search Certification Evaluation, the evaluation candidate team must meet the ground rules and have successfully completed the minimum requirements for both evaluation candidate and canine. (See *Section I, Ground Rules and Minimum Requirements*).
- The evaluation will be conducted by at least two (2) rostered ARDA evaluators.
- Number of Subjects: There will be at least two (2) but no more than four (4) subjects placed within the search area. If the night problem is included as part of the long multiple subject problem, then there must be at least three (3) subjects, one (1) or two (2) of which must be placed in light brush in search sector(s) to be searched in the dark (after sunset and before dawn).
- The subjects will be placed a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the start of the evaluation.
- The subject may not have a canine reward of any type.
- There will be at least two (2) and no more than three (3) clues placed within the search area. **Note:** It is not a failure of the evaluation if the clues are not located.
- Duration of the Problem: The duration of the exercise must last at least four (4) hours and may not exceed eight (8) hours. If the night problem is included as part of the long multiple subject problem, then at least two (2) hours, but no more than four (4) hours of field work should be planned for the period of dark (after sunset

and before dawn). The canine team must be actively searching in the dark for at least eighty (80) minutes if the night element is included in the problem.

- This evaluation will contain both a simulated medical emergency and crime scene. If the night problem is included as part of the long multiple subject problem, then one both not both of these scenarios should be planned for the area searched during the period of darkness.
- The evaluators will conduct a brief clothing and equipment check of the team before the start of the evaluation. If the team is lacking in any important clothing or equipment that renders the team ineffective or unsafe in the field, the evaluation will be terminated immediately.
- The evaluators will provide the handler with a radio.
- The evaluators will provide the handler with a topographic map of the search area and a GPS if the handler does not have their own. The handler is required to have a compass as essential equipment.
- The evaluators will conduct a briefing in which the handler will be given pertinent information about the search scenario. The handler is expected to ask pertinent questions during the briefing.
- The evaluators will assign the handler one or more tasks. The evaluators will accompany the team on its task(s) and observe their performance and may or may not provide additional information and tasking as the search progresses.
- Time will start when the handler receives their initial briefing. The handler must leave to start their task in no more than 30 minutes from the end of the briefing process.
- Prior to starting their search task(s), the handler is required to communicate to the evaluators their search strategy. The handler is then to execute that strategy. Changes in strategy are permissible; however, the handler is to communicate their reasoning to the evaluators.
- At the conclusion of the field portion(s) of the evaluation, the evaluators will debrief the handler. The handler is responsible to provide information about the search task(s) the team performed, to include the search area covered, times, clues, weather, the canine's performance including alerts and indications, any problems encountered, and any other important information. The handler shall draw a map or maps of areas searched. The evaluation time will end at the conclusion of the debriefing.

- At the conclusion of the evaluation, both evaluators are responsible for completing the appropriate evaluation forms and for reviewing the team's performance with the handler. One of the evaluators will be responsible for collecting paperwork from the handler (e.g., maps and notes) and getting all of the paperwork to the appropriate person within ARDA. Submission of paperwork may be electronic.

## **Criteria**

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See *Criteria for Area Search Certification and Recertification Evaluations* above.

# Night Problem

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## Objective

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Evaluate the canine team's ability to effectively plan and execute an area search in the dark, paying particular attention to the handler's land navigation skills.

## Setup

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An area 40 to 80 acres in size in which at least 80% of the total area consists of light brush (ground cover and/or vegetation which can moderately inhibit airflow). At least one (1) boundary of the search area shall not be defined by an obvious man-made or natural terrain feature (e.g., road, trail, power line, creek, etc.).

## Guidelines

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- In order to be eligible to participate in the Area Search Certification Evaluation, the evaluation candidate team must meet the ground rules and have successfully completed the minimum requirements for both evaluation candidate and canine. (See *Section I, Ground Rules and Minimum Requirements*).
- The evaluation will be conducted by at least two (2) rostered ARDA evaluators.
- Number of Subjects: For the Night Problem (run as a separate event): At least one (1) and not more than two (2) subjects shall be placed in an area of light brush anywhere within the search area.
- The subject(s) will be placed a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the start of the evaluation.
- The subject(s) may not have a canine reward of any type.
- Duration of the Problem: For the Night Problem (run as a separate event): The duration of the exercise may not exceed four (4) hours. The field work portion shall not begin until after sunset and must be concluded by dawn. The canine team must be actively searching in the dark for at least eighty (80) minutes in order to demonstrate the canine's ability to concentrate on the task at hand without being unduly distracted or losing interest.
- The Night Problem (run as a separate event): This problem will contain either a simulated medical emergency or crime scene, but may not contain both.

