



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Mission of the VT Police Canine Program	p. 2
II.	Definitions	p. 3
III.	General Information	p. 5
IV.	Handler and Canine Certification Requirements	p. 6
	A. Canine Handler Requirements	p. 7
	B. Training Deficiencies	p. 8
	C. Inservice Training and Annual Requirements	p. 8
	D. Limited Operational Team Status	p. 9
V.	K9 Committee and K9 Trainer Certification Standards	p. 11
VI.	Training Standards and Testing	p. 15
	A. Patrol K-9 Teams	p. 16
	B. Tracking and Trailing	p. 22
	C. Drug Detection	p. 23
	D. Firearms Detection	p. 26
	E. Fish and Game Detection	p. 33
	F. Human Remains Detection	p. 34
	G. Human Remains Detection, Crime Scene	p. 35
	H. Search and Rescue	p. 38
VII.	Alternatively Trained Teams	p. 41

Appendix:

Appendix A – Physical Fitness Test



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

I. MISSION

The mission of the Vermont Police Canine Program is to develop Police Canine teams that are useful and effective tools for their respective Police agencies. The program provides basic, in-service, and advanced level courses which are certified by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC).

The Program is also available, on a case-by-case basis, to assist the VT Department of Public Safety (DPS) as a resource for training and certification of SAR K9 teams and other specialties as needed.

All training provided is based upon practical, realistic, field-related circumstances. Performance is monitored through formal training sessions and field observation sessions to ensure that remedial training is available when needed.

The expertise of the instructional staff is available to all law enforcement agencies interested in developing or improving a canine program.

The canine certification standards will define the initial training, records keeping, in-service training and yearly recertification as they relate to field certification tests and written exams for K-9 Team certification.

This document represents the minimum requirements needed to meet Vermont Police Canine Program standards. This does not preclude participating agencies from applying more stringent requirements or receiving additional training.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

II. DEFINITIONS

- A.** Discipline: A specific area that a canine team specializes in.
- B.** Patrol: a multitude of functions a trained canine team uses in order to assist members of law enforcement.
- C.** Detector: a specific discipline that a canine team specializes in to assist in locating the source of a specific or group of odors, using the canine's olfactory senses.
- D.** Handler: A specially trained law enforcement officer or DPS USAR member who is certified by the VCJC to work with a canine partner.
- E.** Evaluator: A K9 Committee approved individual who oversees the testing phase of a VCJC Training Course and certifies that a Team has met the competency standards for a particular discipline.
- F.** Canine (K-9) or Canine Team - Dog and Handler
- G.** Head Trainer – The Head Trainer is designated by the VCJC's Executive Director to oversee and teach VCJC canine training courses. The Head Trainer, when available, will assist the VCJC with canine programmatic needs including but not limited to in service training curriculum development, reviewing training records for compliance, reviewing instructor certification and recertification applications, and reviewing training waivers.
- H.** Canine Training Coordinator – The Canine Training Coordinator is designated by the VCJC's Executive Director to oversee the scheduling of the VCJC canine training courses, assist in-service instructors in scheduling mandatory monthly in-service training, oversee and organize handler and instructor training records, and undertake other administrative tasks as assigned by the Executive Director or designee to effectively coordinate the VT Canine Program.
- I.** Cross-trained Dog – Certified canine teams with a secondary certified specialty.
- J.** Explosive Detection Dog – A certified canine team in explosive detection.
- K.** Powder Detection Dog – A certified canine team in black powder detection.
- L.** Firearms Detection Dog – A certified canine team in firearms.
- M.** Drug Detection Dog – A certified canine team in drug detection.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- N.** Patrol Dog – A certified canine team in patrol (to include patrol, tracking/trailing, evidence recovery)
- O.** Tracking/Trailing Dog – A certified canine team in tracking/trailing.
- P.** Advanced Tracking Dog – A certified canine team in advanced & aged tracking/trailing.
- Q.** SAR Area Searching/Air Scent – A certified canine team in wilderness area searching.
- R.** Secondary Specialty – certification in one of the following: drugs, explosives, powder detection, air-scent, human remains, firearms, evidence, or advanced tracking.
- S.** V.C.J.C. or Council – Vermont Criminal Justice Council.
- T.** Bite and Hold – A canine apprehends a suspect with a firm grip until commanded/made to release
- U.** Outside Teams - Those teams not trained within the Vermont Police Canine Program.
- V.** Vermont Police Canine Program or Program – The VCJC approved Program that provides basic, in-service, and advanced level courses for Police Canine Teams.
- W.** Certification and Recertification: An initial or annual re-certification which is scored on a pass or fail basis, through both a practical testing of a K-9 team's ability within their specific discipline(s) and accompanied by a written examination of the Handler's knowledge of the discipline being tested.
- X.** Appeal Process
 1. An initial appeal shall be made to the Head Trainer.
 2. If a resolution is not reached, or the Head Trainer is unavailable, the K-9 Handler may put forth their appeal outlining very specific details to the VCJC Canine Committee.
 3. This written appeal to the VCJC Canine Committee must be with the written permission of the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the K-9 Handler's agency.
 4. The VCJC Canine Committee may render a decision and cause to have the K-9 team repeat the K-9 Team Field Certification Test.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

5. If a resolution is still not reached, the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the K-9 Handler's agency may put forth their appeal outlining very specific details to the VCJC Executive Director.
- Y.** Waivers: The Canine Committee and the Head Trainer shall review all requests for waivers and/or extensions or appeals of these Standards, and their recommendations forwarded to the VCJC for final determination.
- Z.** Inservice Training: Applies to Police K9 Teams: training with an instructor.
- AA.** Fitness Assessment (Fitness Test, PT Test): Minimum physical requirements designed by the K9 Committee and approved by the VCJC. This is listed in the appendix.
- BB.** Training Day or Day: will be 8 hours of instruction, training, classroom, etc. Does not include travel time.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

It is the policy of VCJC Canine Committee to establish guidelines for each K-9 team field certification test and written exams for both the Patrol and /or Detector K-9 teams.

The below listed disciplines are acknowledged by the VCJC Canine Committee:

- A.** Patrol Service Dog Team
- B.** Tracking/ Trailing Dog Team
- C.** Search and Rescue Dog Team
- D.** Detector Dog Team:
 1. Drugs
 2. Fish and Wildlife
 3. Firearms
 4. Human Remains
 - a. General HRD
 - b. Crime Scene HRD
 5. Article Search / Evidence Recovery



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

IV. HANDLER AND CANINE CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Canine Handler requirements

1. A Handler must be a certified law enforcement officer, shall have a minimum of three (3) years of law enforcement experience before entering the canine program, and successfully pass the fitness entrance requirements outlined in Appendix A. Prior experience as a military working dog Handler may be taken into consideration.
2. Handler Interviews
 - a. The Canine Committee is available upon request to conduct interviews for departments who have the desire to identify potential Handlers for the program.
 - b. It is highly recommended that police administrators use this service for new Handler selection.
3. Canine Evaluations

Canines must be evaluated prior to entry into the Program. All canines shall be approved by a VCJC approved Trainer or an Assistant Trainer for the purpose of determining suitability of any canine. If a VCJC approved trainer is not available, the Canine Committee may evaluate a canine prior to entrance into a program, and provide its recommendation to the VCJC.
4. Code of Conduct
 - a. By application and acceptance into the Vermont Police Canine Program, it is understood that Handlers will conduct themselves by the Standard of Conduct as defined for Police Professionals who undergo Basic Training at the Vermont Police Academy.
 - b. A Head Trainer may immediately temporarily suspend any team who becomes a detriment to the Program or who disrupts the training thereof. If the Head Trainer believes the team should be permanently dismissed from the Program, they will make said recommendation to the Canine Committee. The Canine Committee will in turn vote on the circumstances involved and provide a recommendation to the Executive Director with their findings and preferred course of action.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

c. Any decision to permanently dismiss a handler from a program will be issued by the Executive Director in writing. A Handler may appeal a decision to the Council per the VCJC Rules.

