



DISASTER CANINE SEARCH SPECIALIST

The Disaster Canine Search Specialist CE is designed to identify the minimum knowledge, skills, and experience needed by an individual and their canine partner to work effectively during disaster search operations. These examinations recognize the need for further training. Certificates will be issued for all of these examinations.

The AERIE Disaster Canine Search Specialists will be defined as follows:

- Disaster CSS – Level 2 Live: Search for, detect and identify the location of live human scent in failed medium frame structures and natural debris fields. Two targets, focused bark final response required, restricted access until first alert. (FEMA FSA)
- Disaster CSS – Level 3 Live: Search for, detect and identify the location of live human scent in failed light frame structures and natural debris fields. Two targets, 40% of pile is restricted access.
- Disaster CSS – Level 1 HRD: Search for, detect and identify the location of human remains in failed heavy frame structures and natural debris fields. Two targets at 30 to 300 grams, 40% of pile is restricted access, final response at source is required. (*Required association with FEMA/SUSAR Team*)
- Disaster CSS – Level 2 HRD: Search for, detect and identify the location of human remains in failed medium and light frame structures and natural debris fields. Two targets at 30 to 300 grams, 40% of pile is restricted access, final response at source required.
- Disaster CSS – Level 3 HRD: Search for, detect and identify the location of human remains in failed light frame structures and natural debris fields. Two targets 30 to 300 grams, 40% of pile is restricted access.

Rubble test includes: 3,500 – 5,000 sq foot pile with average height of 10 feet predominantly consists of concrete or a mixture of materials common to disaster sites, two targets, 15 minutes

HRD target source may include bone, tissue, blood, teeth or a mixture of these to achieve the target weight. Targets may not be only bone or teeth and shall not include human urine, feces or pseudo scent.

A strong bark is the only alert method that can be recognized from out-of-sight and is highly recommended and preferred for all Levels.



Disaster Canine Search Specialist Examination Elements

The examination elements will be as described in the Canine Search Specialist Certification Annex to the National US&R Response System Operations Manual (May 2010).

The only adjustments will be in Element 2 – Alert Station and Element 5 – Rubble Station.

Element 1 – Obedience

Rationale

- The canine should be under the control of the handler, capable of heeling through crowds and non-aggressive to people and other canines. The canine, for its safety, must be responsive to an emergency stop command. The long wait evaluates the reliability of the canine to remain in place when the handler is not in sight.

Required Skills

- Non-aggressive to stranger
- Non-aggressive to canine on Figure 8
- Heels through crowd, with turns and changes of pace
- Emergency stop
- Stays on long wait for 5 minutes

Aggression Testing

- Handler ties the canine and leaves it unattended. Handler proceeds to a designated area out of the canine's sight. After a minimum of one (1) minute out of sight, a stranger unties the canine and returns the canine to the handler.
- A canine search team completes a Figure 8 around two testing team handlers with their canines (post team) on lead, sitting at their side and spaced about eight feet apart. The testing team shall complete the pattern, which will include a reverse change in direction, on loose lead, passing within two feet of each of the post teams. During the exercise all three dogs will be evaluated for aggression.

Heeling

- The team must perform the following commands as directed while heeling off lead through a group of not less than five (5) milling people. Heeling is defined as the canine maintaining position at either side of the handler so as to be attentive to the handler and under his control. Additional or repetitive commands are acceptable.
 - Right turn
 - Left turn
 - About turn
 - Halt
 - Change of pace (normal, fast, slow)

Emergency Stop

- The dog shall be placed on a stay command 25 yards from the handler. Upon direction from the evaluator, the handler shall call their dog. The handler will then stop the dog when directed by the evaluator. Once the stop command has been given, an immediate change in gait is required and the canine must then come to a stop. The dog may drop, sit, or stand and will be judged by the quickness of its response. The handlers may give multiple commands. The dog shall remain stationary until released or recalled by the handler at the direction of the evaluator.



