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SEARCH DOG STANDARDS.

REV 3.0 2011

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document specifies the standards of performance required by search and rescue dog teams used in Land SAR and details the process of assessment used to determine the operational readiness of the teams.

1.1 Objectives

- Provide a fair and open process to determine operational readiness of search dog teams.
- Ensure consistency in the MINIMUM skills and abilities of operational SAR Dog teams nationally.
- Provide a clear direction to non-operational teams of the standard they must achieve in order to become operational, and to enable them to train accordingly to become a valuable resource to LandSAR.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Search Dog - A dog that is certified operational for Search and Rescue (SAR) work.

Search Dog Team - A SAR Dog and Handler combination that is certified operational for SAR.

Area Search Dog - A search dog specifically trained to locate scent (human, ground or windborne) but more specifically windborne scent, and follow that scent to its source, whether it be human or article. (also called an Air Scent or Wilderness dog)

Avalanche Dog

A dog specifically trained to find people and articles buried under snow. A search dog specifically trained to locate scent (human, ground or windborne) and follow the scent to its source, whether it be human or article.

Tracking Dog

A dog that is specifically trained to follow a line of human scent (ground or windborne) .The ground scent is caused by a combination of individual human scent, the crushing of vegetation and life forms in the ground and the disturbance of soil, which may be affected by varying factors, including all climatic conditions. Then following that line of human scent to its source.

Alert

A natural change of behaviour exhibited by the dog when it locates human scent. This behaviour may be subtle, but should be recognisable by the handler and considered a clue.

Indication

A trained response from the dog upon finding a source of scent (e.g. a person or article).

Indications include:

1. Stay and bark
2. Re find
3. Physical Indication

Stay and bark - dog remains at location of missing subject and barks. Handler locates subject and barking dog together.

Re find - Upon finding, dog returns to handler and indicates by barking, grabbing or some other trained response, and then returns with handler to missing subject

Physical Indication - In cases of buried, concealed or elevated subjects, dog indicates strongest source of scent by physically digging, scratching, barking and/or biting at ground or other materials.

Strike - The moment when an air-scent dog locates air-borne human scent and changes from searching for the scent to following that scent to its source.

Article/Evidence Recovery:

(Although not a mandatory component of the Assessment Process at this time), it is expected that a dog will readily alert on an article (ie. Backpack, wallet, glasses, items of clothing etc) or anything that may be foreign to the natural environment. The alert would be a distinct change in behaviour to the dog, whether it be to pick the article/property up, bark or some other trained response.

3.0 PRE REQUISITES

3.1 Handler

- Be an active member of their local SAR group. The handler must be fully involved in their local SAR group
- Be a member of LandSAR Search dog group, completed the LandSAR dogs application and endorsement form, applied to committee and been accepted as a Dog Handler
- Meet the requirements for Team Member in LandSAR Field Guide and be working towards Team Leader
- Recommendation by Police SAR Sgt (will he/she deploy/use you).
- Affinity with animals
- Willingness to persevere
- Determination to succeed
- Adhere to the N.Z. LandSAR Dog Inc. Code of Conduct

3.2 Dog Team

Must be seen by an Assessor or Operational Handler (nominated by the Assessor Team Leader or Current Assessor) for suitability prior to the team being invited to a training camp.

This initial suitability check is at the prospective Handlers cost and at a location which suits the Assessor or Operational Handler.

The dog should be:

- Fit, healthy, of a suitable age, size and necessary attributes of a working dog.
- Registered with the local authority in which the handler is resident
- Be fully vaccinated or certified by a veterinary surgeon as disease free:

3.3 Dog Attributes

- Have a strong retrieve & article play,
- Desire to Search for article/toy,
- Strong/ready bark response, dig response (Avalanche)
- Good Control / Recall of dog.
- Suitability of breed of dog/age of dog
- Well socialised including other animals, and *not* dog or people aggressive

4.0 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- The Assessment process is by joint agreement between LandSAR Dog assessors and New Zealand Police Dog section appointed Assessor

LandSAR Dog Assessors will appoint from within their ranks an Assessor Team Leader. The tenure for the Team Leader will be for 3 years with annual reviews. Assessors once appointed are reviewed annually.

