

# IDAHO PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS & TRAINING PROCEDURE

## 12.13 CANINE TEAM CERTIFICATION

### A. General

IDAPA Rules 11.11.01.090 – 091 govern intended minimum standards of performance for the certification of Idaho police canine teams. Nothing in this procedure is intended to limit the use of canine teams employed by other states or federal agencies for law enforcement purposes, or the use of volunteer canine teams in which the handler is not an Idaho peace, detention, correction, or adult probation and parole officer.

### B. Definitions

A canine team is a specific person and a specific dog controlled by that person as its handler, formally assigned by the appointing agency to perform law enforcement duties together.

Pace is a distance measuring approximately two (2) feet.

### C. Areas of Certification offered by the Council

1. Patrol
2. Tracking/Trailing
3. Evidence Search
4. Controlled Substance Detection
5. Explosive Substance Detection

### D. Training

1. A patrol canine handler shall have completed two hundred forty (240) hours of POST- approved canine handler training, including:
  - a. Suspect search
  - b. Apprehension
  - c. Handler Protection
  - d. Obedience
  - e. Agility
2. A tracking/trailing, controlled substance detection or an explosive detection canine handler shall have completed one hundred sixty (160) hours of POST-approved canine handler training, including:
  - a. Obedience
  - b. Odor recognition specific to the area the canine team is seeking certification in.
3. An evidence detection canine handler shall have completed forty (40) hours of POST- approved canine handler training, including:
  - a. Obedience
  - b. Odor recognition specific to the area the canine team is seeking certification in.

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## E. Patrol Dog Certification Test

1. The skills required for certification of a patrol canine team are:
  - a. Suspect Search
  - b. Apprehension
  - c. Handler protection; and
  - d. Obedience-agility.
2. If a canine team fails any one (1) of the four (4) required skills, all four (4) skills must be repeated and successfully demonstrated during retesting. If the canine team fails, they must attend refresher training from a POST certified K-9 instructor.
3. A full bite suit (jacket and pants) must be used during all portions of the apprehension phases of the test. No barrel sleeves are allowed.
4. Certification Testing Criteria
  - a. **SUSPECT SEARCH--** Under direction and reasonable control, the dog must demonstrate the ability to detect and audibly alert the handler to a hidden person in a structure or building and locate a person in an outdoor open area. The handler must inform the evaluator of the manner in which the canine alerts prior to the exercise beginning. In a structure or building of reasonable size with multiple rooms and hiding places, the dog must demonstrate the ability to locate a hidden person and audibly alert the handler. In an outdoor area with multiple hiding locations, the dog must demonstrate the ability to locate a hidden person and audibly alert the handler.
  - b. **APPREHENSION--Without Contact.** While off leash and under direction of the handler, the dog must pursue a person acting as a suspect without any physical contact. The canine team must begin the exercise off leash from a predesignated starting point. While the handler controls the dog, the evaluator will signal the “suspect” to visually present himself at a distance of at least thirty (30) yards from the canine team. The handler must verbally challenge the “suspect” to stop. The “suspect” will ignore the order and continue to flee. The handler must then release the dog in pursuit of the “suspect” and tactically follow the dog, keeping the dog and “suspect” in full view. The “suspect” will stop fleeing and stand still. As predetermined by the handler, the dog must either return to the handler or stay and guard the “suspect.” During this exercise, the dog must not make physical contact with the “suspect.”  
**With Contact.** While under control of the handler and with the dog off-leash, the dog must pursue and apprehend a “suspect” with physical contact. The canine team must begin the exercise off leash from a predesignated starting point. While the handler controls the dog, the evaluator will signal the “suspect” to visually present himself at a distance of at least thirty (30) yards from the canine team. The handler must verbally challenge the “suspect” to stop. The “suspect” will ignore the order and continue to flee. The handler must then release the dog in pursuit of the “suspect” and tactically follow the dog, keeping the dog and “suspect” in full view. The “suspect” will continue to flee. The handler must send the dog to physically apprehend the “suspect” and the dog must hold the “suspect” until called off (verbal only) by the handler. The handler may give up to three (3) verbal outs within 10 seconds with no recontact.
  - c. **HANDLER PROTECTION--** The dog must defend the handler during a physical attack on the handler by a “suspect.” On verbal command only from the handler, the dog must cease physical apprehension of the assailant. The handler may give up to three (3) verbal outs within ten (10) seconds with no recontact after release.

