



Wake Canine Search and Rescue

Canine/Handler Team Standards

V 2.2 06/05/2003

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Table of Revisions

Version	Date	Author	Changes
V 2.1	05/28/2003	Team effort - with Paul Jarmul formatting	Review, update, and publish previous standards w/gracious help from Cathy, Todd, Bob, and Gail.
V 2.2	06/05/2003	Paul Jarmul	Navigator OK for trailing team. Full debrief at exam finish. Night Search add for Air Scent.

Apprentice Canine/Handler Team{ TC "Executive Overview" \1 1 }

Standards

- Must be an Operational-Beginner Member with WCSAR.
- Canine must have adequate size and strength to negotiate the terrain encountered in wilderness areas.
- Canine must be willing to find and approach strangers.
- Canine cannot be aggressive towards people or other dogs.
- Canine must have basic obedience and be controllable by the Handler.
- Canine must be current on all vaccinations and must be in good health.
- The Handler must maintain training logs to document all training as required by the SOGs set by Wake Canine Search and Rescue.

Training Requirements

- Must maintain Operational status
- Must maintain consistent SAR training for the canine averaging a minimum of twenty runs per quarter reviewed on a quarterly basis. This training can consist of WCSAR sponsored training events and other training opportunities.
- Attend and train canine at WCSAR sponsored training events at least 6 times per quarter.
- Assist other canine handlers as needed with the training of their dogs.
- While not a requirement, canine handlers are encouraged to attend canine training seminars sponsored by other SAR teams and canine training organizations on an annual basis.

Required Equipment

- Field Team Member 24-hour SAR Ready Pack
- Canine lead
- Water for canine
- Device for lighting canine during night training (lighted collar, etc.)
- Harness and lead for on-lead canines
- Bell for off lead canines

Operational Canine/Handler Team

{ TC "Purpose" \1 }

Standards

- Handler must be certified by NASAR as a SARTECH II or possess an equivalent certification approved by the Board of Directors.
- The Handler must meet the standards set by WCSAR for an operational team member.
- The Handler must produce written proof of the canine having successfully completed a recognized obedience evaluation, approved by the Board of Directors, which meets or exceeds the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizens test.
- Prior to testing the Handler must present the dog team's written training records to the Board of Directors for review. The records must indicate a history of success in locating and appropriately alerting to lost subjects in a variety of terrain and weather conditions similar to the terrain normally searched by WCSAR. The training records must document the necessary knowledge and performance skills for the type of certification being challenged. The training records must reflect continuous training for a minimum of six months.
- The dog team must have received a recommendation for qualification from the Deputy Search Commander, or his/her designee, and the Search Commander based on their evaluations of the team's performance during regularly scheduled training events.
- Canine must be non-aggressive and controllable in a variety of situations including crowds, noise, other dogs and a variety of distractions. Aggressive behavior is defined as biting, lunging at people or controlled animals. Aggressive behavior is also defined as continuous growling at people or controlled animals that cannot be corrected by the handler.
- Further, the canine must be at least one year of age prior to qualification testing.
- The Handler must have taken Canine First Aid training and be able to:
 - Define the normal physiological parameters for and perform medical assessments of the following on a canine:
 - Respiration rate
 - Core body temperature
 - Heart rate
 - Pulse
 - Explain the signs of and proper field treatments for:
 - Hypothermia
 - Hyperthermia
 - Dehydration
 - Demonstrate how to improvise a muzzle to control a canine while performing emergency medical treatment. Demonstrate the ability to effectively restrain a canine for examination.
 - Demonstrate how to bandage an injured canine foot and leg using equipment carried in the Handler's pack.
- The Handler must describe and explain to the Deputy Search Commander, or his designee, the effects of the following on how the canine will work:
 - Wind
 - Water
 - Temperature
 - Terrain
 - Time of Day
- Canine must be current on all vaccinations and must be in good health.
- The Handler and Canine must successfully pass the field Search Operations Qualifications Test for the discipline that the team is attempting to qualify for operational status in.

- All qualifications are based on the Canine and Handler as a team. If the Handler wishes to qualify another canine or another handler also wishes to qualify with an operational canine, they must meet the same qualification procedures.
- For the team to maintain its operational status, the team must successfully complete a certification from an independent regionally or nationally recognized SAR dog certifying organization approved by the Board of Directors within 18 months of the date of WCSAR's qualification of the team.
- Further, all teams will be subject to re-qualification to maintain their operational status if the Board of Directors has justifiable reasons to question the team's search effectiveness or if the team fails to train on average at least once a week over a quarterly period. Further, all teams shall be required to re-qualify at the end of two years from the last WCSAR qualification date (or outside recognized certification date) to maintain operational status. To re-qualify, the dog team must successfully pass the WCSAR field Search Operations Qualifications Test for the discipline(s) that the team wishes to be operational in – or pass an independent regionally or nationally SAR dog certified exam approved by the Board of Directors.
- To maintain operational status, the Handler must maintain training logs to document all training as required by the SOGs set by Wake Canine Search and Rescue.