Long Wait

- The canine may be placed next to the handler's pack and will be placed 5 feet away from any other canine. The lead must be removed from the canine and may not be placed in front of the canine. Upon direction from the evaluator, the handler shall give the canine the wait command and the handler will proceed to a designated area out of the canine's sight. The canine must be under the supervision of a monitor. Time starts when the evaluator states "leave the canine". The canine may sit, stand or shift position, but shall not move more than a body length in any direction from where the canine was placed until the handler returns to the canine. After five (5) minutes, the evaluator will direct the handlers to return to the canines. Handlers may hand signal the canines to stay, if needed, while returning. The exercise is complete when all handlers have returned to their canines and the evaluator states "exercise complete". No release will be allowed by any team until the "exercise complete" command is issued. The evaluator should take into consideration the comfort of the canine (i.e., don't choose a place too hot, on anthills, etc.). An effort should be made to set up the exercise so the handlers walk away from the dogs from the front as opposed to going behind the dogs. If a dog breaks the down or becomes overly disruptive, an evaluator may quietly lead the dog away from the others.

Suggested Course Layout

- The course shall consist of an appropriately sized area to perform the identified exercises that has been cleared of hazards and distractions to the canine.

Element 2 – Alert Station

Rationale

- In disaster search, a strong, independent trained final response is required. **A strong bark is the only alert method that can be recognized from out-of-sight and is highly recommended for all Levels.** If using another behavior, the final response behavior must be a behavior which is easily identifiable by a general observer (sit, down). For safety reasons, a find/refind with a body bump at the handler is not acceptable.
- A trained final response (alert) will be required for all types. Final responses allowed by type are:
 - Disaster CSS – Level 2 Live: Focused bark at target
 - Disaster CSS– Level 3 Live: Trained behavior at target, find/refind with trained behavior at handler (bump excluded)
 - Disaster CSS – Level 1 HRD: Focused bark, trained behavior at target
 - Disaster CSS – Level 2 HRD: Focused bark, trained behavior at target,
 - Disaster CSS – Level 3 HRD: Trained behavior at target, find/refind with trained behavior at handler (bump excluded)

Required Skills

- Level 2 Live: Focused Bark Indicating Live Human Scent (FBILHS) for 30 seconds (a minimum of 6 barks may be interspersed with digging and attempts to penetrate).



- Level 1 and 2 HRD: Trained final behavior must continue for 30 seconds (ie, down stay, sit stay, focused bark). Behaviors may be interspersed with digging and attempts to penetrate.
 - For all Levels:
 - The canine stays at target location after indication of scent.
 - The handler does not communicate with the canine after indication of scent.
 - Level 3 Live, and Level 3 HRD: Once the canine has committed to location of scent, the canine must return directly to the handler and then directly lead the handler back to source.

Handler Information

- The team will have five (5) minutes to perform the exercise. The marked starting point will be 25 yards from the target location. The handler will remove the canine's leash before the exercise begins. The canine may be given a hand signal and voice command to send the canine to the target location. If the canine does not go directly to the target location, the handler may use additional commands, as necessary, to direct the canine to the target location. The handler may not move from the starting position.

The handler may direct the canine toward the target location but once the canine has detected the target's scent, the handler may not communicate with the canine in any way. Once the canine has committed to the target location, it must remain focused, stay at the target location and demonstrate an "independent of handler" trained final response behavior for 30 seconds.

There will be two official timers. One timer will start timing the exercise as soon as the handler sends the canine. The second timer will time the 30-second alert, starting with the first bark. The handler will be told when he or she may go to the canine. The canine will not be allowed access to the target. When the exercise is over, the handler may praise the canine and reward with a toy, then leash the canine and quickly leave the area.

Suggested Course Construction

- A victim location will be set up in as isolated an area as the site permits. The location should be made/constructed of a material to give the optimum control of scent (example: barrels, concrete sewer pipe, etc.). Ideally, scent should only be detected from the front. There should be a slightly recessed, snug fitting cover with holes at the bottom for scent to escape. This cover may have a handle/grab bar on the inside for the target to hold or it may be secured in place.
- The starting point shall be measured and clearly marked. This distance is to be 25 yards from the starting line to the target location.
- Target Placement -- The victim shall be in place at least 10 minutes before the canine is sent.

Element 3 – Direction and Control

Rationale

- In order to search areas that the handler may not access or to avoid hazardous areas, the canine must demonstrate the ability to be directed and controlled by the handler. The canine should respond to audible and/or visual signals.



