

## IX. ASRC Operational Air Scent Search Dog Team (DT)

### A. Purpose

1. The Air Scent Search Dog Team standards were developed to define the minimum requirements deemed necessary by the ASRC to perform the following functions in the general environment of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States of America:
  - a. Missing person search in wilderness, rural, suburban, and urban areas using air-scent techniques; and
  - b. Assist with the evaluation, organization, and investigation of missing person incidents.
2. The team should be capable of performing these functions anytime of the year, day or night, and in all weather conditions experienced in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The team may work with a variety of individuals and organizations without the typical oversight provided by an ASRC Incident Commander and Overhead Team. In order to accomplish this, the handler should be able to:
  - a. Understand the search and rescue system used by the ASRC and by the Commonwealth of Virginia;
  - b. Understand the theory and practice of missing person search;
  - c. Plan, execute, debrief, and document a variety of dog search tasks;
  - d. Navigate accurately on land; and
  - e. Survive an unexpected wilderness emergency.
3. These standards do not address any particular breed of dog since many breeds can be trained to do search work. However, it is important that the dog have the stamina for long hours of searching in all kinds of weather. In addition, the dog must be sociable and controllable in situations involving crowds, noise, other dogs, and a variety of distractions.
4. The terminology used in this standard is based on the definition list found in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Standards for Air Scent Dog Teams. No deviation was made from that list.

### B. Qualifications

1. To become an operational team, the handler and/or dog must:
  - a. Meet all standards established for ASRC Field Team Leader;
  - b. Have a dog of at least 12 months old, in good health. In questionable cases, a veterinarian's health certificate may be requested;
  - c. Submit proof of proper canine licensure, proof of current vaccinations, and proper tags required by law;

- d. Successfully pass the standard ASRC DT written test;
- e. Successfully complete the standard ASRC DT skills evaluation checklist; and
- f. Be proposed for DT membership by the Group K9 Officer at a group business meeting and receive a simple majority of the vote.

### C. Equipment Requirements

In addition to the required equipment for the FTL standard, DT must possess the following additional equipment:

1. Water containers of a minimum two liter capacity;
2. Dog bowl;
3. Dog first aid kit containing:
  - a. Imodium AD;
  - b. Benadryl;
  - c. Vet Rap
  - d. Zip lock bag (for irrigation);
  - e. Clotting powder (furison);
  - f. Disinfectant suitable for dog's coat; an
  - g. Buffered aspirin.
4. Lighter or powder; and
5. Dog snacks.

### D. Handler Knowledge and Performance Expectations

ASRC DT standards closely resemble Virginia Air Scent Search Dog Team standards. *Italicized* items are additional requirements for ASRC members. The DT will demonstrate an understanding of the items listed under each subject. Some items require the performance of manual skills.

1. SAR Operations
  - a. Demonstrate the ability to develop basic search dog assignments for a search incident and provide appropriate recommendations for additional resource support to the incident.
  - b. Understand general safety considerations in SAR operations, including dealing with critical incident stress.
  - c. Understand the provisions of the Virginia Search and Rescue Council "Standard Operating Procedures."
2. Scent Transport Theory – understand the following concepts
  - a. Lofting;

- b. Pluming;
- c. Fumigating;
- d. Coning;
- e. Looping; and
- f. Fanning.

### 3. Land Navigation

- a. Demonstrate the ability to use ungridded maps to determine the coordinates of a given point.

### 4. Search Skills

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of these search tactics:
  - 1. Contour search;
  - 2. Ridges/Drainages;
  - 3. K-9 grid search; and
  - 4. Corridor search.
- b. Describe procedures for working with tracking or trailing dogs and mantrackers.
- c. Demonstrate the alert and indication of the handler's dog, including the differences between animal and human alerts.
- d. Given a *search scenario*, discuss and demonstrate the ability to plan the dog task considering wind direction and other weather conditions, visibility, terrain characteristics, and desired POD.
- e. Demonstrate the ability to perform the task above.
- f. Demonstrate the ability to translate field activity onto a topographic map, including route taken, areas searched and not searched, alerts, clues located, wind direction, times for all of the above, and estimated POD for the task.
- g. Demonstrate the ability to accurately debrief the task, providing the debriefer all of the information listed above.

### 5. Canine First Aid

- a. The handler must recognize and know how to treat the following:
  - 1. Excessive bleeding;
  - 2. Heat stroke;
  - 3. Bloat;
  - 4. Shock; and
  - 5. Dehydration.

- b. The handler must know which human medications carried in his pack may be shared with the dog and which may not be.

## E. Canine Performance Expectations

### 1. Behavior

- a. The dog must not display aggressive behavior.

### 2. Obedience

- a. The dog must respond appropriately to handler commands.
- b. The dog must demonstrate the ability to walk with the handler in the heeling position, maintain a sit-stay or a down-stay, even when the handler is not present, and return to the handler when called.

### 3. Agility

- a. The dog must demonstrate the ability to negotiate obstacles and walk on unsteady or elevated surfaces.
- b. The dog must demonstrate the ability to jump onto and off of elevated surfaces.

### 4. Search Skills

- a. The dog must be actively searching. He should move out away from the handler.
- b. The dog must demonstrate the ability and stamina to search effectively for at least two hours.
- c. The dog team must demonstrate the ability to search day and night in terrain and weather conditions typically encountered in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

### 5. Alert

- a. The dog must indicate and the handler must be able to recognize the dog's behavior when it encounters human scent.
- b. The alert must be clear enough that the handler is not likely to miss it or mistake it for a non-human alert.

### 6. Indication

- a. Once the dog has located the subject, it must indicate that fact to the handler by some method. It must then direct the handler to the subject.
- b. The method of indicating a find may be visual or audible, but must be clear enough that the handler is not likely to miss or mistake it.

## F. ASRC Operational Air Scent Dog Team Test Procedures

### 1. ASRC Handler Written Test

- a. The test consists of, at minimum, 100 questions randomly supplied by the VASARCO SAR Dogs Standards Committee.
- b. The test is administered and graded by the Group Canine Officer. The minimum passing score is 80 percent.
- c. More information on the written test can be found in the Virginia Air Scent Search Dog Team standards.

### 2. ASRC Dog Team Practical Test

- a. The ASRC designates the testing procedure outlined in the Virginia Air Scent Search Dog Team standards as its official practical testing standard at this time.

## G. Certification Procedures

1. The ASRC designates the authorization and recertification procedures outlined in the Virginia Air Scent Search Dog Team standards as its official certification procedure at this time, with the following exception:
  - a. Within two years of becoming an operational dog team, the handler must complete a MSO or MSF class.