AREA CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST

The AERIE Area Canine Search Specialist Certification Examination (CE) is designed to identify the minimum knowledge, skills and abilities needed by canine team during land search operations in varied terrain at night and during daylight hours. These certifications recognize the need for further training to acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to become a fully competent canine handler in a wide variety of land search operations.

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT

The AERIE Area CSS Fundamental Skills Assessment (FSA) is designed to identify the minimum skills needed by canine team during search operations. This assessment must be completed prior to attempting other AERIE Area CSS examinations.

Purpose

- The Area Canine Search Specialist FSA is designed to identify the minimum skills needed by an individual and their canine partner to perform as a SAR Canine Team during land search operations for a single, stationary victim located within a small area during daylight hours, and will be the prerequisite for higher level AERIE canine search specialist examinations. No certificate will be issued for this assessment.

Area Canine Search Specialist FSA

- The candidate and dog will be able to search small areas during daylight hours.
- The candidate and dog will be evaluated using an area of approximately 20 acres (8 hectare).
- The candidate and dog will be evaluated using a maximum time limit of 30 minutes including breaks.

Testing Criteria for the Area CSS FSA

Handler Skills
- Is the handler adequately attired and equipped?
- Did the handler develop the appropriate strategy based on information acquired?
- Did the handler articulate the dog's alerts/indications prior to entering the field?
- Did the handler interpret the dog's alert/indication in the field?
- Did the handler articulate the dog's final response?
- Does the handler demonstrate good land navigation field skills?
- Was the handler able to justify their search tactics?
- Is the handler in tune with their dog's needs?

Dog Skills
- Did the dog stay focused on the search?
- Is the dog easily refocused after being distracted?
- Is the dog willing to leave its handler to follow up scent?
- Does the dog search independently and effectively?
- Did the dog make a self-directed find on the subject?
- Did the dog alert/indicate to the handler that it had found the subject?
- Did the dog demonstrate its final response and direct the handler to the subject?

Team Skills
- Did the dog and handler make an effective team?
- Did the dog demonstrate obedience through its reactions to handler commands?
- Was the search completed within the time limit for the evaluation?

AREA CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Prerequisites: AERIE Area Canine Search Specialist FSA or a certification by a nationally recognized organization that meets or exceeds the criteria of the FSA.

There are two separate Area Canine Search Specialist CEs

- Area Canine Search Specialist – Level 2 CE is designed to identify the minimum knowledge, skills and abilities needed by an individual and their canine partner to perform as a SAR Canine Team during land search operations for a single subject during night operations and is a prerequisite for higher level AERIE canine search specialist examinations.

- Area Canine Search Specialist – Level 1 CE is designed to identify the minimum knowledge, skills and abilities needed by an individual and their canine partner to perform as a SAR Canine Team during land search operations for multiple victims in varied light and terrain.

All of these examinations and certifications meet or exceeds the industry standard and the criteria of FEMA 508-8 Typed Resource Definitions – Search and Rescue Resources 11/14/2005

Area Canine Search Specialist – Level 2

Rationale
- The candidate and dog will be able to locate a single subject during nighttime hours.
- The candidate and dog will be evaluated using an 80 acre (~32 hectare) area.
- The candidate and dog will be evaluated using a maximum time of two (2) hours.

Required Skills
- Canine
  - Searches independently, detects and indicates live human scent with a trained final response
  - The final response behavior must be a behavior which is easily identifiable by a general observer. If performed at the subject, an active final response must be used (focused bark alert). If performed as part of a find/refind, the behavior must take place within view of the handler and easily identifiable by a general observer (sit, down, bringsel)
- Handler
  - Correctly identifies indications of live human scent and canine's final response behavior
  - Maintains control of canine
- Team
  - No false alerts

Examination Criteria for the Area Canine Search Specialist – Level 2

Handler Skills
- Is the handler adequately attired and equipped?
- Did the handler develop the appropriate strategy based on information acquired?
- Did the handler articulate the dog's alerts/indications prior to entering the field?
- Did the handler interpret the dog's alert/indication in the field?
- Did the handler articulate the dog's trained final response?
- Was the handler alert to visual clues?
- Does the handler demonstrate good land navigation field skills?
- Was the handler able to justify their search tactics?
- Did the handler document the routes traveled?
- Did the handler accurately debrief the task with an estimated P.O.D?
- Was the handler able to articulate the relevant meteorology?
- Is the handler in tune with their dog's needs?
- Is handler comfortable searching at night?

Dog Skills
- Did the dog stay focused on the search?
- Is the dog easily refocused after being distracted?
- Is the dog willing to leave it's handler to follow up a scent?
- Does the dog search independently and effectively?
- Did the dog make a self-directed find on only the subject?
- Did the dog alert/indicate to the handler that it had found the subject?
- Did the dog demonstrate its final response and direct the handler to the subject?

Team Skills
- Did the dog and handler make an effective team?
- Did the dog demonstrate obedience through its reactions to handler commands?
- Was the search completed within the time limit for the evaluation?

Area Canine Search Specialist – Level 1

Prerequisites: AERIE Area Canine Search Specialist – Level 2

If completed within one year of achieving the AERIE Area CSS – Level 2 the candidate does NOT have to repeat the night examination.

Rationale
- The candidate and dog will be able to search during daylight hours and be required to locate up to two subjects, the subjects may be mobile.
- The candidate and dog will be evaluated using a 140-180 acre (~57 – 73 hectare) area or using components that combined equal 140-180 acres (~57 – 73 hectare)
  - Use of full acreage or components will be at the discretion of the Examiners.
  - Components may include:
    - Hasty trail search -- a trail approximately one (1) mile (1.6km) in length indicative of a typical hiking/nature trail found in that area. The team shall be limited to one pass down the trail and back.

      AND/OR

    - Smaller segmented areas of not less than 60 acres or 24 hectares (total 140 – 180 acres or ~57 – 73 hectare). There may be zero (0) to two subjects in an area, not to exceed a total of two subjects.
- The candidate and dog will be evaluated using a maximum time of four (4) hours for all components.

Required Skills
- Canine
  - Searches independently, detects and indicates live human scent with a trained final response
- Handler
  - Correctly identifies indications of live human scent and canine's final response behavior
  - Maintains control of canine
- Team
  - No false alerts

Examination Criteria for the Area CSS – Level 1

Handler Skills
- Is the handler adequately attired and equipped?
- Did the handler develop the appropriate strategy based on information acquired?
- Did the handler articulate the dog's alerts/indications prior to entering the field?
- Did the handler interpret the dog's alert/indication in the field?
- Did the handler articulate the dog's final response?
- Was the handler alert to visual clues?
- Does the handler demonstrate good land navigation field skills?
- Was the handler able to justify their search tactics?
- Did the handler document the routes traveled?
- Did the handler accurately debrief the task with an estimated P.O.D?
- Was the handler able to articulate the relevant meteorology?
- Is the handler in tune with their dog's needs?
- Does the handler have adequate endurance?

Dog Skills
- Did the dog stay focused on the search?
- Is the dog easily refocused after being distracted?
- Is the dog willing to leave it's handler to follow up a scent?
- Does the dog search independently and effectively?
- Did the dog make a self-directed find on subject 1?
- Did the dog demonstrate its final response and direct the handler to the subject 1?
- Did the dog make a self-directed find on subject 2?
- Did the dog demonstrate its final response and direct the handler to subject 2?

Team Skills
- Did the dog and handler make an effective team?
- Did the dog demonstrate obedience through its reactions to handler commands?
- Was the search completed within the time limit for the evaluation?