Required Skills

- Goes up on each required elevation at the direction of the handler
- Waits on elevation until directed by handler

Handler Information

- The handler will remove the canine's leash before the exercise begins.
- The handler is responsible for counting the 5 seconds the dog must remain on the target obstacle. The evaluator may intervene to "help" at his discretion. If the dog is anticipating the "off" command, the evaluator will not intervene. If the element is showing an overall lack of control, the evaluator will not intervene.

Directability

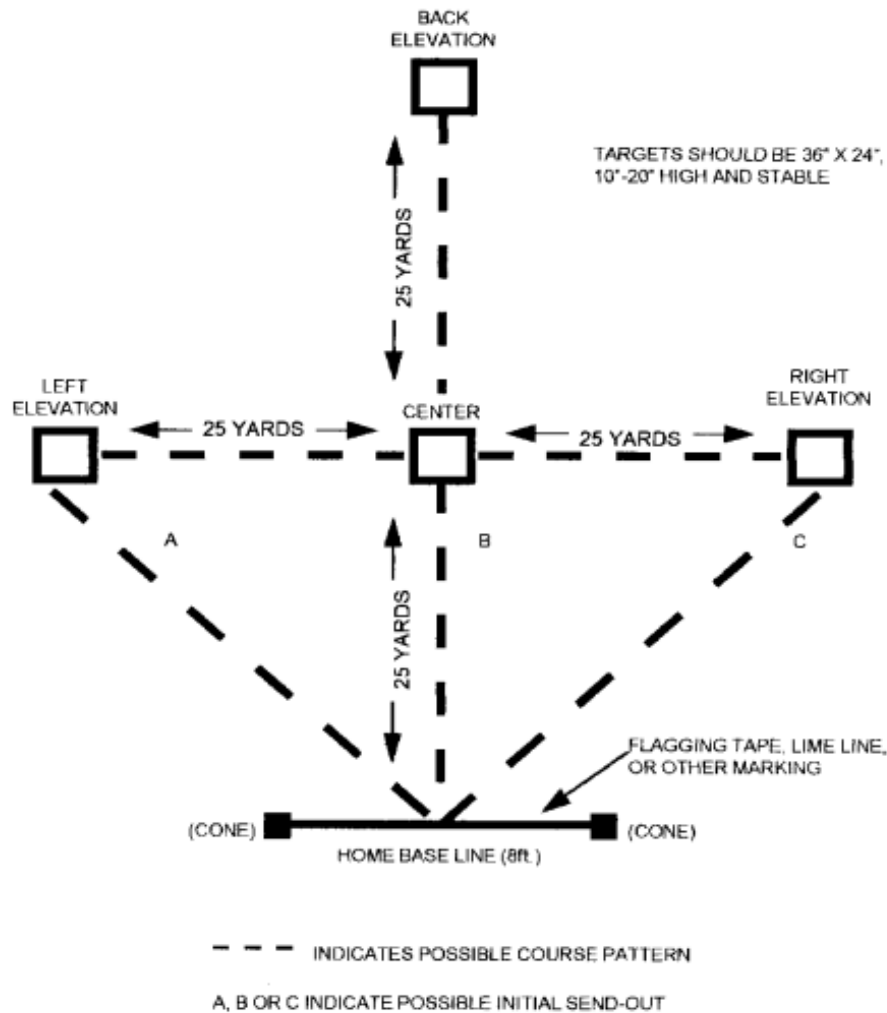
- On the first go out, the canine must go up onto a specified elevation without getting onto any other elevation. The handler may stop the canine and redirect or recall the canine and restart as many times as time allows. If the canine goes up on the incorrect elevation first, the canine must be recalled and restarted. This applies to the first direction only. After beginning the course, if the dog returns to the handler and crosses the start line (or is touched by the handler), he must start over. If the canine goes to the wrong elevation any time after the first go-out, the dog must go back to the last correct elevation and proceed.
- The team will have three (3) minutes to complete the course. The evaluators will designate which elevation the canine shall be sent to (right, left or center). The handler will direct the canine to a series of elevations. The pattern will include a go out, a right, left, go-back and recall. The canine must go up onto the elevations and stay there for five seconds. The canine may sit, stand or lie down. The handler may give multiple commands.
- The canine will be directed to four or five designated elevations and stay for five seconds on each elevation, ending the exercise with a recall to the handler. (See the Canine Directability Diagram.) Diagonals will only be used to and from the starting position.