- New Zealand Police Dog section Assessors will be appointed on Recommendation of National Coordinator - Police Dogs, NZ Police

4.2 Operational Status

Operational status shall be granted to teams deemed to have demonstrated that they have the competencies required by this standard.

Operational status will be effective for 12 months or from the date of assessment to the subsequent annual assessment (in that Island), unless other extraordinary circumstances (Assessor Team Leader/Senior Assessors to have final decision).

- A team that is out of service for 90 days or more (e.g. due to injury) may be asked to attend a weekend training in order to allow assessors to satisfy themselves that the team's skills have been maintained.
- A team that fails an assessment for operational status will immediately become non-operational, irrespective of any time remaining in the 12 months since operational status was granted.
- A team that has been operational, but fails a subsequent assessment, **may, at the discretion of the LSAR Dog Assessors and Police Assessor**, be offered the chance to re-present at an “extraordinary evaluation” as defined in section 5.3 or be seen at a subsequent training camp by 2 Assessors.

4.3 Eligibility for Assessment

Assessment is by invitation only

Operational Search Dog teams are expected to attend the annual assessment course in order to recertify. (Failure to do so may result in removal of operational status).

Non-operational Search Dog teams that have been observed in the six (6) months prior to the assessment camp working at or close to the required standard will be invited to attend for assessment.

These teams must have been observed working by an Assessor, either in their regional training or at one of the LandSAR training weekends.

This observation can be made at any weekend training where an Assessor is present.

An Assessor may be requested to attend a training event where there is no local Assessor

attending, in order to make recommendations to the LandSAR Search Dog committee.

NOTE: Assessors should err on the side of including borderline teams rather than excluding them; teams may potentially make significant progress between being observed and the camp.

Assessors will make recommendations to the LandSAR Assessor Team Leader or Senior Assessor coordinating the camp, who will invite suitable teams to participate.

5.0 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Evaluations to determine suitability for operational status will be carried out annually at two camps, one on each island.

5.1 Format of Assessment Camp

5.1.1 The camp shall be run over four consecutive days.

5.1.2 There shall be a number of sessions during the camp - morning, afternoon and possibly one or more evening (dark) sessions. Sessions to be run at discretion of Senior Assessor at the camp.

5.1.3 Each session will be designed to train and assess specific competencies. Many competencies may be trained and assessed in a single session.

5.1.4 LandSAR Assessors will be present to observe all dogs during all sessions.

5.1.5 Police Assessors will observe each dog at least one, preferably two sessions.

5.1.6 Assessors will debrief each team observed.

5.1.7 During the camp Assessors will have a meeting to agree upon the suitability of each team for operational status. (Any disputes will be directed to the LandSAR Assessor Team Leader and his/her decision will be final).

5.2 Re-assessment

5.2.1 Operational handlers are required to recertify annually in order to retain their operational status

They are therefore expected to attend the annual course for their island in order to be re-assessed

5.2.2 In the case of exceptional circumstances preventing the team attending the annual course, the team may be eligible for assessment at an extraordinary assessment as defined in section 5.3

5.3 Extraordinary Assessments

In some cases, assessments may be arranged outside the annual camp.

There is significant cost, both monetary and in Assessors and Police time.

Therefore, it is **entirely at the Assessors Team Leaders or Senior Assessors discretion** whether such an assessment will be offered to teams.

5.3.1 Extraordinary assessment **may** be offered to:

a) Teams who were operational but fail to subsequently recertify. It is expected that this

option will only be exercised for teams who were very close to the required standard at the annual assessment.

b) Operational teams who due to exceptional circumstances were unable to attend the annual assessment.

