

## Narcotics Detector Dog Performance Objectives

### Narcotics Detector Dog [PSP-2]

These Performance Objectives are based on a Reality-based format, in order to optimize training efficiency and also to provide the most realistic training environment possible, within the current time/logistical constraints.

The skills outlined in the Performance Objectives are considered valuable for the seasoned/veteran Narcotics Detector Dog. A synopsis of these skills is as follows.

#### 1. K-9 Searching.

1. Sniffing a location/object to determine the presence/absence of the odor of contraband.
2. Pinpointing the strongest source of an odor of contraband, once odor is detected.



3. Bypassing distracting odors which may be interesting to the Dog.

#### 2. K-9 Indication.

1. Alerting the Handler to the presence of the odor of contraband. An Alert is the "natural behavior" the Dog exhibits when it first perceives a target odor, behavior which the Handler recognizes due to frequent observation, but which may not be easily perceived by an unskilled person.
2. Indicating the source of the odor to the Handler. An Indication is behavior which is easily perceived by the Handler or an unskilled person. This behavior may be a "trained" behavior or it may be a "final response" the Dog exhibited on its own.



#### 3. K-9 Obedience.

1. A Narco Dog should have sufficient obedience skills to perform its function. Obedience skills are relative to the individual Handler, Agency, and application(s) the dog may have. For example, it is anticipated that a Narco Dog that is also a Patrol Dog will have more obedience skills. Likewise, a particular Handler or Agency is likely to have preferences on what commands the dog should be trained to.



The Dog and Handler can be successfully trained to an appropriate skill level by a qualified Detector Dog Instructor. The competency can then be evaluated and declared by a qualified Detector Dog Judge.

The substances on which a Dog is trained and evaluated shall be determined by jurisdictional need.

The quantities of the substances in the competency evaluation shall be comparable to quantities experienced in deployment. The only exception is the exercise involving buried narcotics (or its substitute), in which a minimum of 1000 grams are to be used. The substances shall be packaged in various materials or containers.

A Dog shall be evaluated only on substances with which it has been trained, and sufficient documentation exists to validate sufficient exposures to the individual substances.

The Narcotics Detector Dog evaluation shall be concluded within a reasonable time frame after it is begun. Most evaluations can be completed in 48 hours, barring some logistical problems, such as weather, injury, or other uncontrollable situation. The intent is to establish that the Dog's mental and physical endurance are sufficient to withstand the rigors of active service.

### Definitions and Examples of Narcotics Detector Dog Behavior

1. **Searching:** Searching is the behavior the Dog exhibits when it is hunting for an odor it has been trained to detect and it does so primarily by use of its nose. When searching with optimal efficiency, the Dog shall be calm, methodical, intense, focused, and sniffing rather than searching primarily with its eyes. Although all Dogs that are searching efficiently use their noses, some Dogs exhibit unique behavior while searching. These unique behaviors may include whining and barking, hopping or bouncing, rapid sideways or serpentine movements, etc. These behaviors, though non-typical, usually have little influence on the quality of the Dog's searching. Most often, these unique behaviors are motivated by other Drives or Character Traits which may be present in the Dog. When a Dog is Searching, the actual sniffing behavior is observed either with the Dog's nose close to the item being sniffed or with its nose pointed toward the location the Dog is attempting to focus on, as if testing the object/direction for the presence of the target odor.