Training Requirements

- Must maintain Operational status
- Must be a NASAR SAR Tech II or equivalent certification approved by the Board of Directors
- Must maintain consistent SAR training for the canine averaging a minimum of twenty runs per quarter reviewed on a quarterly basis. This training can consist of WCSAR sponsored training events and other training opportunities.
- Attend and train canine at WCSAR sponsored training events at least 6 times per quarter.
- Assist other canine handlers as needed with the training of their dogs.
- While not a requirement, canine handlers are encouraged to attend canine training seminars sponsored by other SAR teams and canine training organizations on an annual basis.

Required Equipment

- In addition to equipment listed in Apprentice Canine/Handler Team section:
 - NASAR Equipment list for Canine SARTECH III.
 - 1 – eye wash bottle (normal saline)
 - 6 – antiseptic cleansing pads
 - 1 – muzzle or item to improvise one
 - 2 – pair latex gloves
 - 2 – roller gauze bandages
 - 2 – rolls of vet wrap (2 inch)
 - 4 – LARGE safety pins
 - 4 – sterile dressings (4X4 gauze pads)
 - 1 – super glue (tube or bottle)
 - 2 – towelette
 - 6 – water purification tabs or commercially approved device
 - 1 – instant heat or cold packs (based upon environment)

Search Operations – Wilderness Trailing Dog Team

- The Handler must utilize or explain proper techniques for gathering and handling scent articles such that they do not contaminate the scent article with their scent.
- Prior to the start of the search problem, the Handler will be able to correctly describe to the evaluators the type of indication the canine will give when on/off scent and upon locating the victim.
- Handler may designate another team member to assist in navigation and documentation duties.

Wilderness Evaluation

The dog team will be evaluated as to whether they can follow a subject's scent trail and locate the subject at the end of the trail. Dog team will be evaluated using a trail of 1,600 to 2,400 meters in length and aged a minimum of 15 hours. The trail must contain at least 4 turns. The trail will be laid in moderate wilderness/rural terrain similar to the terrain of central North Carolina. Starting from a contaminated zone such as a camping/hiking area or parking lot, the dog team must be able to correctly establish a direction of travel for the subject. The team will be allowed to cast for the trail as much as needed but the Handler must be able to correctly identify when the canine is on trail. The victim will be in place at the end of the trail 2 hours before the dog team begins. Prior to the start of the test, the victim will provide a map of the trail to the evaluators.

- Subject's trail will have a least 2 cross-tracks laid by one or two other people placed at separate points along the subject's trail.
- Subject's trail will cross at least one road (surfaced or non-surfaced) and will traverse more than one terrain feature. Trail will not have backward loops.
- Search Commander or Deputy Search Commander will provide subject instruction as to required route of travel and ultimate destination.
- The team will be given a PLS, victim information and a scent article. The team will be allowed a maximum of 4 hours for the test.
- The team will provide a full debriefing to the evaluators at the conclusion of the exam. Info should include wind direction/speed, route taken, and high interest areas. The debriefing will occur before the team is shown actual subject route taken.
- The team will be evaluated by two people, one of whom is not a member of WCSAR. If both evaluators agree, then their decision is final. If there is disagreement, then a "no test" will be declared.

Search Operations – Urban Trailing Dog Team

Urban Evaluation

Prior to certifying for urban evaluation, the dog team must have passed the qualifications for Wilderness Trailing Dog Team.

- Handler may designate another team member to assist in navigation and documentation duties.

The dog team will be evaluated as to whether they can follow a victim's scent trail and locate the subject at the end of the trail. Dog team will be evaluated using a trail that is at least 10 blocks in length and will have at least four turns (no backward loops). Terrain must include business district, residential district, one alleyway and a parking lot. The test will be conducted at night and will be aged at least four hours. The victim will be in place at the end of the trail before the dog team begins. Prior to the start of the test, the victim will provide a map of the trail to the evaluators.

