

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

Land Human Remains Detection Field Test

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- This test has been promulgated by NSDA to assess handler/K-9 team's ability as to operational suitability for Land HRD search incidents.
- The NSDA prerequisites represent those items that we believe will allow the candidate to have the opportunity to safely and successfully complete the Land HRD Test.

2. OBJECTIVE

- The Land HRD Test demonstrates the ability of the team (handler/K-9) to locate hidden sources within five (5) separate components (Land [3 areas], Building, and Vehicles) within a prescribed time period. This field test shall demonstrate the ability of the K-9 to search for and recognize the scent of human remains, to perform a trained final response and for the handler to correctly read the behavior of their K-9 partner.
- The handler shall be responsible for formulating and articulating their search strategy and providing the Evaluator with a description of their K-9's final response. The K-9 should give a recognizable change in behavior when it initially detects scent with the K-9 following up to identify the location of the actual source with the trained final response.
- This test is designed to simulate an actual search and not team training. You will be asked to approach it as such.

3. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- The test shall only be given if all of the prerequisite paperwork has been presented and all testing fees have been paid.
- The handler shall be instructed to submit copies of prerequisite documents to the Evaluator via uploading to the website or e-mail prior to the test. Training logs are optional to be uploaded, and may be brought to the test for review.
- The Evaluator shall remain within normal speaking distance of the handler at all times during the evaluation so as not to interfere with the work of the handler/K-9 team.
- A team shall not be required to test in conditions other than those in which it would be reasonably expected to search.
- No electronic correction collars are permitted to be operational while the team is being evaluated. The K-9 may wear an electronic correction collar as long as the transmitter is turned off and given to the Evaluator until the test is completed.
- The K-9 does not demonstrate unwarranted aggressive behavior towards a person, other K-9s, livestock, or wildlife while outside of their primary enclosure.
- Handlers may draw numbers for the order in which they are to be tested unless there is a strong, overriding reason for convenience of handler or Evaluator.

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

Land Human Remains Detection Field Test

4. TEST SITES

- The Evaluator shall accompany the testing team on all testing elements.
- For land, there shall be 3 (three) testing areas which have light to medium ground cover or trees. The boundaries of each site shall be clearly marked.
 - There shall be two (2) one (1) acre areas.
 - There shall be one (1) area adjacent to one side of a roadway that is approximately 1/10th of a mile long and twenty (20) yards in depth. The roadway should be navigable by a non-4-wheel drive passenger car.
- For vehicles, there shall be three (3) vehicles which do not have source or a canine inside.
- The building shall be comprised of a single building not less than 1,000 square feet and not more than 1,500 square feet consisting of at least three (3) rooms.

5. LAND

- For land, there shall be three (3) test areas with light to medium ground cover or trees. Two (2) shall be one (1) acre areas. The third area shall run adjacent to one side of a roadway.
- Each area shall contain zero to three (0-3) sources with the handler being tested not knowing how many sources are in a given area. Sources may be buried, concealed on the ground surface, or elevated.
 - Elevated sources shall be no less than four (4) feet and no more than six (6) feet above ground height, and secured no more than three (3) feet from the trunk of the tree.
 - Buried sources shall be no less than six (6) inches and no more than twelve (12) inches in depth.
- Sources shall be placed not less than one (1) hour prior to the test and in place not more than twelve (12) hours.
- There shall be negative holes dug within each testing site.
- The handler and K-9 shall be given the following testing times:
 - One (1) acre areas: thirty (30) minutes for each acre.
 - Roadway: thirty (30) minutes for the entire roadway.
- For buried and surface sources, flagging/indicating the location of the sources shall be within a three (3) foot radius of the actual location.
- Elevated sources require the handler to convey two (2) things to the Evaluator:
 - Handler recognizes and conveys that the source is elevated by the K-9's change in behavior.
 - Handler flags/indicates the location of the source within 10 feet in any direction of the actual location.
- Sources shall be one or more of the following:
 - Wet and/or dry bone --- no less than the equivalent of five (5) inches and no more than fifteen (15) inches of bone.
 - Wet and/or dry blood no less than ten (10) cc's and no more than twenty (20) cc's contained on a

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

Land Human Remains Detection Field Test

piece of cloth or gauze.

- Buried sources shall consist of tissue no less than a pound and a half (such as a whole placenta) and no more than two (2) pounds.
- Elevated hides shall not be dry bone only.
- An effort shall be made to utilize at least one (1) of each type of these sources.

6. BUILDING

- There shall be one (1) building searched. The building should be not less than 1,000 square feet and not more than 1,500 square feet consisting of at least three (3) rooms. In the event a larger building is available, the interior rooms may be subdivided into equal areas totaling not less than 1,000 square feet and not more than 1,500 square feet. A building with a single room shall not be suitable for testing.
- There shall be from one to three (1-3) sources total with the handler not knowing how many sources are present in any one room. The sources may be concealed at surface level or elevated.
 - Elevated sources shall be not more than three (3) feet from ground height. Sources may not be concealed in areas such as piping, air ducts or other locations that could cause scent to travel throughout the building.
- Sources shall be placed no less than thirty (30) minutes prior to testing and in place not more than twelve (12) hours.
- The handler and K-9 shall be given no more than fifteen (15) minutes to search the building.
- Flagging/indicating the location of the sources shall be within a two (2) foot radius of the actual location.
- Sources shall be the following:
 - Wet and/or dry blood, no less than two (2) cc's and no more than three (3) cc's.