5.3.2 Extraordinary assessments will, wherever possible, be arranged to take place at a weekend training camp, either national or regional, in order to reduce costs and workload.

5.3.3 Whenever possible, more than one LandSAR Assessor will be present to observe teams.

5.3.4 Teams being recertified at such an extraordinary assessment will be required to be observed by the LandSAR Assessor and by the Police Assessor.

6.0 COMPETENCIES

In order to be deemed operational, the Search Dog team must demonstrate during the course certain handler and dog competencies.

6.1 TRACKING STANDARD

Purpose

The assessment is to test that a dog team can locate a line of human scent (see Dog Tracking Standard below)

A dog that is specifically trained to follow a line of human scent (ground or windborne). The ground scent is caused by a combination of individual human scent, the crushing of vegetation and life forms in the ground and the disturbance of soil, which may be affected by varying factors, including all climatic conditions. Then following that line of human scent to its source.

The dog team will be given an approximate starting point and will be required to follow that line of scent to a successful conclusion, under assessment conditions. The assessment is to determine that a handler can plan and systematically cast for a line of scent (human, ground or windborne) and follow it, showing the necessary handler skills required to work that dog and locate the source of that scent (human or article), to a competent level.

A new team attempting assessment will be required to show consistency over three (3) tracks to be deemed operational.

This includes all aspects of the handler and dog to be deemed competent (operational).

Current Operational Dog Teams will be required to successfully complete one (1) assessment.

For all Dog Teams to be deemed 'Operational': This will be at the discretion of the LandSAR Dog Assessor and Police Assessor overseeing the Assessment.

Any disputes by either Handler or Assessor will be overseen/adjudicated by the LandSAR Dog Assessor Team Leader, and his/her decision will be final.

Assessment conditions

6.1.1 In a simulated situation, one person lays a track; the age is timed from when it is commenced. All tracks are to be single laid, and should be laid, if possible in a down-wind direction to prevent air-scent contamination from the subject or article.

6.1.2 New Zealand bush /rural terrain should be varied and may include the following - grass paddocks, bush, gullies, ridges, steep areas and / or open tussock areas. Length up to 1 1/2 km with 5 - 6 directional changes and 3hrs old.

6.1.3 Casting is a systematic process used to enable the dog to locate a track.

6.1.4 At the start of the track the handler will be given an area approx 20m x 20m as PLS.(Point last seen)

6.1.5 Finding the track is a recognisable reaction by the dog on finding human scent on the ground.

6.1.6 On finding the track the dog is to follow the line of human scent to its conclusion.

6.1.7 Upon reaching the end of the track the dog is to provide to the handler a recognisable indication of the presence of the human subject or article.

Performance Criteria:

6.1.8 Dog is trained to find and follow on command a track unknown to the handler and to complete this within 30 minutes.

6.1.9 The dog is cast by the handler in a manner which allows the dog to find then follow the track.

6.1.10 The handler maintains even contact and control of the tracking line throughout tracking.

6.1.11 Commands given to the dog provide direction and encouragement.

6.1.12 Tracking speed and general direction of travel is maintained. In the event the dog loses the scent, the handler must be able to recognise this. Handlers are permitted to rework a part of the track to re-find the scent/track.

AIMLESS WANDERING HOWEVER IS NOT PERMITTED.

6.1.13 Dog is trained to respond immediately to handler's commands in the presence of distractions. Distractions may include but are not limited to - other dogs, people, food, wildlife and farm animals.

6.1.14 Handlers on completion of their search task are capable of being debriefed. At such a debriefing the handler should be able to describe and show on a map their route and any indications made by the dog

6.2 AREA SEARCH STANDARDS

An Air Scenting Team up for their first accreditation, will be required to show consistency over Four(4) Scenario based Assessments to be deemed operational.

This includes all aspects of the handler and dog to be deemed competent (operational).

Current Operational Dog Teams will be required to successfully complete Two (2) Scenario based Assessments.

