

National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)

Urban Trailing I, II and III Field Tests

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

- These tests have been promulgated by NSDA to assess handler/K-9 team's ability as to operational suitability for Urban Trailing 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 Urban Trailing Tests.

2. OBJECTIVE:

- **The Urban Trailing I Field Test** demonstrates the ability of a trailing K-9 team to locate a subject within a prescribed time period. This ability combined with the demonstrated ability of the handler to correctly read the behavior of the K-9, the ability of the K-9 to perform a final response when it detects a person, the ability of the handler to collect a quality scent article, and the ability of the handler to formulate and execute a plan constitutes the team field qualification certification for NSDA.
 - Urban Trailing II is a prerequisite for Urban Trailing I.
- **The Urban Trailing II Field Test** demonstrates the ability of a trailing K-9 team to locate a subject within a prescribed time period but with a trail aged for less time than Urban Trailing I. This ability combined with the demonstrated ability of the handler to correctly read the behavior of the K-9, the ability of the K-9 to perform a final response when it detects a person, and the ability of the handler to formulate and execute a plan constitutes the team field certification for NSDA.
- **The Urban Trailing III Field Test** demonstrates the ability of a trailing K-9 team to locate a subject within a prescribed time period but with a shorter trail aged for less time than Urban Trailing II. This ability combined with the demonstrated ability of the handler to correctly read the behavior of the K-9, the ability of the K-9 to perform a final response when it detects a person, and the ability of the handler to formulate and execute a plan constitutes the team field certification for NSDA.

3. GENERAL:

- The handler shall be instructed to submit copies of their prerequisite documents to the Evaluator before the test. Paperwork may not be returned.
- The test shall not begin if all of the prerequisite paperwork have not been presented.
- Testing shall be of the handler and K-9 only, flankers are not permitted.
- This is designed to be an on-lead trailing evaluation to allow the handler and K-9 to perform as a team.
- The handler will describe the K-9's final response to the Evaluator prior to the start of the test.
- This test is not intended to be a footstep-to-footstep tracking event. Deviation from the trail is permitted if progress in the direction of travel towards the end of the trail continues.
- A K-9 team shall not be required to test in conditions other than those in which it would be reasonably expected to search.

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- Handlers may draw numbers for the order in which they are to be tested unless there is a strong, overriding reason for the convenience of the handler or Evaluator.
- No e-collars (shock collars) are permitted to be operational while the team is being evaluated. A Global Positioning System (GPS) collar with an e-collar feature may be worn if the contact pins are removed from the collar or that feature is otherwise disabled.
- Distractions shall not be intentionally placed in the search area.
- The team must acquire the trail and direction of travel within fifteen (15) minutes of the start of the test from within the thirty (30) foot radius circle at the Start Area/Point Last Seen.
- The team shall locate the subject within sixty (60) minutes of the start of the test.
- One (1) re-start is allowed at the beginning of the trail after leaving the Start Area. If the K-9 loses the scent along the remainder of the trail, the team is allowed to re-acquire the trail.
- At the conclusion of the test, the handler shall indicate on the provided map the approximate route travelled and the location of the subject.

4. EVALUATORS:

- The evaluation shall be conducted by a designated NSDA Principal Evaluator with the option of a second Principal Evaluator, Apprentice Evaluator(s), or an NSDA Board-designated observer.
- The Evaluator(s) shall terminate the test, if in their opinion, it become hazardous to any of the participants.
- The Evaluator(s) shall have discretion in the administration and evaluation of all portions of the test.

5. SUBJECTS:

- The subject may be known to the K-9; however, family members, close friends and regular subjects shall not be used. People who have been a subject for the testing team within the last forty-five (45) days shall not be used as a subject.
- The subject shall be provided with adequate water and supplies. He/she shall be provided a radio for emergency contact with the Evaluator.
- The subject shall be briefed prior to placement in the search area. The subject briefing shall include any area hazards and the protocol in the event of an emergency or if the weather should become hazardous during the examination.
- The subject shall be concealed so that the handler cannot see them from a distance of twenty (20) feet or more. The subject shall be non-responsive to the K-9 team during the evaluation, shall remain stationary, and shall be on ground level.
- The subject shall not be placed in a building, vehicle or other structure.
- The Evaluator shall re-insert the subject at the end of the trail at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the evaluation.