5. Annual Fitness Assessment: All Handlers are required to meet minimum fitness requirements as defined in Appendix A.
 - a. All Handlers must pass the annual fitness test on the first day of the recertification training session. If the Handler does not meet the minimum fitness requirement as defined in the appendix the Handler will be sent home. Arrangements can be made to retake the test.

B. Training Deficiencies

1. The performance of each canine team will be evaluated by the trainer/instructor at each training session. The Handler training record shall make note of any training deficiencies. The trainer will make note of any remedial training that is required.
2. Performance deficiencies will require remedial instruction by a trainer. The performance deficiencies will be documented, and an action plan and anticipated time period, not more than 3 months, for successful completion will be prescribed.
3. The canine team will be given the opportunity to demonstrate performance. The Trainer or Assistant Trainer will evaluate said performance and make a recommendation to the Head Trainer.
4. If the performance deficiency is still present after the above evaluation, the canine team will no longer meet certification standards and the Head Trainer will notify the Executive Director.
5. No team will remain actively deployed when that team demonstrates any form of uncontrollable aggression. Uncontrollable aggression is defined as forward canine aggressive behavior that cannot be controlled by the Handler.
6. This section relates specifically to recurring performance problems. It is recognized that canine teams may have occasional “off” days. This section addresses chronic performance problems.
7. Failure to Train
 - a. Canine teams must meet all training criteria required by these standards.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- b. If a canine team fails to attend more than two months of in-service training sessions for any reason, a written notice will be sent to the Executive Director of the VCJC, the Agency Head, and the canine team requiring immediate training.
- c. The canine team will be given a prescribed period of time, not more than 3 months, to remediate the training deficiency. The Head Trainer will notify the Executive Director if the appropriate improvement occurred within the prescribed time period. If a Head Trainer is not available, the Director of Administration and Compliance, in coordination with the Canine Committee, will notify the Executive Director if the appropriate improvement occurred within the prescribed time period.
- d. If the training deficiencies are still present after the prescribed time, the canine team will no longer meet certification standards and the Head Trainer will notify the Executive Director of the same. If a Head Trainer is not available, the Director of Administration and Compliance, in coordination with the Canine Committee, will notify the Executive Director of the deficiency.
- e. The canine team will not be permitted to train until the Handler and the VCJC develop a written plan to remediate the training deficiency.

C. VCJC K-9 In-Service Training and Annual Requirements for all Police K9 disciplines

1. The VCJC, through either a Head Trainer or VCJC in-service instructors, shall offer monthly in-service training sessions for all applicable disciplines.
2. Each team will be responsible for maintaining a training log of each formal and informal training session or usage (deployment) on a uniform reporting system (such as KATS or PackTrack).
3. Dual purpose teams are required to participate in at least 16 hours of in-service training per month. Within this 16 hours, teams are required to spend at least 8 hours per discipline (Patrol; Detector: Drugs, Fish and Wildlife, Firearm, or Human Remains; Tracking/Trailing; SAR). Single purpose teams will require at least 8 hours of in-service training per month.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

This minimum level of training is to be done with a VCJC certified or approved instructor. (See section pertaining to instructor levels).

4. If a team misses more than two months of monthly in-service training, see Failure To Train section above.
5. Topics or courses directly related to Police K-9 training may be recognized as approved monthly training. All courses must be approved by the VCJC.
6. The K-9 team will re-certify annually, prior to expiration of the previous year's certification. The recertification will consist of:
 - a. A pass /fail score in the disciplines standard which they are testing in; and
 - b. A pass / fail score on a written exam in the disciplines standard which they are testing in.
7. All canine bites shall be documented and reported to the Head Trainer and the VCJC's Executive Director within twenty-four (24) hours. The Canine Committee will review bite incident reports for training purposes and review canine standards - to address training problems, and to suggest improvements to program training. The Canine Committee will send any recommendations post incident review to the VCJC.
8. Training documentation and deployment statistics shall be provided to the VCJC throughout the year as requested. Teams will submit their annual training documentations and deployment statistics at recertification or in-service training day in December of each year.
 - a. If said documentation and statistics are not provided, the team will not be recertified.
9. When possible and highly encouraged, an initial certification should be conducted by a recognized K-9 Trainer or evaluator who does not have any affiliation to the Program, partnered with a recognized evaluator.
10. Each subsequent annual recertification may be conducted by a recognized evaluator within this Program.
11. Test phases may be combined at the discretion of the evaluator.
12. The evaluator may allow a K-9 team to repeat a phase of the testing if the evaluator feels the team did not successfully complete an exercise due to circumstances beyond the K-9 team's control. After a second attempt at the



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

exercise, if the team does not satisfactorily complete the test, a retest shall be administered on a separate calendar day.

13. No electronic stimulation will be used during a certification test.
14. Pseudo-training aids shall not be used during any detector certification test.
15. All certificates that are issued to canine Handlers shall be signed by the VCJC Head Trainer of the K-9 team being tested, and the Evaluator(s) who conducted the test.
16. The maximum number of K9 Teams to certify or re-certify will be 4 per evaluator, unless it is changed at the discretion of the Head Trainer or the Evaluator(s).
17. Drug Recertifications will be held annually, with one training day prior to the recertification day.
18. Patrol Recertifications will be held in annually, with one training day prior to the recertification day.

D. Limited Operational Team status

1. A Limited Operational Team must remedy any shortcoming(s) during a period not to exceed three (3) months, providing that the team continues to actively participate in the identified special training.
2. The team will be evaluated by Evaluators within three (3) months from the time of the Original Certification attempt.
3. If after a period of three (3) months any shortcoming(s) is/are not remedied, Limited Operational status will expire, and the team will not be considered certified.
4. Teams who are considered as Limited Operational teams will not be permitted to deploy in the specific discipline that the deficiency is noted. For example, a team that does not pass Tactical Obedience will not be permitted to deploy as a patrol team. A team that does not pass tracking will not be permitted to track/trail.
5. Under no circumstances will Outside Teams requesting a certification waiver be granted a Limited Operational status.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

V. VCJC Canine Committee and Canine Instructor Certification Standards

Purpose: To ensure proper background and experience in the training and certification of functional police service canines.

A. VCJC Canine Committee

1. The Executive Director of the Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC) shall name members of the Canine Committee based on recommendations by seated members. These members shall be individuals who are, or have been, part of a working canine team for a minimum of five (5) years. The Executive Director or designee shall serve as an ex-officio member or designate the Head Trainer or a Senior Committee Member to preside for the purpose of conducting meetings, participating in discussions, and voting in case of a tie. The Canine Committee shall have 5-9 members for the purposes of meeting at least quarterly or whenever necessary to review the specifications as outlined in these standards. Specifically, the VCJC Canine Committee will:

- a. Perform an annual review of the K-9 team certification requirements and make recommendations and changes as necessary.
- b. Maintain familiarity with current standards and training practices.
- c. Review and discuss all instructor / trainer applicant packets submitted by the Head Trainer or the Director of Administration, then vote on same annually.
- d. Update changes and publish the current standards.
- e. Assist the Canine Committee, when available, with other special program needs or demands.
- f. Any and all changes must receive a majority vote by the VCJC Canine Committee to be enacted.
- g. Members that fail to maintain active participation may be removed from the Committee with a majority vote.
- h. If two or more meetings are missed in a year, the member will be asked to resign. If the member does not resign, the member will explain the reasons for the absences, and the Committee will vote to determine continued membership.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- i. To maintain familiarity with the program and current practices, members who are no longer active K-9 Handlers are required to attend at least two training days, one patrol and one detection, per year (basic training or in-service day).
 - j. Members who leave law enforcement entirely will be allowed to remain members for no more than one more year.
2. Canine Evaluation Team: There shall be a minimum of five (5) members of the Canine Evaluation Team for the purpose of certification and annual recertification. These Evaluation Team members shall be appointed by the VCJC Canine Committee. These members shall be individuals who are, or have been, part of a working canine team within the same discipline that is being evaluated for a minimum of four (4) years. Evaluation Team members may be members of the Canine Committee simultaneously, but it is not required.
3. Canine Evaluation Team Duties:
- a. Maintain familiarity with current standards and training practices.
 - b. Attend scheduled meetings, one of which will be a mandatory evaluation training for upcoming certifications.
 - c. Assist with evaluating / reviewing a minimum of four (4) certification or re-certification days annually.
 - d. To maintain familiarity with the program and current practices, members who are no longer active K-9 Handlers are required to attend at least two training days, one patrol and one detection, per year (basic training or in-service day). If a member is part of both the Canine Committee and the Evaluation Committee, the above training can be concurrent.
 - e. If a member is unable to fulfil the above duties, the member will be asked to resign. If the member does not resign, the member will explain the reasons for the absences, and the Committee will vote to determine continued membership.
 - f. Members who leave law enforcement entirely will be allowed to remain members for no more than one more year.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