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- d. **OBEDIENCE-AGILITY**-- The handler must control the dog during an obedience performance test. Testing will be conducted using reasonable distractions that may be encountered during the performance of law enforcement duties.
- i. Heeling. The canine team must perform basic routine left, right, and about turns, both slow and quick pace, on and off leash. Testing will consist of two (2) right turns, two (2) left turns, two (2) about turns, and two (2) stop/sits, both on and off leash.
  - ii. Down in Motion. With the team moving forward, the handler must “down” the dog on the evaluator’s command and continue to move forward until the handler reaches a designated point. At the evaluator’s command, the handler must recall the dog to the “heel” position by voice and/or hand commands.
  - iii. Stay from a Distance. With the dog in a down-stay or a sit-stay position, the handler must face the dog from a designated point. After the dog has remained for five (5) minutes, the handler must return to the dog.
  - iv. Obstacle. From the heel position, and at least two (2) paces in front, the handler must command the dog to jump the obstacle and to stay in a sit, stand, or down position on the other side of the obstacle. The handler must inform the evaluator prior to the jump what position the dog will assume. The handler must then proceed to the dog and command the dog to heel to complete the exercise.
  - v. Gunfire Sureness Test (Off-Lead). The handler must heel his dog onto the test field. The handler must stop, place his dog in a down or sit, draw a pistol and fire two (2) shots (blanks only). The dog must remain in the heel position next to the handler. The canine may show interest, but no aggression toward the handler or persons in the area or any uncontrolled fleeing.
- e. No toys or treats may be used to lure the dog during testing.
- f. The handler may not overcorrect the dog at any time during the obedience portions of the test.

**DISCLAIMER:** *The patrol canine team’s continued education and maintenance training are critical components for improving and or maintaining the team’s performance profiles. These training requirements are strictly the responsibility of the patrol canine team and their employing agency.*

*By successfully completing this certification criteria, the patrol canine team has demonstrated an acceptable level of proficiency in the areas of obedience, search and apprehension skills, agility and handler protection. This certification testing, however, was conducted in a controlled environment, and cannot in any way replicate the stressors and dangers associated with an evolving, chaotic, and dynamic circumstance, or situation that the patrol canine team could likely encounter in the performance of their official duties.*

### F. Tracking/Trailing Dog Certification Test

1. The dog must follow the trail of a person along a track that is four hundred (400) to six hundred (600) paces in length, having two (2) turns and aged a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes. A cross-track will be placed at some point along the third leg as a diversion. The dog must not be diverted from the original track.

### G. Evidence Search Dog Certification Test

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1. The dog must locate two (2) well-scented, small items that the evaluator has hidden in an outdoor area. The dog and the handler must be out of sight when the items are placed. The handler must direct the dog to search systematically. The dog must indicate the location of these items as it encounters them.