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- Evaluators should give careful consideration to subject placement. The subject should be placed in a manner to cause the K-9 team to travel an ever increasing distance away from the subject if a wrong turn is taken.

6. TEST PREPARATION:

Site Selection:

- The trail shall be laid in an urban environment and shall be any combination of paved roads, paths/trails, parking lots and urban parks or industrial parks. At least ninety (90) percent of the trail shall be laid on hard surfaces (i.e. concrete, asphalt, hard flooring, etc.).
- The Start Area (e.g., Point Last Seen) shall be a circle thirty (30) feet in radius with the center indicated by the Evaluator to the handler.
- There shall be no indication of direction of travel at the trail's start. The area chosen shall be large enough so that the team is not "funneled" by fences, buildings or other barriers.
- The subject shall have entered the Start Area to lay the trail. The Start Area shall be located in such a way that the K-9 team can readily access the Start Area and its perimeter.
- The laying of the trail shall be timed to avoid running of the trail during extreme temperatures or during inclement weather conditions.

Scent Articles:

- **Urban Trailing I:** The Principal Evaluator shall direct the candidate to a reliable source such as a vehicle, chair, or bench that the subject had occupied at the time the trail was laid. The candidate shall collect the scent article from the source, and the quality shall be dependent on the candidate's ability to collect an appropriate scent article. The K-9 team shall, in no way, cause damage to the property from which the scent is collected. Any such damage will be the responsibility of the handler (e.g. the handler shall not cut out a section of the driver's seat and use the material as their scent article).
- **Urban Trailing II & III:** A sterile 4X4 scent pad shall be provided to the subject by the Principal Evaluator at the time the trail is laid. The pad shall be rubbed across the subject's arms, neck and hair for at least one (1) minute and placed into a sealable plastic bag by the subject. The bag shall be labelled with the date and time of collection. The Principal Evaluator will provide the prepared scent article to the candidate.

7. THE TRAIL:

- The trail shall be laid in such a way that the K-9 shall not air scent into the subject.
- The trail aging shall at the Evaluator's discretion so that it is convenient for the subject and Evaluator, but also so that it allows for optimum conditions.
- The trail shall be:
 - **Urban Trailing I:** Length: one and one quarter (1 ¼) to one and one half (1 ½) miles; Aged: eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) hours.

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- **Urban Trailing II:** Length: one and one quarter (1 ¼) to one and one half (1 ½) miles; Aged: twelve (12) to eighteen (18) hours.
- **Urban Trailing III:** Length: three-quarter (3/4) mile to one (1) mile; Aged: two (2) to six (6) hours.
- The trail shall have four (4) opportunities for the team being evaluated to have choices and make decisions in determining the direction of the subject's trail (e.g., street intersections, alleyway or a cut-off of a trail into an urban trail system).
- The trail shall include a minimum of four (4) and a maximum of six (6) turns. Changes in direction shall be greater than 45°, both to the right and left. A wrong turn shall take the team away from the subject's footpath.
- The trail shall cross or go through two (2) of the following:
 - A two (2) or four (4) lane paved road.
 - A fenced area building structure (e.g. house, school, office building, warehouse, armory, hotel, shopping center, etc.).
 - Maximum of one (1) fence or barrier easily negotiable without risk or harm to the team.
 - A lightly travelled road.

8. BRIEFING OF HANDLER:

- At the test site, the Evaluator shall carefully explain the Point Last Seen (i.e., Start Area). For Urban Trailing I, the Evaluator shall also direct the handler to the item from which the scent article will be collected.
- The Evaluator shall provide the handler a good quality map of the area.
- The handler shall describe the K-9's final response to the Evaluator.
- The handler shall address the Evaluator as though the Evaluator was a Search Manager unfamiliar with K-9 search teams and shall introduce the team, explain its capabilities, and ask questions pertinent to the assignment.