4. Members of the Canine Committee or Canine Evaluation Team, who are applying for certification, or are part of a working canine team and applying for the annual recertification, shall be certified and recertified in accordance with these procedures. They shall not participate in the decision-making process during their own certification or re-certification.

B. VCJC Approved Canine Instructor Levels

1. They must be a police officer within the State of Vermont and possess current full time officer certification from the VCJC; or is, or has been, a full-time certified police officer in either Vermont or in another state and be certifiable as a police officer by the VCJC. In addition to the Canine-specific instruction outlined below, all canine instructors must be certified as a VCJC instructor by the Executive Director of the VCJC according to the standards in Council Rule 13.

2. Instructor Levels

a. **Head Trainer:** The Head Trainer is designated by the VCJC's Executive Director to oversee and teach VCJC canine training courses. A Head Trainer has a demonstrated history of training canine teams for law enforcement purposes.

b. **Assistant Trainer:** This person must have been a VT Police Canine Program handler for at least 5 years and a VCJC certified in-service instructor. They must co-instruct with the Head Trainer a minimum of one entire Basic Patrol Dog program or one entire specialty program to receive approval to supervise a class independently. The Head Trainer will determine if extended time is required before independent class supervision is permitted. The co-instruction need not be completed all at once but may be spread out over several basic classes. An Assistant Trainer is allowed to instruct only those disciplines they are certified in and has co-instructed with the Head Trainer.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

3. In-Service Instructor: This is an entry-level canine instructor position. This person must have been a VT Police Canine Program handler for at least 3 years. A three- day class for canine in-service instructors must be successfully completed, which will include one day of classroom lecture (including but not be limited to orientation, administration and paperwork, objectives, and problem solving) and two (2) days of observation in the field with the Head Trainer and/or their designee. Teaching a minimum of three (3) in-service training days for single purpose instructing, or five (5) in-service training days for multi-purpose instructing, under the supervision of the Head Trainer or their designee will then be required. The Head Trainer will make the final Instructor Certification determination if extended training time is required before independent in-service class supervision is permitted.

C. K-9 Trainer/Assistant Trainer/Inservice Instructors Recertification Standards

1. VCJC Canine Program Assistant Trainers shall be required to annually instruct a minimum of 120 hours of instruction as a trainer, with at least 60 hours at a basic school.
2. VCJC Canine Program Inservice Instructors are required to participate in the following annually:
 - a. At least eighty (80) hours of instruction, with a maximum of forty (40) hours of that instructing time being with a K9 they are working, to include:
 - i. Three (3) days of training during a VCJC approved basic Canine School (Patrol, Detection, SAR, Tracking/Trailing), for single purpose instructing, or
 - ii. Five (5) days of training during a VCJC approved basic Canine School (Patrol, Detection, SAR, Tracking/Trailing) for multipurpose instructing, three (3) of which will be patrol, and/or
 - iii. If an instructor is unable to attend a portion, or all, of the above required training days at a basic training course,



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

the instructor must create an alternate training plan approved by the Head Trainer. The alternate training plan must include the same number of days working with the Head Trainer, and include a review of in-service instructor best practices, and VCJC Canine programmatic updates.

D. Training Specialists

1. Nothing shall preclude the use of Training Specialists approved by the Head Trainer or Canine Committee. Training Specialists may include individuals, organizations, or companies that specialize in canine, interdiction, tracking, trailing, legal, tactical, or other specialized skills that the Program utilizes on a case-by-case basis to improve the abilities of the VT Police Canine Program. The primary purpose of utilizing Training Specialists is to supplement, not replace, VCJC instruction.
 - a. The use of Training Specialists will be reviewed at the discretion of the Head Trainer annually.

V. VCJC K-9 Training Courses

Each training course is designed to prepare the handler and canine to show their proficiency in that specific discipline through a written exam and practical testing. All exams are pass/fail.

A. Patrol Dog Team: VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of **560 hours** for a Patrol K-9 Team.

1. The Patrol Course includes a training block on **Article Search**.
2. A non-Patrol canine team may add **Article Search** as an additional area of competency upon successful completion of the Article Search training block; including all testing components as outlined in Section VI(1)(G).

B. Drug Detection Team: VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of **240 hours** for Drug Detection K-9 Team.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- C. **Firearms Detection Team:** VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of **240 hours** for a Firearm Detector K-9 Team.
- D. **Human Remains Detection Team:** VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of **240 hours** for a Cadaver Detector K-9 Team.
 - 1. **WATER SEARCH:** The Human Remains Water Search VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of an additional block of training that will consist of approximately **40 hours** for a water/cadaver detector dog team.
 - 2. Prior to taking the Human Remains Water Search Training Course, the K-9 team must be certified in VCJC Human Remains detection.
- E. **Fish and Game Detection:** VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of **240 hours** for a Fish and Game Detection K-9 Team
- F. **Search and Rescue Team:** VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of **240 hours** for a Search and Rescue (SAR) K-9 Team
- G. **Tracking/Trailing Team:** VCJC Training Course (school) shall consist of **240 hours** for a Tracking/Trailing K-9 Team.

VI. VCJC K-9 Training Courses Competencies and Testing

A. Patrol K-9 Team

1. Obedience

Note: This is a test to determine the Patrol Service Dog's ability and proficiency in performing off-lead obedience exercises and the Handler's absolute control of their K-9 partner. This phase must be completed with a passing score prior to any other certification phase where the K-9 will be utilized off-lead.

- a. Each dog team shall perform an exercise that will include both hand and voice commands by the Handler. *(Note: Exercises described as a "Three-Sided Box" and/or "Figure Seven" which incorporate the below actions are acceptable for this area).* This phase shall be done both on and off leash and will include two right turns, two left turns, and two