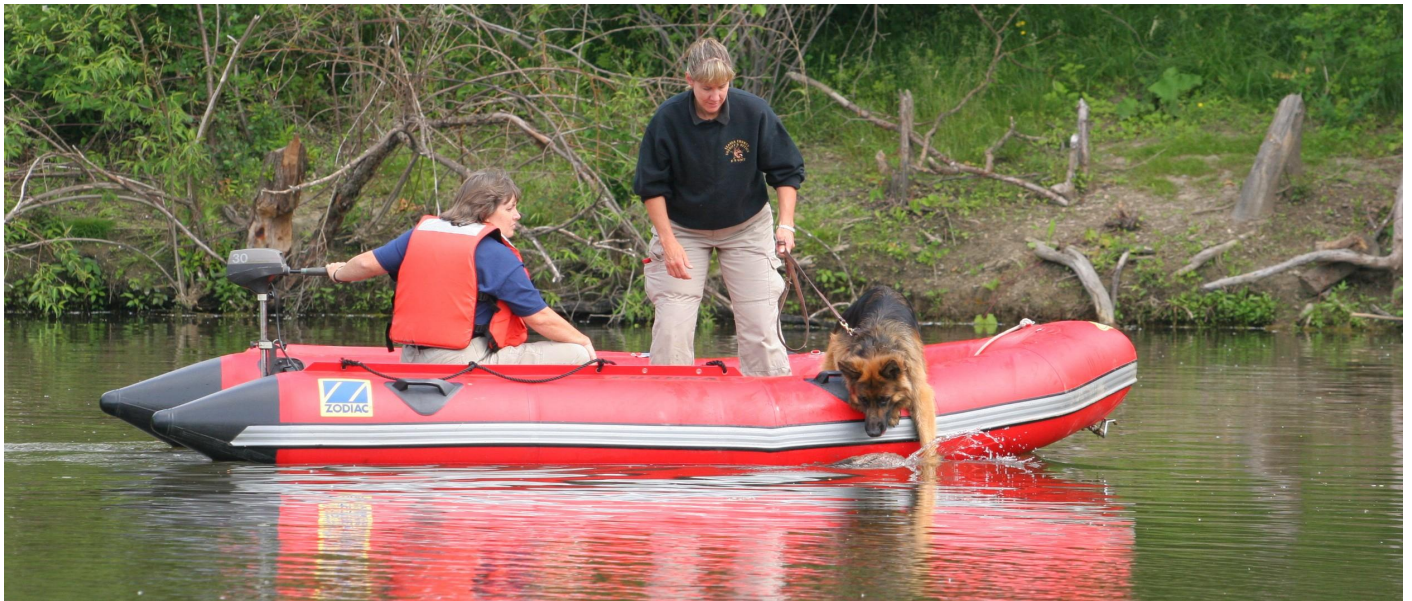
2. **Ranging:** Ranging is a unique Searching behavior that is usually exhibited only when a Dog is deployed in a large open search area, such as a field or forest. It is similar to the behavior seen by wild dogs as they move about large open areas searching for a target odor. Ranging behavior is equally efficient as Searching behavior, it is only on a larger scale. When a Dog is Ranging, the actual sniffing behavior is observed with the Dog's head 6"-18" off the ground, as if testing wind currents. Although Ranging behavior may be seen in a Narco Dog that is called upon to search any large open area, it is most often observed among other types of Detector Dogs. See the photos below for examples of Ranging behavior.



A Wildlife Detector sniffs a 50 acre wooded area for poached game. Notice the "Wild-Tracking" behavior evidenced by the high nose, showing a balance of Tracking Drive and Air Scenting Drive.



A Cadaver Detector Dog Ranges through a large rubble pile search area in an attempt to locate decomposed human victims. This rubble pile was almost 2 acres in size.



A Police Search & Rescue Dog indicates on the presence of odor of a drowning victim in a lake after Ranging back and forth across the wind current. This equates to ranging behavior, although the dog didn't maneuver itself through the search area.

3. **Distraction:** A Narcotics Detector Dog should not be thwarted by a "Distraction" while deployed on a canine sniff. For Narco Dog purposes, a Distraction is a naturally-occurring odor/object which may be present in a location the Dog is called upon to sniff. Examples of Distractions are a tennis ball inside a school locker or the odor of a dead animal.

It is normal and acceptable that a properly-trained Narcotics Detector Dog may notice a Distraction. The Dog may even pause momentarily at the Distraction, but a properly-trained Narcotics detector Dog will not exhibit Alert nor Indication behavior on a Distraction.



Distraction of tire rubber around Cocaine



Distraction of human clothing and food around Methamphetamine



Distraction of a dead bird in a search area.

- 4. **Diversion:** A Narcotics Detector Dog should not be thwarted by a "Diversion" while deployed on a canine sniff. For Narco Dog purposes, a Diversion is an odor/object placed in a location with the intent to divert the Dog away from a narcotics stash or defeat the Dog's sniff test (an example is coffee grounds packed around a quantity of narcotics inside a hidden cavity of a vehicle).

It is normal and acceptable that a properly-trained Narcotics Detector Dog may notice a Diversion. The Dog may even pause momentarily at the Diversion, but a properly-trained Narcotics detector Dog will not exhibit Alert nor Indication behavior on a Diversion.



