

ASRC Dog Handler evaluation checklist

Evaluator:

Evaluator signature:

Affiliation:

Date of test(s):

Location of test(s):

Please mark next to the bullet ("•") beside each tested skill with an "S" for "Satisfactory," "U" for "Unsatisfactory," or "N" for "Not tested." Note that a "Satisfactory" grade indicates that the team has performed the skill in question at a level that indicates they would be an asset in a real search; an "Unsatisfactory" indicates the opposite. An "N" may be made either for skills that team has previously passed, that they will be evaluated for in the future, or that are not relevant to the certification sought (e.g., a previously certified team seeking recertification).

Also note that at the end of this evaluation form there is a space for an overall score for the major elements tested, as well as any comments/suggestions/remediation steps that the evaluator would like to put forward.

The following checklist consists of the performance expectations excerpted from the:

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
SEARCH AND RESCUE PROGRAM

STANDARDS FOR AIR SCENT SEARCH DOG TEAMS

• A. Handler Written Test

1. The handler will complete a comprehensive written or oral test and will achieve a score of at least 70%.
2. The test of 100 multiple choice questions will be provided by VDES and will be randomly selected from questions supplied by the SAR Dog Standards Committee.
3. The test will be administered by the unit's evaluator(s) and kept with the unit's records.
4. At a minimum, topics will include
  - a. scent transport theory
  - b. canine first aid

- c. land navigation
- d. search theory
- e. victim characteristics
- f. topographical maps
- g. search strategy
- h. ASRC grid
- i. clue and site protection procedures

#### B. Dog Behavior Evaluation

- 1. The dog and handler will load into the back of a vehicle, such as a pickup truck, along with at least two other people and two other dogs. The vehicle will then be driven for a period of at least one mile during which time the dog must not display aggressive or uncontrolled behavior.
- 2. The handler will stand with the dog in the heeling position. A stranger will approach and engage the handler in conversation. The dog must not show aggressive behavior toward the stranger.
- 3. The dog will be tied to a stationary point on a 6-foot lead. Another handler, with a dog at heel, will walk within 10 feet of the point where the dog is tied. The dog will show no aggressive behavior.

#### C. Obedience Evaluation

- 1. The dog will heel on command through a straight walk, a right turn, a left turn, and a 180 degree turn. The dog will be off lead or on a loose lead.
- 2. The dog will sit or stand in the heeling position when the handler stops.
- 3. The dog will remain in place without correction for a minimum of five minutes with the handler a minimum of 50 feet away. The dog will remain in place even if people or other dogs are present and moving around the dog. The dog will not be tied.
- 4. The dog will return to the handler immediately when called.
- 5. The handler must be able to stop the dog while it is in motion.

#### D. Agility Evaluation

- 1. The dog will jump onto an object, such as the tailgate of a pickup truck or an elevated platform, having a minimum height of 2.5 feet.
- 2. The dog will walk across a board that is at least 12 feet long, no more than 12 inches wide, and is at least 3 feet above the ground. Step 3 can be combined with Step 2.

•3. The dog will go through a 36" diameter passageway at least 8 feet long.

•4. The dog will perform steps 2 through 4 physically unaided.

## APPENDIX B

### •AIR SCENT SEARCH DOG TEAM GUIDELINES FOR OVERNIGHT BIVOUC

1. The purpose of the overnight bivouac is to test the individual's ability to spend the night in the out-of-doors in a bivouac and still be able to function adequately the next day.

2. The reason for this requirement is that a search and rescue person may find themselves in a situation in the field where they are forced to spend the night with whatever equipment they happen to have with them.

3. In order to simulate this situation for an evaluation, the following guidelines should apply.

a. The individual's equipment should be restricted to what they normally carry in a "day pack" during an actual search.

b. The bivouac area should be typical terrain found in searches and far enough from roads and vehicles to create some sense of realism.

c. Access to vehicles and equipment caches during the bivouac should be denied.

d. The individual must demonstrate the ability to build a fire and shelter.

4. The bivouac should not become an exercise in raw survival. The evaluators should inspect each person's equipment and help ensure that it is at least minimally adequate for the environment.

5. Safety is of paramount importance. The participating individuals should be monitored carefully during the night to ensure that problems such as hypothermia do not develop. The evaluators should have a contingency plan for such emergencies.

## APPENDIX C

### EVALUATOR INSTRUCTIONS

1. Written test materials will be issued to the evaluator(s) by the State SAR Coordinator upon request. All test materials are confidential and security is the responsibility of the evaluator(s) to whom it is issued.
2. All tests and evaluations will be scored on forms approved by the SAR Dog Standards Committee and will be signed by the evaluator(s).
3. The objectives of the behavior, obedience and agility evaluations are to help ensure that both the dog and the handler can work together as a team safely, efficiently and in conjunction with other teams and personnel. Performance on these evaluations should be as written, but does not have to be to competition (dog trial) standards.
4. The objectives of the 40 acre and the 160 acre field evaluations are to evaluate planning ability search techniques and team stamina. The following guidelines should be observed.
  - a. It is the evaluator's responsibility to ensure that the subjects are properly dressed for the conditions and have adequate food, water and other necessary equipment to remain for the duration of the evaluation.
  - b. The subjects should be placed in the search area far enough apart that the team must search a substantial portion of the area before all of the subjects are located.
  - c. The goal is not just to locate the subject(s) but to evaluate planning and technique. It is possible for a team to do an adequate job of searching an area, and to achieve a high POD without finding all of the subjects.
  - d. It is also possible for the team to locate all of the subjects and still score an overall "Unsatisfactory" on the evaluation.
  - e. As subjects are located, they should immediately leave the area by a route that will not interfere with the continuing search effort.