Suggested Course Construction

- The course will be laid out in a diamond shape. The area should be uncluttered, as clear as possible (approximately 75 yards clear). The start shall be an 8' base line or starting line that is clearly marked: See diagram.
- The center elevation shall be 25 yards from the base of starting line. All the other elevations shall be 25 yards from the center elevation.
- The elevations should be clearly visible to the canine. Elevations should be approximately 36" X 24" in size, 15" to 30" high, and stable. The intention is to provide simple, stable, distraction-free targets to demonstrate directability skills.
- The elevations may consist of two or three different types of objects or they may be uniform.



CANINE DIRECTABILITY



Agility

Element 4 –

Rationale

- Agility training will give the canine confidence on the rubble. The canine should be able to search the rubble without being overly concerned about its safety.

Required Skills

- Completes five (5) of six (6) obstacles, including the four (4) mandatory obstacles
- Demonstrates stop and turn on any obstacle
- Canine precedes handler

Handler Information

- The agility course will include the following obstacles: ladder, elevated plank, unsteady/wobbly surface, and tunnel.
- The team shall have five (5) minutes to complete the agility course.
- The handler will be directed to the clearly marked beginning of the course. The handler shall remove the canine's collar and leash before starting. The course should be run in the sequence as numbered. However, if a canine refuses an obstacle, at the handler's



discretion, the team may complete the course and reattempt the obstacle in the remaining time. The canine should work as independently as possible following the handler's direction. Multiple commands are permitted.

- The canine should negotiate the obstacles confidently and carefully.
- The canine should negotiate the obstacles under handler control.
- Once the canine has started an obstacle, the handler should remain as stationary as possible.
- If the handler precedes the canine, the evaluator will instruct the handler to restart the canine on the obstacle. The handler may lift the canine off the obstacle or turn it around to restart.
- The handler may slow, stop or encourage the canine as needed, and may assist the canine, if needed, for safety reasons. Any physical assistance will require a restart of the obstacle.
- The handler shall demonstrate his ability to command the canine to stop and turn, which will be performed on any elevated obstacle (not the support) and in full view of the evaluators (e.g., not in the tunnel)
- The handler is responsible for the welfare and safety of his canine. If this ground rule is compromised the evaluator(s) may intercede with a warning and/or termination of the element or the evaluation for that team. The handler should not use an unreasonable amount of attempts when the dog is obviously unable or unwilling to comply. The canine should be willing to negotiate unfamiliar obstacles based on his training and his confidence in his handler.
- Canine will be judged on negotiating the ladder by going up only.
- The goal is to demonstrate the canine's ability to perform the required skills as well as the canine's confidence in the handler and willingness to undertake unfamiliar agility obstacles.

Obstacles (* = mandatory completion)

- *The Little Giant ladder extended to 8.5 feet secured at an approximate 45-degree angle.
- *A plank elevated at least 6 feet and no more than 8 feet off the ground (the 12" wide by 12' long plank is to be stable).
- *3-foot high (approximate height) unsteady, wobbly surface constructed by using 4 sawhorses covered with a 4' by 8' sheet of 5/8" plywood. Different debris items to be placed on top not to exceed 2' in height, constructed to provide access to the dog either by walking up an incline or by jumping no more than 3' high.
- *A dark, narrow tunnel/passageway containing at least one right angle turn. The canine should not be able to see through the tunnel to the end. Partial covering of the exit is permitted. The canine should fit into the tunnel without crawling.
- A seesaw (16' long by 12" wide plank on a 55-gallon drum).
- A slick, slippery/unpleasant surface
- A moving plank suspended on two barrels (12' long by 12" wide).
- Object that requires the canine to crawl on its belly (must be adjusted to approximately one half (1/2) the height at the withers of each canine).

Course Construction

- The course shall be constructed to include six of the obstacles listed above.
- The course may be set up as six separately constructed obstacles or as a combination. If two or more obstacles are combined, the canine must have the opportunity to



complete each of the obstacles independently. The obstacles must be designed to test the canine on the elements described.