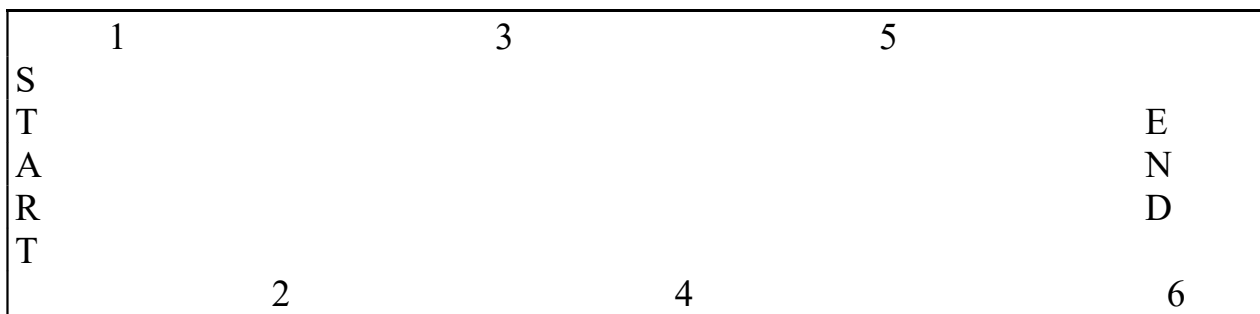
Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- about face turns. At the discretion of the Evaluator, portions of this phase will be completed at:
- i. slow pace
 - ii. normal pace
 - iii. fast pace
- b. The distance portion will be done off leash at a distance of at least 25 yards to include the commands, both verbally and by hand:
- a) sit
 - b) down
 - c) come
 - d) stay
- c. Sit, Down / Stay. At the discretion of the evaluator, the K9 will be placed in a sit or down / stay position. The Handler will then move away a distance of 25 yards, for at least five minutes, while the K-9 maintains the stay position. The Handler will remain in view of the K-9. K-9's must remain under the control of the Handler to successfully pass this phase of testing.
2. Agility / Obstacles
- a) Each team must accomplish the following:
 - i. scale a wall or A-frame
 - ii. a culvert, pipe or tunnel
 - iii. a catwalk, plank, or log walk
 - iv. a car door or over a hurdle
 - v. lift and carry the K-9 for a distance of 10 yards
 - b) The agility exercise may be executed either on or off leash.
 - c) The K-9 Team must successfully complete all the agility obstacles.
 - d) For purposes of annual recertification, the above agility requirements will be at the discretion of the evaluator.
3. Tactical Obedience
- This test will help determine if the patrol dog team can move in a tactical manner, from position of cover to position of cover, in a simulated combat situation.
- This test will be evaluated on a pass / fail basis.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

The test will be conducted on a course of approximately 50 yards in length. It will consist of six stations, approximately 50 feet apart, placed in a zigzag configuration from the start of the course, to the end.



Whenever possible the stations should consist of items of cover that the patrol dog teams would encounter while on patrol, and should be of varying shapes and sizes.

At a minimum of at least three stations the Handler is required to leave the canine in a down stay position, and move alone in a tactical manner to the next position of cover. Once in a position of cover the Handler should recall the canine directly to the heel.

If the Handler moves from any station with the canine, the canine should move at a tight heel. The team should move in a tactical manner.

If at any time the canine strays from the Handler, the Handler should be sure not to compromise the position of cover.

While negotiating the test, the Handler will be exposed to blank gunfire from a decoy. The Handler will be required to return blank gunfire from behind cover. During exchanges of gunfire the canine shall remain under control and alert, awaiting direction from the Handler.

4. Tracking

a) K-9 Teams must be able to track with the evaluator(s) following the K-9 Team.

b) Tracks may be started by casting or by using a scent article.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- c) The evaluator(s) will direct the K-9 Team to the approximate area where the track starts.
- d) Tracking Exercise will consist of:
 - i. The track will be a minimum of **one half (1/2) mile long** and must contain at least two (2) changes of direction.
 - ii. The track will be aged a minimum of thirty (30) minutes.
 - iii. The track will cover at least three (3) different terrains or surface types, including but not limited to: field, woods, thicket, hard pack surface, cement, asphalt, or areas of water.
 - iv. The track will encounter at least one (1) cross trail.
 - v. The track must be completed in a reasonable time as determined by the evaluator(s).
 - vi. The K-9 Team must locate the tracklayer by following the track (ground) scent for the majority of the track and indicate the tracklayer.
 - vii. The K-9 shall not bite the tracklayer.

5. Building Search

- a) The K-9 Team will be utilized to search a building for one (1) or more persons. The building to be searched must have at least four (4) rooms and suitable places for hiding persons.
- b) At least one (1) subject will wear no protective equipment and be placed so the K-9 cannot make contact with them.
- c) If more than one person is used, one person shall be hidden high.
- d) The search shall be conducted on or off lead.
- e) The decoy shall be passive and NOT cue the K-9.
- f) The Handler shall make a warning announcement before beginning the search. (Robinette v. Barnes)
- g) The Handler should allow the canine reasonable amount of time to acclimate to the building environment.
- h) The K-9 must indicate the presence of the subject(s) in a manner that is clear to the evaluator(s).
- i) The search must be completed in a reasonable time as determined by the evaluator(s).



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

6. Criminal Apprehension and Handler Protection

- a) A person experienced in the apprehension training of K-9s will be utilized as the “suspect” or decoy for the apprehension test.
- b) Sections may be combined into a scenario exercise to test the teams’ ability.

c) Handler Control/Tolerance Exercise

This will consist of the K-9 being placed in a heel position on lead at the Handler’s side. The suspect will stand at a distance of ten (10) to twenty (20) feet in front of the K-9 Team. Upon command and without agitation from the suspect, the K-9 will exhibit aggression towards the suspect. The K-9 will then be commanded to return to the heel position and demonstrate tolerance to the suspect.

d) Handler Protection Exercise

This will start with the K-9 in the heel position on lead. The suspect will suddenly show aggression towards the K-9 Team while moving to make contact with the Handler. Upon command, the patrol dog is to intercept the aggressor and bite and hold them. When the evaluator(s) indicate(s) the bite is adequate, the Handler will command the K-9 to release. The canine must release the suspect and remain under the control of the Handler.

e) Short Chase Apprehension Exercise

This will start with the K-9 off lead in the heel position. The suspect will start at a distance of at least twenty (20) yards and run away from the K-9 Team in any direction up to a distance of fifty (50) yards.

The K-9 will not move until commanded by the handler, at the direction of the evaluator, to apprehend the suspect. Upon command the canine will be sent to apprehend the suspect. When the field trial evaluator(s) indicates the bite is adequate, the Handler will command the K-9 to release. The K-9 must release the suspect and remain under the control of the Handler.

f) Chase from the Patrol Vehicle Apprehension Exercise

This will start with the Handler and K-9 in the patrol vehicle. The patrol vehicle will be displaying emergency lights and siren. The suspect will flee on foot from the area of the patrol vehicle when it comes to a stop. Upon command by the Handler the K-9 will exit the patrol vehicle, chase, apprehend and hold the suspect. When the field trial evaluator(s) indicates the bite is adequate, the Handler will command the K-9 to release. The K-9 must release and remain under the control of the Handler.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

g) Recall Exercise

The suspect will be visible-at a distance of approximately forty (40) yards from the K-9 Team. The evaluator(s) will tell the Handler when to send the K-9. Upon command of the Handler, the K-9 will be sent to apprehend the suspect. The K-9 will not leave until commanded to go by the Handler. The suspect will surrender when they hear the Handler's command. When the evaluator(s) indicates, the Handler will recall the K-9 to terminate the pursuit and stop the K-9 from apprehending the suspect. The evaluator should indicate the recall when the K-9 has shown that it is committed to making the apprehension. The K-9 must not bite the suspect and must return to the Handler or assume a down or sit watch position.

h) Prisoner Search/Handler Protection Exercise will be conducted after the K-9 releases during any of the phases of aggression control testing. After the

K-9 releases the suspect, the K-9 will be commanded to maintain a sit or down watch position as the Handler approaches the suspect and conducts a pat-down search of the suspect.

i) **During one (1) of the pat-down searches, the suspect will assault the Handler. Without command from the Handler, the K-9 must pursue and apprehend the suspect. When the evaluator(s) indicates the bite is adequate, the Handler will command the K-9 to release. The K-9 must release and remain under the control of the Handler.**

j) In at least one of the phases of aggression control testing, the patrol dog will be required to make an apprehension of a suspect while being exposed to blank gunfire from the suspect of the **apprehension**. Following the Handler assault a subsequent pat-down search will be conducted. During this search the K9 will not display any unwarranted aggression toward the suspect.

Note: To pass the Apprehension Phase, the Team must show control and effectively apprehend the suspect. The K-9 must respond to verbal commands to let go of the suspect and remain under the Handler's verbal control.

