

## **GENERAL RULES and DEFINITIONS GOVERNING CERTIFICATIONS**

### **Tracking Canines**

This certification test will evaluate the ability of the canine to track the scent of a specific person. It will evaluate the ability of the canine to locate items of evidence left by that person and it will evaluate the ability of the canine to discriminate from a cross track.

## **GENERAL RULES AND DEFINITIONS**

These general rules and guidelines will govern testing unless specifically stated otherwise herein. Rules may be discussed for clarification prior to certification, but no changes will be made prior to the test.

- A. ASSOCATION: The term "association" when used in the context of these regulations shall refer to the rules committee, the Judges Committee or the National USPCA Executive Committee.
- B. Entries: **Each handler must be a member of the USPCA** and a full-time paid law enforcement officer of a city, town, county, state or federal agency. The handler must also be a working K-9 officer assigned to a K-9 and duties appropriate to it. Any member who has retired in good standing with a minimum of 10 consecutive years as a member of the USPCA may also certify their trained K-9 if they are working in a part time status for a law enforcement agency and are assigned K-9 duties. This would also apply to any full retired member who is a reserve, special deputy or any status where the member is still recognized as a law enforcement officer. The member must maintain continuous membership with the USPCA upon retirement. If their membership is not continuous, they will not be eligible to certify their canine.  
**Additionally, a special member as defined in the By-laws may certify a dog in a regional tracking trial if approved as a special member by their region.** Approved 6-12-22
- C. Certifications will not be permitted for the purpose of marketing or selling dogs.
- D. Testing order will be drawn prior to the test and is at the Chief Judges' discretion as will the articles used on the track.
- E. Each region or district shall offer a tracking test annually or more often as determined and approved by the region. That region will determine the required fee. This region will also keep a list of those dog teams that have passed this certification test.
- F. No whistles, ultrasonic devices or related aides not specifically stated herein will be allowed. Spike or pinch collars are permitted. All these devices must be left in the

parking lot. A dummy collar or non-operational electronic collar shall be allowed. Prior to entering the testing field, a field steward will check the K9's E-collar to ensure that the devise is a dummy collar or that it is shut off. The competitor will also hand the remote to the steward prior to the exercise.

G. No dog will be left unattended at any time in such a manner as to create a danger or hazard to any other dog, person or to itself.

H. Each handler will be responsible for any damage done by his or her K-9.

**I. Protests:** The committee ruling on protests shall consist of three or more odd number members as selected by the Chief Judge. Members of the rules and judges' committees cannot rule on protests of their own department. Handlers will advise the steward at the time of occurrence or immediately after the test or phase (before leaving the field) that a protest may be entered or lodged. The steward will note the protest and scoresheets will be marked that a possible protest may be filed. All formal protests will be lodged in writing to the Association (Chief Judge), identified by the team's number only, (no name) before they are considered. Any potential disqualification (DQ) from testing will be considered (as a DQ or not a DQ) by the protest committee. Protests and disqualifications must consider the rules of this Association and be ruled on accordingly. Written protests should be kept and submitted to the National Secretary by email and should indicate the protest committee's names and the outcome of the protest. In the case of a question concerning rules, the Chief Judge should contact the Judges Committee Chairman.

\*Approved 5-7-23 in Evansville.

J. There will be no consumption of alcoholic beverages on or in the area of the testing site during testing hours by judges, handlers or participating officials.

K. *Any extreme or abusive correction or treatment of a dog—loss of temper or display of poor sportsmanship by the handler—will result in disqualification from the certification as determined by the chief judge.* The Executive Board may undertake its own investigation and take any action it deems appropriate based on the totality of the circumstances.

L. JUDGES:

1. All judges for Regional, District and National Certifications must be active regular or associate members of the USPCA. The Chief Judge of a Tracking Certification Trial must be at least a regional certified Tracking Judge and must meet the requirements as set by the Judges Committee unless they are already a National Trainer. *See Chief Judges requirements found on line. (approved 4-2-17 in Raleigh, NC)* Regionally certified tracking judges or technically qualified USPCA evaluators will be used. The minimum qualifications for a tracking judge are:

\* A tracking dog trainer

\* OR a person who had handled a tracking dog for at least three years and who has certified through USPCA in a sanctioned USPCA Tracking Trial two of the three years;

\* And has served as a novice judge in at least one tracking dog certification.