For all Dog Teams to be deemed 'Operational': This will be at the discretion of the LandSAR Dog Assessor and Police Assessor overseeing the Assessment.

Any disputes by either Handler or Assessor will be overseen/ajudicated by the LandSAR Dog Assessor Team Leader, and his/her decision will be final.

In order to be deemed operational, the Search Dog team must demonstrate during the camp certain handler and dog competencies. These competencies are related to Area Search dogs and the handling thereof.

Area Search Dog:

A dog that is specifically trained to indicate windborne human scent (note: it does not have to specifically windborne scent).The scent is caused by a combination of individual human scent, the crushing of vegetation and life forms in the ground and the disturbance of soil, which may be affected by varying factors, including all climatic conditions. Then following that scent to its source.

Possible Areas Search Scenarios for Assessment:

The Area SAR Dog is expected to have been trained and be competent in tackling each of these scenarios:

Corridor Search:

A path, trail, logging road or the like approximately 1 km in length. The subject will be hidden within 10-30m of the trail. The dog should alert and locate the subject from the trail or road and bark readily. The handler should be able recognize the initial indication of the dog. If trained to re-find, on location of the subject, the dog should return to the handler, and once the trained response is given to the handler from the dog, they will together go back and locate the lost party/subject. The handler should assess the subject for injury, accurately place the subject on the map, call the co-ordinates into base and recommend any medical assistance as required.

Night Search:

Dependant on available terrain, and conditions, the type of night search, will be at the Assessors discretion. This could be a corridor or a large open area search. Handler should evaluate information provided regarding missing subject, determine search strategy, and search the area for the subject. The search should begin as soon as practicable after dark and the subject placed at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the search. There will be up to two subjects hidden for the scenario depending on terrain available in the area. Handler should direct search activity according to wind, terrain and cover. Handler should identify the dog's indication and should follow the dog in to the subject. In the case of a re-find trained dog, the dog should return to the handler, and once the trained response is given to the handler from the dog, they will together go back and locate the lost party/subject. Handler should assess subject, identify location, contact base with location and medical assessment.

Open area, Multi-Subject Scenario:

An area of 1–25 hectares depending on density of ground cover (25 hectares for open areas with some cover. e.g. tussock grasslands with rocks and flax; 10 hectares of denser bush). One to Two persons hidden out of handler and dog's sight must be found within a set time limit, generally approximately one hour should be sufficient, however this is discretionary upon the Assessors. Subjects should be placed 30 minutes prior to commencement of search. The handler should assess the sector on the map, determine the most effective way to search it, work the dog effectively, assess any subjects, determine their exact location, and notify base of their needs. The handler should continue to the next subject. The dog should eagerly find each subject with an identifiable alert and re-find or bark on find.

Elimination Search:

The dog team may be required to search any area, where there may be no subject. The Team will not know that the area is subject free. The team will work the area as any other given scenario.

6.2 Skill Maintenance Competencies

The following competencies are designated “skills maintenance” and as such must be demonstrated by all teams including currently operational teams. (NOTE: Assessors are at liberty to request any team, whether currently operational or not, to attend a particular session to demonstrate a specific competency.)

6.2.1 Spontaneous indication -The trained indication (see definitions) must be spontaneous and in no way induced by the handler, either consciously or subconsciously.

6.2.2 Consistent Indication-The dog must demonstrate a consistent trained response upon locating subjects. The indication should not alter or degrade significantly on subsequent 'finds'

6.2.3 Ranging -the dog must be comfortable working at a distance from the handler. The distance will vary with terrain and individual dogs, but should be upwards of 30-50m in open country. Most dogs will work closer to the handler in particularly thick vegetation or as the search lengthens.

6.2.4 Ability to successfully locate multiple subjects - Reliably finding multiple subjects during a single search. There should be no significant change in performance between finds.

