

NNCDS Human Remains Detection (HRD) Water Certification Standard

Effective 9-24-2026

Purpose of Certification

This certification evaluates the effectiveness of a canine team in Human Remains Detection (HRD) under diverse conditions, ensuring competency in:

- A. The canine's ability to recognize and respond to the odor of human remains.
- B. The handler's ability to recognize and interpret the canine's trained final response and changes in behavior associated with human remains odor.
- C. The handler's ability to accurately identify the source location.
- D. The team's ability to search effectively under various environmental conditions.

2. Canine and Handler Requirements

A. Canine Requirements

- 1) Canine must be at least 12 months old at the time of testing.
- 2) The canine must remain under the handler's control at all times.
- 3) Aggression toward handlers, evaluators, or other dogs will result in immediate failure.

B. Handler Requirements

- 1) Handler must provide proof of at least six (6) months of HRD training upon request.
- 2) Any abuse or harsh handling of the canine during testing will result in automatic failure.
- 3) Handlers must demonstrate proper care of their canine at all times.
- 4) Handlers are recommended to take the following courses prior to certification:
 - a) Crime Scene Preservation Training.
 - b) CPR and Basic First Aid (human and canine).
 - c) Blood borne pathogens
 - d) Hazardous Materials Awareness (NFPA 472 or CFR 291910.120(q)(6)(i)).
 - e) Incident Command System (ICS) 100 & 200 and NIMS IS-700 & 800.

3. Evaluation Process

- A. A canine team must not have a false trained final response or more than one miss.
- B. Canine cannot remove, ingest, defecate, or urinate on source, will result in failure of evaluation.
- C. Certification remains valid for 1 year from the date of successful completion.
- D. A team that fails certification must wait 60 days before retesting.

- E. The handler must articulate the search strategy and demonstrate the ability to search an assigned area effectively for the search for human remains and must make an effective search team.
- F. The handler must advise the evaluator of the dog's trained final response. This response must be freely offered by the canine without prompt from the handler. The handler must call the source location correctly.
- G. The dog must search independently.
- H. The handler is encouraged to utilize a handheld GPS and or other online mapping software (such as CALTOPO).
- I. All distractors will be naturally occurring in the environment.

4. Comprehensive Water Search Assessment

- A. Stations: Teams will search two (2) distinct stations, ensuring competency across multiple environments.

Station	Size & Conditions	Time Limit
Shoreline	No less than 50 yds in length, no more than 12ft from shore, and no greater than 3ft in depth.	10 minutes
Boat	In calm water (lake or pond) no less than 100x100 yard area with the area divided into four quadrants.	
	Scent material shall be placed in a depth of between approximately 10 to 12 ft in one of the quadrants.	45 minutes per 100yard area
	The canine's trained final response shall be within a radius of approximately 6 ft of the highest concentration of the target odor.	

Additional Conditions:

- All certification searches will be conducted single-blind. The handler shall have no prior knowledge of the location of training aids within the assigned search area.
- Blank Areas: Three of the four quadrants will contain no sources.
- Number of Sources: One (1) source will be placed in each station.
- Training aids shall be placed a minimum of thirty (30) minutes prior to testing. Set time may vary among search problems at the evaluator's discretion.

B. Scent Sources & Placement

- 1) Approved Human Remains Materials will consist of tissue and or bone.
- 2) Source Quantity:
 - a) Between 1- 2 lbs of material.
 - b) Bone fragments must be larger than a quarter (\$0.25).

5. Retesting Policy

Retesting Due to Safety Concerns

- If a test is halted due to safety (severe weather, hazards), the team may retake the full field portion without penalty.

6. Test Results & Debriefing

- A. Handlers receive results during an official debriefing with the Evaluator.
- B. The debrief provides constructive feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.
- C. Decisions made by the Evaluator are final.