

Wilderness / Urban Live & Article Find

Purpose: This rubric is designed to evaluate a dog's potential for Search and Rescue (SAR) work based on their performance in various exercises in order to permit the team to go for third party validation.

Criteria:

Total Search Time: 1 hour

Test Components:

1. **Area Search – Live Find (300m x 300m, fields/woods)**
 - a. The subject may be standing, seated or prone and may or may not interact with the dog.
2. **Evidence / Article Search – Urban (alleys/buildings up to 100m)**
 - a. The team must complete the required number of finds in each area before progressing.

SCORING SCALE

| Score | Descriptor | Definition |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| 4 – Excellent | Operational Level | Performance demonstrates strong mastery. Efficient, confident, minimal handler input, clear dog behaviour, accurate problem-solving. |
| 3 – Proficient | Deployment-Ready | Reliable performance with minor handler or canine errors that do not significantly affect outcome. |
| 2 – Developing | Training Level | Inconsistent performance; multiple errors or inefficiencies requiring handler correction or additional training. |
| 1 – Needs Improvement | Not Yet Ready | Significant issues impacting search effectiveness, safety, or ability to complete the task. |

1. Pre-Search Readiness & Deployment Strategy

| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Briefing comprehension & area planning | Does not understand assignment or struggles to plan search approach. | Understands assignment but plan is unclear or inefficient. | Solid understanding; plan is generally effective. | Clear, logical plan; demonstrates strong situational analysis. |
| Equipment readiness | Missing critical gear; unsafe setup. | Minor missing elements; needs prompting. | Proper gear; prepared with minor adjustments. | Fully prepared, efficient, professional readiness. |
| Canine start-line focus | Dog unfocused, overstimulated. | Dog somewhat distracted; slow to settle. | Dog ready with minor warm-up needed. | Dog engaged, controlled, responsive, and ready to work. |

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2. Area Search – Wilderness / Semi-Urban (Live Find)

1 subject hidden ~30 minutes prior.

| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Search strategy & coverage | No clear pattern; large gaps. | Inconsistent pattern; gaps present. | Effective pattern with minor inefficiencies. | Excellent area coverage; adaptive and thorough. |
| Odour problem-solving | Dog struggles to source; repeated failures. | Dog eventually sources with significant handler help. | Dog works scent well with occasional adjustment. | Strong independent scenting; efficient problem-solving. |
| Handler support & timing | Ineffective support; over/under handling. | Needs prompting; inconsistent timing. | Appropriate cues with minor errors. | Excellent timing; balances guidance and independence. |
| Subject location & alert behaviour | Fails to locate or incorrect alert. | Delayed or unclear alert. | Clear alert; minor handler confirmation needed. | Strong, decisive alert; handler interprets accurately. |
| Call-out & confirmation | No verbal call or incorrect. | Hesitant or delayed call. | Correct call with minor hesitation. | Immediate, confident, accurate call. |

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3. Article / Evidence Search – Urban Environment

4 articles placed 24+ hours in advance, on ground or ≤1m high.

| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Systematic search pattern | Little structure; many gaps. | Some structure but misses key areas. | Methodical pattern with minor gaps. | Highly systematic; complete coverage of assigned area. |
| Odour acquisition & sourcing | Dog unable to acquire scent without major help. | Dog acquires odour inconsistently. | Solid sourcing with occasional handler correction. | Efficient, confident sourcing; minimal handler input. |
| Article indication | Incorrect, unclear, or missed articles. | Slow or inconsistent indication. | Accurate indications; minor handler clarification needed. | Clear, reliable, prompt indication on all articles. |
| Team communication & call-out | Incorrect number of finds called; confusion. | Slow to call finds or uncertain. | Correct call-outs; minor hesitation. | Immediate, accurate, confident declaration of article count. |

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4. Team Dynamics & Safety

| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Handler situational awareness | Poor awareness; safety concerns. | Inconsistent awareness; minor risks. | Good awareness with minor misses. | Excellent awareness; anticipates risks. |
| Dog management & control | Dog unsafe, uncontrolled, or repeatedly leaving search area. | Dog occasionally out of control; needs major correction. | Dog well controlled with minor adjustments. | Dog consistently controlled; excellent search drive and obedience. |
| Environmental navigation | Struggles with terrain, obstacles, or urban hazards. | Handles terrain with difficulty. | Navigates safely with minor inefficiencies. | Moves through all environments confidently and safely. |

NOTES:

5. Completion Standards

| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Number of finds completed | Fails required finds. | Finds incomplete or incorrect. | All finds completed with minor issues. | All finds completed accurately and efficiently. |
| Time management | Unable to finish within 1 hour. | Finishes late or rushes excessively. | Completes within time with minor delays. | Excellent pacing; finishes confidently within time. |

NOTES:

PASS / FAIL

Evaluator Notes: