Effective Search Dog Deployment

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Search Dogs are just another resource we have available to us to help in the effort to find the missing person. As with any resource, when deployed in the most effective manner possible to optimize their capabilities, the better the results will be. When calling in resources, it just makes sense to use them in such a way that they can work as effectively as possible according to their training and certification levels; as well as their specialty for which they were requested. Make sure the dogs you are requesting are properly certified.

Types: Trailing Dogs:

1. Trailing dogs follow ground scent from where the subject has traveled. They are best at getting a direction of travel for the search. Keep in mind that subjects don't just walk a straight line.
2. Scent article: Yes!
3. PLS
4. Contamination: These dogs should be able to work through contamination; however, if it can be minimized then the effectiveness of the team can be maximized.
5. Best time for working: P.M. or early A.M. most effective, though can and should be deployed as soon as possible.
6. Length of effectiveness: Up to 48 hours after subject has gone missing-varies according to weather, levels of contamination, individual dog's training and capabilities.
7. Negatives. Maybe the subject wasn't there, or they left in a vehicle.
8. Maximizing the use of the Trailing Dog Team: Have scent article (see below) and navigator ready to go. Request Dog team as soon as possible after subject has gone missing. Also, if a vehicle is the PLS, try to protect this area as well as possible.

Air Scent Dogs:

1. Air Scent Dogs work specific areas using the scent flowing in the wind. They can find live subjects, as well as deceased. (See last item.)
2. Scent Article: Yes! However, if necessary, these dogs can work without one- they will then have to find everyone in the area and long distance alerts are not usable. Not optimal but can be effective under the right circumstances.
3. PLS or any specific area. Areas will optimally be no more than 1 mile x 1 mile-or specific areas as divided by workable terrain i.e. drainage systems, ridgelines, etc. However, these teams are prepared to work whatever assignment they are given. The

handler will decide how the area will be worked according to wind, weather and terrain. They will also try to work it to the level of POD requested.

4. Contamination-These dogs are scent specific, (scent article optimal), so other searchers, hikers, etc. will not bother them. However, again, to optimize their effectiveness, it is best to minimize other searchers in the area assigned to the dog team. These dog teams are better and faster at working their assigned areas, so it is not necessary to cover the area with foot teams too. Save the foot teams for their own areas and get the most out of your resources.

5. Best time for working; Summer: P.M. through early a.m. but dog teams can, and should, be fielded as soon as possible regardless. Fall, Winter, Spring-any time. Cooler conditions make for better scent flows, but teams should be capable of any type of working conditions. Scent flows downhill/down valley during the coolness of the night and early morning, allowing for much easier and faster terrain coverage, as well as high PODs. During the heat of the day (summer) the scent flow is upslope/ upvalley and often non-continuous, requiring terrain to be covered from the top, which, of course, is much more difficult and time-consuming. High PODs will be much harder to achieve in hot conditions.

6. Length of Effectiveness: As long as they can keep working. Air Scent teams work the active scent on the wind coming off the subject's body-a continuous source assuming the subject is in the area.

7. Negatives: Air Scent dogs are very good at clearing areas. If search areas are divided up wisely and thoroughly, the high probability areas can be narrowed down by dogs giving negatives on areas that can then be disregarded-assuming their PODs are high enough for comfort. And assuming the subject is not moving. Good dogs can also rule out whether or not the subject has passed through the hiking trails and junctions recently.

8. Clues: Air Scent dogs are also excellent for distance alerts and triangulation clues-Handlers should report the major interests and alerts their dogs are having, along with the UTMs and compass bearings. These can then be drawn on the base map to triangulate the high probability area. Again, keep in mind the subject might be moving. Other clues would, of course, include articles of clothing, etc. belonging to the subject that might turn up along the way.

9. Deceased subjects: Air Scent dogs are effective in finding deceased subjects with a scent article up to three weeks after their disappearance, depending on the conditions. Possibly longer in the winter; less time in 90-100 degree weather.

10. Maximizing the use of the Air Scent Dog Team: If requesting dogs for 5-6 a.m.; please have their assignments and navigators (if requested) ready to go and get them

into the field immediately and ahead of the other teams.   These handlers like to arrive early and go to work before the heat sets in.