Diversion of mustard around packets of Marijuana



Diversion of automatic transmission fluid around Methamphetamine



Diversion of Purina Cat Chow around Marijuana

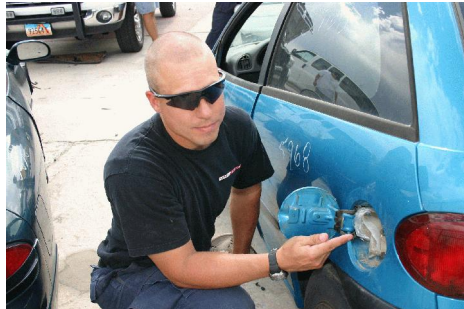


Diversion of mustard around packets of Marijuana

5. **Currency:** Drug-tainted currency on which a Narco Dog Indicates has become a hotly-debated legal issue in the past several years. Currently, if currency can be reasonably linked to illegal drug activity, it may be seized by the government. Accordingly, a Narcotics Detector Dog should be trained to disregard and bypass the odor of uncirculated currency, if it should encounter it during the course of a canine sniff. The odor of currency should not accidentally nor purposely become a target odor for a typical Narcotics Detector Dog. Conversely, if a Narcotics Detector Dog Indicates on a location/object and the contents appear to be only currency, then it is obvious that the Indication was on a narcotics odor, not the currency itself. An example is shown below in the sequence of photographs wherein the Narco Dog passes by uncirculated currency and Indicates on narcotics odor which has odorized the tainted currency.



Uncirculated currency being hidden in a vehicle cavity prior to a canine sniff.



Narcotics being hidden in another cavity within the same vehicle as the currency.



Narco Dog being deployed to conduct a canine sniff of the suspect vehicle.



Narco Dog sniffing the cavity of the vehicle wherein the uncirculated currency has been placed.



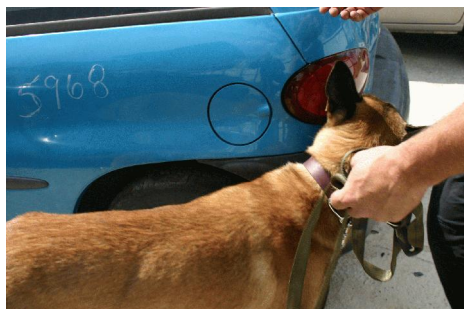
Narco Dog bypasses the odor of uncirculated currency and continues its canine sniff.



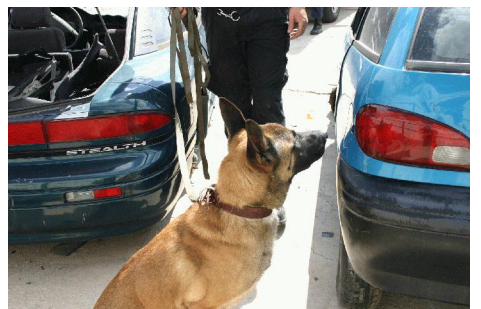
Narco Dog continuing its canine sniff, not influenced by the presence of uncirculated currency.



Narco Dog continuing its canine sniff, in spite of the presence of uncirculated currency.



Narco Dog Alerting to and Pinpointing the source of a target narcotics odor.



Narco Dog has Pinpointed the source of a narcotic odor and Indicates by sitting, notice the stare at source.

6. **Alerting:** Alerting is a behavior exhibited by a Narco Dog when it transitions from general scanning behavior (when it has not yet detected any target odor) to Pinpointing behavior (when it has detected target odor). A person who is familiar with the Dog, such as the Handler or the Instructor, may easily recognize the Alert behavior and perceive that the Dog has encountered the target odor. There are similarities between Pinpointing behavior and Alert behavior, however, each has unique qualities to it. Alert behavior may consist of a pronounced or sudden head movement (which is recognized as an attempt to isolate odor), or some other articulable behavior which the Handler or Trainer has observed to be consistent when the Dog Alerts.