\* In the event that the above criteria cannot be met, then the Chief Judge will select the most qualified individuals to judge. When using the approved USPCA Tracking trial program, only two scoring judges per participant is required. (Additional judges scores can be put in the "novice" area of the program)

2. Judges must carry a mental picture of a theoretically perfect performance in each exercise and score each dog and handler against this visualized standard, which shall combine the utmost in willingness, enjoyment, and precision on the part of the dog, and the naturalness, gentleness, and smoothness of the handler. Lack of willingness or enjoyment on the part of the dog must be penalized, as should a lack of precision in the dog's performance or roughness in handling.

3. There will be no penalty of less than one-half (1/2) of a point. Prior to testing, judges should determine if partial scores will be given for incomplete tracks. See scoresheets for areas of evaluation.

4. Judges are not required to explain their scoring and should not enter into any discussions with a member who appears dissatisfied. Any interested person, who thinks there has been a mathematical error or an error in identifying a dog, may report the fact to one of the officers of the Association or the certification committee. Judges should explain point deductions on the score sheets whenever possible.

5. Scores will be considered unofficial until checked and officially released by the chief scorekeeper and Chief Judge. Scorekeepers will not change a judge's score sheet unless it is an obvious mathematical error and then only after the error has been confirmed by the judge and chief judge. On completion of an event the Chief Judge or chief scorekeeper will release the judges.

6. No judge shall require a dog or handler to do anything, nor shall they penalize a dog or Handler, for failing to do anything not required by these rules.

7. There will be no lengthy explanation of the exercise while on the field. It will be the handler's responsibility to know the requirements of each exercise. A judge will direct the team to the starting location and start the test.

8. If a dog fails in a particular part of an exercise, it shall not ordinarily be re-judged or given a second chance unless so stated in these rules. But, if in the opinion of the judges, the dog's performance was prejudiced by peculiar circumstances, the judges may, at their discretion, re-judge the dog on the entire exercise, or that portion of the exercise, that the dog failed.

9. Judges will stay away from the team to avoid distracting or interfering with the K9.

*Teams failing to successfully certify will not immediately be given a second chance. Multiple tests of the same team will not be conducted. The team must undergo a period of retraining, documenting successful performance, before any attempt at re-certification. Only official Certificates of Certification (Provided by the National Office) will be issued to participants who successfully pass a USPCA Certification test.*

### SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR TRACKLAYERS:

1. The track layer, after laying the track, must stay away from the starting point and the K9 team prior to the test.
2. If possible, all tracks for all participants should be done on the same type of surface. For example, all grass or all part grass and part dirt.
3. The track layer should draw a diagram of the track and location of articles, along with the cross track.

### **GOVERNING RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION**

#### **TRACKING CERTIFICATION**

The purpose of this test is to evaluate the ability of a canine to track the scent of a particular person and indicating articles of evidence left on the track. The test also evaluates the canine's ability to discriminate from the cross track by following the original track to a successful conclusion. All certifications are good through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. (ie: if you certify on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, your certification will not expire until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022)

### **1. TESTING:**

A. The test track will consist of a three-legged track laid at the direction of the Chief Judge. The length of the track will be from 150 yards to 300 yards in length depending on the space available. There will be two turns with the first turn being either to the right or the left.

B. As many individual tracks as possible will be laid in the area utilized. If the area is limited and will be used more than once, a dog and handler will contaminate all areas prior to the first test.

C. The age of the track will be a minimum of thirty (30) minutes and not to exceed one hour. DO NOT allow tracks to sit too long. If one hour is your starting time, you should use forty-five minutes as the target time to not exceed the one hour.

D. Handlers will have the option to use leads, tracking ropes, tracking harnesses, or any other collars approved by the USPCA. The test will be conducted on leash.

## 2. START:

A. The approximate area of the start of the track will be marked with two markers placed by the tracklayer. The markers may be cones, flags, etc. They will be placed ten feet apart and the track may start anywhere between the markers.

