

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 in a wilderness area, building and vehicle 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 copies of the prerequisite paperwork have been presented.
- You may be instructed to submit copies of your documents to the Evaluator via mail or e-mail prior to the test. If so, those documents may not be returned.
- 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.

4. TEST SITES

- Evaluator shall accompany the testing team on all testing elements.

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- The search areas should be comprised of light to medium ground cover or trees. The corners of the search areas shall be clearly marked.
- There shall be two (2) one (1) acre areas that can accommodate four (4) testing teams.
- There shall be a roadway approximately 1/10th of a mile long and twenty (20) yards in depth.
- There shall be three (3) vehicles that do not contain testing material or a canine inside.
- There shall be a building 1,000 to 1,500 square feet in size which contains at least three (3) rooms.

5. WILDERNESS

- There shall be a total of three (3) separate testing sites within this one component. Two (2) shall be one (1) acre sites. The third site shall run adjacent to a roadway. The roadway shall be approximately 1/10th of a mile in length, twenty (20) yards in depth and navigable by a non-4-wheel drive passenger car. Search areas should be comprised of light to medium ground cover or trees. The corners of the search areas shall be clearly marked.
- There shall be from zero to three (0-3) sources in each area with the handler being tested not knowing how many sources are in a given area. The sources may be buried or concealed on the ground surface. There may also be an elevated hide of four (4) to six (6) feet in height. 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 not longer than twelve (12) hours.
- Flagging of the source must be within a three (3) foot radius of the actual source on buried and surface.
- Elevated hides require the handler to convey two (2) things to the Evaluator:
 - Handler recognizes that the source is elevated by the K-9's change in behavior.
 - Handler flags a spot within ten (10) feet in any direction from the source material.
- There shall be negative holes dug within each testing area.
- The handler and K-9 shall be given the following testing times:
 - One (1) acre sites: thirty (30) minutes for each acre.
 - Roadway: thirty (30) minutes for the entire roadway.
- 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 piece of cloth or gauze. It could be fresh or old blood.
 - 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.

An effort shall be made to utilize at least one (1) of each of these sources on the test.

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6. BUILDING

- There shall be one (1) building searched. The search area should be no less than 1,000 square feet and no 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 no less than 1,000 square feet nor more than 1,500 square feet. A building with a single room is not suitable for testing.
- The handler and K-9 shall be given no more than fifteen (15) minutes to search the building.
- Sources shall be placed no less than thirty (30) minutes prior to testing and no longer than twelve (12) hours.
- There shall be from one to three (1-3) sources with the handler not knowing how many sources are in a given area. The sources may not be concealed in areas such as in ceiling tiles, piping, air ducts or other such locations that could cause scent to travel throughout the building.
- Prior to setting source material in the building, it is recommended that a certified HRD K-9 work the building to make sure there are no residual odors.
- The indicated location must be within two (2) feet in any direction from the actual source.
- 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. Prior to setting source material on the outside of the vehicle, it is recommended that a certified HRD K-9 work the vehicles to make sure there are no residual odors. This is to prevent unknown sources in the vehicles being identified by the K-9s testing.
- 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. The handler shall show the Evaluator the source's location. The indicated location must be within three (3) feet in any direction from the actual source.
- There shall be one (1) source within the line-up. Source shall be placed no less than thirty (30) minutes prior to the test but no more than six (6) hours. 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 not be placed any higher than the highest point of the vehicle's wheel wells.
- 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.

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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 the natural distracter, it shall be considered a failure. Evaluators shall not clean the areas of any distracters.

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 scent.
- 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

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 final response, as described by the handler, on all sources within the allotted time.
- The handler marks the sources within the allowable distance from the source.
- The K-9 does not urinate/defecate within three (3) feet of the source.
- The K-9 does 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 shall have control of the K-9 during the testing period.

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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 corner 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.
- 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 when the team is eligible to test again. The team shall not be eligible to test again before a minimum time period 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.