Cadaver Dogs (HRD-Human remains detection):
1. Cadaver Dogs are used for land cadaver searches (NOT WATER). They should be capable of locating bodies, as well as smaller things, such as bones. They are NOT needed for recent suicides, etc. Air Scent dogs are effective for recently deceased parties for up to three weeks. (See above.)
2. Specific areas-High probability areas should have been selected that are of reasonable size, depending on what the team is looking for. Smaller target items require smaller areas as these searches demand high concentration on the part of the dog. Very small grids would be needed to cover the area.
3. Best time for working: Daylight. Again, cooler conditions are better. These searches are usually easier to schedule.
4. Crime Scenes-If this is a crime scene and a case that could possibly go to court, take care that all procedures are properly followed.

Water Dogs:
1. Water dogs are trained to find ANY human scent under the water, including cadaver.
2. Scent article-Not needed, but can be helpful. The dogs are trained to work without.
3. Contamination-Other recreationists are fine on shore and in boats, but it is always the best to clear the area of all but necessary personnel, whenever possible.
   ***Divers in the water are NOT a good idea. A lot of the dogs' training is done on divers so having divers looking at the same time as the dog is not optimal. If you are requesting a water dog, please allow that dog team a reasonable time to work the area before putting divers into the water. The dog team's job is to pinpoint the location of the subject. Once that has been GPS'd and flagged, then the divers can come in with their cameras to pinpoint. (The divers can be searching from a boat with cameras or sonars, just not in the water while the dog team is searching.)
4. Best time for working-Early a.m. but any time during the day. Wind conditions in Colorado often become unworkable as the day goes on.
5. Length of Effectiveness-As long as the subject is under the water.
6. Using the Water Dog Team wisely-
   a. No divers in the water.
   b. Have a boat that is workable for the dog available to go when they get there (Lakes).
   c. Have a boat driver who enjoys working with dogs and who is interested in navigating.

d. Give the dog team just a good hour head start to get their job done. The handler will most likely have a good method for covering the search area-this will include shoreline search and boat search.

Avalanche Dogs:
1. Avalanche dogs search for any human scent coming from under the snow surface. Dogs should search for the subject-some will also indicate on articles (i.e. gloves, packs, etc.) Scent rise time from a buried subject is approximately 10 minutes from the time of burial to the surface, depending on conditions, depth of burial, snow density, etc.
2. No Scent Article.
3. Dogs know to search the debris field, or the section of the debris field indicated by the handler.
4. Contamination-No problem-these dogs are trained to work with other searchers on the field.
5. Best time for working-Should be deployed as soon as possible. Daylight is always better for safety.
6. Length of effectiveness: As long as the subject is buried.
7. Clues: The dog might indicate on articles. They are trained to go for the subject first to try to save their life. Articles are secondary.
8. Maximizing the use of the Avalanche dog: Get the dog team on scene as quickly as possible assuming the scene is safe. If more than one dog, have the search segments ready to be worked. Someone available to probe quickly when the dog alerts is also ideal-

Obtaining a Scent Article:
1. Select an article of clothing that has been worn and touched only by the subject. Wallets, insoles and hairbrushes also work. When in doubt, let the handler get it if at all possible. On multi-day searches, incoming handlers will probably want to select new scent articles if that possibility exists to eliminate all chances of contamination.
2. Do Not chose something out of a family laundry basket.
3. Using a Ziploc baggie, invert it over your hand (nitril/latex gloves on your hands are a real plus), pick up the article, fold the bag back over the article and seal. Do not touch the inside of the bag.
4. If the scent article must come from a vehicle, please let the handler take care of this. Sometimes, the only way to get a scent article is to rub some gauze on the steering wheel, seat cushion, headrest, door handle, etc. So, please, if you must get into the car, touch as little as possible and remember what has been touched. If the car is

locked, the handler might have to scent the dog through the crack in the door. (This works, so don't touch!!)

Dog Team Certifications:

1. Why this is important-Properly certified dogs have spent years (literally) just getting to testing. After they pass their tests, they are continuously monitored throughout their working lives to make sure they are up to snuff and advancing as they should. You can trust the information the handlers are giving you. Uncertified or poorly tested dog teams are not qualified, trained, nor "weathered," in such a way that they can positively and reliably add to the search-in many cases they might actually misdirect. All resources can have good days and bad, make mistakes or perform stellarly. However, by insisting on properly trained teams, you are most likely to receive the results you are looking for in any search resource.