



# **Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado**

## **Standards Manual**

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# 1.0 Introduction

Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado (SARDOC) was formed in 1983 as the need arose for locating and standardizing search dogs and handlers throughout Colorado and the surrounding region. Standards enable search managers to have a basis for expectations of a dog/handler team's performance in a search situation. These standards are designed to ensure that SARDOC's operational SAR dog and handler teams will be professional and competent in their work. Agencies requesting SAR dog teams rely on those teams to do their job correctly. The failure of a team, through inadequate training, could have a negative impact on the outcome of the mission, which could result in inefficient use of resources, misdirecting the search, and personal injury or even death of a subject or team member.

The purpose of the standards is to provide a structure of expected abilities and responsibilities for determining the proper field assignment of all Dog/Handler and Field Support team members. Standards are intended also to provide a system which encourages members to achieve additional skill levels for themselves and their dogs and positions of leadership. Training does not have to be obtained through SARDOC, but the skills required for a specific discipline/specialty must be demonstrated through certification testing. The specific required skills and equipment for all discipline/specialty standards are determined by the Fielding Coordinator, Testing Coordinator and the Standards Committee.

Dog and handler teams wishing to become SARDOC certified must join SARDOC and will be evaluated, through a series of tests, by the Fielding Coordinator, Testing Coordinator and Standards Committee for operational status as stated in the Certification Procedures in these Standards.

The SAR dog should have the primary characteristics of the working, herding, sporting or hound breeds and be of sound physical structure and temperament, and of adequate size and strength to negotiate the terrain encountered in wilderness areas. It is also required that the dog be non-aggressive toward people and towards other dogs.

The SAR dog handler must be willing to spend considerable time and money on training and equipment. He or she must also be reasonably available to respond to missions. SARDOC Weekends will be held a minimum of 4 times a year. Each SARDOC member will be required to participate in a minimum of 2 of the 4 SARDOC Weekends per year including business meetings. Teams are encouraged to work regularly on their own on all phases of training. Training two to three times a week is recommended. It is up to the individual team to ensure that they are properly prepared and trained.

All SARDOC members must maintain a log of their training.

The relationship between a dog and a handler in a working team goes beyond mutual cooperation. It is a relationship based on mutual trust and love. With this in mind, the following team characteristics will be evaluated at all times during the training of the team:

- The handler and dog should show mutual liking and respect for each other and enjoy playing together as well as working.
- The handler shall give appropriate encouragement and praise to the dog. The handler must be able to recognize when the dog is alerting to human scent, and the dog should give a recognizable, strong alert.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to work and control the dog effectively in a variety of areas and conditions according to terrain and weather including:
  - a. The ability to plan searches of areas for the best use of the wind and efficient coverage for that terrain,
  - b. The ability to judge sweeps of the area suitable to the prevailing conditions, and
  - c. The ability to recognize when either member of the team is working inefficiently and take actions to compensate or remedy the situation.
- All handlers must observe and aid in the training of other dogs.
- The dog shall be willing to find and approach strangers.
- The dog should be eager to work in a variety of terrain, ranging under control.
- The dog should show eagerness to work and please in a range of stress situations.
- The air scent and off-lead trailing dog must be able to find the subject, and indicate the find to the handler in a reliable manner.
- The dog must not miss an obvious scent even when tired.
- The dog must be able to find a subject in an area contaminated with human scent other than that of the subject.
- The dog must be able to find a subject and work effectively with one or more additional persons (who may be strangers to the dog) accompanying the team.

Search work is an exhausting physical and emotional experience and requires a dog that is mentally and physically ready for hard work. For the safety of the dog, it must be at least 18 months of age before the team is given any certification tests.

## **2.0 Standards**

### **2.1 Candidate Member**

An individual joining SARDOC starts as a Candidate Member. The Candidate must complete a probationary period of 6 months, but generally not to exceed 1½ years. During the probationary period, the Candidate must become a fieldable member of a fielding agency. Candidates are not allowed to vote, and they are not allowed to participate with their dog on a mission unless specifically requested by the Fielding Coordinator. All candidate members will be required to pass a written test about SARDOC before they will be considered for Voting Member status. Candidates will be considered for Voting membership by the Executive Board, with recommendations from the Standards Committee and the voting membership. A majority vote by the Board is required to accept a member to Voting status.

#### **2.1.1 Candidate for Handler or Field Support**

##### **Minimum Qualifications**

1. Know the purpose and objectives of SARDOC and be familiar with its Bylaws, Policies, Standards, and organization. This will be demonstrated through a written test administered by the Testing Coordinator, or if he/she is unavailable then by a Standards Committee member before the completion of the probationary period.
2. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of mountaineering or be willing to take a basic mountaineering course.
3. Must be in good physical condition. (Before the probationary period is completed, and/or before applying for operational status, the physical condition of the Candidate will be tested by an Area Director, or a member who has been approved by the Testing Coordinator. The test will be a four (4) mile hike over varied terrain, a minimum of 1000 feet gain in elevation, carrying a 25 pound pack to be completed within 3 hours.) In lieu of the test, a candidate may submit to the Testing Coordinator a letter from their fielding agency stating the Candidate's physical fitness.
4. Must become a member in good standing of a fielding agency approved by the Standards Committee (except for a non-field support Candidate) within 1½ years from date of membership. A longer period may be granted by the Standards Committee under exceptional circumstances.
5. Complete Basic Bloodborne Pathogens class.

##### **Training Requirements**

1. Must attend at least the minimum number of required SARDOC Weekends and practices and, it is highly recommended that handlers attend at least 25% of their area's regular training sessions.
2. A Candidate for handler or field support is encouraged to start building their navigation and field support skills during the probationary period so that they can begin the testing process as soon as they are voted in as a member.

### **2.1.2 Candidate for Dog**

#### **Minimum Qualifications**

1. Be of sound physical structure and temperament.
2. Be of adequate size and strength to negotiate the terrain encountered in wilderness areas.
3. Be quiet, friendly and well-mannered.
4. Must be able to provide proof of preventative vaccinations or adequate titers.

