

Alaska Search & Rescue Dogs

Wilderness • Avalanche • Cadaver • Water • Disaster • Tracking/Trailing



Section 300 Mission-Ready Standards

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Section 300 Mission-Ready Standards

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Section 301

Alaska Search & Rescue Dogs – Overview Statement

There are numerous skills that are necessary for the search dog and handler team to have in order to perform competently in a given search discipline. ASARD search disciplines include wilderness, avalanche, cadaver, urban disaster, and tracking/trailing. A foundation skills checklist and the mission-ready evaluation series are used to determine if these skills are in place for a given team.

By having a completed checklist, completing the mission-ready evaluation series (field tests), receiving a positive review (passing grade) from the evaluators and being approved by the board-of-directors as mission-ready for that discipline, the team will have met the ASARD standard.

The checklist is used as an accounting of skills and training that are important to search preparedness but that can be accumulated over time. All items need to be approved by evaluators. However, documentation that proves that the skill or training has been acquired will preclude the need for further demonstrations.

The purpose of the mission-ready evaluation series is to provide the dog and handler team the opportunity to demonstrate successful finds with alerts and that they have and can use the skills and ability necessary for mission readiness. When (grading) the mission-ready evaluation series, the evaluators should view the field tests as a whole, with particular attention given to the demonstration of abilities that affect over-all search preparedness,

By conducting the mission-ready evaluation series, the evaluators make the best determination they can as to the mission readiness of the team being evaluated. It is the responsibility of the evaluators to decide if the field test setting and environment meet the written guidelines and purpose of the tests. It is the evaluators' duty to be honest and fair in their assessment of the demonstrations given by the dog and handler team. It is their duty to grade the evaluation series such that the BOD can, with confidence, approve or disapprove the team as mission ready.

The following is a guide to help ASARD teams reach “mission-ready” or “operational” status within ASARD. It outlines how teams will be evaluated for mission readiness and the criteria used in assessing a team’s qualifications and skills. It is intended to help evaluators in conducting fair, valid and reliable evaluation series and to help teams as they prepare for mission readiness.

Section 302

Alaska Search & Rescue Dogs – Overview of Search Preparedness

ASARD maintains search preparedness and Mission-Ready Evaluation Series in the following areas:

	Wilderness: Section 307		Urban Disaster: Section 310	(To Be Completed in 2010)
	Avalanche: Section 308		Tracking/Trailing: Section 311	
	Cadaver: Section 309			

Alaska Search & Rescue Dogs – Time Chart

This time chart will help individuals better understand and develop as a team to a Mission-Ready Evaluation Series. ASARD understands individual teams will bring with them strengths and weaknesses that will determine an individual rate of development along this continuum. However, it is still recommended that Training Status only last for an eighteen month time period. Although a team may take longer than eighteen months, that is the target time (or goal) a dog team will use to reach a Mission-Ready Evaluation Series.

Month 0	Dog Team becomes Support Member in ASARD.
	Dog Team becomes familiar with organization and observes training policies and practices of other dog team members.
	Dog Team starts basic problems, obedience and temperament training.
Month 6	Dog team becomes a Training Member in ASARD and given 18 months to become an Operational Member by passing a Mission-Ready Evaluation Series.
	Handler has chosen an alert and is focused on the dog clearly communicating the location of human scent.
Month 9	Handler is working towards completing the Handler Foundation Checklist.
	Team is focused on short training problems building on consistency, repetition, and a solid alert.
	Team is working on obedience and socialization.
Month 12	Team is extending the length of their problems and has incorporated blind problems with consistent success and a solid alert.
	Team has been socializing with both familiar and unfamiliar dogs and individuals, chaos training, and using a variety of obstacles and equipment to increase agility.
	Team may start considering completing the dog's Foundation Skills Evaluation in obedience, temperament, agility, swimming, transport, and sociability.
Month 18	Team is extending the length of their problems to longer periods of time (i.e. Wilderness problems that last over 1 hour) building search endurance with consistent success and solid alerts.
	Handler has successfully completed Handler Foundation Skills to become Field Support or is actively pursuing such completion.
	Upon successful completion of Handler Foundation Skills, handler is actively gaining experience becoming involved in large scale trainings and appropriate searches.
	Start completing evaluations for the dog's Foundations Skills in obedience, temperament, agility, swimming, transport, and sociability.
Month 24	Attempt a Mission-Ready Evaluation Series.
	Move to Operational Status upon successful completion or consider asking for an extension to further refine skills and work towards another Evaluation Series.

