

NNCDS Human Remains Detection (HRD) Land 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 Land Search Assessment

- A. Stations: Teams will search five (5) distinct stations, ensuring competency across multiple environments.

Station	Size & Conditions	Time Limit
Wilderness	1-2 acres (fields, wooded areas, varied terrain)	20 min per acre
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Urban	1-1.5 acres (buildings, landscaping, roads, parking lots)	20 min per acre
Buildings	Minimum 2 rooms, max 1000 sq. ft.	20 min total
Vehicles	3-6 vehicles (interior & exterior)	3 min per vehicle

Additional Conditions:

- All certification searches will be conducted single-blind. The handler shall have no prior knowledge of the number or location of training aids within the assigned search area.
- Blank Areas: At least one area will contain no sources but may have freshly disturbed soil.
- Buried & Elevated: There will be at least one buried and one elevated hide.
- Number of Sources: 0-3 per area.
- 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 human blood (fresh & aged), decomposition fluids, adipocere, tissue, bone (wet & dry), and or burned tissue.
- 2) Source Quantity:
 - a) Between 0.1mL (drops) and 2 lbs of material.
 - b) Bone fragments must be larger than a quarter (\$0.25).
- 3) Burial & Elevation Depths:
 - a) Buried sources: 6-24 inches deep.
 - b) Elevated sources: Outdoor up to 6 feet high, and interior up to 10 feet.
- 4) A minimum of three different types of approved human remains training aids shall be represented during the certification.

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.