6.2.5 Endurance - The search dog team must be sufficiently fit, both mentally and physically to search for extended periods, without detrimentally affecting the performance. Operationally, the team will be expected to work for many hours (e.g. a six or eight hour shift) and as such the team must demonstrate the stamina to search for several hours in a single day.

6.2.6 Efficient Searching - Searches must be carried out efficiently; thoroughly enough such that an acceptable POD is achieved but in a timely manner, without over searching or over working the dog.

Other Mandatory Competencies

The following competencies must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the assessors by all teams presenting for assessment for the first time. Current operational teams may also be required to demonstrate these competencies at the discretion of the assessor panel.

6.2.7 Plan and implement a search strategy - The ability to plan logical and efficient coverage of search areas which give their team the best possible P.O.D, and to implement the plan effectively. Successful implementation of the plan includes changing the plan appropriately if required (e.g. due to environmental changes), coverage of ground missed due to dog striking on scent. The search must be planned and implemented such no significant portion of the area designated is omitted, subject to assessors' instructions.

6.2.8 Debrief a search - The ability to realistically and accurately debrief to SAR IMT (Incident Management Team) the area searched, including an estimate of achieved POD, notification of any sections not covered, and any sections that would be worthy of another resource (either due to interest shown by the dog, or because the POD achieved was low, but the POA maybe high).

6.2.9 Search during darkness - The Search Dog Team will be required to work in the hours of darkness. It is thus essential that the search dog team is as competent and effective working during the hours of darkness as in daylight.

6.2.10 Management of dog - The handler must demonstrate appropriate management of the canine member of the team, including rest schedule, access to water, encouragement, appropriate praise and guidance through directional control.

6.2.11 Ability to read the dog - The handler must have the inherent skill level and ability to read and interpret the dog's actions and behaviours. This would include, but is not limited to: correctly reading the 'strike' and reading when the dog is losing concentration and requires rest.

6.2.12 Elimination Search - Most search areas the team will search during operations will not contain the missing person. Therefore it is vital that an operational team can search an area, not find anything in that area, and continue working effectively when tasked again. The handler must demonstrate enough confidence in the team's abilities to leave the area and debrief appropriately to the SAR I.M.T. when nothing is found in the area.

NOTE: When this competency is being assessed, the participant will not be made aware of that prior to the exercise. The participant will be informed that a full debrief of the search will be required upon completion. Other competencies may still be assessed during this exercise and the participant may be made aware of them.

6.2.13 Traverse all types of terrain - Dog teams must display an ability to travel efficiently over various terrain (e.g. dense bush, steep ground, scree, rocks, snow) and traverse barriers encountered (e.g. Fences, water etc.) in a range of conditions and must have the stamina to sustain this for extended periods (a number of hours) whilst continuing to search effectively.

6.2.14 Behaviour in the presence of domestic stock - The dog must show little to no interest in domestic stock, such as sheep, goats, cattle, pigs etc.. Search dog teams will frequently be required to search farmland, and the dog may not in any way cause any distress to domestic stock. If the dog does show any interest, the handler must have a suitable recall of the dog

6.2.15 Behaviour in presence of distractions - The dog must be under the control of the handler at all times, including in the presence of distractions such as other dogs, wildlife etc.. The dog should continue searching in the presence of such distractions

6.2.16 Directional Control - In order to successfully implement a search plan, the handler will need to be able to direct the dog to search in particular directions and places. Handlers should be able to demonstrate during the course of general searching, sufficient directional control to ensure that the search plan is thoroughly implemented.

6.2.17 Helicopter/Light Aircraft Transport - Whilst this competency may not necessarily be assessed, the handler is responsible to ensure that both they and the dog have attended appropriate safety sessions, and that the dog is exposed to helicopters/light aircraft at all available opportunities. If at all possible, the handler should get the dog comfortable with entering helicopters/light aircraft with the engine(s) running, and also with being winched into and out of helicopters. (Winching practice can be achieved without the use of a helicopter)

6.2.18 Transport - Handlers and dogs should be comfortable travelling in all forms of transport. Many different modes of transport may be used to locate search teams to the start of their search area, including, 4WD's, ATV's, air transport, snowmobiles, 'Unimogs', inflatable boats (IRB's), jet boats, skidoos, chairlifts.

