

Rocky Mountain Rescue Dogs, Inc. **Specialized Operational HRD Land-Evidence Test**

Purpose

The HRD land-evidence test demonstrates the ability of a handler and their canine partner to locate small quantities of human remains in a variety of land search situations. This test shall demonstrate the ability of the canine to search for and recognize the scent of human remains, to perform a trained final response, and for the handler to correctly read the behavior of their canine partner.

Prerequisites

1. Operational handler in good standing
2. Request to test HRD land-evidence form approved by the governing board
3. Completed necessary checklist
4. Attendance at a minimum of four (4) searches
5. Training logs for HRD land-evidence consistent with the level of training necessary to pass the test.
6. Haz-Mat awareness class (NFPA 472/CFR 29/910.120 Part Q or equivalent)
7. Bloodborne pathogens class (29CFR1910 or equivalent)
8. Crime scene preservation class (2 hour minimum course taught by law enforcement, crime scene technicians or equivalent)

Test Criteria

1. The test consists of four (4) one (1) acre areas; one buried source (6 to 12 inches), one elevated source (4 to 6 feet), one surface source and one blank area (no source present). All sources shall be concealed. Each corner of each station shall be identified with flagging and/or GPS coordinates.
2. The team has 30 minutes to complete each station. The handler must flag/GPS mark the buried and surface source within a three-foot radius of the source. The handler must flag/GPS mark the elevated source within a radius equal to 1-½ times the height; i.e. a 4-foot high source must be flagged/GPS marked within a 6-foot radius. The handler must identify the blank area as clear.
3. Upon interpreting the dog's final response, the handler shall advise the evaluator and mark the location with a flag. Any identified (flagged/GPS marked) final response that is incorrect shall constitute as a fail of that station. If the team fails one station, that station may be retested during the same testing event. If the team fails two or more stations, the entire test must be repeated at a later date after proof of the completion of more training to remedy the problem. If the team fails the blank station, the whole test is considered a fail and the test must be repeated.

General Guidelines

1. The HRD material, referred to as “source”, shall be 15-30 grams of human blood, bone and/or tissue. The sources shall be contained in such a way that no dog or handler shall come into direct contact with it.
2. Each area should be open but have shrubs or trees present so that elevated targets can be hidden in them. Neither trees nor shrubs may be so dense that the handler or evaluator would easily lose sight of the dog at any time. Care must be taken to prevent contamination from other evaluation areas.
3. The sources should be placed one to six hours prior to the start of each search. The search areas shall be contaminated with human scent to prevent the canine from tracking to the source. One to two people in addition to the evaluator should walk in the search area after the source is placed.
4. Distractions shall be present in the test areas. These may be animal remains, false holes (dug with an uncontaminated shovel), food, animal scat or other naturally occurring distractions.
5. The evaluator shall conduct a briefing in which the handler shall be given pertinent information about the search scenario and answer any questions the handler might have. The evaluator, whenever possible, should not know the location of the sources (double blind test) and should have another qualified handler place the sources. If the evaluator sets up the test he/she cannot follow the team but shall watch from the outside of the search area.
6. The handler shall be responsible for formulating and articulating their search strategy and providing the evaluator with a description of their dog’s final response. The canine should give a recognizable change in behavior when it initially detects scent and follow it to identify the location of the actual sources. Changes in search strategy are permissible, however the handler must communicate their reasoning to the evaluator.
7. Dogs must be under the handlers control at all times. If the dog mouths, picks up or begins to move the source, the dog must immediately stop at the command of the handler.
8. Once the dog locates the source, the dog shall demonstrate its final response. The handler is not permitted to physically search for the source before calling the final response.
9. At the conclusion of the test, the evaluator shall be responsible to complete the appropriate evaluation form and debrief the handler on their performance.

Evaluation Criteria

1. The team is adequately attired and has adequate supplies, equipment and water for the team.
2. The canine locates sources within the allotted time and performs the final response.
3. The canine demonstrates good focus on the task at hand. The canine avoids wildlife interaction, responds to the handler's corrections/commands and readily returns to work after distractions.
4. The handler marks the sources within the allowable distance from the source.
5. No false alert is given by the dog and called by the Handler.

Recertification

Recertification is required every two (2) years.