7. Article Search / Evidence Recovery



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- a) The K-9 Team will search an outdoor area no less than 25 yards by 25 yards covered with vegetation sufficient to conceal the articles.
 - b) Three (3) articles of different material shall be utilized in the search. Articles may be leather, canvas, nylon, plastic, cloth, metal or other material.
 - c) The K-9 may search on or off lead.
 - d) The Handler will be directed to an area in which articles have been placed. The canine must be properly set up and worked. The K-9 must indicate the location of the articles in a clearly decisive manner. All three (3) articles must be located by the K-9 Team in a reasonable amount of time as determined by the evaluator(s).
 - e) The Handler should stay out of the search area except at the direction of the evaluator.
 - f) The Team fails this component of the trial if the K-9 urinates or defecates in the search area. The Team shall be given a retest in a separate area.
 - g) The handler must pass a written exam.
-

B. Tracking/Trailing K-9 Team

1. K-9 Teams must be able to track with the evaluator(s) following the K-9 Team.
2. Tracks may be started by casting or by using a scent article.
3. The evaluator(s) will direct the K-9 Team to the approximate area where the track starts.
4. **Tracking Exercise**
 - a) The track will be a minimum of 1.5 miles long and must contain at least two (2) changes of direction.
 - b) The track will be aged a minimum of sixty (60) minutes.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- c) The track will cover at least three (3) different terrains or surface types, including but not limited to: field, woods, thicket, hard pack surface, cement, asphalt, or areas of water.
 - d) The track will encounter at least one (1) cross trail.
 - e) The track must be completed in a reasonable time as determined by the evaluator(s).
 - f) The K-9 Team must locate the tracklayer by following the track (ground) scent for the majority of the track and indicate the tracklayer.
 - 7. The K-9 shall not bite the tracklayer.
5. For the **Advanced Tracking Certification**, the above requirements will be the same except the trail will be aged 6 hours.
6. **Article Search / Evidence Recovery**
- a) The K-9 Team will search an outdoor area no less than 25 yards by 25 yards covered with vegetation sufficient to conceal the articles.
 - b) Three (3) articles of different material shall be utilized in the search. Articles may be leather, canvas, nylon, plastic, cloth, metal or other material.
 - c) The K-9 may search on or off lead.
 - d) The Handler will be directed to an area in which articles have been placed. The canine must be properly set up and worked. The K-9 must indicate the location of the articles in a clearly decisive manner. All three (3) articles must be located by the K-9 Team in a reasonable amount of time as determined by the evaluator(s).
 - e) The Handler should stay out of the search area except at the direction of the evaluator.
 - f) The Team fails this component of the trial if the K-9 urinates or defecates in the search area. The Team shall be given a retest in a separate area.
7. The handler must pass a written exam.
-

C. Drug Detector K-9 Team

1. General Rules



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- a) All Drug Detector K-9s are to be tested in all basic odors. The basic odors to be tested may include, but are not limited to: Cocaine, Crack, Heroin, Methamphetamine, and Ecstasy and their derivatives. Marijuana and its derivatives may be added at the direction of the Handler and their agency.
- b) The VCJC in general recognizes that periodic changes will be made to the basic odor(s) list. These changes will be made to include those controlled substances that become necessary as time dictates. These changes will be approved by the Canine Committee.
- c) No less than one (1) gram of the drug material be utilized per search. The maximum weight of drug material shall be unlimited.
- d) In each area searched, discriminating odors will be placed so as to test the K-9's discrimination abilities.
- e) Six (6) areas will be allowed for testing. The areas will be selected by availability. A minimum of three (3) areas are to be used. The six (6) areas to choose from will be Buildings (Indoor), Open areas, Vehicles, Baggage/Parcels, Mass Transit, Lockers. Two areas that are mandatory are Building and Vehicles, with the remainder to be determined by the Evaluator.
- f) All odors shall be tested during each of these areas.
- g) All aids will be placed at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of testing.
- h) A maximum of 20 minutes will be allowed for each phase of testing.
- i) The aids will be placed so that the K-9 cannot retrieve them.
- j) Handlers will not open any closed drawers, doors, or containers, etc.
- k) All tests will be conducted on a pass/fail basis.
- l) The K-9 Team cannot miss more than a total of two (2) aids in all combined phases of testing. A false indication constitutes a miss.
- m) In the event a team fails an area of testing, a retest shall be given at the discretion of the evaluator.
- n) The handler must pass a written exam..

2. Building Search

- a) Will consist of four (4) to (6) rooms, and each should have some type of furniture in it.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- b) At least one (1) room should contain no aids.
- c) At least one (1) room shall contain two (2) aids.
- d) All aids will be placed between ground level and a height of eight (8) feet, with at least one (1) aid placed high.

3. Open Area Search

- a) The area shall consist of any outdoor area.
- b) Aids may be placed anywhere from a maximum of one (1) foot below surface level, to a maximum of eight (8) feet above surface level.
- c) The area to be searched will be a minimum of 25 yards by 25 yards.
- d) The aids must be placed so that they are not visible to either the Handler or K9.

4. Vehicle Search

- a) Will consist of a minimum of three (3) vehicles and a maximum of ten (10) vehicles.
- b) **The vehicles may consist of any type or model including commercial vehicles. The vehicles will be positioned to allow the K-9 Team to have access to each vehicle.**
- c) At least one (1) vehicle must contain no aids.
 - i. One (1) vehicle must contain more than one (1) aid.
 - ii. One (1) aid must be placed inside a closed engine compartment.
 - iii. One (1) aid must be placed in the passenger compartment of a vehicle. It is acceptable if the K9 locates this find from outside the vehicle.

5. Baggage/Parcel Search

- a) A minimum of ten (10) items to a maximum of fifteen (15) items will be searched.
- b) Baggage / parcel shall be defined as, but is not limited to: hard and soft-shelled suitcases, attaché/brief cases, clothes bags, carry-on luggage/hand bags, golf bags, ski bags, sea/duffel bags, rolled mail, manila envelopes or shipping/cardboard cartons. Aids will be placed inside the items to be searched.

6. Mass Transit Search

- a) If Mass transit vehicles are to be searched by drug detection dogs, the following will apply:
 - i. The aids must be placed so that they are not visible to either the Handler or K9.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- ii. The search will consist of the entire vehicle including all accessible interior and exterior areas.
- iii. At least one (1) aid must be placed inside or on the vehicle.

7. Locker Search

- a) This search will consist of searching lockers.
 - i. A minimum of thirty (30) lockers shall be searched with a minimum of one (1) hide.
-

D. Firearms Detection Teams

1. General Rules

- a) All Powder Detection K-9s are to be tested in all basic odors. The basic odors to be tested may include, but are not limited to: four (4) different articles which contain the components of, or residue of, black powder, smokeless powder, and/or a modern black powder substitute.
- b) The VCJC in general recognizes that periodic changes will be made to the basic odor(s) list. These changes will be made to include those substances that become necessary as time dictates. These changes will be approved by the Canine Committee.
- c) No less than one (1) gram of the material be utilized per search. The maximum weight of powder material or propellant shall be unlimited. Examples of these articles may include a fired rifle cartridge (smokeless residue), a fired shotgun shell (smokeless residue), a fired muzzleloader sabot (modern day black powder substitute/black powder), TADD jar of gun powder propellant (smokeless, double base smokeless, black powder, modern day black powder substitute, gun oil)
- d) In each area searched, discriminating odors will be placed so as to test the K-9's discrimination abilities.
- e) In the event a team fails an area of testing, a retest shall be given at the discretion of the evaluator.
- f) The handler must pass a written exam.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