6.2.19 Obedience - Whilst this competency may not necessarily be assessed, the handler must have sufficient control over the dog to cater for all eventualities whilst the team is representing LandSAR as a Search Dog Team. This includes PR exercises, such as demonstrations, displays etc., transport on commercial transport, such as aircraft, and

at all times during a search, from arrival at the incident through deployment and location and possible extraction of the subject.

As such the dog must:

- Walk to heel on and off lead.
- Return to handler immediately when commanded
- Be able to be left in a 'down stay' for a minimum of 10 minutes. (This is to allow the handler to deal with a subject once located without distraction, for instance)
- Be sociable in the presence of humans and other dogs
- Be handle able by persons other than the regular handler in controlled situations.

6.2.20 Aggression - The team must show no sign of aggression in the presence of other dogs, handlers, search team members or members of the public. The dog should be capable of being handled for all situations except searching by persons other than the handler (e.g. transportation)

7.0 OPERATIONAL

7.1 Operational Deployment Policy

7.1.1 Only Search dog teams which have met the Tracking or Area Search assessment standard will be used for SAR Operations.

7.1.2 Operational Search dog teams must always be deployed with at least one other LandSAR or Police team member and ideally two. Team members can be responsible for navigation and communications.

7.2 Operational expertise

7.2.1 The operational Tracking handler is able to demonstrate a careful and systematic "casting" procedure to locate ground scent at PLS (place last seen)

7.2.2 The operational handler understands the basic theory of scent, and the possible impact of climatic conditions on scent distribution to formulate an understanding of the likelihood of the dog being able to find scent.

7.2.3 The operational handler is able to recognise when the dog has NOT located scent human, ground or windborne or has lost the track or airborne scent

7.2.4 The operational handler marks on map and radios Search Base the location of any

articles, items or clues found during a search. Base will instruct the handler regarding this.

7.2.5 If the dog is worked on line, the handler is physically capable of handling a 25 - 30 foot line in rough and varied terrain and handling the dog on tracks of 3 to 4 hours duration.

7.2.6 The handler is able to recognise scent pools and dead ends and be able to assist their dog as necessary

7.2.7 The handler is capable of assisting their dog over, under or across, fences, streams, swing bridges, bluffs and breaks in terrain.

7.2.8 The handler recognises when their dog needs a break during the search. The dog demonstrates a willingness to resume tracking / searching after being rested.

7.2.9 On completion of their task the handler will be debriefed by the SAR IMT (Incident Management team). The handler is able to reasonably describe and show on a map; the route and assessment of their confidence regarding the tracks location and person's direction of travel.

7.2.10 The Operational handler carries enough equipment to be self supporting for 48 hours.

7.2.11 The Operational Tracking dog team is capable of finding the track of a subject leaving from a contaminated area. This may mean casting the dog in a large (100m or more) circle in order to cut the track.

7.2.12 Search Dogs should be comfortable in all types of transport with their handlers. This may involve being winched into and out of helicopters.

NB Search dog handlers often liaise directly with Search management to establish a search plan. Therefore knowledge and competence in the following areas are highly recommended: tracking, sign cutting search methods, lost person behaviour, team leading and managing search operations.



SEARCH DOG AVALANCHE EVALUATION (Obedience)

A dog team is required to pass the following obedience exercises to an acceptable level; an inability to attain this level will result in assessment failure.

