

## **Search and Rescue Dog Training**

Search and Rescue Society of British Columbia

### **OBEDIENCE**

Search & rescue dogs are obedient dogs, under control at all times. The successful dog/handler team must complete the following exercises individually and together with other teams whereby only hand signals are used.

1. Heel, jog at heel, sit and down at heel.
2. Stay, master out of sight for 5 minutes.
3. Recall from a distance of 15 meters.
4. Stay or down on recall.
5. Sit at a distance of 10 meters.
6. Down at a distance of 10 meters.
7. Finish at heel position.

### **AGILITY**

This profile is an extension of obedience. It also develops the dog physically, preparing it to deal with strenuous tasks encountered in rescue operations.

The agility course consists of a number of jumps one meter high, a window jump, a vertical wall, suspension plank, balance beam, a culvert, and an "A" frame ramp. The dog must successfully negotiate all of these hurdles off leash with the handler at a moderate jog. The dog is under control at all times at the handler's left side.

### **TRACKING**

The purpose of this profile is to provide a qualified tracking dog to assist police in finding missing persons and possible evidence.

Dogs are trained to follow a track of human scent and crushed vegetation using their magnificent nose. The dog's nose is far superior to man's. The total number of olfactory cells in a human is about 5 million. The dog has 125 - 200 million. Its sensitivity is amazing. The dog can detect some odors at as little as one part in a trillion.

A greater proportion of the dog's brain is devoted to the sense of smell, unlike in humans whose size of the olfactory area has decreased and the thinking part has increased. For this reason, when training, BELIEVE

YOUR DOG as he is the best judge of what he smells!

The necessary equipment for the tracking dog consists of a non-restrictive harness and a 20 - 25 foot long line, preferably made of leather. The dog is trained to follow a single human scent, disregarding all else. The successful candidate must complete a 45 minute old track set by one person in a rural environment. The track includes:

1. 2 road crossings
2. 3 scent related articles
3. the dog must indicate right and left 45o turns
4. 1 dead end
5. cross tracks - human
6. 20 meters on low scent area such as gravel
7. animal scent distraction

## **RETRIEVING**

The SAR dog must retrieve articles found on a track belonging to the person the dog is to find. The dog should be taught to retrieve a variety of articles including those made of leather, wood, cloth, as well as glass and metal objects.

For certification purposes the dog must sit at handler's side, stay while the dumbbell (wooden) is thrown 10 meters. On the "fetch" command, the dog must pick up the object, return to the handler, sit in front position and hold the article for 30 seconds. On command "out" the dog gives up the article and goes to the heel position, again on command.

## **SEARCHING**

Searching involves air scenting to locate a missing person. This is opposed to tracking where the dog's head is low, near the ground, following the scent left by a person's footprints. The handler must pay close attention to wind direction when searching. Scent from a lost person or article will be carried to the dog by the wind. Therefore, it is beneficial for the dog/handler team to work into the wind.

### **Testing in this profile involves:**

1. a search for a concealed person in a rural environment. The search includes bush and open terrain approximately 400 meters by 400 meters. The search is to be completed within 20 minutes.
2. a search for 2 medium sized, well scented articles in a rural area. Articles are concealed about 24 hours before the start of the search. The search area is approximately 200 meters by 200 meters. The 2 articles are to be located within 20 minutes. Hand signals and voice commands are used to direct the dog.