2. Search Tests:

- a) K9 Teams must select a minimum of three (3) of the search test offered and complete successfully. All search areas selected should be free of gunshot residue contamination.
- b) Crowd Screening certification is an optional third phase/ advanced certification and will be noted on the Firearms Detection Certification as an additional “Crowd Screening” endorsement when successfully completed. Crowd Screening is an advanced certification which all Firearm Detection K-9s may not be well suited for, therefore Firearm Detection K-9 candidates should be evaluated to ensure that they possess strong hunt drive, environmental stability, the ability to focus on detection in large crowds, the ability to air scent to a moving target odor source, and a lack of lead or Handler sensitivity.
- c) Odors/ training aids utilized in search testing will be selected by the evaluator. A minimum of one odor/ training aid per search area is required. Training aids must be concealed so that they are not visible to either the Handler or K-9. The evaluator will determine the maximum number based upon the size and type of area used.
- d) During the certification evaluation the evaluator will take all necessary precautions to insure that no K-9 Handler has any prior knowledge as to the location of training aids. The evaluator will not give any assistance in locating a training aid, except in the event of a miss.
- e) To pass search test evaluation, the K-9 Team shall not have more than one (1) miss in all areas. A “miss” is defined as “Any situation in which a K-9 Team fails to locate a target odor/ training aid.” In the event of a miss, the team will be allowed to search the exact location of the find to determine the reason for the miss. Following this search, the evaluator will determine the reason for the miss, Handler and/or canine error, and advise the K-9 Team accordingly.
- f) The K-9 Team may have no more than one (1) false indication in all areas. A “false indication” is defined as “a canine trained response which indicates the presence of target odor in the absence of any target odor or behaviors/ body language exhibited by the K-9 in the absence of any target odor, which the Handler interprets to be indicative of the presence of target odor”. In the event of a false indication, the evaluator will determine the



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

reason for the false indication, Handler and/ or canine error and advise the K-9 Team accordingly.

3. Interior Structure/ Room Search

- a) Will consist of a minimum of three (3) rooms and a maximum of six (6) rooms. Each room should contain at least some type of furniture.
- b) At least one (1) room should contain no training aids/ target odor objects.
- c) At least one (1) room shall contain two (2) training aids/ target odor objects.
- d) All training aids/ target odor objects will be placed between ground level and a height of eight (8) feet above surface level.
- e) At least one (1) training aid/ target odor object must be placed high.
- f) The evaluator will determine the number of training aids or target odor objects utilized based upon the size, type, and complexity of the area utilized. The training aids may be placed anywhere within the capability previously trained and demonstrated by the K-9 Team.

4. Vehicle Search

- a) A minimum of 5 and maximum of 10 passenger size vehicles or a minimum of 3 and maximum of 6 large/ commercial size vehicles (buses, trucks etc.) of any type may be utilized for the vehicle search area.
- b) The order and spacing of the vehicles will be determined to permit the K-9 Team's easy access and to prevent detection of target odor from adjacent vehicles.
- c) The training aids/ target items may be concealed within the interior passenger compartment, trunk, and engine compartment as well as on the exterior of the vehicle. No two hides will be in the same location on or within any vehicle.
- d) At least one vehicle with more than one training aid/ target item may be included within the search area and at least one negative/ blank vehicle will be included within the search area.
- e) Adequate search time for each vehicle will replicate the time frames available to investigators who are detaining suspects under current "Terry Stop" and/ or "reasonable suspicion" standards established by courts within the K-9 team's operational environment/ geographic region.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

5. Open Area Search

- a) The search area will be at a minimum 25 yards by 25 yards consisting of any surface available which replicates the K-9 Team's operational environment (grass or other vegetation/ rural, pavement/ urban, building exterior, etc).
- b) The open area search may include all items within the designated area such as building exteriors, dumpsters, storm drains, etc.
- c) At least one training aid/ target odor item will be placed in the clearly defined search area and will not be visible to the K9 or K9 Handler.
- d) The open area allowable search time will be determined by the evaluator based upon the size and complexity of the area and the number of training aids within the search area.

6. Locker Search

- a) This search will consist of searching for firearms concealed within lockers.
- b) A minimum of thirty (30) lockers shall be searched with a maximum of two (2) hides.
- c) The allowable search time will be determined by the evaluator based upon the size and complexity of the vehicle and the number of training aids within the search area.

6. Bag/ Parcel Search

- a) This search will consist of searching for firearms in a mix of parcels (boxes) and bags. The parcels and bags will be a mix of size, shapes and styles.
- b) A minimum of ten (10) and a maximum of twenty five (25) parcels and bags will be used.
- c) The allowable search time will be determined by the evaluator based upon the size and complexity of the vehicle and the number of training aids within the search area.

7. Person Search/ Line Up (non-aggression trained K9s only)



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- a) This certification testing phase shall only apply to non-aggression trained K-9 Teams. Aggression trained/ certified K-9 Teams shall not train or certify on Person Searches.
- b) This will consist of searching for and locating training aids/ target odor items concealed or otherwise located on a subject's person and/ or their clothing. Directed Search Targeting of persons by the K-9 Handler is permitted.
- c) A minimum of 5 persons and a maximum of 10 persons will be utilized. The number will be selected by the evaluator to reflect the K-9 Team's operational environments.
- d) A training aid or target odor item will be concealed on one of the person within the search line up.
- e) Adequate search time for the basic person/ line up search will replicate the time frames available to investigators who are detaining suspects under current case law.

8. Mass Transit Vehicle Search

- a) Mass Transit vehicles may include buses, train cars, aircraft, etc.
- b) This search will consist of the entire vehicle including all accessible interior and exterior areas.
- c) At least one training aid/ target odor item will be concealed within the interior or on the exterior vehicle.
- d) The allowable search time will be determined by the evaluator based upon the size and complexity of the vehicle and the number of training aids within the search area.

9. Warehouse Search

- a) A minimum of 4 odors will be placed in a large interior area such as a warehouse, gymnasium, basement, or any other large open area.
- b) Training Aids/ target odors items will be concealed where handler or K-9 cannot visually detect.
- c) All training aids/ target odor objects will be placed between ground level and a height of eight (8) feet above surface level.
- d) At least one (1) training aid/ target odor object must be placed high.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

****CROWD SCREENING (non-aggression trained K9s only)****

(Optional Certification, Requires Firearms Detection Certification as a Pre-Requisite)

Firearm Detection K-9s certified in Crowd Screening will be trained to conduct “free air” or “air scent” searches to locate target odors within the “off body” aerodynamic human wake” or otherwise emanating from moving and/ or static persons. There is no 4th amendment expectation of privacy protecting odors emanating from a person or their possessions into the surrounding environment.

Crowd Screening Search #1

- A. This test will consist of a generally static crowd containing a minimum of 10 persons and a maximum of 40 persons.
- B. Training aids will consist of complete firearm(s) concealed on a person within their clothing or within items carried by a person.
- C. One person in the crowd will be in possession of at least one complete firearm.
- D. The K-9 Team will navigate the generally static crowd conducting a “free air” or “air scent” search and should utilize wind and/ or air currents to their advantage when possible.
- E. The density of the crowd and the search time duration will be determined by the evaluator and should replicate the K-9 Team’s operational environment.
- F. The identity and number of the person(s) in possession of training aid firearms will always be unknown to the K-9 Team and the firearms will never be visible to the K-9 Team.
- G. The K-9 must pull to and indicate the person in possession of firearm(s) and the K9 Handler must correctly identify the person in possession of firearm(s).
- F. The K-9 Team may have no more than one (1) false indication and zero (0) misses in this area. A “false indication” is defined as “a canine trained response which indicates the presence of target odor in the absence of any target odor or behaviors/ body language exhibited by the canine in the absence of any target odor, which the Handler interprets to be indicative of the presence of target odor”. In the event of a false indication, the evaluator



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

will determine the reason for the false indication, Handler and/or canine error and advise the K-9 Team accordingly.

