

# *National Search Dog Alliance (NSDA)*

## *Shoreline HRD Field Test*

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### **1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

- This test has been promulgated by NSDA to assess handler/K-9 teams as to operational suitability for typical 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 search test(s).

### **2. OBJECTIVE**

- The Shoreline HRD Test demonstrates the ability of the team to safely and effectively search for subjects in a water environment from a shoreline.
- This field test shall demonstrate the ability of the K-9 to search for and recognize the odor of human remains and for the handler to correctly read the behavior of their K-9 partner.
- The handler shall be responsible for formulating and articulating their search strategy and providing the Evaluator with a description of their K-9's trained final response.
- The K-9 shall give a recognizable change in behavior when it initially detects odor from the source. The K-9 shall show significant changes in behavior while in and out of odor and when narrowing the search area.
- This test is designed to simulate an actual search and not team training. You will be asked to approach it as such.

### **3. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- Proof of prior field certification of the team (handler + K9) with NSDA in at least one (1) of the following disciplines is a required prerequisite: Open Water HRD, Shoreline HRD, Water HRD (formerly known as), Land HRD, Area Live with Large Source Cadaver, or Wilderness Cadaver; certification does not need to be current. A passing field evaluation score sheet submitted from the same testing event is acceptable.
- First time Candidates must submit training logs that include documentation of at least two blind Shoreline HRD problems.
- The test shall only be given if all copies of the prerequisite paperwork and payments have been presented. No payment shall be accepted or held by the Evaluator.
- You will be instructed to upload copies of your documents to the website prior to the test.
- The Evaluator shall remain within normal speaking distance of the handler at all times during the evaluation so as not to interfere with the work of the handler/K-9 team.
- A team shall not be required to test in conditions other than those in which it would be reasonably expected to search.
- No electronic correction collars are permitted to be operational while the team is being evaluated. The K-9 may wear an electronic correction collar as long as the transmitter is turned off and given to the Evaluator until the test is completed.
- The K-9 does not demonstrate unwarranted aggressive behavior towards a person, other K-9, livestock, or wildlife while outside of their primary enclosure.
- Handlers may draw numbers for the order in which they are to be tested unless there is a strong, overriding reason for convenience of handler or Evaluator.

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### **4. TEST SITE**

- There shall be no less than three hundred and twenty (320) feet of shoreline.
- The area shall not be used for training or testing for a minimum of four (4) days prior to testing. If there is no current in the water, then one (1) week would be required. An area can be used up to four (4) times in a 24-hour period before a new area must be designated.

### **5. SHORELINE SEARCH**

- The beginning and end of each shoreline search area boundary shall be clearly marked.
- There shall be two (2) shoreline search areas. Each area shall be between one hundred and fifty (150) to two hundred (200) feet in length with a minimum of twenty (20) feet separation between the two areas. The team must search both areas.
- Each shoreline search area shall have 0-1 source(s) placed between five (5) and ten (10) feet perpendicular distance from the shoreline; there shall be at least one (1) source between the two areas. If multiple sources are used, they must be placed a minimum of 40 feet apart.
- The source shall be submerged in the water at a minimum depth of six (6) inches and a maximum depth of three (3) feet, and placed so that neither the handler nor K-9 can see it.
- The source material shall be tissue weighing between approximately 0.33 and 1.0 pounds. Tissue of appropriate weight may be of a single type (e.g., placenta) or in composite (e.g., partial limb) and contained in a perforated container secured so it cannot drift.
- The handler may start the search wherever they choose, but must search each area separately.
- The handler shall advise the Evaluator how they plan to search.
- The handler shall describe the K-9's Trained Final Response and changes in behavior as they occur during the search.
- The handler must correctly identify the location(s) of the source(s). This location(s) must be within a distance to the source of twice the distance that the source was placed perpendicular from the shore. Example: If the source is placed seven (7) feet from the shoreline, their final call must be within fourteen (14) feet on either side of the source(s) location(s).
- The handler shall place any non-destructive marking device or simply stand on the location of their final call.
- The team shall have twenty (20) minutes per area to complete the search. Rest periods are part of this time.

### **6. EVALUATORS**

- The evaluation shall be conducted by a designated NSDA Principal Evaluator with the option of a second Evaluator or Apprentice Evaluator, or Board-designated observer(s). No third party observers are allowed.
- The Evaluator(s) shall terminate the test if, in their opinion, it becomes hazardous to any of the participants.
- The Evaluator(s) shall have discretion in the administration and evaluation of all portions of the test and/or re-test.

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### **7. DISTRACTIONS**

- Natural distracters including, but not limited to, dead animals, food wrappers/containers, and/or uneaten foods may be a part of any of the test components. This simulates what handlers will have to deal with on actual searches. Should the handler call a final response or if the K-9 is unable to work past the natural distracter, it shall be considered a failure. Evaluators shall not clean the areas of any distractors.

### **8. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- It is the responsibility of the handler to be adequately equipped and attired.
- The use of a compass and/or GPS by the handler is recommended but not required.

### **9. SAFETY**

- The Evaluator shall be assured that the handler has proper equipment and supplies for the team when beginning the field test.
- The K-9 must remain under the control of the handler at all times during the evaluation.

### **10. KNOWLEDGE AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

- The Handler communicates to the Evaluator that they recognize when the K-9 has a change in behavior to Human Remains odor.
- The Handler demonstrates the ability to judge sweeps of areas as to their suitability to the prevailing conditions.
- The Handler communicates to the Evaluator that they recognize when either member of the K-9 team is working ineffectively and takes action to compensate for or remedy the situation.

### **11. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE SHORELINE HRD TEST**

The following requirements must be successfully completed in order to pass the Shoreline HRD Search Test. If the requirements are not met, the test is considered a failure.

- The K-9 performs a trained final response as described by the handler and locates all source(s) within the allotted time.
- The Handler marks the source(s) within the allowable distance.
- No false alert is given by K-9 and called by the Handler.
- The Handler demonstrates the ability to judge sweeps of areas as to their suitability to the prevailing conditions.
- The Handler shall have control of the K-9 during the testing period.
- The K-9 did not try to ingest the source material. If the K-9 picks up the source, they must immediately drop it on command from the handler.

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### **• BRIEFING OF THE HANDLER**

- A briefing of the handler shall be held at the test site, or in a meeting of the group that has been scheduled by previous arrangement, as close to test time as reasonable.
- The Evaluator shall carefully explain and identify each handler's test boundaries.
- The Handler shall address the Evaluator as though the Evaluator were a Search Manager unfamiliar with K-9 search teams and shall introduce the team, explain its capabilities, and ask questions pertinent to the assignment.

### **13. RE-TESTS**

- One testing fee covers an initial test, and a re-test if necessary, within one (1) year of the time of test payment.
- The Evaluator shall mark the scoring sheet in one (1) of three (3) ways concerning the re-test timeline: "Immediately" Must wait - "Three Months" or "Six Months".
- Re-tests during the same testing event shall be at the discretion of the Evaluator, only if time permits and there is justification.
- Should weather or something out of the control of the handler or Evaluator cause a test to be stopped (rain, wind, heat, etc.), the Evaluator, at their own discretion, may offer a re-test at the same testing event.
- If the team fails the re-test, the Evaluator shall mark on the Scoring Sheet when the team is eligible to test again. The team shall not be eligible to test again before a minimum time period of three (3) months. A copy of the Scoring Sheet shall be given to the handler.

### **14. RE-CERTIFICATION**

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