7. VEHICLES

- There shall be three (3) vehicles in a line-up.
- There shall be one (1) source total placed on the outside of one vehicle. The K-9 shall work the exterior of the vehicle only. The source shall be placed in a way that the K-9 shall be able to indicate the source's location without gaining entry to the vehicle.
- The source shall be placed no higher than the highest point of the vehicle's wheel wells and/or no higher than 3 (three) feet.
- Source shall be placed no less than thirty (30) minutes prior to the test and in place not more than six (6) hours.
- The handler shall be given a total of six (6) minutes to conduct a search of the exterior of all three (3) vehicles. The handler/K-9 team must search all three (3) vehicles.
- Once all vehicles have been searched, the handler and K-9 shall return to the vehicle they believe contains the source. Flagging/indicating the location of the source shall be within a three (3) foot radius of the actual location.

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

Land Human Remains Detection Field Test

- The source shall be the following:
 - Wet and/or dry blood, no less than two (2) cc's and no more than three (3) cc's.

8. EVALUATORS

- The evaluation shall be conducted by a designated NSDA Principal Evaluator with the option of a second Evaluator or Apprentice Evaluator.
- The Evaluator(s) shall terminate the test if, in their opinion, it becomes hazardous to any of the participants.
- The Evaluator(s) shall have discretion in the administration and evaluation of all portions of the test.

9. DISTRACTIONS

- Natural distracters including, but not limited to, dead animals, food wrappers/containers, and/or uneaten foods may be a part of any of the test components. This simulates what handlers will have to deal with on actual searches. Should the handler call a final response or if the K-9 is unable to work past a natural distracter, the test shall be considered a failure. Evaluators shall not remove any distractors.

10. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- A pack check is not a pre-test requirement but the handler is expected to carry adequate first aid supplies and water for the handler/K-9 team. NSDA has published a recommended equipment list but, for this test, it is the responsibility of the handler to be adequately equipped and attired for the present conditions.
- Although a pack check is not part of the evaluation, lack of adequate equipment may be a reason for the exam to be stopped and considered a failure. For example, if the handler runs out of water, the Evaluator may stop the test if there is a danger to the health and well-being of the handler and/or the K-9.

11. KNOWLEDGE AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Handler communicates to the Evaluator that they recognize when the K-9 has a change in behavior to human remains odor.
- Handler demonstrates the ability to judge sweeps of areas as to their suitability to the prevailing conditions.
- Handler communicates to the Evaluator that they recognize when either member of the K-9 team is working ineffectively and takes action to compensate for or remedy the situation.

12. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE LAND HRD TEST

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

Land Human Remains Detection Field Test

The following requirements must be successfully completed in order to pass the Land HRD Search Test. If the requirements are not met, the test is considered a failure.

- The K-9 performs the trained final response, as described by the handler, on all sources within the times allotted for each component.
- The handler flags/indicates the location of all sources within the allowable distance from the source for each component.
- If there was an elevated source in a land component, the handler conveyed it was elevated and properly flagged/indicated within a 10 foot radius of the source.
- The K-9 did not urinate/defecate within three (3) feet of the source.
- The K-9 did not try to ingest the source material. If the K-9 picks up the source, they must immediately drop it on command from the handler.
- No false alert is given by the K-9 and called by handler.
- The handler has control of the K-9 during the testing period.
- The K-9 did not demonstrate unwarranted aggressive behavior towards a person or other K-9s while outside of their primary enclosure.

13. BRIEFING OF HANDLER

- A briefing of the handler shall be held at the test site, or in a meeting of the group that has been scheduled by previous arrangement, as close to test time as reasonable.
- The Evaluator shall carefully explain each handler's test boundaries and point out the boundary markers.
- The handler shall address the Evaluator as though the Evaluator were a Search Manager unfamiliar with K-9 search teams and shall introduce the team, explain its capabilities, and ask questions pertinent to the assignment.

14. RE-TESTS

- One testing fee covers an initial test and a re-test, if necessary, within one (1) year of the time of test payment.
- A re-test consists of the entire test and not just the portion of the test that was failed.
- The Evaluator shall mark the scoring sheet in one (1) of three (3) ways concerning the re-test timeline:
"Immediately" Must wait - "Three Months" or "Six Months".
- If an "Immediate" re-test is checked, then there may be another attempt:
 - of all five (5) testing components.
 - of the one (1) testing component, whichever was failed.
- If an immediate re-test constitutes a testing of only one (1) of the five (5) testing components, then it must be done during the same testing event and must be done within a two (2) day period of time. If it cannot be done within two (2) days, the testing candidate shall have to re-test all components even though the score sheet shows an immediate re-test.

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

Land Human Remains Detection Field Test

- Re-tests during the same testing event shall be at the discretion of the Evaluator, only if time permits and there is justification.
- Should weather or something out of the control of the handler or Evaluator cause a test to be stopped (rain, wind, heat, etc.), the Evaluator, at their own discretion, may offer a re-test at the same testing event.
- If the team fails the re-test, the Evaluator shall mark on the scoring sheet that the team is not eligible to test again before a minimum of three (3) months. A copy of the scoring sheet shall be given to the handler.

15. RE-CERTIFICATION

- Re-certification is required every two (2) years.