#### APPENDIX D

##### Search Skills Evaluation 160 Acre Problem

1. An area of approximately 160 acres will be used for the evaluation. The area should contain mostly woods with at least some light to moderate underbrush. The area should

not contain large areas of extreme terrain such as dense underbrush, swamps, or large streams, or be extremely steep. It should also not contain large areas of open fields.

2. The evaluation will be conducted during daylight hours. Weather conditions should not be extreme, such as heavy rain or snow, or high winds.

3. Two or three subjects will be placed by the evaluators in the search area. The subjects will remain quiet during the evaluation, either sitting or lying down, dressed in muted clothes, and not obvious beyond 25 feet. They are not to assist the team in locating them in any way.

•4. The handler will be given a scenario and a map of the search area, and will not be told the number of subjects. He/she must describe to the evaluators how the area will be searched based on terrain, wind direction, visibility and any other pertinent factors.

•5. The handler must describe to the evaluators how the dog will alert when it detects human scent. During the actual search, each time the handler observes the dog alerting he/she must clearly inform the evaluators of that fact.

6. The evaluation must last at least two hours from the start of the actual search, and a maximum of six hours. The evaluators may terminate the search at any time if unsafe conditions exist or if they have observed enough to determine if the team will, or will not, pass.

•7. At the end of the search, the handler will debrief with the evaluators and will indicate on the map areas searched, areas not searched, wind characteristics, alerts, clues located, estimated POD for the area searched and any other pertinent information.

•8. During the evaluation the dog should make a self directed air scent find and indicate on and/or refind at least one subject. If conditions are such that a self directed find is not probable, then the evaluators may direct the team to a known subject in another identified area, or may set up a smaller secondary problem to observe the dog's alert and refind.

## Appendix E

Search Skills Evaluation  
40 Acre Night Problem

1. An area of approximately 40 acres will be used for the evaluation. The area should contain mostly woods with at least some light to moderate underbrush. The area should not contain large areas of extreme terrain such as dense underbrush, swamps, or large streams, or be extremely steep. It should also not contain large areas of open fields.

2. The evaluation will be conducted during night time hours, and should begin at least one hour after sunset. Weather conditions should not be extreme, such as heavy rain or snow, or high winds.

3. One or two subjects will be placed by the evaluators in the search area. The subjects will remain quiet during the evaluation, either sitting or lying down, dressed in muted clothes, and not obvious beyond 25 feet. They are not to assist the team in locating them in any way.

• 4. The handler will be given a scenario and a map of the search area, and will be told the number of subjects. He/she must describe to the evaluators how the area will be searched based on terrain, wind direction, visibility and any other pertinent factors.

• 5. The handler must describe to the evaluators how the dog will alert when it detects human scent. During the actual search, each time the handler observes the dog alerting he/she must clearly inform the evaluators of that fact.

6. The evaluation may last a maximum of three hours. The evaluators may terminate the search at any time if unsafe conditions exist, or if they have observed enough to determine that the team will, or will not, pass. If the subject(s) is/(are) found within an hour, the evaluators may require the team to continue searching until the evaluators are comfortable with the handler's night skills.

• 7. At the end of the search the handler will debrief with the evaluators and will indicate on the map, areas searched, areas not searched, estimated POD for the area searched and any other pertinent information.

• 8. During the evaluation the dog must should make a self-directed air scent find and indicate/refind on at least one subject. If conditions are such that a self directed find are is not probable, then the evaluators may direct the team to a known subject in another identified area, or may set up a smaller secondary problem to observe the dog's alert and indication and/or refind .

## Appendix F

### Field Skills Reevaluation 40 Acre Field Problem

1. An area of approximately 40 acres will be used for the evaluation. The area should contain mostly woods with at least some light to moderate underbrush. The area should not contain large areas of extreme terrain such as dense underbrush, swamps, or large streams, or be extremely steep. It should also not contain large areas of open fields.

2. The evaluation may be conducted at night or during daylight hours. Weather conditions should not be extreme, such as heavy rain or snow, or high winds.

3. Zero to two subjects will be placed by the evaluators in the search area. The number of victims will be unknown to the handler. The subjects will remain quiet during the evaluation, either sitting or lying down, dressed in muted clothes, and not obvious beyond 25 feet. They are not to assist the team in locating them in any way.

•4. The handler will be given a scenario and a map of the search area, but will not be told the number of subjects. He/she must describe to the evaluators how the area will be searched based on terrain, wind direction, visibility and any other pertinent factors.

•5. The handler must describe to the evaluators how the dog will alert when it detects human scent. During the actual search, each time the handler observes the dog alerting he/she must clearly inform the evaluators of that fact.

6. The evaluation must last at least 1 hour from the start of the actual search, and a maximum of three hours. The evaluators may terminate the search at any time if unsafe conditions exist or after 1 hour if they have observed enough to determine if the team will or will not pass.

•7. At the end of the search the handler will debrief with the evaluators and will indicate on the map areas searched, areas not searched, wind characteristics, alerts, clues located, estimated POD for the area searched and any other pertinent information.

•8. If a subject or subjects have been placed in the search area during the evaluation the dog must make a self-directed air scent find and indication/refind on at least one subject. If no subjects were placed in the search area, the team will be directed to a smaller secondary problem for

the evaluators to observe the dog's alert and refind. If subjects are placed in the search area but conditions are such that a self-directed find is not probable, the evaluators may set up a smaller secondary problem to observe the dog's alert and indication/refind.

OVERALL SCORES:

Written test:

Behavior evaluation:

Obedience test:

Agility test:

Bivouac:

160-acre day problem:

40-acre night problem:

40-acre recertification problem:

Comments (blank page follows):

