

Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference

Proposed Policy for Dogs at Joint Activities

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Scope: This policy applies to any activity, including both training and actual search and rescue operations, when more than one ASRC Group is participating.

Definitions:

- **Aggressive behavior** is any uncontrolled growling, snarling, lunging or other unprovoked reaction directed at either a person or canine, whether contact is made with the intended target or not. Exceptions: A canine which is protecting itself, its handler, or another person or canine from an aggressive action shall not be considered the aggressor. Additionally, accidental bites that are not aggressive in nature (for example, if someone is playing tug with a toy or hand-feeding a dog and the canine inadvertently bites a finger), this will not be considered aggressive behavior -- though there may still be training that is needed to avoid similar incidents in the future.
- **Biting** is any aggressive skin-contact by teeth directed at a person, canine, cat, or other domestic animal. any attempted bite, including snapping in the air but missing the target person, canine, cat, or other domestic animal, or a bite that is blocked by clothing or avoided by defensive reaction of the intended target is also considered a biting incident.

Policies:

- Pets at joint activities will be held to the same standards as team-member dogs.
- Handlers must bring evidence of current required vaccinations for the dog. Handlers who cannot provide such evidence for their dogs on demand must remove the dogs from the vicinity of the activity.
- At all times, dogs must be on a lead/leash, or confined, except when the dog is working during a training exercise or field task.
- If the event is held at a facility with buildings, dogs are permitted in buildings only with the express permission of the facility's owner, manager or operator.
- In developed areas, dog poop must be bagged and disposed of by handler.
- It is recommended, but not required, that bite-trained dogs not participate in joint activities.
- If there is a conflict between dogs, there will be no attempts to determine fault, but handlers must immediately confine both dogs except brief walks for necessary bodily functions pending further investigation.
- If there are complaints about a dog's behavior, the handler must confine the dog except for training exercises and brief walks for necessary bodily functions pending further investigation.
- Members at joint activities should
- The ASRC member in overall charge of the joint activity, or a designate, will investigate all reported bites and categorize them according to the [Dr. Ian Dunbar Dog Bite Scale](#). Any dog

responsible for a level 4 bite shall be expelled from the joint activity and shall not be permitted to attend future joint ASRC activities, both training activities and missions. The investigation of the aggressive behavior should include the following information and should be recorded and reported to the Conference Training Officer:

- Date, time, and location of the incident
 - Name of the dog or dogs involved and the person or people involved
 - Name and contact information of the handler for all dogs involved
 - Nature and circumstances of the incident
 - A photograph if any injury that result from the bite, if possible
 - Names and contact information for any witnesses to the incident
- Dogs responsible for a level 1-3 incident shall be suspended from participation in joint ASRC functions, both training and joint search and rescue operations. Such dogs may return to joint activities only once dog's Group Training Officer can report to Conference Training Officer that the behavior issues have been successfully addressed. This may include requirements for any or all of the following:
 - Medical check by a vet
 - Consultation with a canine trainer
 - Development and execution of a bite-inhibition training program
 - Re-evaluation by the Group's Canine Officer or equivalent
 - Successful certification or re-certification test
 - Other remediation or training activities as determined by Group Training Officer.