B. The K9 team will be brought to the general area of the markers and told that the track starts somewhere between the markers. The team will be evaluated on locating the track and determining the track direction.

## 3. ARTICLES:

A. Track Articles - Three of the PDI articles will be used. Articles used will be supplied by the host city or region. Prior to the start of the exercise, the Chief Judge will select the articles used. Three new articles will be used for each participant. The articles will be concealed on the track, with one article on each leg.

B. End Article – The end article will be determined by the Chief Judge and must be the same for each participant. It will be concealed at the end of the track.

C. Article scoring - The canine will be evaluated on indication and alert of the track articles. Finds must be obvious to the judges. Each article will be judged separately with the end article having a higher point value. If a canine does not locate an article, he will still be evaluated on the work on the track. The canine does not have to retrieve the article. The handler must inform the judges of the find.

## 4. CONTAMINATION:

The test track will be contaminated on one of the three legs by having another person cross over the laid track. The cross track will be laid at least fifteen (15) minutes after the initial track was laid.

**5. TIME:**

There will be no time limit on the test. A judge will conclude the test if the team has stopped working or it obviously unsuccessful.

**6. PROFICIENCY:**

Total possible points in a Tracking Certification is 180. Certification (passing) will be 130 or more points.

**GOVERNING RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION**

**TRACKING EXCEPTIONAL CERTIFICATION**

The Tracking Exceptional Certification Test will be open to all members who have already achieved certification as a Tracking dog. All certifications are good through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. (ie: if you certify on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, your certification will not expire until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022) By that definition, if your Tracking Dog Certification is still valid, then you are qualified to participate in a Tracking Exceptional Certification.

**1. TESTING:**

A. The Tracking Exceptional Certification test will be a track consisting of a five-legged track with four turns laid at the direction of the Chief Judge. The length of the track will be a minimum 880 yards (one-half mile) to 1760 yards (one mile).

B. The track will have two cross tracks.

C. The age of the track will be a minimum of one hour and not to exceed two hours. DO NOT allow tracks to sit too long.

D. A minimum of two types of surfaces will be used and can consist of roads, streams, and parking lot crossings.

E. Handlers will have the option to use leads, tracking ropes, tracking harnesses, or any other collars approved by the USPCA. The test will be conducted on leash.

## 2. START:

A. The approximate area of the start of the track will be marked with two markers placed by the tracklayer. The markers may be cones, flags, etc. They will be placed ten feet apart and the track may start anywhere between the markers.

B. The K9 team will be brought to the general area of the markers and told that the track starts somewhere between the markers. The team will be evaluated on locating the track and determining the track direction.

## 3. ARTICLES:

A. Track Articles - Five of the PDI articles will be used. Articles used will be supplied by the host city or region. Prior to the start of the exercise, the Chief Judge will select the articles used. Five new articles will be used for each participant. The articles will be concealed on the track, with one article on each leg.

B. End Article – The end article will be determined by the Chief Judge and must be the same for each participant. It will be concealed at the end of the track.

C. Article scoring - The canine will be evaluated on indication and alert of the track articles. Finds must be obvious to the judges. Each article will be judged separately with the end article having a higher point value. If a canine does not locate an article, he will still be evaluated on the work on the track. The canine does not have to retrieve the article. The handler must inform the judges of the find.

## 4. CONTAMINATION:

The test track will be contaminated on two of the five legs by having another person cross over the laid track. The cross track will be laid at least thirty (30) minutes after the initial track was laid.

## 5. TIME:

There will be no time limit on the test. A judge will conclude the test if the team has stopped working or it obviously unsuccessful.

## 6. PROFICIENCY:

Total possible points in a Tracking Exceptional Certification is 270. Certification (passing) will be 190 or more points.

### **Chief Judges are responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the paperwork.**

Mail or E-mail completed trial paperwork to include: (within 30 days of the trial)

- Original Master score sheet
- Judges and Scorekeepers list with events judged
- The high-low sheets showing the scores of all judges.
- Just the excel program if that is what is used for scoring

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