PSAR Dog Certification Scenarios

A PSAR Dog in Utah may be called upon to perform in a variety of environments and in any jurisdiction. Accordingly, a wide variety of skills are advantageous. Whether it is a missing child in a suburban environment or in an expansive wilderness, the need is the same. The following scenarios represent common types of deployments in which PSAR Dogs have been deployed in past years. Successful performance in these scenarios suggests a higher likelihood for success in actual deployments. Each of these scenarios is prepared and enacted in a reality-based format, to establish the Handler/Dog are functional in actual deployments and not just sterile environments.

0. **General Information.** This is a reality-based evaluation of a Handler & Dog in various Search/Rescue environments. No formal obedience phase is included, but rather, the obedience displayed throughout the examination is evaluated for its functionality. Specifically, at some point during the examination, the Handler is to command the Dog to respond to at least the following commands.

    1. Heeling. This may be exhibited at any time, i.e., from the vehicle to a point where the Handler/Dog are to be briefed for a scenario.

    2. Down-in-Motion. This may be exhibited at any time, i.e., as the Handler approaches a scenario briefing.

    3. Recall to Handler. This may be exhibited at any time, i.e., when the Handler leaves a scenario briefing and prepares to deploy.

    4. Long Down. This may be exhibited at any time, i.e., while a Handler is being briefed on a scenario.

    The Handler need not display each of these behaviors in each scenario, however, each scenario will have an overall obedience grade assigned to it.

1. **Forested Area Search Scenario.** The Handler shall be presented with a scenario which represents a missing person, with elements that suggest the appropriate action to be taken would be to attempt to conduct an area search. The configuration of the search area will be relative to the location the scenario is conducted in. Specifically, the search area shall be a minimum of 10,000 square yards (i.e., 100x100), the victim shall be placed therein in such a manner that the Handler is unable to acquire visual contact until s/he is directly at the victim's location, and the victim will not interact with the Dog in any manner when found. This shall simulate an unconscious person. For this scenario, upon finding the victim, the Dog shall exhibit sustained barking or some other behavior in which the Handler is able to go directly to the victim's location.

2. **Building Search Scenario.** The Handler shall be presented with a scenario which represents a missing person, with elements that suggest the appropriate action to be taken would be to attempt to conduct a search within a building. This scenario is intended to represent an abducted child/adult in a domicile or similar site. The configuration of the building search will be relative to the location the scenario is conducted in. Specifically, the person shall be hidden such that a human searcher alone is unlikely to find the victim and the victim will not interact with the Dog in any manner when found. For this scenario, upon finding the victim, the Dog shall exhibit sustained barking or some other behavior in which the Handler is able to go directly to the victim's location.

3. **Compound Search Scenario.** The Handler shall be presented with a scenario which represents a missing person, with elements that suggest the appropriate action to be taken would be to attempt to conduct a search of a compound or related facility. This scenario is intended to represent an unaccounted-for person at a work environment. The configuration of the compound search will be relative to the location the scenario is conducted in. Specifically, the compound shall be a minimum of 1000 square yards in size, the person shall be hidden such that a human searcher alone is unlikely to find the victim and the victim will not interact with the Dog in any manner when found. For this scenario, upon finding the victim, the Dog shall exhibit sustained barking or some other behavior in which the Handler is able to go directly to the victim's location.

A Dog which performs suitably in each of the above scenarios may be Utah POST certified as a PSAR Dog.

Specialty Disciplines

Along with a utility PSAR Dog, there are specialty disciplines which may be either added to the basic PSAR Dog certification or each discipline may be evaluated/certified as a skill-set of its own. If the specialty is being evaluated as an individual skill-set, the obedience criteria listed for the utility PSAR Dog shall be also be exhibited in the specialty discipline(s).

4. **Tracking Scenario.** The Handler shall be presented with a scenario which represents a missing person, with elements that suggest the appropriate action to be taken would be to attempt to track the victim from a point last seen. The configuration of the track will be relative to the location the scenario is conducted in. Specifically, the length of the track shall not be less than 800 steps, the age of the track shall not be less than 30 minutes, it will have at least two changes of direction, shall cross at least one hard surface, and two well-scented true-to-life articles will be placed along the track. Upon finding the articles, the indication behavior shall be sufficiently obvious that a

person watching a video would also recognize the behavior. The Handler shall take such action as is necessary to prevent any unreasonable tainting of the articles by the Dog. The tracklayer shall remain at the end of the track so that the Dog's behavior upon making the find may be evaluated.