Crowd Screening Search #2

- A. This test will consist of a generally static K-9 team positioned at a choke point replicating an entrance to a secure facility, public venue, etc.
- B. Training aids will consist of complete firearm(s) concealed on a person or persons within their clothing or within items carried by the person(s).
- C. The K-9 Team will conduct a “free air” or “air scent” search and should utilize wind and/ or air currents to their advantage when possible.
- D. A generally continuous flow of “blank” persons will walk through the choke point where the K-9 Team is positioned for a period of at least 20 minutes or longer at the discretion of the evaluator.
- E. At random point(s) during the testing period of at least 20 minutes or longer, 1 or 2 persons in possession of at least one complete firearm will pass through the check point. The number of persons in possession of firearms will be at the discretion of the evaluator.
- F. The density of the crowd and the number of persons in possession of complete firearms (1 or 2) will be determined by the evaluator and should replicate the K-9 Team’s operational environment.
- G. The identity and number of the person(s) in possession of training aid firearms will always be unknown to the K-9 Team. Firearms will never be visible to the K9 Team.
- H. The K-9 must pull to and indicate the person in possession of firearm(s) and the K9 Handler must correctly identify the person in possession of firearm(s).
- I. The K-9 Team may have no more than one (1) false indication and zero (0) misses in this area. A “false indication” is defined as “a canine trained response which indicates the presence of target odor in the absence of any target odor or behaviors/ body language exhibited by the canine in the absence of any target odor, which the Handler interprets to be indicative of the presence of target odor”. In the event of a false indication, the evaluator will determine the reason for the false indication, Handler and/ or canine error and advise the K-9 Team accordingly.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

CERTIFICATIONS

Certifications are to be conducted annually at a minimum or more frequently at the discretion of the certifying agency. Certifications are issued only upon successful completion of the certification test and are subject to suspension by the Canine Committee for violation of laws, policies, rules, guidelines, training methodologies, or field performance deficiencies.

The VCJC Firearm Detection Crowd Screening Certification will be issued as a separate certificate from the VCJC Firearm Detection Certification or will be indicated as a “Crowd Screening” endorsement addendum on the VCJC Firearm Detection Certificate.

RE-TEST ADMINISTRATION

If the K-9 team fails any phase of an evaluation, the team may be re-evaluated in that particular phase. K-9 teams will be allowed two attempts to successfully pass the requirements of each phase during an evaluation. If the team does not pass by the second attempt, the team shall be reevaluated in all phases at a different time to be scheduled by the Head Trainer.

E. Fish and Game Detection Teams

1. General Rules
 - a) All Fish and Game Detector K-9s are to be tested in all basic odors. The basic odors to be tested may include, but are not limited to: turkey, fish, and deer.
 - b) The VCJC in general recognizes that periodic changes will be made to the basic odor(s) list. These changes will be made to include those controlled substances that become necessary as time dictates. These changes will be approved by the Canine Committee.
 - c) No less than one (1) gram of the drug material be utilized per search. The maximum weight of drug material shall be unlimited.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- d) In each area searched, discriminating odors will be placed so as to test the K-9's discrimination abilities.
- e) Six (6) areas will be allowed for testing. The areas will be selected by availability. A minimum of three (3) areas are to be used. The six (6) areas to choose from will be Buildings (Indoor), Open areas, Vehicles, Baggage/Parcels, Mass Transit, Lockers. One area that is mandatory is Open Area. See descriptions under Drug Detector Dogs for details.
- f) All aids will be placed at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of testing.
- g) A maximum of 20 minutes will be allowed for each phase of testing.
- h) The aids will be placed so that the K-9 cannot retrieve them.
- i) Handlers will not open any closed drawers, doors, or containers, etc.
- j) All tests will be conducted on a pass/fail basis.
- k) The K-9 Team cannot miss more than a total of two (2) aids in all combined phases of testing. A false indication constitutes a miss.
- l) In the event a team fails an area of testing, a retest shall be given at the discretion of the evaluator.
- m) The handler must pass a written exam.

F. Human Remains Detector K-9 Team Field Certification Test

1. **Purpose:** To establish a minimum level of proficiency and reliability for dogs used in the *detection* of human remains or parts thereof.
2. **General Rules:** All K-9 teams shall demonstrate their proficiency in the search techniques used to locate:
 - a) Human bodies or parts of bodies
 - b) Body decomposition fluids
 - c) Human blood

Note: Pseudo scent sources or skeletal remains which do not contain skin or tissue shall not be used for testing.
3. **Area Search Setup:**
 - a) The search will be conducted in a minimum size area of approximately two (2) acres.
 - b) The area shall have moderate vegetation.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- c) The team will be allowed a maximum of (1) hour to conduct the search.
- d) There shall be a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of two (2) training aids used for the outside area search test.
- e) If two scent sources are used, one shall be placed above surface.
- f) The training aid(s) shall be placed in the test area a minimum of twelve (12) hours prior to the start of the test.
- g) There shall be a minimum of three holes dug to ensure the dog does not alert on earth disturbance.
- h) Animal remains may be on the surface to act as a distraction.
- i) The scent source(s) shall be concealed so not to be visible to the dog or Handler and shall be camouflaged so visible ground disturbance is minimal. The source(s) shall be placed:
 - a. either above ground, (no higher than six (6) feet).
 - b. on the surface
 - c. buried no deeper than 12 inches below the surface.

- 4. Evaluation:** All proficiency testing shall be done on a pass/fail basis. For certification, the team must:
- a) Locate all aids placed for testing.
 - b) Describe the search plan and be able to justify the plan, if necessary.
 - c) Be able to control the dog and conduct a thorough search.
 - d) Notify the evaluator of the trained indication prior to the search and the dog must offer the trained indication at each scent source(s).
 - e) The team fails the test if the Handler calls an alert on anything other than human remains.
 - f) The handler must pass a written exam.
-

G. Human Remains Crime Scene Detector K-9 Team Field Certification Test

- 1. Purpose:** To establish a level of proficiency and reliability for dogs in the detection of human remains or parts thereof, in a variety of different scenarios.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

2. **General Rules:** All proficiency testing shall be done on a pass/fail basis. For certification, the team must:
 - a) Locate all aids placed for testing.
 - b) Be able to articulate the dog's indication.
 - c) Describe the search plan and be able to justify the plan, if necessary.
 - d) Be able to control the dog and conduct a thorough search.
 - e) Notify the evaluator of the trained indication prior to the search and the dog must offer the trained indication at each scent source(s).
 - The team fails the test if the Handler calls an alert on anything other than human remains.

3. **Source Material:** The scent source(s) used may be:
 - a) Human tissue
 - b) Burnt/charred human tissue
 - c) Soil samples from grave
 - d) Aged human blood
 - e) Articles tainted with blood or decomposing bodily fluids
 - f) Skeletal remains (*above surface hides only*)

4. **Scent source amounts and preparation:**
 - a) Scent source amounts will vary depending on the search scenario chosen by the VCJC evaluator.
 - b) All buried scent sources shall be placed no deeper than twelve (12) inches below the surface and hanging sources no higher than six (6) feet high.
 - c) The scent source(s) should be camouflaged and packaged in a container to prevent the dog from making contact with it.
 - d) Pseudo scent sources shall not be used for testing.

5. **Evaluation:** The evaluation will consist of four (4) parts to which one will be a *negative area*. The four areas shall be Crime Scene / Disarticulated Human Remains Search, Vehicle Search, Building/Structure Search, and Fire Scene Search.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

a) **Crime Scene / Disarticulated Remains Search:**

- i. A maximum of three (3) scent sources may be placed for the canine team to locate.
- ii. The search area shall be approximately one (1) acre in size.
- iii. The search area shall have moderate vegetation.
- iv. The scent sources shall be placed a minimum of six (6) hours prior to the start of the test.
- v. The K-9 team will be allowed a maximum of 30 minutes to conduct the search.
- vi. Animal remains may be placed above surface in the test area as a distraction.

b) **Vehicle Search:** A minimum of five (5) vehicles will be used.