- Search Commander or Deputy Search Commander will provide subject instruction as to required route of travel and ultimate destination.
- The canine must be on lead in harness for the urban evaluation.
- The team will be given a PLS, victim information and a scent article. The team will be allowed a maximum of 3 hours for the test.
- The team will provide a full debriefing to the evaluators at the conclusion of the exam. Info should include wind direction/speed, route taken, and high interest areas. The debriefing will occur before the team is shown actual subject route taken.
- The team will be evaluated by two people, one of whom is not a member of WCSAR. If both evaluators agree, then their decision is final. If there is disagreement, then a "no test" will be declared.

Search Operations – Wilderness Air Scent Dog Team

- Either Day or Night Area Search may be taken to become operational. However, the team should take the ‘other’ exam within 6 months.
- The Handler must utilize or explain proper techniques for gathering and handling scent articles such that they do not contaminate the scent article with their scent.
- Prior to the start of the search problem, the Handler will be able to correctly describe to the evaluators the type of indication the canine will give when on/off scent and upon locating the victim.

Day Area Search

Dog team will be evaluated searching for one victim in a 60 – 100 acre area of moderate wilderness terrain similar to the terrain generally searched by WCSAR. The subject will establish a reasonably camouflaged location within the search area at least 5 hours prior to the evaluation. The Handler must be able to direct the canine’s search activity based on wind, terrain, time of day, and weather in a rational pattern that will cover the assigned search segment. The canine must locate the victim, provide a recognizable trained indication and lead the handler back to the victim. Prior to the start of the test, the victim will provide a map of the trail to the evaluators.

- Search Commander or Deputy Search Commander will provide subject instruction as to required route of travel and ultimate destination.
- The team will be given victim information and a scent article. The team will be allowed a maximum of 4 hours for the test.
- The team will provide a full debriefing to the evaluators at the conclusion of the exam. Info should include wind direction/speed, route taken, and high interest areas. The debriefing will occur before the team is shown actual subject route taken.
- The team will be evaluated by two people, one of whom is not a member of WCSAR. If both evaluators agree, then their decision is final. If there is disagreement, then a “no test” will be declared.

Night Area Search

Same as Day Area Search except evaluation start will occur minimum 1 hour after sunset.

WCSAR Canine Qualification Procedures

For a Handler/Canine team to become operational, they must meet the qualification standards and evaluations established by the Board of Directors of WCSAR. When a canine team wishes to be evaluated to change their operational status or to be evaluated to additional standards, they must contact the Search Commander and prove they have meet the pre-requisites for qualification. The Search Commander will take the request to the Board of Directors who shall determine if the team is ready for evaluation. If the Board of Directors does not have first-hand knowledge of the team's ability, they may choose to contact other team members for their observations during training and their opinion of the team's preparedness for evaluation. Once the Board of Directors has approved the request for operational qualification, the Search Commander will schedule the evaluation at the earliest time convenient for the evaluators. Two evaluators will evaluate the Search Operations Qualification Test. At the beginning of the evaluation, the Search Commander or test administrator shall review with the Handler the goals of the test and answer any questions regarding the search segment and subject. The Handler shall explain his/her search strategy at the beginning of the evaluation. Should the Handler change strategy at any time during the test, they shall immediately inform the evaluators.

If a dog team fails, at the discretion of the Search Commander and the availability of the evaluators, another evaluation may be set up for the following day. If the dog team fails on a second attempt, the Board of Directors shall decide under what criteria the team may re-test.

Wilderness Trailing/Air-Scent Dog Team Evaluation Checklist

Handler:		Canine:	
SAR TECH II?		K9 Good Citizen?	
Canine First Aid training?			
Weather Conditions:			
Evaluator:		Evaluator:	
Date/Time Started:		Date/Time completed	
Note: * Starred items denote critical skills, which must receive a passing score			

Handler Skills	Pass	Fail	N/A
1. Is the handler adequately attired and equipped?			
2. Did the handler develop the appropriate strategy based on the information acquired?			
3. Did handler utilize or explain proper techniques for gathering and handling scent articles?			
4. Did handler describe the dog's alerts?			
5. Did handler document the dog's alerts?			
6. Did handler describe the dog's indication?			
7. Was handler alert to visual clues?			
8. Was handler able to justify their field tactics?*			
9. Did handler accurately debrief?			
10. Was handler able to describe the relevant meteorology?			
11. Is handler in tune with the dog's needs?*			
12. Did handler properly evaluate terrain and track clues?			
13. Did handler document the routes traveled?			

