

# Intermediate Training Plan

## Introduction

This training plan is designed to guide K9 handlers who have passed the SARDOA Novice course towards the goal of progressing into intermediate-level Search and Rescue (SAR) canine work. It aligns with the benchmarks outlined in the SARDOA Intermediate course and provides a structured approach to developing the necessary skills in both handler and dog.

## Phase 1: Search Area Control and Pattern Development

### Goals:

- Refine search area control.
- Establish a consistent search pattern.
- Improve GPS navigation.

### Training Activities:

- **GPS mapping:** Practice using GPS to mark locations and navigate search areas.
- **Pattern training:** Develop a systematic search pattern, such as a grid or line search.
- **Environmental exposure:** Search in various terrains, heights and weather conditions.

## Phase 2: Independent Searching and Endurance Building

### Goals:

- Increase search duration.
- Encourage independent searching.

- Build endurance.

### Training Activities:

- **Longer searches:** Gradually increase the duration of your search sessions.
- **Introduce distractors:** Put out food, toys and other items.
- **Independent searches:** Practice searching with minimal handler guidance.
- **Hide locations:** Start putting hides at high and low places.
- **Endurance training:** Work on building your dog's stamina through physical exercises.

### Phase 3: Advanced Article Indication and Retrieval

#### Goals:

- Refine article indication and retrieval skills.
- Introduce more challenging article scenarios.

#### Training Activities:

- **Article variation:** Use a wider variety of articles for scent training.
- **Challenging scenarios:** Practice searching for articles in difficult environments or with distractions.
- **Multiple finds:** Train your dog to locate and indicate multiple articles in a search area.

### Phase 4: Wind and Terrain Adaptation

#### Goals:

- Understand the impact of wind on scent dispersal.
- Adapt search strategies to different terrains.

#### Training Activities:

- **Wind training:** Practice searching in various wind conditions.

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- **Terrain adaptation:** Search in challenging terrains like dense forests or rocky areas.
  - **Strategic planning:** Develop search strategies based on wind direction and terrain features.

### Phase 5: Obedience and Control

#### Goals:

- Maintain a high level of obedience and control both on and off leash.
- Demonstrate a strong bond and working cooperation.
- Prepare for SARDOA Advanced course evaluation.

#### Training Activities:

- **Heeling on lead:** Practice a variety of heeling patterns, including normal, fast, and slow walks, and commands like sit and down.
- **Sit/stay and down/stay:** Increase the duration and distance of stay commands.
- **Recall:** Practice recall from various distances and distractions.
- **Control and cooperation:** Work on maintaining control of your dog in all situations, including during searches and training exercises.

### Phase 6: SARDOA Intermediate Evaluation Preparation

#### Goals:

- Review and reinforce learned skills.
- Prepare for the SARDOA Intermediate course.

#### Training Activities:

- **Practice exams:** Simulate the SARDOA Intermediate course evaluation.
- **Problem-solving:** Work on scenarios that might arise during a search.
- **Confidence building:** Continue to boost your dog's confidence in challenging situations.

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## Additional Tips

- **Positive reinforcement:** Use rewards and praise to motivate your dog.
- **Consistency:** Maintain a consistent training routine.
- **Variety:** Keep training sessions interesting by changing locations and activities.
- **Seek guidance:** Consult with experienced SAR trainers for advice and support.

By following this training plan and adhering to the SARDOA Intermediate course benchmarks, you can effectively prepare your K9 handler and dog for a successful career in intermediate-level Search and Rescue.

