

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

The Back Track standard has been developed by NSDA for very limited, specific use. It can be helpful for law enforcement, Fish and Game, evidence searches and any related use where the subject's trail must be followed back to its source in order to locate additional items or people. We recommend that a handler has their canine well founded in forward trailing techniques and obedience before pursuing additional training for this standard.

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NATIONAL SEARCH DOG ALLIANCE K-9 BACKTRACKING TEAM CERTIFICATION

Introduction:

The United States Border Patrol Search and Rescue Canines (BORSTAR K-9) have been utilizing backtracking techniques since 2001. This technique is responsible for saving hundreds of lives throughout the nation. When the importance of this technique became evident to the National Search Dog Alliance, NSDA decided to form a certification representing realistic BORSTAR Operations.

The National Search Dog Alliance Backtracking Certification is a test designed to measure both the ability of the dog and the handler in searching for and locating lost people in a backtracking/forward-tracking scenario. With the council of NSDA Advisory Board member, BORSTAR Agent Robert Noziska, the test was designed to duplicate actual field conditions that are encountered by canine teams.

Only persons designated by NSDA can administer, score, and grant this certification to a current NSDA K-9 Team.

During the certification process, the NSDA approved Canine Evaluator will evaluate the dog separately from the handler. All areas of handling will be observed and a pass/fail will be based on an overall observation of the handler's ability and skill in executing the scenario and reading his canine. The canine will be evaluated throughout the scenario on his ability to follow the route of the subjects and a pass/fail will be issued. A failure will be issued if any subjects are not located by completion of the test. Even if all persons are located, a failure may still be issued to the team if the handler receives a failing evaluation. The team will work on leash.

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Set Up Criteria

Trails:

The trails will be laid on terrain that significantly limits the ability of the handler to employ visual tracking techniques.

No part of the trail may be within fifty meters of any other part of the same trail.

The trails will be broken down into turns and legs. Legs are the segments of track between turns. If the dog misses any leg, it will be at the discretion of the instructor as to whether it is a failure or a redo of the exam.

The trail will consist of between two (2) and six (6) turns. These turns shall be no less than forty-five degrees (45°) and no more than ninety degrees (90°) in angle.

Turns shall be spaced a minimum of fifty (50) meters apart and will not be laid on a hard surface. Gradual turns may be included in the trail to avoid or surmount topographical obstacles but will not count as a mandatory change of direction unless they meet previously mentioned specifications.

Subjects:

People utilized to lay the trails will walk in a natural manner. While laying a multiple person trail, the people should walk closely together in single file.

People should remain quietly concealed at either the end of the trail or when their portion of the trail is complete.

Distractions:

The certification will have liberal amounts of distractions which may include, but are not limited to, moving vehicles, food, other animals and animal odors. The Canine Evaluator will determine the amount of distraction utilized in each trailing scenario.

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Single Person Backtrack w/Multiple Person Forward Track:

Trail Setup

The trail will be setup with a group of four to six (4-6) persons walking a straight line to a specific location.

Single Subject:

- Once at this specific location, one (1) person will separate from the group and continue for a minimum of an additional ½ mile.
- The single person will enter and exit the lay-up using the same line of travel.
- The single person will not perform any turns while exiting the lay-up.
- The single person may perform turns but must be at least fifty (50) meters from the lay-up.

Remainder of Subjects:

- The remainder of the Multiple Person Group will stay at this specific location for a minimum of twenty (20) minutes.
- After twenty (20) minutes have elapsed, the remainder of the group will leave the lay-up perpendicular (90 degrees) from their original entrance, walking in-line.
- The Multiple Person Group will continue on for a total of ½ mile.
- No turns will be made in the first fifty (50) meters from the lay-up.
- On completion of the ½ mile track, the group may conceal themselves in separate locations but each person must be within twenty (20) meters of another person.
- Persons will not be fully concealed but will not be readily visible to the canine team testing at distances over fifty (50) meters.

Running of Trail:

Back track:

- The start will be a one (1) person trail, a minimum of one (1) hour old.
- The Canine Evaluator will provide the handler with the approximate location of the start of the trail, within twenty (20) meters.
- The direction of the trail will be given.
- The trail will be a minimum of one (1) mile in length (backtrack and forward track) and include two to six (2-6) turns.
- This trail will be a back track of a minimum of ½ mile to a location where items of personal belongings are located. (Lay-up)

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- The personal belongings left in the lay-up will be scent articles from the Multiple Person Group.
- There will be no items left behind by the single person.

Forward Track:

- From this lay-up, the K-9 team will re-deploy onto a forward track consisting of three to five (3-5) persons.
- After locating the first person, the additional persons may be located by trailing or air scent. No person may be located by air scenting prior to completing the last turn of the laid track.
- Upon locating all three to five (3-5) persons and justifying any techniques in question, a pass/ fail will be issued to the team.

Certification:

Rest Periods:

- The team may stop at any time to rest.
- The length of the rest periods will be at the discretion of the Canine Evaluator.

Team Failure:

A failure will be issued if any subjects remain not located by completion of the test.

Even if all persons are located, a failure may still be issued to the team if the handler receives a failing score.

Handler will be judged on

- appropriate techniques
- reading of canine
- proper leash control
- wandering more than fifty (50) meters off of the laid track

The Canine Evaluator may stop any exercise when:

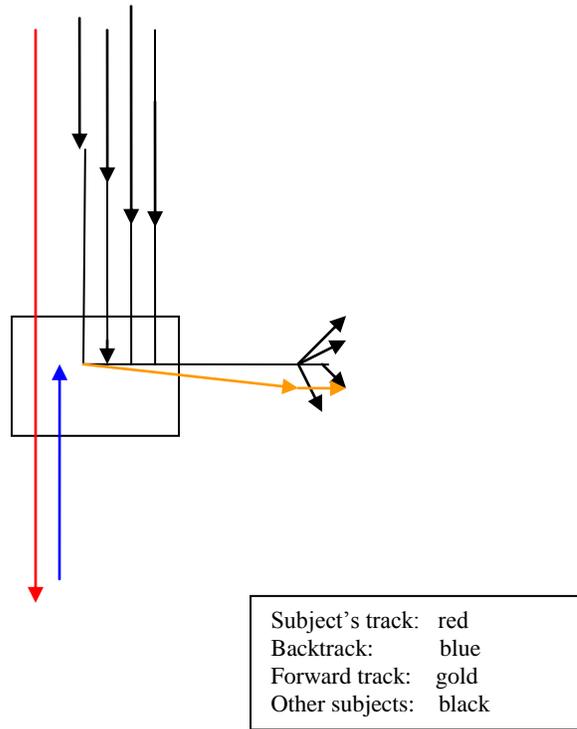
- he determines that the team has stopped working effectively,
- the team has failed to locate a person, or
- it is clear that the team is off the trail and will not successfully re-acquire the trail.

Any exercise that is stopped by a Canine Evaluator is grounds for failure.

Certifications will be issued upon successful completion of the scenario.

Certifications are only valid for two years from date of completion.

TRACK LAYOUT



All lines are shown as being straight for simplification. The trails will actually have several turns as described in the body of the Evaluation document.