### H. Detection Dog Certification Test

- I. Detection dog teams must detect substances in residential and commercial buildings, private and commercial vehicles, containers, and exterior open areas. During testing, substances will be hidden by the evaluator, outside the knowledge of the handler. The dog must start the search at a point determined by the handler.
  - a. Buildings. The building search will consist of an area designated by the evaluator that may vary in size, location, or environment, but must consist of at least four (4) rooms. Substances may be hidden high and low. No more than 1 (one) find may be placed in each room. The search must contain one blank room.
  - b. Vehicles. The vehicle search will consist of at least four (4) vehicles which may vary in size, location, or environment. Substances may be hidden inside or on the outside of the vehicle. No more than 1 (one) find may be placed on/in each vehicle. The search must contain one blank vehicle.
  - c. Containers. This search will consist of at least six (6) containers. These pieces may vary in location or environment.
  - d. Exterior open areas. The exterior search will consist of an area in open air that may vary in size, location, or environment, and may include buried substances.
2. Each handler must demonstrate the ability to control their dog throughout the certification.
3. The types and amounts of substance in each search will be at the discretion of the evaluator. Substances must be set in place at least thirty (30) minutes prior to each test. Pseudo substances and/or paraphernalia must not be used.
4. Controlled substances will consist of three (3) main areas. A drug detection dog must locate a total of eight (8) finds consisting of the following:
  - i. Cocaine (hydrochloride) (two (2) grams or greater)
  - ii. Heroin and Opiate Derivatives (two (2) grams or greater)
  - iii. Methamphetamine (two (2) grams or greater)
5. An explosive detection dog shall locate one (1) find of each of the following:
  - i. Black Powder/Time Fuse
  - ii. Smokeless Powder
  - iii. TNT
  - iv. Dynamite
  - v. RDX
  - vi. PETN/Det Cord
  - vii. Ammonium Nitrate
  - viii. Potassium Chlorate
6. Any optional substances may be tested at the handler's request.
7. Testing Procedure
  - a. The evaluator will signal the start and finish of each test and will allow reasonable time for the team to cover the area and indicate the location of the substance.

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- b. The handler must verbally indicate to the evaluator that his dog has located a target odor and believes that the substance has been found and is in the immediate vicinity. Any erroneous call by the handler is an automatic failure.

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### I. Testing Documentation

1. All equipment used during an evaluation will be inspected & approved by the evaluator.
2. All testing locations will be determined by the evaluator.
3. All testing must be documented on the official POST K-9 Certification Form for the specific discipline tested.
4. K-9 evaluator's reserve the right to terminate any certification attempt if they believe the dog or the handler is experiencing medical distress or for some other extraordinary circumstance. If the evaluator terminates a certification attempt, it must be documented and sent to POST.
5. If the K-9 team successfully passes the evaluation, it is the responsibility of the handler to mail or email the appropriate paperwork to POST for processing within 30 days of passing the certification.
  - a. If the canine team has never been certified before or the canine team's previous certification has expired, an application for certification must also be submitted with the certification evaluation form.
  - b. If the canine team has been certified before and is not currently expired, only the certification evaluation form must be submitted.
6. If the K-9 team does not successfully pass the evaluation, it is the responsibility of the evaluator who conducted the evaluation to mail or email the appropriate paperwork to POST for record keeping. Any K-9 team who does not successfully pass the evaluation must wait a minimum of 24 hours before retesting.

### J. Canine Team Evaluator

The Idaho Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) canine team evaluator certificate recognizes officers trained to evaluate the competence of law enforcement canine teams who meet the requirements listed below. Canine Team Evaluator certificates may be issued in the areas of Patrol and Detection.

1. To be eligible for a Canine Team Evaluator Certificate, each applicant shall:
  - a. Be a current Idaho POST certified canine instructor in good standing in the discipline they wish to evaluate.
  - b. Complete the POST Canine Team Evaluator's course
  - c. Evaluate seven (7) dogs while under supervision of a currently certified POST certified canine evaluator
  - d. Submit an application packet to POST which includes:
    - e. a curriculum vitae or resume verifying the applicant's education and training in the canine field
    - f. a letter of recommendation from an administrator within the applicant's agency acknowledging agency support.
2. POST reserves the right to limit Canine Team Evaluators based on the need in each region.
3. Canine Team Evaluators MUST notify POST prior to conducting any Canine Team Certification Test.

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4. Canine Team Evaluators must have no vested interest in the K-9 team they are evaluating such as, but not limited to purchasing, initial training, selection of the K-9, financial gain, etc.
5. Renewal of Canine Team Evaluator Certification
  - a. Canine Team Evaluator Certifications are valid for a period of 2 years.
  - b. Canine team evaluators shall evaluate a minimum of four (4) dogs every two (2) years in the
  - c. discipline in which they are certified to evaluate in any evaluator not satisfying this requirement will not be renewed.