Section 303

Alaska Search & Rescue Dogs – General Guidelines for Evaluations

Section 303 outlines guidelines evaluators should apply and follow in setting-up, conducting, and debriefing dog team evaluations.

	The Board of Directors approves who may evaluate ASARD dog teams e.g. operational and senior members.
	There shall be a minimum of two evaluators for each test conducted.
	Each evaluation will be set-up as to allow the dog team to demonstrate their abilities. If an unanticipated variable disrupts an evaluation, the dog team shall not be penalized and another evaluation shall be arranged as soon as possible.
	The evaluators may adjust the parameters of a field test based on their judgment with the goal of meeting the purpose of the test.
	Mission-Ready Evaluations will be valid good for two years.
	Evaluation forms will be completed by evaluators directly following each evaluation. Copies shall be given to the dog team evaluated in a timely manner.
	Handlers may not use excessive or abusive corrections nor will they be allowed to mistreat their dogs. Such instances are cause for immediate failure.
	No dog will be left alone so as to create a hazard to itself or others.
	Any aggressive behavior will result in immediate failure.
	A Mission-Ready Evaluation Series should be completed in a 60 day time period.
	Upon an un-successful Mission-Ready Evaluation Series and at the discretion of the evaluators, a time period for re-attempt will be set.
	A handlers training log-book must document consistent training and performance in the discipline to be evaluated.
	The Board must agree that the dog team is well prepared before a Mission-Ready Evaluation Series may begin.
	Evaluators and those being evaluated must discuss expectations before evaluations begin.
	Problems encountered with the evaluation process will be approached with an effort to improve them.
	A facilitator will be assigned to each evaluation series. The facilitator's role is to organize tests within an evaluation series. The facilitator will schedule the pre and post meetings, the test dates, locations, evaluators, and subjects / articles / and human remains sources. The facilitator may ask for assistance from other ASARD members.

Section 304 and Section 305a

Alaska Search & Rescue Dogs – Foundation Skills

Section 304 outlines the skills all dog handlers (and field support personnel) must demonstrate before proceeding to any Mission-Ready field evaluations.

- 4.1 Health & Stamina – ASARD personnel must exhibit the physical stamina required for multiple days of searching in a variety of terrain, altitudes, and weather conditions. A letter stating physical readiness may be required from a physician.
- 4.2 Medical Aid Training – ASARD personnel must hold current certificates in CPR and an approved first responder medical course e.g. WFR, OEC, ETT, WEMT, or Wilderness First Aid.
- 4.3 Dog First Aid - ASARD personnel shall have training in injury precautions, diet, and emergency care for dogs.
- 4.4 Radio Communications – ASARD personnel shall have at least four (4) hours of combined training in radio equipment and communications.
- 4.5 Equipment / Search Pack - ASARD personnel shall carry appropriate gear to be self-sufficient in remote and hazardous terrain.
- 4.6 Navigation – Map, Compass, GPS - ASARD personnel shall have at least four (4) hours of combined training in land navigation using multiple navigation instruments and tools used in search and rescue operations.
- 4.7 Helicopter and Boating Safety – ASARD personnel shall have at least four (4) hours of approved combined training aircraft operations, flight safety, and boating operations and safety.
- 4.8 Scent Theory - ASARD personnel shall demonstrate knowledge and application of scent theory principles.
- 4.9 SAR Training – ASARD personnel will pass NASAR’ SAR TECH III or equivalent coursework.
- 4.10 ICS – ASARD Personnel will attend four (4) hours of search theory or ICS instruction.
- 4.11 Field Observation – ASARD personnel will maintain consistent participation in 50% of ASARD’s organized trainings and meetings.
- 4.12 Survival Training – ASARD personnel will have taken a survival training course and/or possess equivalent experience to promote long-term survivability in remote settings and harsh weather conditions.
- 4.13 SAR Mission Experience – ASARD handlers will participate as support personnel in at least three missions before being eligible for deployment with their dog. Inter-agency trainings may substitute for genuine search missions.

Section 305a outlines the skills all ASARD dogs must demonstrate before proceeding to any Mission-Ready field evaluations.