9. TEST TIMING:

- Following the handler briefing, the team shall have a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes to develop a plan and collect a scent article (if required). The team shall not walk in or near the Start Area until they begin the test.
- Timing of the test shall commence when the handler enters the Start Area, takes a scent inventory, casts the K-9, or scents the K-9.
- The team shall have a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes to acquire the trail and determine direction of travel once they begin the test. The fifteen (15) minutes shall be counted as part of the total time allotted to complete the test.
- The team shall have a total time of sixty (60) minutes to complete the test and locate the subject.

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- Handlers may take breaks; break times shall be counted as part of the total time allotted to complete the test.

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 adequately equipped and attired.
- Lack of adequate equipment may be a reason for an Evaluator(s) to stop or terminate a test.

11. SAFETY:

- The Evaluator(s) may terminate the test at any time if unsafe conditions exist or if either member of the K-9 team or the subject is in jeopardy.

12. TERMINATION OF FIELD TESTS:

The Evaluator(s) shall stop a test and consider it a failure if:

- The team is unable to acquire the trail and indicate the direction of travel within fifteen (15) minutes of beginning the test.
- The team is unable to locate the subject within sixty (60) minutes of beginning the test.
- The team is moving away from the direction of travel, and, in the Evaluator's opinion given wind and terrain conditions, has moved beyond a reasonable distance so as to not be able to reacquire the trail.
- The team is unable to indicate the direction of travel on any part of the trail for an unreasonable amount of time.
- The Evaluator determines that the remainder of the search shall not result in finding the subject.
- The Evaluator determines the team has become lost.
- A false alert is given by the K-9 and called by the handler.
- The handler cued the K-9's final response.
- The handler is abusive to the K-9 including, but not limited to, verbal abuse or lack of proper supplies for existing conditions.
- The handler allows the K-9 to work to such a point that, in the opinion of the Evaluator(s), the health and well-being of the handler or K-9 is at risk.
- The K-9 demonstrates unwarranted aggressive behavior towards any person or K-9 while outside the K-9's primary enclosure.
- The handler is unable to call the K-9 off wildlife or other distractions in or near the search area. The K-9 must respond to the handler's command(s) to return to work.

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13. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION:

The following requirements must be successfully completed in order to pass the Urban Trailing I, II, and III tests:

- The K-9 team is able to acquire the trail and indicate direction of travel within fifteen (15) minutes of the beginning of the test.
- The K-9 locates the subject within sixty (60) minutes and performs the appropriate final response.
- The K-9's final response matches what the handler articulated before the start of the test.
- The handler is able to show the subject's approximate route and location on the search map.
- The handler is able to articulate weather and other conditions relevant to the test.

14. RE-TESTS:

- One testing fee covers an initial test and one re-test, if necessary, within one (1) year of the time of test payment.
- A re-test shall consist of the entire test and not just the portion of the test that was failed.
- Re-tests during the same testing event shall be at the discretion of the Evaluator, only if time permits and there is justification.
- If a handler requests to re-test during the same testing event of an initial failure, the scoring sheet of the initial test must be marked with "re-test immediately".
- A test that is discontinued and cannot be resumed due to weather, safety or health concerns of the handler or K-9 shall not count as a failure. A re-test at the same testing event may be provided at the Evaluator's discretion. If time does not allow for a re-test, the scoring sheet shall be marked "Discontinued" with the reason stated and the handler shall be allowed one re-test in the following twelve (12) months. The testing fee will be credited to the re-test but not refunded.
- If the team fails the test, the Evaluator shall mark on the Scoring Sheet when the team is eligible for a re-test. If the Evaluator marks the initial failed attempt as "re-test in three (3) or six (6) months", the handler shall be ineligible to re-test during the same testing event and shall wait the required time to re-test.
- A new set of paperwork will be completed for re-tests, and all sets forwarded to the Testing Administrator(s).
- A copy of all Scoring Sheets shall be given to the handler.

15. RE-CERTIFICATION:

- Re-certification is required every two (2) years.