

## **NEW Trailing Test Requirements – As Approved by NNCDS Executive Board 2/3/2018**

Certification for the named canine team shall be valid for one year.

Certification does not relieve the canine team from regular maintenance training, periodic proficiency assessments, and following other recommended SWGDOG guidelines.

The certifying official(s) shall not be routinely involved in the day to day training of the canine team being evaluated.

Handler errors, when excessive may result in failure of the team.

A mission-oriented test environment shall be used.

Certification shall consist of a number of assessments that together form the full test.

Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.

GPS will be used to record the trail laid by the target, and GPS will be used to record the trail run by the canine team.

The certifying official will compare the recorded GPS trails to assess accuracy.

Targets used in the certification process shall not have been used in the day to day training activities of the team being certified.

The certification shall be comprised of a scent recognition assessment together with either a comprehensive assessment or a double-blind assessment, or both.

A canine team which fails the certification process shall complete a corrective action plan before making another attempt to certify.

Any competent individual or entity may enhance the recommended SWGDOG guidelines in order to make the requirements more stringent.

### **PHASE 1: Scent Recognition**

Scent recognition assessments evaluate the following skills:

The ability of the canine to detect and use a specific person's scent on a scent article to follow the matching scent trail to this specific person while discriminating from non-matching scent trails. The ability of the canine to demonstrate the absence of a matching scent trail. The canine's alert. The handler's interpretation of the canine's alert.

The scent recognition assessment shall consist of four (4) individual assessments with the following components and parameters:

For each scent recognition assessment, one human target and two human distractors are utilized to lay human scent trails in an environment similar to where the canine usually works (wilderness, urban, suburban or rural environment). Each scent recognition assessment shall be between 90 m - 183 m (≈100 - 200 yds) in length with a single split turn 1 involving one human target and two human distractors.

The target trail and one human distractor trail shall be aged a minimum of 1 hour, and one distractor trail shall be aged a maximum of 30 minutes. Prior to the assessment, the start of the scent trail shall be marked by the assessing agency. The handler shall be directed to the start marker, but not given the target's direction of travel. The handler shall be provided a scent article from the target or a nonmatching scent article as a negative control. The handler shall specify the type of scent article his or her canine used in training sessions prior to the assessment.

At least half, but not all of the scent recognition assessments shall be conducted with non-matching scents to demonstrate the absence of a matching scent trail. The order of the matching and non-matching scent recognition assessments shall be randomized. The assessor shall know the correct outcome of each assessment. The handler shall not know the correct outcome of any assessment.

A successful completion of the scent recognition assessment is the ability to find the correct direction of travel and follow the scent trail beyond the turn or to correctly demonstrate the absence of a matching scent trail. The assessor may take into consideration the environmental influences on the scent in determining whether or not the canine team has successfully completed the scent recognition assessment. The canine team shall properly scent discriminate in at least three out of four or 75 % of the assessments.

## **Phase 2: Comprehensive Assessment**

Comprehensive assessments test the following canine team skills:

The ability of the canine team to follow a specific person's scent trail along multiple surface types appropriate to the canine team's operational requirements and to identify a specific person or location at the conclusion of the assessment. The handler's interpretation of the canine's behavior. The canine's response. The handler's interpretation of the canine's response.

**Single-Blind assessments** shall incorporate the following components and parameters:

One or more different potential target trails shall be approximately 1.6 km ( $\approx$  1 mile) in length in an environment similar to where the canine usually works. Each target trail shall be aged in accordance with mission requirements for a minimum of 12 hours.

Each target trail shall contain a minimum of ten turns. Multiple human distractors, either placed or regularly occurring in the assessment area shall be present along the distance of the target trail.

The assessment location shall be unfamiliar to the handler. The targets and distractors shall not be ones normally utilized in the training of the canine team. The handler shall be informed of the start location. The handler shall be provided a scent article from the target. The handler shall specify the type of scent article prior to the assessment.

The assessment should be completed in less than 60 minutes. The assessor shall know the correct layout of each assessment. The handler shall not know the correct layout of each assessment. The handler shall articulate the canine's final response prior to the start of the

assessment. The canine shall demonstrate an alert, which should include the final response. This must be communicated by the handler to the assessor.

Any team that is determined by the assessor to be more than 46 m ( $\approx 50$ yd) off the target's trail may be failed. However, the assessor may take into consideration environmental influences on the scent in determining whether or not a canine team is still on trail. Identifying a human distractor shall be considered a failure.

### **Double –blind assessment**

This assessment demonstrates the proficiency of the canine team in an operational setting over multiple surfaces. The handler will be advised of the start location. The handler shall not know the location of the end point, nor the number of turns to be conducted. The handler shall articulate the canine's final response prior to the start of the assessment.

One or more different potential target trails shall be approximately 1.6 km ( $\approx 1$  mile) in length in an environment similar to where the canine usually works. Each target trail shall be aged in accordance with mission requirements for a minimum of 12 hours.

Each target trail shall contain a minimum of ten turns. Multiple human distractors, either placed or regularly occurring in the assessment area shall be present along the distance of the target trail.

The assessment location shall be unfamiliar to the handler. The targets and distractors shall not be ones normally utilized in the training of the canine team. The handler shall be informed of the start location. The handler shall be provided a scent article from the target. The handler shall specify the type of scent article prior to the assessment.

Identifying a human distractor will be considered a failure. No individual present, including the handler and assessor, shall know the correct outcome of any portion of the assessment. The assessment will not be timed. The assessor shall observe the canine team.

At the conclusion of the assessment, the assessor shall compare the search results with the parameters of the search. This comparison may be done immediately after the handler determines the canine has made its trained response, or at the conclusion of the entire assessment.