

NEW Air Scent Test – As Approved by NNCDS Executive Board 2/3/18

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.

GPS can be used by handler.

A scent article will be available but provided only on handler request.

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

Each assessment is the evaluation of a search.

Targets used in the day to day training activities of the team being certified shall not be used in the certification process. Subjects may not have been used in the last 30 days for the K9 team.

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

A canine team that fails the certification process shall complete a corrective action plan before making another attempt to certify. Evidence of this shall be recorded in training records to show remediation of deficiencies.

Phase 1: Odor Recognition

Odor recognition assessments shall evaluate:

The handler's ability to organize and articulate a logical and systematic search pattern utilizing the wind and terrain to the canine's advantage. The handler's ability to perform a systematic search with the canine. The handler's interpretation of the canine's behavior. The canine team's ability to locate all relevant human targets. The canine's ability to perform an effective independent search without continuous handler guidance. The canine's response to a human target. The handler's interpretation of the canine's response. The canine's ability to ignore distractions and/or to be immediately refocused.

An odor recognition assessment consists of a single search:

The assessment shall occur in an environment similar to where the canine usually works in daylight hours. Typically, this is an unpopulated environment where animals and human scented objects may be present. The search area shall be approximately 20,000 m² (5 acres) in size. One target shall walk into the search area in such a way as to encourage the use of air scenting. The target shall hide in a stationary position for a minimum of 20 minutes, but not in an enclosed location (i.e., tents, caves, sleeping bags). The target shall not be a person routinely or recently used as a target to train the canine. The handler shall know the number of the targets, but not the placement. Subject should

be camouflaged in such a way that visual confirmation is not available to the dog or the handler but odor availability must not be restricted. (subject should be hidden in a brush pile or under a burlap tarp, etc).

For multiple assessments run consecutively, the target position shall be different for each assessment. It is recommended that a new search area is used for each team, but only two canines evaluated per area, then subject is moved and new area is identified. Set time is a minimum of 20 minutes and is dependent on the terrain, vegetative cover, and by operational requirements. Search time for approximately 20,000 m² (5 acres) would be under 30 minutes

The evaluating official shall inform the handler of the search parameters which will include the area to be searched and the number of human targets to be located. The handler shall decide to work with the canine on or off lead depending on the operational requirements, training, and trained canine response. The handler shall advise the evaluating official of his or her decision. Should conditions necessitate a change in that decision, the handler shall notify the evaluating official what prompted the change to his or her original decision. The handler must disclose the canine's response prior to the start of the assessment. The handler shall demonstrate a logical, systematic search pattern utilizing the wind and terrain to the canine's advantage.

The evaluating official shall know the location of the target(s) and desired outcome of the search. The canine must locate and alert on the target(s) independent of specific directions from the handler. Any false response constitutes a failure.

Phase 2: Comprehensive Assessment

Comprehensive assessments test the following:

The handler's ability to set up a logical, systematic search pattern utilizing the wind and terrain to the canine's advantage. The handler's ability to perform a systematic search with the canine. The handler's ability to articulate location of subjects upon location and ability to determine cleared areas. The canine team's ability to locate all relevant human targets. The canine's ability to conduct a search pattern. The canine's response to a human target. The handler's interpretation of the canine's response. The canine's ability to ignore distractions. The handler's ability to conclude the search (no one left to find).

Single-blind assessments examine a level of competence based on an average-sized search area. Larger search areas can be tested through proficiency testing. The assessment shall occur in an environment similar to actual search conditions (including day or night). Typically, this is an unpopulated environment where animal and human scented objects may be present. The assessment area shall be between 20 (1 Hour Max) - 40 acres (2 Hour Max).

One to three targets shall walk into the search area in such a way as to encourage the use of air scenting no less than 20 minutes prior to start of testing. The target(s) may hide in a stationary position, in an enclosed location (i.e., tents, caves, sleeping 4 bags) or may be moving, but shall not deliberately evade. The target(s) shall not be a person routinely or recently used to train the canine. The handler shall not know the number or placement of

the targets. The target positions shall be unique for each assessment. It is recommended that a new search area be used for each team but can be used for a maximum of two (2) canine teams.

The handler shall be provided with a map of the search area. The handler shall decide to work with the canine on or off lead depending on the operational requirements, training, and trained canine response and shall advise the evaluating official of his or her decision. Should conditions necessitate a change in that decision, the handler shall notify the evaluating official regarding the reasons for the change. The handler must articulate the canine's response to the evaluating official prior to the start of the assessment.

The evaluating official(s) shall know the location of the target(s). The evaluating official(s) shall know the outcome of the search. The handler shall demonstrate a logical, systematic search pattern utilizing the wind and terrain to the canine's advantage. If there are multiple targets, the handler shall restart at a location of their choosing to ensure efficient coverage of the search area. Once a target has been located, the target will leave the area. The canine must locate and should perform its trained final response on the target independent of specific directions from the handler upon initial location of the target.

Any false indication or non-find constitutes a failure. The assessments shall include a blank search. The team must locate all targets or determine that an area is blank. The handler must be able to determine when there are no targets left to find. At the conclusion of the search, the handler shall document the following on the map provided: the area covered, and the number and position of all targets found, and any areas not covered.

Double-blind assessments demonstrate the proficiency of the canine team in an operational setting. A double-blind assessment shall consist of a single search. The assessment shall occur in an environment similar to where and when the canine usually works. Typically, this is an unpopulated environment where animal and human scented objects may be present.

The search area will be 10 acres (30 Minutes Max) – 20 acres (1 Hour Max). One to three targets shall walk into the search area in such a way as to encourage the use of air scenting no less than 20 minutes prior to start of testing. The target(s) may hide in a stationary location, an observed location (i.e., tent, cave, sleeping bag), or may be moving, but shall not deliberately evade. The targets shall not be persons routinely or recently used to train the canine. The handler shall not know the number or placement of the targets. The target positions shall be unique for each assessment.

The handler shall be provided with a map of the search area, but not the number of human targets to be located. Neither the handler, the evaluating official if used, nor any individual present shall know the correct outcome of any portion of assessment. The handler will set up a logical, systematic search pattern utilizing the wind and terrain to the canine's advantage. The canine team will perform a systematic search. The handler shall decide to work with the canine on or off lead depending on the operational requirements, training, and trained canine response and shall advise the evaluating official of his or her decision. Should conditions necessitate a change in that decision, the handler shall notify the evaluating official what prompted the change to his or her original decision.

The handler shall start at a location of their choosing. If there are multiple targets, the handler shall restart at a location of his or her choosing to ensure total coverage of the search area. The canine must locate and should perform its trained final response on the target independently of specific directions from the handler upon initial location of the target. The handler must articulate the canine's response to the evaluating official prior to the start of the assessment. Any false indication or non-find constitutes a failure.-The team must locate all targets. The handler must be able to determine when there are no targets left to find. At the conclusion of the search the handler shall document the following on the provided map: the area covered and the number and position of targets found. The evaluating official shall compare the documented search results with the parameters of the search at the conclusion of the assessment.

Neither participant nor observer present at the assessment location shall be aware of the desired outcome of the search.