#### **Training Requirements**

1. Demonstrate manners/obedience, or be in appropriate training. Aggression should be controlled by training. If needed, confine the dog to the vehicle or crate the dog. A dog/handler team can lose its SARDOC certification if, on any practice or mission, the dog demonstrates unstable and/or undesirable behavior as determined by majority vote of the Standards Committee.
2. Comes reliably from at least 20 yards when called by the handler.

Any dog not meeting the above requirements or considered to be unsuitable as a search dog may be referred to the Standards Committee for review.

### **2.1.3 Candidate for Non-field Support**

The candidate for Non-field Support is an individual wishing to become a voting member upon completion of the probationary period, with the desire to help SARDOC in any way, other than in the field. Non-field Support personnel will never respond to a mission in any SARDOC fielding capacity. Non-field Support personnel will not be required to take the physical fitness test.

## **2.2 Non-Operational Voting Member**

A non-operational voting member is a voting member who has not passed any SARDOC certification tests. A non-operational voting handler is a voting member who has a dog in training, in one or more areas of search-related work. Non-operational handlers and field support will only respond to a SARDOC mission at the special request of an operational handler and only in the capacity of field team support.

### **2.2.1 Non-operational Handler and Non-operational Field Support Minimum Qualifications**

1. Be a fieldable member in good standing of a fielding agency approved by the Standards Committee.
2. Know the purpose and objectives of SARDOC and be familiar with its Bylaws, Policies, Standards and organization.
3. Be in, and maintain appropriate physical condition for SAR operations. (This will be judged at SARDOC training sessions.)
4. Must attend at least the minimum number of required SARDOC Weekends per year and should attend at least 25% of local area trainings.
5. Have or be in the process of obtaining a Basic Red Cross First Aid card or "higher" medical training.
6. Have or be in the process of obtaining an American Red Cross/American Heart Association CPR card.
7. Possess the required items from the Field Equipment Lists (see section 6) and satisfactorily complete the training required of field personnel.
8. Be responsible for his/her own and the SAR dog's safety first, then team member's safety, and lastly the subject's safety.
9. Participate in and assist in the non-handler aspects of a mountain search. Be expected to follow all reasonable orders given by leaders. Only those orders that conflict with safety may be refused without concern for disciplinary action.
10. Be able to participate on a basic search under conditions normally found in the mountains from spring through fall at any altitude.
11. Be capable of backpacking all necessary equipment, at least four miles over varied, mountainous terrain.
12. Be able to select and prepare a proper site for a search team bivouac.
13. Possess the necessary skills and equipment for personal survival in the mountains for a minimum of 24 and up to 48 hours.

14. Be able to navigate, day or night, in an unfamiliar wilderness area using a map and compass, and, separately and independently, demonstrate proficiency in the use of GPS technology.
15. Be familiar with SAR dog search operations as they relate to mantracking, grid and aerial searching.
16. Be familiar with radio communication procedures.
17. Be able to work with a SAR dog in unfamiliar terrain up to 8 hours in a 24 hour period.
18. Be able to, at the end of a search, translate field activity onto a base map, including the route taken, areas left uncovered, alerts, wind direction and probability of detection (hereby referred to as POD).
19. Have adequate training in canine first aid.
20. Be able to respond to a reasonable number of missions.
21. Be able to participate on missions under weather conditions normally encountered during winter below timberline with minimal snow. Be capable of selecting and inhabiting adequate campsites for SARDOC operations under these conditions.
22. Be willing to participate in non-mission SARDOC activities such as: training, presentations, fund raising, and SARDOC supported community activities.

## **Training Requirements**

Handlers and Field Support personnel must complete whatever training necessary to meet the qualifying Standards. Each SARDOC member will be required to participate in at least the minimum number of required SARDOC Weekends and practices each year.

The training listed below is also recommended.

1. Practice Mission
2. Practice Bivouac
3. Helicopter Operations
4. Mantracking
5. Water Crossing
6. Cold Weather Camp
7. Advanced Navigation
8. Clue Awareness



### **2.2.2 Non-operational Non-Field Support**

A Non-operational Non-field Support Member is a SARDOC member who will not respond to a mission in any capacity. They help SARDOC in other ways, including:

1. Helping any officer with the duties of their office.
  - a. Fundraising activities
  - b. Public demonstrations
  - c. Maintaining membership lists
  - d. Receiving, answering, and filing official SARDOC correspondence
  - e. Maintaining an official file of SARDOC records
  - f. Collecting all payments due SARDOC
  - g. Preparing receipts for all payments received
  - h. Preparing receipts for all contributions received by SARDOC
  - i. Preparing the yearly budget
  - j. Assuring that Federal and State legal requirements are completed and filed in a timely manner.
  - k. Maintaining the records of members training, attendance and all certifications of dog/handler teams
2. Financially Supporting SARDOC
3. Dispatching

## **2.3 Operational Member**

An operational member of SARDOC is a member who is a certified Field Support member, or a certified Handler in one or more disciplines/specialties.

### **2.3.1 Operational Handler and Field Support Personnel**

#### **Minimum Qualifications**

1. Continue to meet all Minimum Qualifications for Non-Operational Handler or Non-Operational Field Support (see section 2.2.1)
2. Have a current Basic Red Cross First Aid card or higher medical training.
3. Have a current American Red Cross/American Heart Association CPR card.
4. Possess the equipment required of their capability/certification and satisfactorily complete the training required of field personnel. All equipment must be kept in good condition and in a constant state of readiness.

5. Be expected to follow all reasonable orders given by leaders. Only those orders that conflict with safety may be refused without concern for disciplinary action.
6. Be able to endure 24 hours under conditions normally found in the mountains from spring through fall at any altitude using only the contents of their pack.
7. Be familiar with SAR dog search operations as they relate to other SAR resources.
8. Be able to work a SAR dog, or with a SAR dog, in unfamiliar terrain up to 8 hours in a 24 hour period.
9. Handlers should train a SAR dog at least one time per week in wilderness and/or specialty search and participate in at least 25% of local area trainings.
10. Field Support members should train with a SAR dog and handler in wilderness or specialty search and participate in at least 25% of local area trainings.
11. Complete NIMS/ICS 100, 200, & 700 (available free online at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov))

## **Training Requirements**

Handlers and Field Support personnel must complete whatever training necessary to meet the qualifying Standards. Each SARDOC member will be required to participate in a minimum of 2 of the SARDOC Weekends (formal training sessions) per year, including the business meetings.