- i. A maximum of two (2) scent sources may be placed for the canine team to locate.
- ii. No two (2)-scent sources will be placed on the same vehicle.
- iii. If two scent sources are used, one shall be placed in the interior and one shall be placed on the exterior of the vehicles.
- iv. The scent source(s) shall be placed so the K-9 cannot retrieve them.
- v. All scent source(s) shall be placed a minimum of two (2) hours prior to testing.
- vi. The vehicles shall be parked at a minimum of eight (8) feet apart to minimize cross contamination.
- vii. A reasonable amount of time will be allowed for the vehicle search and will be at the discretion of the VCJC evaluator.

c) **Building/Structure Search:** Five (5) Rooms shall be used

- i. A maximum of two (2) scent sources may be placed for the K-9 team to locate.
- ii. If more than one scent source is used, only one shall be placed in a room.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- iii. Scent sources shall be placed or concealed to simulate a crime scene.
- iv. The scent sources shall be placed a minimum of six (6) hours prior to the start of the test.
- v. Scent source(s) will be placed no higher than eight (8) feet above the floor.
- vi. The K-9 team shall have 15 minutes to conduct this search.

d) **Fire Scene Search:**

- i. A maximum of two (2) scent sources may be placed for the K-9 team to locate.
- ii. Scent source(s) shall consist of burnt human remains material.
- iii. Scent source(s) shall be placed a minimum of (6) hours prior to the start of the test.
- iv. The K-9 team shall have 15 minutes to conduct this search.

H. Search and Rescue

1. Search and Rescue – Obedience and Agility

- a) The purpose of this testing is to ensure that the canine Handler has reasonable control of their canine to perform search and rescue/recovery functions. The canine and Handler must pass this evaluation prior to testing in any of the VCJC basic search disciplines.
- b) Search and Rescue dogs will be required to meet or exceed the obedience and agility requirements for Patrol K-9 teams as detailed in Section VI.A of these standards.
- c) The handler must pass a written exam.

2. SAR Tracking and Man Trailing

- a) K-9 Teams must be able to track with the field trial evaluator(s) following the K-9 Team.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- b) Tracks may be started by casting or by using a scent article.
- c) The evaluator(s) will direct the K-9 Team to the approximate area where the track starts.
- d) The canine/handler team will approach the point last seen in an area that has been contaminated by a two-person hasty team and establish a direction of travel of the trail layer.
- e) The track/trail will be a minimum of one half (1/2) mile long and no longer than one and one half (1 1/2) miles long.
- f) The track/trail must contain (4) to seven (7) changes of direction.
- g) The track/ trail will be aged six (6) hours. It will be set up at the discretion of the trainer based on climatic conditions.
- h) The track/trail will cover at least three (3) different terrains or surface types, including but not limited to: field, woods, thicket, hard pack surface, cement, asphalt, or areas of water.
- i) The track/trail will encounter at least one (1) cross trail.
- j) The track/trail will encounter at least one (1) water hazard.
- k) The track must be completed in a reasonable time as determined by the evaluator(s).
- l) The K-9 Team must locate the tracklayer by following the track (ground) scent for the majority of the track and indicate the tracklayer. The canine must identify said track/trail layer so it is clear to the evaluator that the canine has the correct person.
- m) The Handler must advise the evaluator of the location of the victim using mapping/ GPS technology.

3. Wilderness/Air Scent Field Certification Test:

- a) Be able to search an area of 40 to 160 acres in moderate to difficult terrain and locate at least one (1) but no more than three (3) subjects who have been in place at least one (1) hour prior to the beginning of the testing.
- b) A scent article may be used but must be requested by the handler prior to the test set up.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

- c) The canine must have a trained indication behavior indicating to the Handler and evaluator that it has located the victim. This behavior shall be described to the evaluator prior to beginning the test, that is: bark alert, re-find, etc.
- d) The canine team must locate the victim between two (2) and six (6). The Head Trainer or Evaluator may shorten or extend the time limit based on search area size, weather and terrain conditions.
- e) The victim shall not wander or move from the location it is put by the evaluator. The victim may be placed exposed or hidden and may be on the ground or in a tree/ high area.
- f) The Handler must advise the evaluator of the search strategy employed and should change strategy as needed during the test.
- g) The Handler must advise the evaluator of the location of the victim using mapping/GPS technology.

4. Urban Search and Rescue Field Certification Test

Search and Rescue dogs will be required to meet or exceed the obedience and agility requirements for Patrol K-9 teams as detailed in Section VI.A of these standards. The bark indication will also be tested in this section.

a) COLLAPSED STRUCTURE SEARCH:

- i. The search area will include at least five structures, i.e. mobile homes. The dog and Handler will have thirty minutes to clear all five structures. There will be at least two (2) and no more than three (3) victims placed at least twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of the testing.
- ii. The team will be allowed five minutes to conduct the interview. The Handler must communicate their search plan to the evaluator at which time the evaluator will advise the Handler when to begin. The canine team must clear all five structures before the test is concluded. The dog must indicate on the victim by giving a sustained bark alert. When the Handler hears the dog bark, they must notify the evaluator. The evaluator will then advise the Handler to access the structure. The Handler must identify the area of the



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

alert. The Handler may praise and reward their canine and then should move on to the next search. This process shall continue until the five structures are cleared. The Handler may break their canine during this process.

b) BUILDING SEARCH:

- i. This search will be conducted in **low light** conditions.
- ii. **One (1) victim** will be placed in a large building, multi floored, **at least twenty minutes** prior to the beginning of testing.
- iii. The Handler and dog will have **five minutes** to locate the victim. The Handler may enter the building and direct the search. The search time may be extended by the Master Trainer based on the size and number of floors in the building.
- iv. The dog must indicate on the location of the victim by a sustained bark alert. When the Handler hears the dog barking, identifying live human scent, the Handler must notify the evaluator. The Handler must identify the location of the alert. The Handler may praise and reward their canine. Distractions may be used during this search.

XII. Alternatively-Trained Teams

Canine teams not trained through the Vermont Police Canine Training Program may seek certification through the VCJC in the following manner:

Full Waiver Request – Certification Challenge

1. A written application shall be made to the Executive Director of the VCJC for canine training certification. The Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the K-9 Handler's agency must submit the application.
2. They must also provide the Head Trainer with written documentation of successful completion of a canine training program that approximates, or exceeds, VCJC standards. The documentation shall include the program lesson plan, training logs, and results of written and/ or proficiency tests for the applying team. The documentation must be provided prior to the challenge to the VCJC standards.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

3. The applying team must be a certified law enforcement officer.
4. The applying team is required to meet the existing physical fitness standards for Handlers, as well as the minimum performance standards for dogs.
5. The applying team is required to train as follows:
 - a. Train with the Head Trainer or Assistant Trainer for 5 consecutive days (40 hours), then
 - b. Attend 1 day each month per discipline for 4 months under the supervision of a VCJC trainer/in-service instructor, then
 - c. Train with the Head Trainer or Assistant Trainer for 5 consecutive days (40 hours).

At the completion of this training period, the Head Trainer will recommend to the Canine Committee/ that the team is, or is not ready, for the evaluation.

6. Demonstration of abilities of the applying canine team will be evaluated (as an original certification) during a one day evaluation, designed to meet the current certification standards. Satisfactory completion will result in a six (6) month provisional certification. Unsatisfactory completion will require the canine team to attend the appropriate Vermont Police Canine Program Training program for certification, or result in outright rejection of the team, whichever is appropriate as recommended by the Evaluators, and determined by the Executive Director of the VCJC.
7. The six month provisional certification will permit the canine team to attend monthly in-service training sessions. The trainer(s) will evaluate team performance during the in-service sessions, as well as through field training and observation periods.
8. The Canine Evaluation Team will conduct an evaluation of the canine team's skills when the team has completed the six-month provisional period. Successful completion of this evaluation will result in full certification of the canine team until the next scheduled certification evaluation in the following calendar year.



Vermont Police Canine Program Canine Certification Standards and Policies

APPENDIX

PT TEST:

The VCJC permits the K9 Committee to design and define the annual PT Test to best fit the needs of the VT Police Canine Program. The VCJC will not require approval of the specific test to be administered, thereby allowing the K9 Program to administer the test as it sees fit and make modifications as necessary.

The elements of the test will include but are not limited to running, carrying, climbing, and agility.