Canine Skills	Pass	Fail	N/A
1. Did the dog stay focused on the search?*			
2. Is the dog easily refocused after being distracted?			
3. Does the dog scent discriminate?			
4. Is the Air-Scent dog willing to leave the handler to follow up on a scent?			
5. Does the dog search effectively?			
6. Did the dog make a self-directed find on the subject?*			
7. Did the dog indicate to the handler that it had found the subject?			
8. Did the dog direct the handler to the subject?*			

Team Skills	Pass	Fail	N/A
1. Did the dog demonstrate obedience through its reactions to the handler's commands?			
2. Do the dog and handler make an effective team?*			
Overall Recommendation:			

Evaluator Signature:		Evaluator Signature:	
Comments - if necessary use back of sheet:			

Wilderness Trailing / Air-Scent Dog Team Evaluation Checklist Instructions

Handler Skills:

1. Is the handler adequately attired and equipped?

24 HR SARTECH II ready pack & canine specific equipment as listed for Canine SARTECH III

Canine lead

Water bowl

Bell, if at night - lighted collar

2. Did the handler develop the appropriate strategy based on the information acquired?

Candidate shall tell the evaluator their initial search strategy prior to beginning the evaluation. The candidate may change the search strategy during the evaluation but must relay this information to the evaluators at the time the strategy is being changed, and provide reasons for the change of strategy. The evaluators may ask questions during search pertaining to strategy.

3. Did handler utilize or explain proper techniques for gathering and handling scent articles?

Candidate shall show or explain to the evaluator proper procedures for gathering and handling a scent article, e.g.: "Using sterile gloves, insert a sterile gauze pad into jacket sleeve, let 'cook', and then place pad in zip lock bag."

4. Did handler describe the dog's alerts?

For this exam please use the following definition of alert, indication, trained alert or trained 'hard alert':

Alert: The particular behavior your dog exhibits when on 'human scent' vs. no longer working 'human scent'.

Trained alert or Trained 'hard alert': The trained behavior your dog shows when having found the victim, example return and re-find, stay and bark, return and lead back on leash, etc.

Indication: Any real-time interest your dog is showing, (human scent or none). Describes the working behavior of the dog in real-time, e.g.: "My dog is indicating an alert", or "My dog is indicating he/she just noticed deer up ahead".

In Summary: Prior to the test, the handler must be able to describe the particular working behaviors of the dog (tail, ears, nose position, etc.) when the dog is on scent vs. no longer working human scent, and the behavior (ex: whine, stay and bark) when the dog has located the subject. The handler shall advise evaluators during the evaluation if any changes to the described working pattern occur, and why those changes are occurring (ex: deer distraction, restart needed).

5. Did handler document the dog's alerts?

Tracking/Trailing: Should the tracking/trailing dog lose track/trail, candidate shall provide evaluator with information in regards to last known location of scent, indicate such on a map, and be allowed to return to that location in an attempt to relocate scent. Handler shall also describe how he/she "restarts" the dog. Handler may designate another individual to assist in navigator duties.

Air-Scent: Handler should be able to indicate victims location on the map provided along with any other pertinent information regarding alerts.

6. Did handler describe the dog's indication?

During the evaluation, the handler shall advise the evaluators the dog's behavior (indications or alerts) while on versus off scent, and any changes in behavior when the canine indicates having found the victim (ex: bark or whine).

7. Was handler alert to visual clues?

The handler will be able to correctly gather and handle scent articles or other possible clue items found.

8. Was handler able to justify their field tactics?*

Based on the search strategy described before testing began and any necessary modifications after the test began, the handler should have adequately described the overall search tactics used.

9. Did handler accurately debrief?

If the victim was not found, the handler should be able to estimate the POD of the area searched, including high interest areas they would like to rework. Providing time has not expired, evaluators will determine if information provided is sufficient and accurate enough to allow a restart.

If the victim was found, handler will provide full debriefing to evaluators – including wind direction/speed, route traveled, and high interest areas. Debriefing will occur before handler is shown map of actual victim route taken.

10. Was handler able to describe the relevant meteorology?

The handler should be able to describe any current meteorological factors that might influence the field problem, including wind, water, temp, terrain, time of day, etc.

11. Is handler in tune with the dog's needs?*

The handler should provide encouragement, rest, and water as needed.

12. Did handler properly evaluate terrain and track clues?

Visual clues: (NA if not required for the exam). Any visual clues discovered should be properly bagged/tagged or otherwise identified (e.g. footprints noted/measured/marked).

How the handler used the terrain to search more effectively.

13. Did handler document the routes traveled?

The handler should be able to document the routes traveled on the provided map.

Tracking/Trailing handler may designate another individual to assist in navigator duties.

Canine Skills:

1. Did the dog stay focused on the search?*

The dog should show the described working behavior at all times. If not, the handler should be able to describe why (lost scent, dog tired –needs a break, etc).