Search Dog Teams to carry out the following group exercises:

- 1.0 On lead, handlers are to line up with the dog on their left hand side and sitting, 2 metres separating them from the next team.
- 2.0 On lead, (1 at a time) each dog team to walk, dog on left hand side in control across an open area 20 metres turn 180 degrees with dog and then sit the dog down again with a separation of 2 metres from the next dog team (dogs will be required to maintain sit position until instructed otherwise).
- 3.0 On lead, (1 at a time) each dog team to walk (weaving) through the other teams until they reach the end, then establish a 2 metre gap and sit the dog down on their left hand side. This will be repeated in the opposite direction back to the original position.
- 4.0 Handlers are to remove their dogs from leads and maintain a sit until instructed by assessor.
- 5.0 Each handler will walk 20 metres away from their dog, (the dog must maintain a stay) until instructed by the assessor to call their dog to a heel and sit.
- 6.0 Each handler will walk 20 metres away from their dog, (the dog must maintain a stay), then the handler when instructed by the assessor will call their dog and then sit them mid way between start and handler, the handler when instructed will call them to a sitting heel position on left hand side.

Note: Handlers may give reassurance to their dog during any exercise.

Dog teams are expected to demonstrate confidence, obedience, trust.

Uncontrollable aggression will not be accepted.

Socialisation of dogs is allowed prior to testing.

SEARCH DOG AVALANCHE EVALUATION (Novice)

TIME LIMIT: 15 minutes, snowfield approx 3000 sq metres, one victim buried to a depth of one metre. Visual and physical contact is allowed.

REGULATIONS

The handler may complete this assessment either with, or without touring skis or snowshoes unless the test assessor states otherwise.

The victim must be buried at least 20 minutes before assessment begin.
The victim is not permitted to help in the preparation of the snow cave.

When burying persons all safety regulations must be adhered to.

The snowfield boundaries must be marked by yellow flags to ensure that a visual control is able to be kept on the entire search area.

Areas of interest or indications by the dog must be marked with red flags.

Directly before search begins a minimum of three persons must walk or ski in a criss cross fashion over the search area, this may be done a number of times.

The dog handler with dog must remain out of sight until called by the assessor.

The assessor will then deliver a search scenario to the handler before the search commences.

The dog handler must then advise the assessor how the search will be undertaken before deploying their dog

The dog must be released to search from a point decided by the dog handler. The dog handler may not leave this position until the dog has either disappeared from the handlers view or travelled more than 30 metres from the handler, or when so directed by the assessor.

The dog must indicate the find on the victim, with clear visible or audible indication. The dog must remain at the site of indication until the handler arrives.

If the dog disappears from sight before a 30 metre distance is reached, the handler may move

from the start position to regain view of the dog, upon regaining visible contact, the handler must stop and wait until the above mentioned 30 metre distance is achieved.

Any indication by the dog must be recognised by the dog handler and reported to the assessor,

The point of indication by the dog must be marked by the dog handler and the indicated person dug out by the dog handler. Outside digging assistance may be called upon, at the discretion of the assessor. The dog handler must make visual and auditory contact with the victim.

No indication on the victim or multiple false indications will lead to failure of the assessment.

Following this assessment, the dog handler must use an avalanche transceiver (pieps), in an unknown area, of 20 x 20 metres, to find a buried backpack (to a depth of 20cms), recover it and report the find to the assessor within five minutes. This assessment may also be done in conjunction with the obedience or standby phases of this assessment.

SEARCH DOG AVALANCHE EVALUATION LEVEL (Operational)

TIME LIMIT: 20 minutes, snowfield approx 6000 sq metres, two victims buried to a depth of one metre. Visual and physical contact is allowed.

1 Backpack buried to a depth of 40 cm.

REGULATIONS:

The dog handler must complete this assessment using touring skis or snowshoes.

The victims and the backpack must be buried at least 20 minutes before assessment begins. The victims are not permitted to help in the preparation of the snow caves.

When burying persons, all safety regulations must be adhered to.

The snowfield boundaries must be marked by yellow flags to ensure that a visual control is able to be kept on the search area.

Areas of interest or indications by the dog must be marked with red flags.

Directly before the search begins a minimum number of three persons must walk or ski in a criss cross fashion over the search area, this may be done a number of times.

