

American Rescue Dog Association

Open Field Assessment

Setup Instructions and Assessment Criteria

Description

An area, 40 to 80 acres in size, which can be reasonably searched within 2 hours. The area should consist of a field or fields that contain little or no brush that inhibits air flow.

Objective

Direct observation of the canine team's basic search skills. This assessment will specifically focus on the canine's ranging, ability to locate a subject by air-scenting, and eagerness to locate the subject for its reward.

Procedures

- One (1) subject shall be placed anywhere within the area. The subject must be found by air-scenting, therefore, it is critical that the problem be set up to minimize the likelihood of the canine picking up the subject's track before it picks up the air scent.
- The duration of this assessment will be no more than 2 hours. An attempt should be made to set up the problem to last approximately 1 hour in order to allow the team to demonstrate the canine's ability to maintain its focus on the task, however, if the team locates the subject in less than an hour it will not be penalized.
- Prior to the start of the task, the handler will receive a briefing from the assessor(s).
- The ranging ability of the canine is a major component of this problem and it is not desirable to have the canine distracted from the primary scent source (the subject). Therefore, no scent articles are to be intentionally placed as clues.
- The canine and handler will perform a grid search.
- When the canine alerts on the subject, the handler is to allow the canine to make the find with little or no assistance, but may join the canine at the subject once the find has been made.
- The subject may have the canine's reward and at the discretion of the handler, the reward may be immediate to the canine making the find.
- Upon completion of the task the handler will debrief with the assessor(s).

Critical Criteria

The following criteria must be met at a satisfactory level in order to pass this assessment.

Handler

- Handler is to demonstrate knowledge of how to determine the wind conditions (e.g., puff bottle or similar).
- Handler is to take into account the wind conditions, land contours and obstructions to the wind in planning and executing a search of the assigned area.
- Handler must be capable of interpreting the canine's behavior.
- Handler must grid the assigned area(s) so as to provide adequate coverage.

- Handler must demonstrate adequate working pace and endurance appropriate for weather and terrain conditions.
- Handler must maintain control of the canine. Control of the canine is defined as the handler's ability to recall and/or halt the canine if the canine enters or may potentially enter an unsafe area or be presented with an unsafe situation.

Canine

- Canine is to eagerly engage in, and remain focused on the task of finding the subject.
- Canine must range at a distance appropriate for wind and weather, while maintaining appropriate contact with handler.
- Canine shall demonstrate long-range detection appropriate for wind conditions and persistence to work the scent cone to the source (the subject).
- Canine must locate the subject by air-scenting.
- Canine must make the "find" within an acceptable time limit, based on the demonstration of the canine team's ability to search the assigned area at a reasonable pace.
- Upon detecting human scent, the canine must willingly leave the handler and approach the subject with little or no encouragement from the handler.
- Canine shows no aversion to approaching the subject.
- Canine demonstrates good behavior toward the subject. The canine does nothing that might injure the subject.
- Upon locating the subject, the canine must eagerly accept its reward.

Non-Critical Criteria

The following criteria are not required in this assessment and do not affect the pass/fail score, 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.

Handler

- Handler understands radio protocol. This element includes the handler's understanding of when to initiate communication to inform base of pertinent information.
- Handler has good navigation skills: uses map and compass to get to and stay in the assigned search area; can give UTM coordinates for a location.
- Handler takes correct actions to give his canine the best chance for success in locating the lost subject. This applies especially if the canine alerts or shows interest in an area and is unsuccessful in working out the scent on its own.
- Handler completes hand-drawn map after the completion of the assigned task. The map should include all pertinent information: north arrow, wind direction and speed, POD, terrain and prominent features, the track of the canine team, location of alerts, indications, and/or the subject.
- Handler asks appropriate questions during the initial briefing.
- Handler is able to relate pertinent information during debrief.

Canine

- Canine has a trained indication upon locating the subject. Examples of trained indications include a bark alert or recall/refind.



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Date: _____ Assessed By: _____

Handler: _____ Canine: _____

Subject: _____

Weather: **Temp** _____° **Humidity** _____ **Wind Direction/Speed** _____ mph

Condition: Clear Cloudy Fog Rain Snow

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Average Range (Distance): _____ Recall/Refind (Distance): _____

Critical Criteria		
	Pass/Fail	Comments
Handler		
Recognize wind/terrain conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Explain/use systematic search method	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Demonstrate good pace/endurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Ability to interpret canine's behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Cover assigned area thoroughly	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Maintain control of the canine	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Canine		
Eagerness and focus of the dog to work the problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Appropriate ranging distance and contact with the handler	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Long-range detection appropriate for conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Locate the subject by air-scenting	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Demonstrate good pace/endurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Willing to leave handler	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Shows no aversion to approaching the subject	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Demonstrates good behavior towards the subject	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	
Response to reward/play	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail	

The handler and canine must pass all elements listed under critical criteria in order to successfully complete this assessment.