- The course must be designed in such a way that the canine can precede the handler.
- Obstacles should be numbered clearly.
- The following obstacles must be included in the course:
 - Ladder
 - Elevated Plank
 - Unsteady, Wobbly Surface
 - Tunnel
- In Element 5 – Rubble Station, Type III Live, Type I HRD and Type II HRD will be allowed access to the pile upon starting this component. Approximately 40% of the pile will be inaccessible to the handler to demonstrate the canine's ability to independently search and directional control.

Element 5 – Rubble Site

Rationale

- The rubble search demonstrates the ability to integrate all of the previously evaluated elements into an effective search team.

Required Skills

- Establishes scene safety.
- Responsive to handler's direction and control
- Canine searches independently
- Canine shows commitment to each target
- Trained final response on two targets with no false alerts
- Informs evaluators of canine's alert/location of each live victim
- Canine's agility
- Handler's agility – the ability to negotiate the rubble in a safe manner and without the assistance of other personnel
- Canine Alerts repetitively and independently of handler
- Handler demonstrates appropriate canine care, safety and welfare

Handler Information

- Handler establishes scene safety.
- Scene safety interview may include the following:
 - What time did the structure collapse?
 - What type of occupancy was the structure (school, office, apartment bldg., etc.)?
 - What is the number of suspected missing persons?
 - Has this structure been searched before?
 - Has a structural engineer checked the building?
 - What were the findings?
 - Is it safe to enter?
 - Are blueprints available?
 - Has HazMat checked the building?
 - What were the findings?
 - Have the utilities been secured? How and by whom?
 - Gas



- Electric
- Water
- Is Heavy Rescue available?
- Is Medical available?
- Is there a veterinarian available?
- There shall be five (5) minutes for the briefing/interview process. The team shall be allowed 15 minutes to search the rubble for two targets. The handler should inform the evaluators of the search strategy. Evaluators may or may not be positioned on the site while the canine is searching. The handler may not access the rubble site in any areas identified as inaccessible. The handler shall direct the canine to search the area. The Evaluator Team will be in attendance during the briefing. Evaluators will then proceed to predetermined locations to view the rubblework before the team's 15-minute time starts.
- The handler will remove the canine's collar and leash.
- The handler may direct the canine to search but shall not encourage the canine's alert.
- The procedure will be:
The handler will send the canine on an independent search.

For Level 2 Live:

The canine will be required to perform the first bark alert out of sight before the handler can enter the search area

When the handler hears the canine barking or is advised by an evaluator that the canine is barking, the handler shall notify the evaluator of the alert (at least 3 repetitive barks). The evaluator will instruct the handler to go to the canine. The handler may now verbally praise and encourage the canine. The handler must proceed directly and safely to the area indicated by the canine. The handler will promptly identify the live victim by the canine's actions. On the first alert, if the handler is unable to quickly locate the live victim by the canine's actions, he or she must immediately leave the site at the direction of the evaluators and restart the search from the starting point. At this point, the alert process (3 bark requirement) starts over. After identifying the area of the first alert, the handler will have full access to the search area and may direct/control the canine for the remainder of the allotted time. The handler may reward the canine with a toy on the rubble; however, no food rewards are allowed.

The bark alert consists of a minimum of three (3) barks at the same victim. Between the first and third bark, if a handler verbally communicates with his dog in order to keep him barking at a victim, the team loses that victim. Barking may be interspersed with digging, scratching or any other attempt to get to the victim. Canine may reposition itself while alerting at the victim location. If the canine leaves the victim location before barking three (3) times, the alert process (3 bark requirement) starts over.

For Level 3 Live, Level 1-3 HRD:

The handler may access the pile after their canine has proceeded out of sight. There will be approximately 40% of the pile that will 'restricted access'. Only upon a final response behavior by the dog, will the handler be allowed to enter this area and mark the location of the target.

When the handler sees the canine perform their trained final response or is advised by an examiner that the canine is performing the trained final response, the handler shall



notify the examiner of the alert. The examiner will instruct the handler to go to the canine. The handler may now verbally praise and encourage the canine. The handler must proceed directly and safely to the area indicated by the canine. The handler will promptly identify the target by the canine's actions. The handler may reward the canine with a toy on the rubble; however, no food rewards are allowed.

Course Construction

- There should be new, unused target locations created for the evaluation. They should be created in inaccessible areas that are out of the handler's sight. The examiners must have a clear view of the canine's work.
- The rubble site shall have a minimum average height of 10' and consist of an area of 3,500 to 5,000 square feet. It should consist predominantly of concrete or a mixture of materials common to disaster sites. Banner tape is to be used to reduce the search area when larger rubble sites are being used.
- The testing handler will not be given a specific route to send his dog.