The training listed below is also recommended.

1. Practice Mission
2. Wilderness Survival
3. Helicopter Orientation
4. Man-tracking
5. Clue Awareness
6. Leadership Skills
7. Advanced Navigation
8. Managing the Lost Person Incident or equivalent course

### **2.3.2 Expectations of an Operational Search and Rescue Dog**

Search work is an exhausting physical and emotional experience and requires a dog that is mentally and physically ready for hard work and exhibits a strong healthy bond with the handler.

**Minimum Qualifications** – *may be demonstrated at area trainings*

1. Dog is 18 months old before testing for operational status.

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2. Handler delivers proof of up-to-date vaccinations to Area Director when dog starts training, and annually with dues.
3. Dog is able to successfully perform physically while completing Progressions with Handler.
4. Dog does not exhibit anxiety, depression or aggression.
5. Dog is responsive to handler when off lead, with other people and/or dogs as distractions and will recall from a group of dogs or other distractions.
6. Dog is able to be loaded with other dog teams, can enter a vehicle, snow vehicle, boat, canoe or aircraft as needed for trainings or missions.
7. Dog can wear a muzzle during transportation comfortably.
8. Dog and handler exhibit basic obedience and/or engagement commands which may include sit, stay, down, and the ability to perform an emergency stop or down.

## **2.4 Temporary Inactive Member**

Certified SARDOC teams must maintain a continual state of readiness, at or above the skill level required for certification. They must keep the Fielding Coordinator and local Area Director informed if they are not able to respond to missions for a significant length of time due to personal, medical, or other reasons.

A Temporary Inactive Member is a SARDOC member who has paid SARDOC dues but is unavailable to participate in missions or trainings for 3 months due to, but not limited to, the following reasons: medical, work, family, or personal matters. A certified handler and dog may be required to pass a Certification Readiness Evaluation before returning to Active status. This will be up to the discretion of the Area Director. Considerations will be, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the member declared his/her temporary inactivity
- Reason for absence
- Past SARDOC performance
- Current SARDOC participation in other areas
- Other SAR team participation and certifications
- Years of experience for the dog team
- History and outcome of missions

If the Certification Readiness Evaluation is not passed the Area Director will refer to the Fielding Coordinator for input who in turn will involve the Standards Committee depending on the circumstances. The temporary inactive member is not fieldable during this time frame.

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It will be the responsibility of the individual member to declare his or her temporary inactive status to the Area Director, Testing Coordinator and Fielding Coordinator.

## **2.5 Inactive Member**

An Inactive Member is a SARDOC member who has paid SARDOC dues but has not participated in missions or trainings for 6 months. Inactive SARDOC members will not be required to go through the probationary period in order to return to full status. However, Field Support Personnel may be asked by the Fielding Coordinator, Testing Coordinator, or Standards Committee to recertify and previously certified dog handlers may be required to recertify by passing the appropriate test(s) for their discipline(s). Exceptions may be made given the individual circumstances. This will be up to the discretion of the Dog Coordinator, Testing Coordinator, and the Standards Committee. Considerations will be, but are not limited to, the following:

- Past SARDOC performance
- Other SAR team participation and certifications
- Years of experience for the dog team
- History and outcome of missions

It will be the responsibility of the individual member to declare his or her inactive status to the Fielding Coordinator, Testing Coordinator, or to a Standards Committee member.

If a member does not declare his or her status to be inactive to the Fielding Coordinator, Testing Coordinator, or a Standards Committee member, and does not fulfill the membership requirements, the member must rejoin SARDOC and he or she must go through the probationary period.

## **3.0 Certification Procedures**

### **3.1 General Procedures**

1. All members should track their own training and progress towards the SARDOC certifications they wish to obtain.
2. When a member feels they have completed the prerequisites for a certification level and are ready to test for that certification, they should contact the Testing Coordinator to request the certification test.
3. Testing Coordinator will determine if the member is ready for the requested testing by reviewing the applicable Standards requirements with the testee. The Testing

Coordinator may also consult the testee's Area Director and other SARDOC members who have firsthand experience working with the testee. The purpose of this inquiry is to avoid the time lost in testing someone who is clearly not ready.

4. The-Testing Coordinator will also administer any Written Tests associated with the requested level of certification. The Testing Coordinator or his/her appointee will score the Written Test. Any grievances regarding the scoring of the written test will be addressed by the Standards Committee.
5. When the Written Test has been passed, The Testing Coordinator will ensure the requested Certification Test is scheduled as soon as practicable.
6. If the testee is an Area Director or the Fielding Coordinator, then their responsibilities for the certification test will be performed by the Testing Coordinator. If the testee is the Testing Coordinator, then their responsibilities for the certification test will be performed by the Fielding Coordinator.
7. The Testing Coordinator will appoint a Lead Tester for the test. The Lead Tester will set up and conduct the test. Only the Lead Tester will know the location of the subject(s) or article(s) beforehand.
8. Tester Trainees may observe all parts of the test.
9. Any number of additional observers may follow at the discretion of the testee. Observers must not distract the testee or testers.
10. At the beginning of the test, a Tester shall review with the testee the goals of the test. The testers shall confirm how long the testee shall have to complete the test and make note of the time at the start of the test.
11. Once the test has begun, the only allowable conversation between the testers and the testee is that of the testers asking the testee questions regarding navigation, search strategy, and how the dog is working. However, the testee may request these questions be held until a break and not disrupt the concentration/focus of the handler and/or dog while working. If discussion at a break is delaying the testing team to get back to work, the discussion should be continued at the next break or after the conclusion of the problem/test. The testee is free to offer any information or commentary he/she feels appropriate without any prompting by the testers.
12. A handler may use their own GPS receiver during the test. The Lead Tester will use GPS to verify locations in the field. The navigator will use map, compass, and GPS to plot the test team's location and any other information the testee tells the navigator to record.
13. The handler shall explain his/her search strategy at the beginning of the test. Should the testee change his/her strategy during the test, he/she shall inform the testers.
14. After completion of the test, nothing regarding the test shall be discussed among any of the testers, or with the testee, until after the testers have reviewed the test in private.

