

Rocky Mountain Rescue Dogs, Inc.
Specialized Operational Wilderness Tracking/Trailing Test

Purpose

The specialized operational wilderness tracking/trailing test demonstrates the ability of a handler and their canine partner to detect and follow a specific human scent along the ground to that subject. This test shall demonstrate the ability of the team to select the correct scent, to navigate conditions of the area, 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 wilderness tracking/trailing form approved by the Board.
3. Completed necessary checklist
4. Attendance at a minimum of four (4) searches
5. Training logs for tracking/trailing searches 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

The handler may choose Option one or Option two with the following test conditions:

Option 1:

1. This test consists of .25 to .33 mile long track on a soft surface in an uncontaminated area. There shall be one (1) turn and one (1) surface change or two (2) turns.
2. A masker shall lay a cross track within 30 minutes after the trail has been laid. The cross track should be perpendicular to the track and cross somewhere before the halfway point.
3. The track shall age overnight between ten (10) and sixteen (16) hours.
4. The team has thirty (30) minutes to complete the test and find the subject. The test shall be conducted during daylight hours.

Option 2:

1. This test consists of .50 to .75 mile long track on a soft surface in an uncontaminated area. There shall be at least one (1) surface change and two (2) turns.
2. A masker shall lay a cross track within 30 minutes after the trail has been laid. The cross track should be perpendicular to the track and cross somewhere before the halfway point.
3. The track shall age between two (2) and four (4) hours.
4. The team has one (1) hour to complete the test and find the subject. The test shall be conducted during daylight hours.

General Guidelines

1. The handler shall describe their dog's alerts, indications and trained final response prior to the start of the test. The canine must locate and alert on the subject independent of direction from the handler.
2. The dog shall wear a GPS collar (Astro) and the track shall be laid with a GPS and the track saved for evaluation. After the test, the handler shall upload the collar data to the computer to be used in the evaluation.
3. The handler shall be given a point last seen (PLS) to begin the test. The handler may be given an uncontaminated scent article or may be asked to collect their own scent article or scent the dog off of an uncontaminated stationary object.
4. The team shall have a Level 1 evaluator who is not their mentor following to evaluate handler and dog. The evaluator shall not know the location of the subject or the track (double blind).
5. The subject must not be someone that the dog has repeatedly trained on in any live-find discipline (trailing, area or avalanche); nor someone that regularly associates with the dog (i.e. family, teammates, etc.); nor someone who has recently (within 90 days) been used as a training subject for the dog. The subject should preferably be someone that the dog has never trained on before.
6. The masker shall not be left in the test area and if possible shall be available at the start of the test for a scent inventory at the handler's request. Anyone that is not a visual distraction to the dog that has been in the area may be available at the start for elimination.
7. The subject shall remain unresponsive until the dog has identified the subject. Once the dog has located the subject, the dog shall demonstrate its final response.

8. Every effort should be made in all tracking/trailing tests to avoid the possibility of the victim being air scented for at least the first half of the track.
9. The dog must find the subject by tracking for a majority of the route. The test shall be conducted during daylight hours.
10. 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. Team demonstrates the dog's ability to follow the trail and avoid distractions and cross tracks and find the subject.
3. The handler and canine demonstrate good working stamina for the complete duration of the test.
4. 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.
5. The handler recognizes and correctly interprets the behavior of the canine.
6. The canine demonstrates an easily identifiable, trained indication of a find (i.e. bark alert or recall/refind).

Recertification

3. Recertification is required every two (2) years.