

Police Tracking Dog Certification Scenarios

The Police Tracking Dog certification is patterned after the international certification sometimes known as the Police Faerterhundpruefung (fair-ten-hoond-proof-oong) or Police FH. The official international title associated with this certification is PSP-5. Certain minor adaptations are made herein to make the examination consistent with law enforcement practices in the United States of America. The evidence search is not mandatory for the PFH certification but is necessary for the PSP-5 certification.

1. Tracking Scenario.

0. This Scenario has been designed to evaluate the Dog and Handler skills for tracking suspects or victims, including finding evidence or articles dropped along the way. This skill level is considerably more advanced than that of a Patrol Dog and may be legitimately referred to as a "Footstep Detector Dog."



1. The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to track an unknown person's complex travel route after a considerable length of time (minimum 3 hours). A investigative scene marks the starting point of the track. The person shall depart from the scene and walk a minimum of 1625 yards (1500 meters). Along the way s/he shall make five realistic turns and one acute-angle turn. Along the way, s/he shall drop five small pieces of realistic evidence (i.e., button, coin, cigarette butt, etc.) in such a way that they are not easily visible to the Handler. The last article shall constitute the end of the track. The Dog shall indicate the presence of the evidence in a non-contaminating manner. A misleading cross-track shall intersect two corners of the original track in such a manner that the cross-track continues in the original direction of the original track (see diagram below). The cross-track shall be about 30 minutes fresher than the original track.



The majority of the track shall not be visible to the Handler. The track shall pass over several different types of terrain. The Handler shall deploy the Dog to cast about for the track, then follow it. The Judge shall halt the scenario only if it appears that the Dog has gotten so far off the footsteps that it realistically unlikely the Dog will not find it again.

2. Procedures.

1. The Judge shall determine the place where the scene is to be prepared and a reasonable route for the tracklayer to follow.
2. A "scentpad" is not permitted. Footprints should not be visible from the start of the track, but may be occasionally visible along the route.
3. The tracklayer shall be a stranger to the Dog.

4. The tracklayer shall walk in a natural manner and wear ordinary shoes. S/he is forbidden from making abnormal footfalls.
5. The track shall not be a defined pattern and shall be laid reasonable to the lay of the land. Only one turn is allowed to be unnaturally sharp or acute-angle. Otherwise, turns are to be realistic and not a "stop-rotate-walk" turn, as is common in civilian dog trials. Obtuse-angle turns are permitted for the non-acute turns.



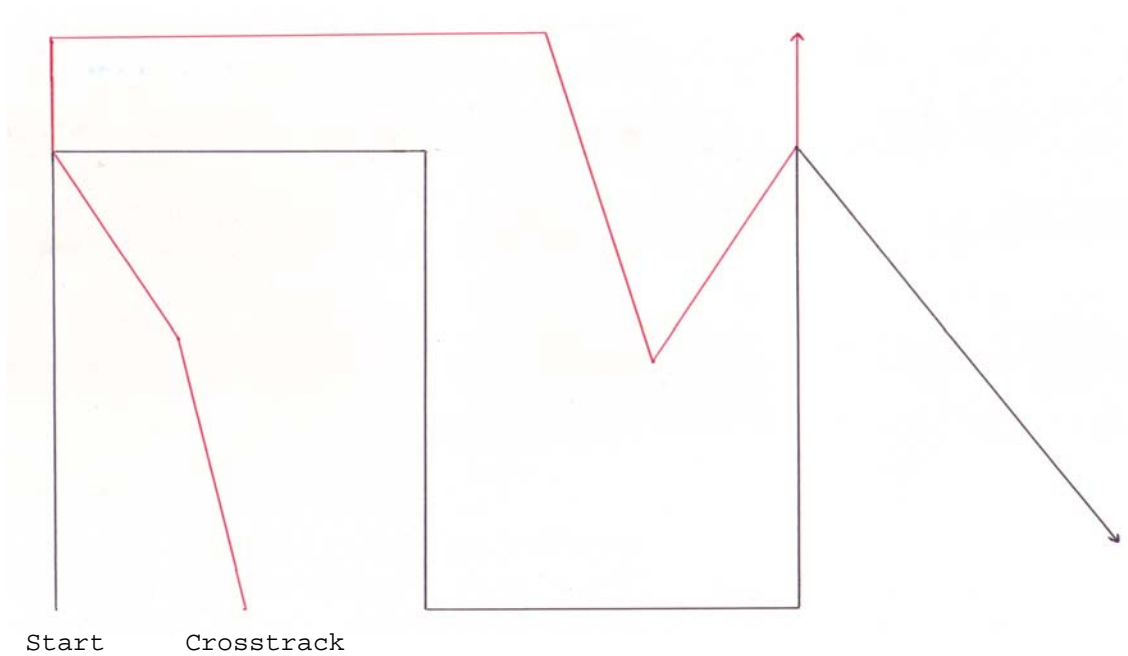
6. The person laying the crosstrack should be of sufficient dissimilarity (weight, etc.) from the tracklayer as to prevent any possible reasonable misinterpretation by the Dog.
7. The crosstrack should be laid at each corner as close to the 30-minute mark as possible. This means that after crossing the first turn, the person must pause for some minutes prior to crossing the other turn.

8. The evidence items shall not be larger than a small cell phone and shall be similar color as the terrain, when possible.
9. The evidence shall be thoroughly permeated with human odor.
10. The evidence may be placed anywhere along the track, except in the first or last 50 feet of the start, any turn, the crosstracks, or the end.
11. The track must have multiple changes of terrain.
12. The Dog may track on-leash or off-leash and at any reasonable length, with vigilant Judge's scrutiny to watch for inappropriate Handler help.
13. The track concludes at the last piece of evidence.
14. The Dog may exhibit only "precision" footstep-to-footstep tracking during this examination. Street-Tracking or Trailing is faulty.
15. The speed of the Dog is not an issue, but should not exceed a comfortable walking speed for the Handler, nor Backup Officers in order to maintain weapons-ready presentation.
16. The Handler may encourage the Dog throughout the scenario, as long as it is not so loud as to overtly announce the location of the Handler/Dog to any possible perpetrators along the way.
17. The Handler may rest the Dog along the route, if it appears that the Dog needs to do so to maintain efficiency.



- 18. The Handler shall notify the Judge when the Dog has indicated evidence, but shall not immediately pick it up. This is consistent with most deployment procedures. The Handler may ask the Judge to collect the evidence, to simulate a realistic procedure. During this time, the Handler may interact with the Dog in a reasonable manner.
- 19. The Handler and Dog shall be evaluated not only for the tracking skill, but also as if their performance was videoed and will be presented in court as evidence.

[Below is a diagram of a sample Track}



2. Criminal Evidence Search Scenario

0. This Scenario has been designed to evaluate the Patrol Dog and Handler deployment skills for searching, locating, and indicating criminal evidence or lost property.

1. The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate and indicate criminal evidence. The search area shall be about 800m² size. The Judge shall place four contaminated realistic objects in the search area and the Dog shall be given a reasonable amount of time (10 minutes) to deploy.



2. Procedures.



1. The search area shall be realistic and typical of deployment scenarios.
2. The Dog shall deploy unmuzzled.
3. The Handler and Dog shall be out of sight when the objects are placed. They shall be composed of four different materials and not be larger than a small cell phone. The objects shall be similar color as the terrain and shall not be placed in plain sight.
4. The objects shall be thoroughly permeated with human odor.
5. The Dog shall display a non-contaminating Indication behavior when locating the items.

6. A sample evidence search scenario is shown on the next page.



[Below is a diagram of a sample Criminal Evidence Search]

