

Proposed Explosive Canine Team Certification Standards

Statement of Purpose: To provide recommended guidelines for state certification and documentation pertaining to explosive detector canines.

1. Canine handler team certification

- 1.1 Certification for explosives detection dogs shall consist of a comprehensive assessment and shall include elements of odor recognition or double blind testing.
- 1.2 A canine team will be certified annually with an expiration date of 30 days following the date of the last certification. A team will be considered non-deployable should one year and 30 days pass without a documented annual certification signed by a qualified certifying official.
- 1.3 In order for a canine team to be considered deployable, the team must be certified by the Georgia P.O.S.T Council using the standards set forth in this document.
- 1.4 A canine team which does not pass the certification must wait 72 hours before reattempting to certify.

2. Explosive odors used in certification

2.1 The certification shall include the following mandatory groups of explosives that contain the following substances.

- 2.1.1 **RDX**
- 2.1.2 **PETN**
- 2.1.3 **TNT**
- 2.1.4 **Dynamites**
- 2.1.5 **Acid Salts**
- 2.1.6 **Black Powder**
- 2.1.7 **Double Based Smokeless Powder**

2.1.8 **Elective** - An elective odor set may be added to the certification, at the discretion of the certifying official. However, the certifying official must provide documentation of the group's imprint at the time of the certification. Examples of possible elective odor sets: peroxides, chlorates, per-chlorates, and nitrates. Use of an elective odor set is subject to the availability and the safe handling of the elective group. If used, the elective odor set will be used to document odor recognition of that substance group not environmental testing.

2.1.9 Actual explosive compounds (no pseudo compounds) will be used during the certification.

2.1.10 The certifying official will be responsible for providing the training aids for the certification.

3. Explosive weights used in certification

3.1 The minimum weight used for substance odors in the RDX, PETN, TNT is 113.3980925 grams (1/4 pound).

3.2 The minimum weight for substances in the Dynamite group will be defined as one stick.

3.3 The minimum substance weight for all powders in the black powder, double based smokeless powder will be a substance weight of five (5) grams.

3.4 The minimum weight when using items that are corded such as; detonation cord or safety fuse will be measured as a minimum length of twelve inches or one foot.

3.5 The maximum weight for all substances will be three (3) pounds. This will be based upon the availability of larger quantities by the certifying officials. However, at least one training aid from each group will be a least one pound in weight to test for appropriate canine response to larger odor.

4. Number of training aids required for certification

4.1 There will be a minimum of twenty (20) training aids placed during the certification. A minimum of two (2) training aids from each explosive group will be used throughout the entire certification (Please reference 2.1.1-2.1.7).

5. Team certification requirements

5.1 A canine team must locate 90% of all hidden explosives in all areas in order to pass the certification. If a canine team misses more than 10% of the hidden explosives, then the team will fail to certify.

5.2 A canine team being evaluated must not respond incorrectly to more than 10% of the total number of training aids placed within the areas.

5.3 A “miss” is defined as a canine displaying no odor recognition to a given training aid or a handler’s error which caused a canine to not respond to the given training aid. If a handler assists the canine by giving a “sit” command, this will be considered to be a positive find. An “incorrect response” is defined as a positive indication which the handler believes to be accurate and no target odors are present. This will be promptly confirmed by the certifying official; they will note if an associative odor is present and document as an observation for the canine team.

5.4 During the certification, a testing area may be referred to as a “set, session, or problem.”

5.5 A certifying official will be given authority to dictate if any given search time is considered “excessive.” They will cease the certification set and apply any “misses” that would result with terminating the set.

5.6A dog making an “aggressive” response during certification will fail to certify. A response is deemed “aggressive” when the dog attempts to bite/scratch/excessively nudge the training aid or area containing the training aid.

6. Evaluated areas for testing

6.1 **Buildings** - No more than one (1) training aid will be placed within a four (4) room area. Building may include warehouses, passenger terminals, office space, residential, etc.

6.2 **Vehicles** - No more than one (1) training aid will be placed within a space of six (6) vehicles. One test set will include a minimum of thirty (30) vehicles to test for endurance of the canine team in a “lot” environment. A minimum of one (1) pound of explosives will be used when placed in interior environments of vehicles (e.g., passenger compartments and trunks).

6.3 Open Areas/ Perimeters - An open area will be used during the certification; this may include building exteriors, open fields, wooded area or park areas. No more than two (2) explosive odors may be placed in an open area environment. A mission specific elective may be used in place of the open area/perimeter.

6.4 Parcels/Luggage - A minimum of fifteen parcels/baggage (either soft/hard) will be used during the certification. No more than one (1) explosive training aid per six (6) articles of parcel/luggage will be used.

6.5 Blank Set - The certifying official will conduct one set with no target explosive odors. They will not advise the canine team of the “blank” set. This blank set will require the canine team to search in any given environment for a minimum of twenty (20) minutes, plus or minus five (5) minutes. The blank set may be in concert with the endurance set or any of the areas. Observable deficiencies will be noted by the certifying official.

6.6 Endurance Set - The certifying official will conduct one set that will require the canine team to search for (35) minutes, plus or minus five (5) minutes, in any of the areas. This will test the endurance of the canine team. Observable deficiencies will be noted by the certifying official.

7. Explosive training aid placement requirements

7.1 Explosive training aids will be placed no higher than eight (8) feet above ground level and no lower than (1) foot under the surface.

7.2 Explosive training aids will not be placed at depths greater than two (2) feet.

7.3 At least one explosive training aid in buildings and vehicles will be placed at a depth of one (1) foot.

7.4 At least one (1) training aid will be placed at a height greater than four (4) feet and less than eight (8) feet.

7.5 All explosive training aids should be placed in a fashion that will not reveal their visual presence to the canine team.

7.6 A canine team must locate and or articulate the source of the explosive training aid.

7.7 All certification sets involving explosive compounds will be given a minimum of thirty (30) minutes of set time before allowing a canine team to enter the set.

8. Ethical Violations

8.1 Deliberate compromise of a certification will not be tolerated. Any communications (in person, by cell phone, two way pager, text messaging, or by any other means) between handlers and personnel participating in the certification, concerning specifics of an area still being evaluated, placements of explosive training aids or any information that could be regarded as compromised prior to the termination (by the certifying official) will constitute a compromise of the certification. The handler will not be allowed to continue and may be removed from the certification.

8.2 To eliminate the possibility of a biased/prejudiced certification there will be two (2) certifying officials present during the certification. Any grievances or protest made by a certifying team will be made to the P.O.S.T. Council for review. The team making the grievance will be non-deployable until the grievance is resolved through the P.O.S.T. Council.