

American Rescue Dog Association

Trail Assessment

Setup Instructions and Assessment Criteria

Description

A trail, approximately 1 mile (1600 meters) in length, which runs primarily through moderately dense underbrush.

Objective

Direct observation of the canine team's ability to get to and quickly and effectively search along an assigned trail. The canine must demonstrate its ability and eagerness to detect and follow human scent with little or no assistance from the handler.

Procedures

- One (1) subject should be placed so that the canine team has to cover approximately 1 mile before making the find. The subject may or may not cross the trail and will be hidden no more than 100 feet off either side of the trail. (If the subject is downwind of the trail, he must cross the trail).
- The subject is to be someone unfamiliar to the canine.
- The subject may not have the canine's reward.
- The duration of this assessment can be no more than two (2) hours.
- The problem will be set up so that there is a need to use a topographic map (provided by the evaluator) and compass to get to and stay on the correct trail.
- Prior to the start of the task, the handler will receive a briefing from the assessor(s).
- There are to be 2 clues, each placed within six feet of the edge of the trail. (It is not a failure of the problem if the clues are not found).
- The canine and handler will perform a "hasty" search.
- In order to provide necessary coverage of the search area, the handler is allowed to leave the trail.
- 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 and subject once the find has been made.
- Upon completion of the task the handler will draw a map of the search area and 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 provide adequate coverage of the assigned area.
- Handler has good navigation skills; uses map and compass to orient himself, get to, and stay on the assigned trail; can identify location in terms of appropriate map coordinates.
- Handler must demonstrate adequate working pace and endurance appropriate for weather and terrain conditions.
- Handler must be capable of interpreting the canine's behavior.
- 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.
- Handler is to conduct a hasty search of the assigned trail while working at a reasonable pace and take into consideration the wind conditions and the effect of the terrain and ground cover on the canine's detection capability.
- Upon making the find, the handler is to correctly identify the location of the subject using appropriate map coordinates.

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.
- Upon detecting human scent, the canine must be willing to leave the handler and the trail to locate the subject.
- Canine may locate the subject by air-scenting, tracking, trailing, or any combination of the three.
- 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.
- Canine has a trained indication upon locating the subject. Examples of trained indications include a bark alert or recall/refind.

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 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.
- The handler is to actively look for clues. If encountered, clues are to be appropriately marked and reported to base.
- 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.



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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	
Demonstrates trained indication (recall/refind or bark alert)	<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.