5.   **Article Search Scenario.** The Handler shall be presented with a scenario which represents a missing person, with elements that suggest the appropriate action to be taken would be to attempt to locate personal articles within a given search area. The configuration of the search are will be relative to the location the scenario is conducted in. Specifically, two well-scented true-to-life personal articles will be placed in the search area, as well as a non-human type of distraction (dead animal, etc.). Upon finding the articles, the indication behavior shall be sufficiently obvious that a person watching a video would also recognize the behavior. The Handler shall take such action as is necessary to prevent any unreasonable tainting of the article by the Dog.

6.   **Urban Disaster Scenario.** This is also known as the Collapsed Structure Scenario. The Handler shall be presented with a three-phase scenario which represents missing persons, with elements that suggest the appropriate action to be taken would be to attempt to search multiple collapsed structures or rubble piles. This scenario is intended to represent a natural disaster such as a tornado or a WMD event. The configuration of the urban disaster searches will be relative to the location each phase is conducted in. Additionally, due to the unique nature of this function, at some point during the scenario the Handler shall command the Dog to crawl through/between a structure, climb upon a structure and then lay down in place, and also jump horizontally over a minimum 36" gap between structures.   The three phases are identified as follows.

   1.   Minor Collapse. A victim shall be concealed in a partially-collapsed building or rubble pile such that a human searcher alone is unlikely to find the victim. Neither shall the victim be visible to the Handler or Dog prior to being found. For this phase, upon finding the victim, the Dog shall exhibit sustained barking or some other behavior in which the Handler is able to go directly to the victim's location.

   2.   Moderate Collapse. A victim shall be concealed in a moderately-collapsed building or rubble pile such that a human searcher alone is unlikely to find the victim. Neither shall the victim be visible to the Handler or Dog prior to being found. If the Handler determines the debris to be safe to enter upon, the Dog may be deployed to pinpoint the victim per the Handler's strategy. *If the Handler determines the debris to be unsafe to enter upon, s/he may deploy the Dog via on-leash strategical windscenting. In this case the Handler shall identify the Dog's alert to a scent cone for evaluation sake. The Handler shall then be advised by a simulated safety engineer if the debris is safe for the Dog to proceed further to pinpoint the victim's location.* For this phase, upon finding the victim, the Dog shall exhibit sustained barking or some other behavior in which the Handler is able to go

directly to the victim's location.

3.   Major Collapse. A victim shall be concealed in a totally-collapsed building or rubble pile such that a human searcher alone is unlikely to find the victim. Neither shall the victim be visible to the Handler or Dog prior to being found. If the Handler determines the debris to be safe to enter upon, the Dog may be deployed per the Handler's strategy. *If the Handler determines the debris to be unsafe to enter upon, s/he may deploy the Dog via on-leash strategical windscenting. In this case the Handler shall identify the Dog's alert to a scent cone for evaluation sake. The Handler shall then be advised by a simulated safety engineer if the debris is safe for the Dog to proceed further to pinpoint the victim's location.* For this phase, upon finding the victim, the Dog shall exhibit sustained barking or some other behavior in which the Handler is able to go directly to the victim's location.

7.   **Avalanche Scenario.**   The Handler shall be presented with a scenario which represents a missing person(s), with elements that suggest the appropriate action to be taken would be to attempt to search an avalanche field.   This scenario is intended to represent a snow-related disaster event. The configuration of the avalanche search will be relative to the location it is conducted in.   Additionally, due to the unique nature of this function, at some point during the scenario the Handler shall command the Dog to remain at Heel while walking past a running snowmobile and a moving snow cat.   Then S/he shall command the Dog to jump into the snow cat, pause, then command

the Dog to exit and return to the Heel position. Then s/he shall walk over to a pre-determined position and place the Dog on a three minute down-stay in the proximity of another Avalanche Dog. Then the Handler will recall the Dog to a Heel position and move toward the avalanche field.

Search of Mock Avalanche Debris.   This scenario is designed to evaluate the Handler's critical-thinking skills regarding wind direction, safety concerns etc. It also determines, in a Reality-Based setting, if the team is able to locate and indicate the presence of a victim.   After arriving at the mock search area, which will be a minimum of 100 x 100 yards with moderate slope and depth, the Handler shall be required to advise the searchers on-site of any special requirements s/he and the dog will need to conduct the search. The team shall successfully locate the presence of two separate victims, with an obvious indication at each. The victims shall be no less than 3 feet deep and will have been in position for no less than 30 minutes.