

Rocky Mountain Rescue Dogs, Inc.

Specialized Operational HRD Land-Cadaver Test

Purpose

The HRD land-cadaver test demonstrates the ability of a handler and their canine partner to locate a large quantity of human remains, simulating as much as possible a deceased body, 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-cadaver 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-cadaver 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 a 20-acre area; the source may be elevated (not more than 6 feet) or on the surface. The source shall be concealed: covered with boards, leaves, branches, rocks etc. to allow airflow. Each corner of the area shall be identified with flagging and/or GPS coordinates.
2. The team has one (1) hour to complete the test. The handler must place a flag/GPS waypoint within a three-foot radius of the source. If the source is elevated, the handler must place the flag/GPS waypoint within a radius equal to 1 ½ times the height; i.e. a 4 foot high source must be flagged with in a 6 foot radius.
3. Upon interpreting the dog's final response, the handler shall advise the evaluator and mark the location with a flag. Any identified (flagged and/or GPS marked) final response that is incorrect shall constitute a fail. The test can be repeated once in a different location if conditions and time permit. If the team fails a second time, the test must be repeated at a later date after proof of the completion of more training to remedy the problem.

General Guidelines

1. The HRD material, referred to as “source”, shall be at least 300 grams of human blood, bone and/or tissue, simulating as much as possible a deceased body. The source shall be contained in such a way that no dog or handler shall come into direct contact with it.
2. The area should be open but have shrubs or trees present so that elevated targets can be hidden in them.
3. The source should be placed one to six hours prior to the start of the search. The search area shall be contaminated with human scent to prevent the canine from trailing 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 area. 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 source (double blind test) and should have another qualified handler place the source. If the evaluator sets up the test he or she cannot follow the team but shall watch from the outside of the search area and shall limit communication to updating the handler regarding time limits.
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 source. Changes in search strategy are permissible, however the 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. Team is adequately attired and has adequate supplies, equipment and water for the team.
2. Dog locates the source within the allotted time and performs the final response.
3. Handler marks the source within the allowable distance from the source.
4. No false alert is given by the dog and called by the handler.

Recertification

Recertification is required every two (2) years.