The testers should review and score the test immediately after returning from the field. The testers should collect feedback from the navigator and subject(s) before starting their review. Only Testers and Tester Trainees may attend the review of the test. Directly after the testers have completed their scoring of the test, the testee will be invited to discuss his/her test results with the testers. Observers may be present at this discussion, at the testee's and testers' discretion.

15. Testers will apply the latest version of the SARDOC Standards and any written guidelines from the Standards Committee when setting up and scoring the test. Testers will not use any "unwritten rules" or personal reinterpretations of the standards.
16. If a situation arises that is not covered by the Standards or other written guidelines for testing, the Testers should deal with it in the manner they best see fit, doing their best to be fair to the handler and true to the general intent of the SARDOC Standards. The situation and its resolution must be described in writing to the Standards Committee immediately after the test. The Standards Committee will review the incident and decide how it should be handled if it happens again.
17. If a testee fails, then the Testing Coordinator will consult with the Testers and decide under what criteria the testee may retest. The criteria will be presented in writing within two weeks of the original test. A retest will not be conducted in the same test area.
18. If a testee wants to contest the testers' decision, the testee may petition the Standards Committee. A meeting of the Standards Committee, the testee, and the testers must be held within one month to resolve the disagreement.
19. The Lead Tester has the option of calling a "no-test" if the conditions don't allow the tested skills to be observed. (e.g. dog finds subject on first pass.) A no-test does not count as a failed attempt.
20. If a testee fails a test two times the testee must have four Confidence Forms completed, signed, and returned to the Testing Coordinator before requesting the test again. Two of these forms must be completed by SARDOC certified handlers or testers, the other two may be completed by any SARDOC operational member. The Testing Coordinator and the Standards Committee will decide under what criteria the testee may retest. They do not have to retake the written test.
21. The testee may arrange for their own navigator on a test, otherwise the Lead Tester will appoint a navigator.
22. Before a Lead Tester is assigned by the Testing Coordinator, the testee may make a written request of the Testing Coordinator that one particular Tester not be chosen for their test.
23. The testee may choose one of the required number of Testers on their test, otherwise the Lead Tester will choose the test team. This allows the testee to be assured that at least one Tester is familiar with the dog and handler.

## **3.2 Maintenance Recertification**

SARDOC canine certifications expire after 3 years. Teams may recertify by passing a Maintenance Recertification Test or by demonstrating continuous performance through a program of Maintenance Performance Requirements (MPR). SARDOC Support Certifications do not have an expiration.

### **3.2.1 Maintenance Recertification Test**

Maintenance Recertification Tests are conducted in the same manner as initial certification tests, except:

- Confidence Forms and Written Tests are not required
- A minimum of one Tester is required, a Lead Tester is recommended. Additional testers and observers are allowed.
- The test must be conducted in an area unfamiliar to the testee, but it may be held within the testee's home region.

### **3.2.2 Maintenance Performance Requirements**

The Standards Committee will maintain and publish a checklist for each discipline or specialty defining the requirements for Maintenance Performance Requirements. Each handler will be responsible for tracking their progress and for submitting the checklist to the Dog Coordinator for approval before their certification expires. The checklist will include requirements for:

- Demonstrated performance on blind practice problems or missions
- Attendance and performance at trainings
- Attendance and performance at missions

Teams have a three month grace period after their expiration date to pass their recertification test(s), after which time, either due to failure to pass (up to three tries are allowed) or failure to meet the deadline, the team will no longer field on missions without the approval of the Dog Coordinator. The Standards Committee will set the parameters which the team must meet to recertify.

## **3.3 Wilderness Field Support**

### **Prerequisites:**

1. It is recommended that the testee train regularly, at least once per month.
2. The testee must attend at least the minimum required SARDOC Weekends and practices.
3. The testee must successfully complete the Written Test for Wilderness Field Support.
4. The testee must possess all Field Support items on the Field Equipment List (see section 6.1)

### **Test Setup:**

1. For field support certification, the team member must pass field tests in both the trailing and air scent disciplines. In addition, the team member must pass a night test, which may be in either of the above disciplines.
2. The tests may be conducted in the member's home region but they must be done in an area unfamiliar to the testee.
3. The testing team will be made up of 2 Testers (2 operational handlers, or 1 operational handler and 1 operational support member). All Testers must be approved by the Testing Coordinator.
4. The parameters of the field test will be similar to the Certification Test or Night Progression Evaluation of the discipline. The Lead Tester will determine the actual parameters (area, length, time).
5. The testee will act as navigator for a dog handler during the test. The handler may also be one of the testers, but the handler and dog cannot be tested or evaluated at the same time as the field support testee.
6. The testee is not permitted to use any Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology during the test. All navigation must be done with map and compass. The Testers may use GPS during the test.

### **Test Procedure:**

1. During the test, the testee must carry a field pack with adequate equipment for an 8 hour operational period in the climate and terrain of the test area. The Lead Tester will tell the testee ahead of time what minimum equipment from the Field Equipment List is expected. Before the test, the Testers will review the contents of the testee's field pack. If the contents of the pack are inadequate, the Lead Tester may cancel the test.
2. The location of the subject will be unknown to both the dog handler and the field support testee.
3. At the start of the test, the testee will be provided with a topographic map, and their current location will be marked on the map.
4. The testee will be asked to locate him/herself on a map and give the correct coordinates at least once during the test. The testee must also locate him/herself on a map and give the correct coordinates at the end of the test.
5. The testee must identify and package a scent article.
6. The testee must be able to navigate competently using map and compass, without GPS.
7. The testee must record the entire route taken by the dog team on their map.



8. The testee must be able to record all search-related information called by the handler onto the map.
9. The testee must be able to locate any clues found, including footprints, on the map.
10. The testee must demonstrate the proper procedures for handling clues, including footprints, found in the field, and be able to call in the description and location to incident base via radio.
11. The testee must be able to, at any time during the test, give a brief, understandable, and correct explanation of the team's location at the request from one of the testers.
12. The testee must be able to give the final coordinates of the subject to the tester.
13. The testee must demonstrate a basic understanding of air scent strategy and trailing strategy.
14. The testee must be able to properly read wind direction and obvious alerts given by the dog.