The dog handler with dog must remain out of sight until called by the assessor.

The assessor will then deliver a search scenario to the handler before search commences.

The dog handler must then advise the assessor how the search will be undertaken before deploying their dog.

The dog must be released to search from a point decided by the dog handler. The dog handler may not leave this position until the dog has either disappeared from the handlers view or travelled more than 50 metres from the handler, or the dog has made an indication on either a backpack or a victim, any indication by the dog must be recognised by the dog handler and reported to the assessor.

The dog must indicate finds with clear visible or audible indication; the dog must remain at the point of indication until the handler arrives.

If the dog disappears from sight before a 50 metre distance is reached, and the handler moves from the start position to regain view of the dog, then upon regaining visible contact, the handler must stop and wait until the above mentioned 50 metre distance between dog and handler has been reached.

The dog handler must then mark the point of indication and the indicated person or article dug out by the dog handler. Outside digging assistance may be called upon, at the discretion of the assessor. The dog handler must make visual and auditory contact with the victim. The handler is not obliged to wait until the total recovery of the victim, but may continue the search for the remaining subject or article.

All victims and articles will be removed from the search site in the order they are found by helpers appointed by the assessor.

The assessment will end when the dog handler advises that the search action is finished, or when so directed by the assessor. A debrief of the search may be given at this time by the assessor.

No indication on victims or false indications will lead to failure of the assessment.

The dog handler following this assessment must with the use of an avalanche transceiver (pieps), in an unknown area, of 20 x 20 metres, find a buried backpack, recover it and report the find to the assessor within a period of five minutes. (This assessment can also be done in conjunction with the obedience or standby phases of this assessment).

Note:

In the event of a low snow year or when insufficient snow limits required site preparation, all holes will be covered during assessment for each handler.

The handler will be expected to make a call according to their dogs' indication; the handler may not investigate the hole prior to making this call.

The dog handler must then mark the point of indication and the indicated person or article can be dug out by the dog handler.

Outside digging assistance may be called in, at the discretion of the assessor.

The dog handler must make visual and auditory contact with the victim.

The handler is not obliged to wait until the total recovery of the victim, but may continue the search for the remaining subject or article after ascertaining the condition and safety of the victim.

SEARCH DOG AVALANCHE EVALUATION LEVEL (Advanced)

TIME LIMIT: 30 minutes, snowfield approx 10,000sq metres, two victims buried to a minimum depth of one metre.

1 Backpack buried to a depth of 40 cm.

1 Avalanche transceiver (Pieps)

REGULATIONS:

All advanced teams will be first assessed to pass operational evaluation and will be assessed under those regulations.

A successful dog team who has completed the operational assessment and deemed by the assessor team to have the required skills and time to carry on with the advanced scenario will be stopped along with the time.

ADVANCED SCENARIO:

The boundaries will be extended by 4000 sq metres.

The time will be extended to a total combined time of 30 minutes.

A transceiver search will be added.

A second operational dog team will be added and be briefed by the handler being assessed.

A new search plan will be provided to the assessors that will include the use of the new dog team and transceiver.

The assessed handler may choose to include or stand down their own dog.

The remaining evaluation time will start again once the dog teams have resumed the search.

The assessment will end when the dog handler advises that the search action is finished, or when 30 minutes total time is reached or so directed by the assessor. A debrief of the search may be given at this time by the assessor.

Failure to find the transceiver will result in a failed advanced evaluation.

SAFETY REGULATIONS:

Victims must wear an avalanche transceiver, radio and before being buried. They must be trained in the use of all three.

The snow hole must be sufficient volume for the victim to enter headfirst and sit up once inside. They must be able to turn around before exiting headfirst. Note: The ample sit-up airspace is important to stop the buildup of CO₂ around the head of the victim.

A safety person must be on site to monitor the victims at all times and have the authority to pull the victims from the snow holes at victim request or any other safety concerns.