When a Dog performs an Alert, the Handler - and sometimes a highly skilled K-9 expert - is able to perceive the following:

1. change of behavior from Searching/Ranging to Pinpointing;
2. focus narrows to a particular location or zone where the odor was detected;
3. intensity increases as the Dog closes in on its target;
4. deep nasal breathing begins, rather than short sniffs;
5. pronounced "closing in" on the source of the odor, meaning the Dog is attempting to isolate a particular spot;
6. odor-fixated behavior which is noticeably different from general sniffing,
7. resists leaving the area where odor was detected;
8. resists distractions, such as officer(s) moving in closer to assess the Dog's behavior or other sounds;
9. when the task is reinforced by a verbal search command, may result in an Indication.
10. if the Dog is showing interest only - on a non-drug odor - and the task command is given, the Dog is likely to continue the search, rather than Indicate.

The United States Military Working Dog Program utilizes a special term for the "Alert" described herein, it is the "Just Noticeable Difference" or JND.

*2.2.1.1 JND is the animal's ability to detect slight changes or differences pertaining to a specific sense. All sensing systems are included in this definition. Examples of JND include the smelling of a weak odor as opposed to a stronger odor, the hearing of low volume noises as opposed to louder volumes, the feeling of light pressure as opposed to progressively heavier pressure, and so on. (<http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/pubfiles/af/31/afman31-219/afman31-219.pdf>)*

7. **Pinpointing:** If a Narco Dog is deployed on a search for the presence of a target odor, it shall do so as described herein. If it perceives a target odor, it shall immediately pinpoint the source of the odor. Pinpointing differs from Searching in that it is evaluated as independent behavior manifested by the Dog, whereas Searching is a Handler-controlled behavior.



8. **Indicating:** Indicating is the trained behavior exhibited by a Narco Dog after it has "Alerted" to a drug odor and "Pinpointed" its strongest source. Indicating is subdivided into behaviors identified as "Aggressive" or "Passive." An Aggressive Indication is observed when a Dog barks, bites, or scratches when it Indicates. A Passive Indication is observed when a Dog sits, stands, downs, or freezes when it Indicates. Either Aggressive or Passive Indication is suitable for a Narco Dog.



Aggressive Indication on a stash of narcotics.



Aggressive Indication at the source of a narcotic odor.



Aggressive Indication on the seam of a vehicle ... narcotics inside.



Passive Indication on a stash of narcotics in a child's toy. Notice that the Dog gets its nose very close without touching the source.



Passive Indication on a target odor via a "Down" position. Notice the intense stare at the source of the odor.



Passive Indication on a drug odor via a "Point" ... this Dog was so intent that it even "flagged" its tail like a hunting dog.

It is critical to note that the trained behavior is likely to be exhibited only when the Dog is physically able to do so. For example, if a Narco Dog Alerts to odor and crawls underneath a vehicle as it Pinpoints, it may not be able to scratch due to the confined space ... and may just freeze in position. This is, nonetheless, an Indication to the Handler that the Dog has located the strongest source of odor.





A Narco Dog that can only pinpoint the source of a target odor by jumping up to it, may repeatedly jump up to the exact location and attempt to place its nose on the source. When this behavior is consistently observed on high finds, it is also acceptable as an indication.



A Narco Dog that normally Aggressive Indicates may "Freeze" in position and stare (aka "Point" as Hunting Dogs do) at the source of the odor because it cannot scratch easily. When this behavior is consistently observed on high finds, it is also acceptable as an indication.

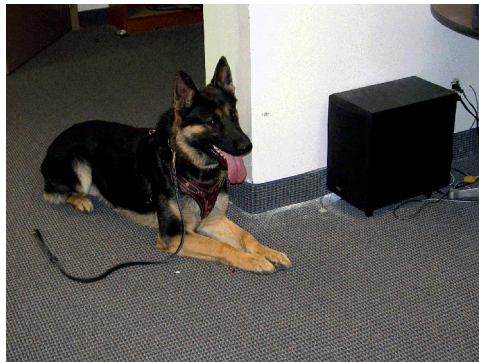
Similarly, if drugs are stashed in a room at a point high above the Dog's reach, it may Alert, Pinpoint, and then begin jumping up in the air in an attempt to get to the drug stash in the ceiling ... this is also an Indication to the Handler that the Dog has located the strongest source of odor. Again, if a Dog is sniffing the interior of a vehicle wherein a large quantity of drugs are stashed, it may have extreme difficulty locating the exact source (smoky room effect) and may Alert/Pinpoint for an extended period of time, and not Indicating. This behavior, when it is exhibited consistently and reliably, is also acceptable.