### **3.4 Wilderness Trailing Search Dog Team**

#### **Prerequisites:**

1. The handler must be a certified Wilderness Field Support member.
2. It is recommended that the testee team have completed at least 75% of the Trailing Task Book.
3. It is recommended that the team train regularly, two to three times a week, and that they practice diversified training in urban, suburban and wilderness trailing problems with varied lengths, ages and levels of contamination.
4. The team must attend at least the minimum required SARDOC Weekends and practices.
5. The team must have successfully completed all of the required Trailing Progression Evaluations.
6. The handler must possess all of the equipment in the Field Equipment List (see section 6.1).
7. The Area Director must review and approve the handler's training log.
8. The handler must successfully complete the Written Trailing Test.
9. When the Testing Coordinator has record of all prerequisites, the certification test will be scheduled.

### **Test Setup:**

1. The testing team will consist of 3 Trailing Testers (including the Lead Tester). At least one Tester must be currently or previously certified in trailing. All Testers must be approved by the Testing Coordinator.
2. The test will be conducted outside the team's home region, in an area unfamiliar to the handler.
3. The Point Last Seen (PLS) will be unmarked in a known area of 150 x 150 feet.
4. The PLS will be contaminated by at least 2 individuals not related to the subject.
5. The Direction of Travel (DOT) from the PLS is unknown to the testee.
6. The trail will be aged overnight, a total of 18 to 24 hours. The actual age of the trail will be determined by the testers according to the climatic conditions and terrain.
7. The trail will be 1¼ to 1½ miles long through moderate wilderness terrain. The trail will be laid considering the convenience and safety of the testers, tracklayers, and test team.
8. The trail will cross at least one road.
9. Approximately ½ mile after the start of the trail, the trail will be contaminated by two fresher cross-tracks. (Crosstracks may be laid by the same subjects as used to set up the contaminated start.)
10. Two or three personal articles will be left on the trail by the tracklayer.
11. A scent article from the subject will be provided.
12. All natural obstacles will be considered fair, with consideration given to safety of the dog, handler and subject while setting up the area. It is up to the dog handler to be able to read their dog.

### **Test Procedure:**

1. During the test, the testee must carry a field pack with adequate equipment for an 8 hour operational period in the climate and terrain of the test area. The Lead Tester will tell the testee ahead of time what minimum equipment from the Field Equipment List is expected. Before the test, the Testers will review the contents of the testee's field pack. If the contents of the pack are inadequate, the Lead Tester may cancel the test.
2. At the start of the test, the testee will be provided with a topographic map, and their current location will be marked on the map.
3. The testee will be asked to locate him/herself on a map and give the correct coordinates at least once during the test. The testee must also locate him/herself on a map and give the correct coordinates at the end of the test. The testee may use their GPS to obtain these coordinates.

4. During the briefing, and prior to the start of the time clock, the testee handler will give all appropriate instructions to the navigator
5. During the briefing, the testee will give to the testers a brief explanation of his/her dog's general working style, its primary body language indicators, and its trained indications, etc.
6. The handler must inform the testers when the dog has established the direction of travel, within ¼ mile of the start of the trail. If the declared direction of travel is incorrect, the test is failed immediately.
7. The dog may perform an indication on the articles left on the trail, but it will not be cause for failure if the dog does not find or indicate on the articles.
8. It will be up to the dog handler to determine the best ways to work their dog. No input on how to work the problem may be offered by the testers or any observers until the completion of the test.
9. An off-lead trailing dog must find the subject and indicate the find to the handler in a pre-described, reliable manner.
10. How the handler applies their search strategy and works the trail is as important to the outcome of the test as the dog making a find. The dog finding the subject does not automatically mean the team passes the test.
11. A field support person and a topographical map of the area will be available. The dog handler is responsible to communicate to the support person what information to put on the map and how to help him/her with navigation.
12. The team must find the subject within 2 hours (not including time taken for the briefing and breaks). Extra time may be added at the Lead Tester's discretion.

### **3.5 Wilderness Airscent Search Dog Team**

#### **Prerequisites:**

1. The handler must be a certified Wilderness Field Support member.
2. It is recommended that the test team have completed at least 75% of the Air Scent Task Book, and at least 50% of the Trailing Task Book.
3. It is recommended that the team train regularly, two to three times a week.
4. The team must attend at least the minimum required SARDOC Weekends and practices.
5. The team must have successfully completed any mandatory Trailing Progression Evaluations. The Testing Coordinator may, under special circumstances, waive this requirement.

6. The team must have successfully completed all of the required Air Scent Progression Evaluations.
7. The handler must possess all of the equipment in the Field Equipment List (see section 6.1).
8. The Area Director must review and approve the handler's training log.
9. The handler must successfully complete the Written Test for Air Scent.
10. When the Testing Coordinator has record of all prerequisites, the certification test will be scheduled.

### **Test Setup:**

1. The testing team will consist of 3 Airscent Testers (including the Lead Tester). At least one Tester must be currently or previously certified in airscent. All Testers must be approved by the Testing Coordinator.
2. The test will be conducted outside the team's home region, in an area unfamiliar to the handler.
3. One subject will be hidden in an area of 200 to 320 acres (1/2 mile x 5/8 to 1 mile) in moderate wilderness terrain with the subject in place at least 45 minutes prior to the start.
4. The boundaries of the test area will be marked on a map for the handler. The subject will be within the given boundaries.
5. A scent article from the subject will be provided.

### **Test Procedure:**

1. During the test, the testee must carry a field pack with adequate equipment for an 8 hour operational period in the climate and terrain of the test area. The Lead Tester will tell the testee ahead of time what minimum equipment from the Field Equipment List is expected. Before the test, the Testers will review the contents of the testee's field pack. If the contents of the pack are inadequate, the Lead Tester may cancel the test.
2. At the start of the test, the testee will be provided with a topographic map. The boundaries of the test area and the team's current location will be marked on the map.
3. The testee will be asked to locate him/herself on a map and give the correct coordinates at least once during the test. The testee must also locate him/herself on a map and give the correct coordinates at the end of the test. The testee may use their GPS to obtain these coordinates.