- 5.1 Obedience – ASARD dogs will demonstrate a minimum level of obedience taking directions from their handler verbally and visually. ASARD dog teams will satisfactorily demonstrate their obedience skills on the obedience skills checklist.
- 5.2 Temperament - ASARD dogs will demonstrate a stable and tolerant temperament. ASARD dog teams will satisfactorily demonstrate their temperament on the temperament skills checklist.
- 5.3 Agility - ASARD dogs will demonstrate a minimum level of agility taking directions from their handler verbally and visually. ASARD dog teams will satisfactorily demonstrate their agility skills on the agility skills checklist.
- 5.4 Swimming – ASARD dogs will demonstrate an ability to swim in both moving and still H2O.
- 5.5 Transport Land, Air, H2O – ASARD dogs will demonstrate an ability to be transported by a variety of means including but not limited to helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, snow machines, trucks, boats, chairlift, ATV’s, trains, etc.
- 5.6 Sociability – In close quarters, ASARD dogs will demonstrate tolerance of familiar and unfamiliar dogs and people.

305b

Alaska Search & Rescue Dogs – Foundation Skills Checklist

Section 305b provides the performance checklist all ASARD dogs must complete before proceeding to any Mission-Ready field evaluations.

5.1 Obedience				5.2 Temperament		5.3 Agility	
	Handler	Teammate	Date Completed		Date Completed		Date Completed
Heel	Off – Lead	On-Lead		<p>Confusion Response: At least three (3) dogs from the unit shall be loaded into the back of one (1) vehicle by their respective handlers. Another handler will then transfer one (1) dog at a time, using a leash, into the back of another vehicle parked about twenty (20) feet away, which shall then be driven a short distance to a designated location.</p> <p>Noise Response: After arriving at the designated location, the same handler shall transfer the dogs, using a leash, back into one vehicle and then move off to a position about fifty (50) feet away and in view of the dogs. Handler will then fire two (2) rounds into the air from a shotgun, starter pistol, or equivalent noisemaker.</p> <p>Stranger Response: Immediately after the noise and confusion evaluations, the dogs will be reassured by their respective handlers and told to stay. When those handlers have moved out of sight, three (3) strangers will come up to the dogs using pleasant voice tones and touch them.</p>		<p>Body awareness: Dog has demonstrated the ability to navigate through an appropriate section of woods (such as an alder thicket or area of downed trees) under the direction of the handler.</p> <p>Jump: Dog has demonstrated the ability to jump over a vertical obstacle about the height of the dogs shoulder.</p> <p>Platform: Dog has demonstrated the ability to jump up to a platform raised above the ground.</p> <p>Tunnel: Dog has demonstrated the ability to be directed through an extended narrow passage such as a tunnel or culvert.</p> <p>Unstable Surface: Dog has demonstrated the ability to walk, sit, turn around, or lay down on an unstable surface raised slightly above the ground.</p> <p>Climb: Dog has demonstrated the ability to navigate an open or closed staircase in a deliberate manner under the direction of the handler.</p>	
Stand-stay	Off – Lead (30 sec)	On-Lead (15 sec)					
Sit-Stay	Off – Lead (2 min)	On-Lead (1 min)					
Down-Stay	Off – Lead (5 min)	On-Lead (2 min)					
<p>Non-vocal stay: Dog shall be left on a sit-stay as the handler moves to a position about one hundred (100) feet away. (The sit may be a verbal command or a hand signal.)</p>							
<p>Down from 100 feet: Dog shall perform a down from 100 feet away with a hand signal from the handler.</p>							
<p>Recall from 100 feet: Handler can recall the dog to a sit, either in front or at heel using only a hand signal.</p>							
<p>Out of Sight Response: With handler out of sight, dog shall be left on a down-stay with at least two (2) other dogs from the unit in a line for 15 minutes while under constant supervision.</p>							
<p>Preference Response: Multiple meaty bones shall be placed scattered randomly on the ground. Handler shall walk the dog through the area to a position about fifty (50) feet away.</p>							
<p>Preference Response: Dog shall be allowed to play or socialize with one other dog from the unit for one (1) minute. Handler shall then recall dog to sit either at front or at heel.</p>							
Date Completed:							
5.4 Swimming – Dog will demonstrate its ability to swim across a flowing stream and 25 yards in flat water.						Flowing -	Flat -
5.5 Transportation – Dog will demonstrate its ability to be transported by three different modes.							
5.6 Sociability – Dog will demonstrate tolerance of other dogs on three occasions.							