2. Is the dog easily refocused after being distracted?

The handler should be able to effectively refocus the dog if the dog has lost scent or has become distracted. Handler should indicate distraction or lost scent, and restart method to be used.

3. Does the dog scent discriminate?

The dog should track the correct victim.

4. Is the Air-Scent dog willing to leave the handler to follow up on scent?

When the dog has come across the victim's scent cone, the dog should follow up on this rather than remain with the handler.

5. Does the dog search effectively?

The dog should stay focused and not be easily distracted.

6. Did the dog make a self-directed find on the subject?*

If the handler has a visual to the victim, the handler should not have to 'lead' the dog to the victim.

7. Did the dog indicate to the handler that it had found the subject?

The dog should carry out the appropriate alert as indicated by the handler prior to the test start.

8. Did the dog direct the handler to the subject?*

A successful find should be made with the dog leading the handler to the victim.

Team Skills:

1. Did the dog demonstrate obedience through its reactions to the handler's commands?

The dog should obey handler's commands.

2. Do the dog and handler make an effective team?*

Overall, the handler and dog should appear to have a close and effective working relationship.

Overall Recommendation:

Starred * items are a must pass. The evaluators should both be of the opinion that the team being tested is ready for full operational status. Comments should be provided on skills to improve upon.

Evaluator instructions - items covered with candidates:

Track/trailing candidate shall be asked the following questions:

- “Please show or explain the proper techniques for gathering and handling scent articles”
- “Please describe your dog’s working style when on track/trail, including head set, tail movement, and general body language.”
- Please describe your dog’s behaviors when not on track/trail, including head set, tail, movement, general body language.”

The following will then be read to the candidate:

“The candidate shall articulate to the evaluators should the dog exhibit different behaviors from the described behaviors given to the evaluators prior to the start of the evaluation. The candidate shall be allowed to restart to establish initial direction of travel. The handler shall determine if restart of direction of travel is necessary and may restart at PLS. Should track/trailing dog lose track/trail, candidate shall provide evaluators with information in regards to last known location of scent, indicate such on the map, and be allowed to return dog to that location in attempt to relocate scent. Should the candidate visually locate the subject prior to the dog’s indication, candidate shall tell evaluators that they have visually located the subject. The team shall then continue their search until the dog makes an indication on the subject. Should it be obvious to the evaluators that the handler has led or is leading the dog to the subject without proper strategy/working behaviors, the evaluators shall call the test as fail.”

Air-scent candidate shall be asked the following questions:

- “Please show or explain the proper techniques for gathering and handling scent articles”
- “Please describe your dog’s working style when on scent, including head set, tail movement, and general body language.
- Please describe your dog’s behaviors when not on scent, including head set, tail, movement, general body language.”
- Please describe your dog’s trained alert upon locating the lost subject (e.g.: stay and bark, return and re-find, etc).”

The following will then be read to the candidate:

“The candidate shall articulate to the evaluators should the dog give a different trained or hard alert than what was stated prior to test start. A false alert may result in failure of the evaluation and termination of the test.”

“The candidate shall tell evaluators their initial search strategy prior to beginning the evaluation. The candidate may change search strategy during the evaluation but must relay that information to the evaluators at the time the strategy is being changed, and provide reasoning for the change of strategy. The evaluators may ask questions during search pertaining to strategy.”

“The candidate shall be allowed to complete one full grid of the assigned search area. Should candidate complete grid prior to locating subject, evaluator’s shall stop the clock. Once candidate has provided evaluators with POD of areas not covered, high interest areas or areas they would like to recover due to their estimation of performance in the area, evaluator shall determine if information provided is in relationship to the subject location and the clock shall be restarted. Candidate will be allowed to return to the area they designate as high interest to rework. If the area they would like to recover is in no relationship whatsoever to where the subject location is, the clock shall not be restarted and the evaluation will be terminated.”

Starting the test:

- Provide handler with map of area
- Read the scenario to the candidate and answer any questions the candidate may have. Ensure each candidate is read the same scenario:
 - “(Name of subject) told their spouse that they were going for a hike and would be home in time for the next meal. It has been X* hours since then and the Sheriff’s Dept has contacted WCSAR to assist in the search.” (X* - adjust as needed for test being given)
- Evaluator should have a description of the subject in the event the candidate asks for this. It is up to the candidate to request a scent article, the evaluator is responsible for having the scent article prepared and maintained in the event it is requested.
- Evaluator will ask the candidate to say when they are ready to begin the test. When affirmative - the clock shall be started.