4. During the briefing, and prior to the start of the time clock, the testee handler will give all appropriate instructions to the navigator.
5. During the briefing, the testee will give to the testers a brief explanation of his/her dog's general working style, its primary body language indicators, and its trained indications, etc.
6. The team must find the subject within 2 hours (not including time taken for the briefing and breaks). Extra time may be added at the discretion of the Lead Tester.
7. The dog must find the subject and indicate the find to the handler in a pre-described, reliable manner.
8. The dog must scent discriminate, and should only indicate a find on the subject.
9. How the handler applies their search strategy and works the area is as important to the outcome of the test as the dog making a find. The dog finding the subject does not automatically mean the team passes the test.
10. A field support person and a topographical map of the area will be available. The dog handler is responsible to communicate to the support person what information to put on the map and how to help him/her with navigation.

## **3.6 Specialty Search Dog Team**

### **3.6.1 Avalanche**

Teams that have passed appropriate non-SARDOC avalanche dog team certification tests, which are approved by the SARDOC Standards Committee, may field their dogs as representing that agency only. In order to field as avalanche dogs representing SARDOC, they must certify with SARDOC according to the appropriate SARDOC certifying standards for a SARDOC Avalanche Dog Team.

#### **Prerequisites:**

1. It is recommended that the team train regularly (during winter/snow season).
2. The team must attend at least the minimum required number of SARDOC Weekends and practices.
3. The handler must have completed an acceptable avalanche course within the last 3 years and be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of avalanche safety.
4. The handler must successfully complete the SARDOC written exam on avalanche search.
7. The handler must be capable of selecting and inhabiting an adequate campsite for their team, for a minimum of 24 hours, during any weather conditions encountered by the team above timberline and in deep snow.

8. The handler must be competent in backcountry winter travel.
9. The handler must possess all items listed in the Avalanche Field Equipment List (see section 6.5)

The dog must be able to work effectively in below 0(F) temperatures and navigate avalanche debris.

### **Test Setup**

1. The testing team will consist of 2 Avalanche Testers (including the Lead Tester). All Testers must be approved by the Testing Coordinator.
2. The test will be set up in a simulated avalanche area at least 150 feet top to bottom, and 100 feet across.
3. Two live subjects will be buried in the test area. They will be buried with a minimum of 3 feet and maximum 5 feet of snow between the top of their snow cave and the surface of the avalanche.
4. Two to four clothing articles will also be buried in the test area, 6 inches to 2 feet deep.
5. The test team will be staged near but unable to see the test area while the subjects are buried.
6. 10 minutes after the subjects are buried (longer if the snow is denser than usual), the test team will begin their search.
7. Handler and dog must approach and navigate rapidly and carefully despite radio interruptions and the presence of testers and shovellers on the perimeter of the test area.
8. When the dog indicates on the first subject, it will be diverted to continue searching while shovellers clear a 1 foot deep hole above the subject.
9. When the dog indicates on the second subject, it will be diverted back to the hole above the first subject to test reindication. If the dog digs positively and accurately it will be permitted to fully recover that subject.
10. The team must locate both subjects within 30 minutes
11. The team does not have to locate any of the clothing articles. If a dog indicates on an article, it will be diverted as with a live find. When the dog is returned to the article, testers will look for difference in the dog's enthusiasm between a live subject and an article.
12. Nothing belonging to the handler is allowed in the hole with the subject
13. The handler cannot use an avalanche beacon in "receive" mode during the test. For the safety of the subjects, they will have beacons in "transmit" mode, and testers or shovellers will have receivers that will be activated in an emergency.

14. Each subject must have a working radio in contact with the Lead Tester or a designated safety person.
15. Subjects and testers will enter the slide zone from the windward side or from a different direction than the test team will enter.
16. Shovellers and testers will be placed so as not to cue the dog or handler.
17. The entire slide area will be disturbed by tramping with snowshoes or, preferably, boot-packing.
18. After the area disturbance, the test will be started as soon as possible.
19. All burials must be a minimum of 3 feet from the surface.
20. Any dog showing signs of unstable and/or undesirable behavior under normal conditions will not be certified.

### **3.6.2 Water Search**

#### **Prerequisites:**

1. The handler must have successfully demonstrated the written test for water search.
2. The handler must possess all items listed in the Water Field Equipment List (see section 6.6)

#### **Qualifications:**

1. The testing team will consist of 2 Water Testers (including the Lead Tester). All Testers must be approved by the Testing Coordinator.
2. The testee may have a navigator/support person if they wish.
3. The test will be conducted in an area of at least 350' x 1000'.
4. Cadaver material of adequate size (no less than the size of a hand or foot) will be sunk in the water approximately 8' to 12' deep.
5. Cadaver material will be given a rise time of at least 60 minutes.
6. The source material may be provided by the testers or by the testee with the approval of the testers. Fat will not be used, nor will blood.
7. The team will first conduct a shoreline search, triangulating the high probability area with flagging and compass bearings. The dog may or may not swim out. The team must complete this section of the test in 30 minutes.

8. With this information, the handler will communicate to the testers the high probability area to be worked with the boat.
9. With the high probability area defined, it is up to the testee's discretion if they would like to work a larger area to accommodate the wind, scent patterns, and their own style.
10. The team will then work the indicated search area from, preferably, a gas-powered boat (another type of boat may be used in the event that this type of boat is not available).
11. The team will be graded on their strategy, ongoing instructions to the boat driver, use of GPS and compass to triangulate and mark dog alerts, and their specification of the high probability area. A buoy may be placed at the spot of the dog's final alert.
12. The team must define an area small enough to be searched quickly and successfully by divers. This will be determined by the depth of the source and weather conditions. A radius twice the distance as the depth of the source is the suggestion, but the testers will make the final decision based on present conditions.
13. When the team has finished, the source will be popped if requested so the dog may have his/her reward.
14. The team has 45 minutes to complete the boat half of the test.
15. A topo map will be provided by the testing team and, after the boat portion has concluded, the testee will draw the area worked and the high probability area as defined by GPS, landmarks, flagging, and compass bearings. The testee will write down the GPS coordinates of the final alert for the testers.

#### **Training Requirements:**

1. Dog/handler teams are encouraged to work regularly on their own on all phases of training.
2. The team must attend at least the minimum required number of SARDOC Weekends and practices.
3. A Swiftwater Rescue class is highly recommended.

### **3.6.3 Large Area Cadaver Search**

This certification test demonstrates a dog team's ability to search large wilderness areas and urban interface areas where the subject is presumed to be deceased.