Target Placement

- The targets shall be concealed from both handler and canine.
- The targets will be separated by a minimum of 20'.
- The hiding areas shall be constructed to prevent canines from accessing the targets.
- The hiding areas should be a few feet below the surface, the scent should be contained and effort should be made to control the scent flow.
- All live targets will have a radio with an earpiece (if available) and shall be monitored prior to each rotation.
- The targets must be in place at least 20 minutes before the canine is sent.

Testing Criteria for the Disaster CSS

Ground Rules

- Handler is required to follow all Ground Rules
 - Did Not Complete – Handler did not follow all Ground Rules
 - Completed – Handler followed all Ground Rules

Obedience

- Non-aggressive to stranger in absence of handler
 - Did Not Complete – Canine demonstrates aggression
 - Completed – Canine does not demonstrate aggression
- Non-aggressive to canine on Figure 8 pattern
 - Did Not Complete – Canine demonstrates aggression
 - Completed – Canine does not demonstrate aggression
- Heels through crowd, with turns and change of pace
 - Did Not Complete – Does not maintain heel, distracted
 - Completed – Maintains heel, attentive to handler
- Emergency Stop



- Did Not Complete – Does not show an immediate change in gait and does not stop
- Completed – Shows immediate change in gait and stops
- Long Wait for 5 minutes
 - Did Not Complete – Does not stay within the designated area
 - Completed – Stays within the designated area with additional commands allowed.

Alert Behavior

- Stays focused for thirty (30) seconds (must have at least 6 barks for Type II Live)
 - Did Not Complete – Does not stay focused for thirty (30) seconds
 - Completed – Stays focused for thirty (30) seconds
- Stays at the victim location or barrel after indication of scent
 - Did Not Complete – Leaves after indication
 - Completed – Stays after indication
- Handler does not communicate with the canine after indication of scent
 - Did Not Complete – Handler communicates after indication of scent
 - Completed – Handler does not communicate after indication of scent

Direction & Control

- Goes up on elevation & completes pattern
 - Did Not Complete – Does not go up on elevation & complete pattern
 - Completed – Goes up on evaluation & completes pattern
- Waits on elevation until directed by handler
 - Did Not Complete – Does not wait until directed
 - Completed – Leaves elevation when directed

Agility

- Completes required obstacles under handler's control
 - Did Not Complete – Does not complete five obstacles (including the four required)
 - Completed – Completes five or more obstacles (including the four required)
- Canine precedes handler
 - Did Not Complete – Handler precedes the canine
 - Completed – Handler directs canine over obstacle without preceding canine
- Demonstrates "Stop" & "Turn".
 - Did Not Complete – Does not demonstrate behavior
 - Completed – Demonstrates behavior

Rubble Site

- Handler establishes scene safety
 - Did Not Complete – Does not complete scene safety
 - Completed – Completes scene safety
- Responsive to handler direction and control
 - Did Not Complete – Does not respond to commands
 - Completed – Canine responsive to commands
- Canine searches independently



- Did Not Complete – Canine does not search independently
 - Completed – Canine searches independently
- Focused final response on two targets (no false alerts)
 - Did Not Complete – Does not complete final response or false alerts
 - Completed – Completes final response (no false alerts)
- Canine shows focused commitment to each target:
 - Did Not Complete – Loses interest in target
 - Completed – Maintains interest in target
- Canine alerts independently of handler
 - Did Not Complete – Does not alert independently of handler at target
 - Completed – Alerts independently of handler at target
- Informs evaluators of canine's alert/location of each target
 - Did Not Complete – Does not recognize alert and/or can't identify target location by the canine's actions
 - Completed – Recognizes alert, correctly identifies location of target by the canine's actions
- Canine agility/ability to negotiate rubble
 - Did Not Complete – Does not negotiate the rubble in a safe manner
 - Completed – Negotiates the rubble in a safe manner
- Handler agility/ability to negotiate rubble
 - Did not Complete – Does not negotiate the rubble in a safe manner and without assistance
 - Completed – Negotiates the rubble in a safe manner and without assistance