Finally, two more points are important to understand. First, Indicating is a trained behavior to tell the Handler (and others, such as an Attorney, a Judge, or a Jury) that the strongest source of odor is at a certain spot. Second, Indicating does not always occur and is dependent on the environment. Indicating is optimal but not critical to the interdiction of drugs in a criminal investigation.

- 9. **Sit:** If the Handler halts while Heeling, the Dog shall, without command or signal, sit immediately in the Heel position. A proper sit at Heel is observed when the K-9's shoulder is in line with the Handler's knee, as shown in the accompanying photograph. The Handler shall not move in order to favor the Dog's position, but rather, the Dog shall position itself according to the Handler. If the Handler gives a sit command when the K-9 is not in the Heel position, the K-9 should immediately sit in whatever position it is in at that moment.



- 10. **Down:** If the Handler commands or signals the Dog to Down, it shall comply immediately. If this occurs during Heeling, the Dog shall lie parallel to the Handler. If this occurs during a



detection task, the Dog shall lie as commanded.

11. **Point:** Point is another term for a Narco Dog that freezes in a position when it Indicates. Pointing is related to Indication behavior. Some hunting breeds have been selectively bred to Point when a target is located and this



may be utilized by some Handlers as the Indication behavior for that Dog. Other Dogs may even be trained to freeze in position when they Indicate, at the Handler's choice. The terms Point and Freeze are used interchangeably.

12. **Behavior in Public:** If the Handler walks through a group of people, the Dog should remain at Heel - neutral and safe - to the people. Touching or sniffing is faulty. The Handler shall ensure sufficient space between the Dog and others. This neutral and safe demeanor shall be maintained, even if the Handler speaks or a person speaks to the Handler.



13. **Pain Tolerance:** Pain Tolerance or "Hardness" is a critical issue for the Narco Dog in modern society. For examination purposes, pain tolerance is evaluated by observing the Narco Dog during uncomfortable situations.



## Narcotics Detector Dog Certification Scenarios

Successful performance in the following scenarios are considered important for the seasoned/veteran Narcotics Detector Dog.

1. **Human Clothing Sniff Scenario.** The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate two separate stashes of narcotics which have been hidden among six (6) piles of human clothing. This represents the environment which may be encountered in residential deployments. A diversion will also be placed within the search area.



2. **Residential Sniff.** The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate three (3) separate stashes of narcotics which have been hidden in a residence consisting of at least three (3) rooms. This represents the environment which may be encountered in residential deployments. A diversion will also be placed within the search area.



3. **Automobile Sniff.** The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate two (2) separate stashes of narcotics, one (1) which has been hidden on the exterior and one (1) which has been hidden in the interior, of an automobile. This represents the environment which may be encountered during traffic stops or other vehicular deployments. A diversion will also be placed within the search area. For Utah POST certification, this diversion shall be uncirculated currency. If it should occur that the Dog locates both drug stashes prior to encountering the currency, the Dog shall be required to sniff the vicinity where the currency is hidden, to determine if the Dog exhibits a neutral response to its presence.



4. **Business Establishment Sniff.** The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate two (2) separate stashes of narcotics which have been hidden in a business establishment or stockroom/storage facility. This represents the environment which may be encountered during a criminal investigation or a request from a proprietor to audit the facility.



5. **Livestock/Stable Sniff or Equivalent.** The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate two (2) separate stashes of narcotics which have been hidden in a barn or in animal stalls. This represents the environment which may be encountered in a rural circumstance. Some agencies/Handlers may feel this to be a lesser-priority incident. For Utah POST certification, this scenario may be substituted with another higher-priority scenario of comparable difficulty at the request of the Agency/Handler.



6. **Dark Room Sniff.** The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate two (2) separate stashes of narcotics which have been hidden in a totally dark search area such as a cellar, bunker, etc. This represents the environment which may be encountered when no electricity is available in a search area. In this search the only illumination shall be by hand-held flashlight.



7. **Buried Stash Sniff or Equivalent.** The Handler shall deploy the Dog in a scenario which has been prepared to examine the Dog's ability to locate one (1) stash of narcotics (1000 grams) which has been buried in an 800 square yard field/forest search area. Some agencies/Handlers may feel this to be a lesser-priority incident. This scenario may be substituted with another higher-priority scenario of comparable difficulty at the request of the Agency/Handler.