#### **Prerequisites:**

1. The handler must successfully complete a Bloodborne Pathogens class.



2. The handler must successfully complete a Crime Scene Preservation class.
3. The handler must successfully complete a Hazmat Awareness Level class.
4. The team must attend at least 25% of SARDOC HRD/Cadaver Specialty trainings during the 12 months before requesting the test.
5. It is recommended that the team attend seminars or workshops taught by outside instructors in addition to the SARDOC specialty trainings.
6. The handler must maintain a training log of all their HRD/Cadaver trainings.
7. The handler must possess all items listed in the HRD Field Equipment List (see section 6.6).
8. The handler must successfully complete the SARDOC written exam on HRD/Cadaver search.
9. When the Testing Coordinator has record of all prerequisites, the certification test will be scheduled.

#### **Test Setup:**

1. The testing team will consist of 2 HRD/ Cadaver Testers.
2. The test will be conducted in an area of approximately 40 acres ( $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$  mile) in medium vegetation density and medium terrain difficulty with some drainages.
3. The test will be conducted in an area unfamiliar to the testee.
4. One quarter of the area will not contain any source (blank area).
5. The area will contain 3 to 5 sources that are completely hidden from view the source material may be provided by the testers, or by the testee with the approval of the testers.
6. The source will be approximately the size of an adult human hand or foot (minimum 340 grams). There will be a variety of source, such as tissue/bone, bone (minimum 140 grams), and adipocere in various stages of decomposition. Blood will not be used as a source.
7. The sources will be hidden at least one hour prior to the test.
8. The sources will be placed in various states:
  - Buried (in soil, 6-12 inches)
  - At surface
  - Hanging (6-8 feet above ground level)

9. The number of hidden sources and their state will be unknown to the testee.
10. Any naturally occurring animal scent distractions will remain in place in the search area.
11. There will be one blank hole dug and refilled in the search area, taking care that it does not become contaminated with cadaver scent.
12. Testers will fully contaminate the area with live human scent after placement of sources by walking all over the search area (to inhibit the dog trailing to the source).
13. The boundaries of the test area and the team's current location will be marked on a map for the handler.
14. All hides will be within the given boundaries.

**Test Procedure:**

1. Before the test begins, the handler will advise the tester what the dog's final indication is.
2. The dog must provide a pinpoint alert so that the handler can mark with a flag and a GPS waypoint, within 36 inches of the actual location of the source. If the location of the source does not allow for marking at the pinpoint spot, the flag must be placed as close as physically possible.
3. The handler must develop and advise the testers of a search plan for the area.
4. The team must show competence and efficiency in the search for and location of human remains in a wilderness setting. How the handler applies their strategy and works the area (e.g. adapting their strategy when appropriate) is as important to the outcome of the test as the dog making finds.
5. The dog team is expected to find all of the sources. More than one miss constitutes a failure.
6. Any alert that the handler identifies and marks as a find which is a false alert will constitute a failure of the test.
7. The handler may not probe the ground for buried source.
8. The dog must not compromise the scent source.
9. The handler must indicate when they have completed their search.

10. If the dog performs a final indication on animal scent distraction, it constitutes a failure of the test.
11. The time limit for the test is 1.5 hours from the time the dog is given its search command (excluding time for briefing, breaks, and rewarding after each find)
12. A support person and a topographical map of the area will be available. The dog handler is responsible to communicate to the support person what information to put on the map and how to help him/her with navigation.
13. A map of the area including dog indications, wind directions, and other pertinent information will be kept by the testee and a copy submitted to the Testing Coordinator.

### **3.7 Team currently certified by outside agency and not a current SARDOC member**

SARDOC recognizes that there are a wide range of air scent, trailing, and specialty certification standards across the nation. A SAR dog team that has been certified by a non-SARDOC agency may apply to the Standards Committee for a comparable SARDOC certification process, if their current certification is equivalent to SARDOC standards. The handler should submit the following for review:

- Certification and testing standards, demonstrating scent specific capabilities.
- Proof of current certification
- Reference from previous fielding agency or SAR team including but not limited to years served, attendance on missions and trainings
- Proof of membership from local fielding agency
- Demonstrate that team is capable of fielding as scent specific search team.
- Proof of possession of the minimum equipment for fielding on missions
- Training and mission logs

The Standards Committee will review these submissions and make recommendations to the Fielding Coordinator and Testing Coordinator on how to proceed. If approved for the comparable certification process, the 1 year minimum on the probationary period will be waived. The handler must still become a Voting Member before any certification tests.

The Standards Committee may, at its discretion, accept proof of previous training or experience in lieu of required tests including Field Support Tests and prerequisites for Operational Handler tests (including Progression Evaluations). The Written Candidate Test requirement cannot be waived. When all requirements have been met or waived, the handler/dog team may request the certification test.

The Standards Committee may require field demonstrations of the teams' skills before granting comparable certification approval, or may deny the comparable process entirely in which case the team will have to follow the normal process of training and testing for SARDOC certification.

While the non-SARDOC certified team is preparing for and taking SARDOC certification tests, they may field on missions with their local agency, but only when it is made explicitly clear with all agencies involved that the team is using their non-SARDOC credentials. The Standards Committee will review the preparation and testing progress of the handler every 3 months. If the Standards Committee determines that sufficient progress is not being made it may cancel the comparable certification process, and require the handler to follow the normal SARDOC certification process.

## **4.0 Evaluators and Testers**

### **4.1 Evaluators**

Evaluators are SARDOC members who are qualified and approved to set up, conduct, and evaluate the Progression Evaluations.

The SARDOC Testing Coordinator will maintain a list of members who are qualified as Progression Evaluators in each discipline. In general, anyone who is at least Operational Support and has passed a particular evaluation can be an evaluator for that progression evaluation. Note that some evaluations require approved Certification Testers, not just Evaluators.

### **4.2 Testers**

The Testing Coordinator will keep an up-to-date list of all approved Testers and Lead Testers for each discipline and specialty. In special cases, the Standards Committee may appoint Testers or Lead Testers who have not completed all of the requirements listed below.

#### **4.2.1 Tester Trainee**

Tester Trainees are operational SARDOC members who are learning how to be good testers for Certification Tests. They observe all phases of certification tests, but do not get to vote in the scoring of the test.