- The evaluators will conduct a brief clothing and equipment check of the team before the start of the evaluation. If the team is lacking in any important clothing or equipment that renders the team ineffective or unsafe in the field, the evaluation will be terminated immediately.
- The evaluators will provide the handler with a radio.
- The evaluators will provide the handler with a topographic map of the search area and a GPS if the handler does not have their own. The handler is required to have a compass as essential equipment.
- The evaluators will conduct a briefing in which the handler will be given pertinent information about the search scenario. The handler is expected to ask pertinent questions during the briefing.
- The evaluators will assign the handler one or more tasks. The evaluators will accompany the team on its task(s) and observe their performance and may or may not provide additional information and tasking as the search progresses.
- Time will start when the handler receives their initial briefing. The handler must leave to start their task in no more than 30 minutes from the end of the briefing process.
- Prior to starting their search task(s), the handler is required to communicate to the evaluators their search strategy. The handler is then to execute that strategy. Changes in strategy are permissible; however, the handler is to communicate their reasoning to the evaluators.
- At the conclusion of the field portion(s) of the evaluation, the evaluators will debrief the handler. The handler is responsible to provide information about the search task(s) the team performed, to include the search area covered, times, clues, weather, the canine's performance including alerts and indications, any problems encountered, and any other important information. The handler shall draw a map or maps of areas searched. The evaluation time will end at the conclusion of the debriefing.
- At the conclusion of the evaluation, both evaluators are responsible for completing the appropriate evaluation forms and for reviewing the team's performance with the handler. One of the evaluators will be responsible for collecting paperwork from the handler (e.g., maps and notes) and getting all of the paperwork to the appropriate person within ARDA. Submission of paperwork may be electronic.

## **Criteria**

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See *Criteria for Area Search Certification and Recertification Evaluations* above.

# Area Search Recertification Evaluation

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## Objective

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The purpose of the Area Search Recertification Evaluation is to accurately and uniformly assess that the Canine Search Specialist Team has retained its ability to perform the skills necessary to locate missing persons in a wilderness, rural, or suburban environment.

## Setup

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The total search area will consist of terrain typical to that encountered in the region where the evaluation is being conducted. It is preferable that the area consists of mixed ground cover (e.g., mixture of light and dense brush). The total size (acreage) of the search area may vary by region (e.g., 40 to 80 acres). It is the responsibility of the evaluators to determine the size of the search area based on the terrain, ground cover, season, and weather conditions and to ensure that the total size of the search area is such that it presents a challenge to the team and can be reasonably searched within the acceptable timeframe.

## Guidelines

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- In order to be eligible to participate in the Area Search Recertification Evaluation, the evaluation candidate team must meet the ground rules and have successfully completed the minimum requirements for both evaluation candidate and canine. (See *Section I, Ground Rules and Minimum Requirements*).
- The evaluation will be conducted by at least two (2) rostered ARDA evaluators except if requested two (2) months prior to the canine team's certification expiring if the non-availability of a second evaluator would result in the team's certification expiring. In such a case, the evaluation may be conducted by one (1) rostered ARDA evaluator.
- There is no night requirement, but the evaluation may include some hours of darkness.
- There will be at least one (1) but no more than two (2) subjects placed within the search area.
- The subject(s) will be placed a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the start of the evaluation.
- The subject(s) may not have a canine reward of any type.

- There will be at least one (1) and no more than two (2) clues placed within the search area. **Note:** It is not a failure of the evaluation if the clues are not located.
- The duration of the evaluation must last at least eighty (80) minutes and may not exceed four (4) hours.
- This evaluation will contain either a simulated medical emergency or crime scene.
- The evaluator(s) will conduct a brief clothing and equipment check of the team before the start of the evaluation. If the team is lacking in any important clothing or equipment that renders the team ineffective or unsafe in the field, the evaluation will be terminated immediately.
- The evaluator(s) will provide the handler with a radio.
- The evaluator(s) will provide the handler with a topographic map of the search area and a GPS if the handler does not have their own. The handler is required to have a compass as essential equipment.
- The evaluator(s) will conduct a briefing in which the handler will be given pertinent information about the search scenario. The handler is expected to ask pertinent questions during the briefing.
- The evaluator(s) will assign the handler one or more tasks. The evaluator(s) will accompany the team on its task(s) and observe their performance and may or may not provide additional information and tasking as the search progresses.
- Time will start when the handler receives their initial briefing. The handler must leave to start their task in no more than 30 minutes from the end of the briefing process.
- Prior to starting their search task(s), the handler is required to communicate to the evaluator(s) their search strategy. The handler is then to execute that strategy. Changes in strategy are permissible; however, the handler is to communicate their reasoning to the evaluators.
- At the conclusion of the field portion(s) of the evaluation, the evaluator(s) will debrief the handler. The handler is responsible to provide information about the search task(s) the team performed, to include the search area covered, times, clues, weather, the canine's performance including alerts and indications, any problems encountered, and any other important information. The handler shall draw a map or maps of areas searched. The evaluation time will end at the conclusion of the debriefing.
- At the conclusion of the evaluation, each evaluator is responsible for completing the appropriate evaluation forms and for reviewing the team's performance with

the handler. An evaluator will be responsible for collecting paperwork from the handler (e.g., maps and notes) and getting all of the paperwork to the appropriate person within ARDA. Submission of paperwork may be electronic.

- Upon the successful completion of the Area Search Recertification Evaluation, the Canine Search Specialist Team will receive a certificate of completion which will be valid for two (2) years unless the canine is 10 years or older, in which case it is valid for one (1) year.
- If a Recertification Evaluation is failed twice, the Certification Evaluation must be taken and passed for recertification.

### **Criteria**

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See *Criteria for Area Search Certification and Recertification Evaluations* above.