#### **Requirements:**

1. Certified handler.
2. Certified Wilderness Support members may be tester trainees for Wilderness Support testing.
3. Tester trainees must be approved beforehand by the Testing Coordinator.

#### **4.2.2 Wilderness (Trailing/Airscent) Tester**

Testers are SARDOC members who are qualified and approved to review and score Certification Tests. A Tester must qualify separately in each discipline.

#### **Requirements**

1. Fielded as Operational Support or Operational Handler on at least five missions.
2. Participated in at least three tests/evaluations (Night Progression Evaluation, Certification Readiness Progression Evaluation, and Certification Tests) as a Tester

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Trainee in the discipline. One of the tests must be a Certification Test, one must be a Night Evaluation, the other can be any of the three types.

3. Tester Trainees may operate as Navigator on the test they are observing.
4. Testers must be approved annually by the Standards Committee.

#### **4.2.3 Specialty Tester**

Testers are SARDOC members who are qualified and approved to review and score Certification Tests. A Tester must qualify separately in each specialty.

##### **Requirements**

1. Qualified as a Wilderness Tester.
2. Served as Operational Handler on at least two missions in the specialty.
3. Participated in at least two tests as a Tester Trainee in the specialty.
4. Testers must be approved annually by the Standards Committee.

#### **4.2.4 Lead Tester Trainee**

A Lead Tester Trainee is a SARDOC Tester who is learning to set up, lead, review, and score Certification Tests. They work directly with the Lead Tester for a test in all phases of the test, including setup.

##### **Requirements:**

1. Participated as Tester on at least 3 tests (the same types of tests and evaluations that qualify for becoming a Tester) in the discipline or specialty.
2. Approved by the Standards Committee to be a Lead Tester Trainee.

#### **4.2.5 Lead Tester**

Lead Testers are qualified and approved to set up, review, and score Certification Tests.

##### **Requirements:**

1. Participated as a Lead Tester Trainee on at least one Certification Test in the discipline or specialty.
2. Lead Testers must be approved annually by the Standards Committee.

## **5.0 Certification Test Score Sheets**

The Certification Test Score Sheets are saved in separate files and are included by reference in these Standards. The latest version of each score sheet will be posted on the SARDOC website, and available from the Testing Coordinator.

- GPS Proficiency Test
- Wilderness Search Support Field Test Scoresheet
- Air Scent Certification Test Scoresheet
- Trailing Certification Test Scoresheet
- Avalanche Certification Test Scoresheet
- Water Search Certification Test Scoresheet
- Large Area Cadaver Search Certification Test Scoresheet

## 6.0 Field Equipment Lists

### 6.1 Field Equipment

Listed below is the minimum equipment required for Handlers and Field Support personnel.

(Items marked with \* are only required for Handlers.)

1. Compass
2. Headlamp
3. Extra Bulbs and Batteries
4. Shelter (tarp, bivy sack, tube tent)
5. Hiking Boots
6. Socks (wool or equivalent)
7. Sweater (wool or equivalent)
8. Mountain Parka
9. Long Pants (wool or equivalent)
10. Hat (appropriate for season)
11. Gloves or Mittens
12. Rain Gear
13. Sunglasses
14. Extra Food and Water for 72 Hours
15. Waterproof Matches
16. Candle and Fire Starter
17. Whistle
18. Pocket Knife
19. Signal Tape (plastic)
20. Signal Mirror
21. Small Notebook and Pencil
22. Toilet Articles
23. Individual First Aid Kit
24. Closed Cell Foam Pad
25. Wind/Rain Pants
26. Gaiters
27. Equipment to Heat Water and a Container to Heat Water
28. Hearing Protection
29. Sun Screen and Lip Protection
30. Sleeping bag
31. Orange hunting vest
32. GPS \*
33. FRS radio \*



## **6.2 Canine Field Equipment**

**Recommended Equipment** (at handler's discretion) - to keep in vehicle

1. Dog Food (for a minimum of 72 hours)
2. Extra Water (for a minimum of 72 hours)
3. Dish for Food and Water
4. Collar and appropriate Lead
5. Harness
6. Lighted collar and/or light for the vest (or equivalent).
7. Bright colored vest (unless the dog is working on lead). Orange is the preferred color, especially during hunting season.
8. Hearing Protection
9. Containment for dog (crate, tether, etc)
10. Rewards for dog
11. Necessary Medications
12. Dog Boots

## **6.3 Individual First Aid Kit**

**Suggested items:**

1. Band-Aids
2. Butterfly Bandages
3. SAM Splint
4. Wound Antiseptic
5. Nonstick Gauze Pads
6. 2 in. Roller Bandages
7. Triangular Bandages
8. 1 in. Roll Adhesive Tape
9. Chemical Cold Pack
10. Moleskin or Molefoam
11. Petroleum Jelly
12. Lanacaine or Cortacaine
13. Eye Solution
14. Tincture of Benzoin Swab
15. Tweezers
16. Needle
17. 3 Large Safety Pins
18. Scissors

## **6.4 Canine First Aid Kit**

### **Suggested items:**

1. Vet Wrap
2. Booties
3. Squirt Water Bottle
4. Salt Packets
5. Needle Nose Pliers
6. Eye Ointment (e.g. Neobacimyx)
7. Mineral Oil (for dog's ears)
8. Super Glue (for cuts)

## **6.5 Avalanche Field Equipment**

### **Required Equipment:**

1. All items on the Field Equipment List (section 6.1)
2. Backcountry skis or snowshoes (and repair items)
3. Backpack snow shovel
4. Backpack stove and pot
5. Avalanche beacon
6. Probe pole
7. Clothing appropriate for working in winter alpine conditions

## **6.6 Water Field Equipment**

### **Required Equipment:**

1. All items on the Field Equipment list (section 6.1)
2. PFD for handler and dog. Use of the PFD for the dog is up to the handler's discretion. It is not recommended for river search.
3. Whistle
4. Diver's knife
5. Marker buoys
6. River Helmet
7. River Rescue Throw Bag

## **6.7 Large Area Cadaver Field Equipment**

### **Required Equipment:**

1. All items on the Field Equipment List (section 6.1)
2. Latex/Nitril gloves
3. Handi Wipes with Bleach
4. Appropriate flagging materials
5. Eye protection