



**New Zealand
Urban Search & Rescue**

www.usar.govt.nz

Best Practice Guideline
Canine Readiness Evaluation Process

Advanced Level

In support of NZQA Unit Standard 19658

USAR Training Standards Working Group

Version 2.0 August 2005

Introduction

Background

These standards are the result of agreement between the New Zealand National Urban Search & Rescue Steering Committee, and the New Zealand USAR Search Dog Association.

The basis of this guideline is the Type I Advanced Disaster Dog, FEMA Disaster Canine Readiness Evaluation from the United States.

The New Zealand standard for the Canine Readiness Evaluation Process – Basic Level was first used to evaluate dogs in 2003 and was found, with some small alterations, to be a useful and fair assessment tool. With the USAR search dog capability continuing to grow at all levels the introduction of an advanced standard will provide a practical tool with which to measure the progress of USAR dogs in New Zealand. In time the advanced standard will be considered the minimum for membership of a NZ USAR Taskforce and will also be useful for Response Teams to gauge the level of their Canine Search Specialists.

This guideline should be read and used in conjunction with NZQA unit standard *19658 train a dog to locate multiple victims at urban search and rescue incidents*.

Objectives

The objectives of a standardised Disaster Search Canine Evaluation are to:

- Provide uniform methods to determine the current operational level of all Canine Search Teams.
- Ensure trainees are clear about what they are expected to achieve.
- Develop a fair and objective process that can be conducted locally.
- Provide feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Canine Search Teams for targeted improvement.
- Use the review process as an opportunity to share techniques and ideas between Canine Search Handlers on how to address issues arising during the assessment process.
- Provide a process that can be internationally peer reviewed.

Revision

Revisions of this document and the standard it defines require consultation with all current evaluators as well as the organisations listed below:

NZ USAR SDA	NZLSAR
USAR Training & Standards Working Group	INSARAG
NZ Police National Dog Training Centre	ANTECH

Process

Pre-requisites

The handler and dog are required to be a currently operational New Zealand Basic Canine Search Specialist team, and have been operational for a minimum of the 8 months proceeding the CREP. In addition:

a) Handler

It is preferable, but not compulsory that the handler holds the following Unit Standards at the time of assessment:

- 7399 Demonstrate knowledge of ethics and legislation as they apply to the care of animals
- 5170 Prepare small animals for domestic and international transportation
- 7337 Monitor health and provide husbandry to dogs
- 5181 Provide emergency care to companion animals
- 5183 Handle and transport injured companion animals

The canine shall be registered with a local authority and hold a current vaccination certificate for at least canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, canine parvovirus, canine parainfluenza, leptosporosis and Bordetella bronchiseptica (kennel cough).

The Disaster dog shall have implanted a microchip, type approved by the Veterinary Association of New Zealand.

Evaluators

Each CREP must be assessed with at least three USAR Canine Search Evaluators (Advanced) present. At least one of these is to be a Police Evaluator and at least one is to be a NZ Civilian Evaluator. Wherever possible an additional independent Evaluator will be appointed by the USAR Training and Standards Working Group. This will ideally be a suitably qualified and recognised international Evaluator. Before each CREP one of the evaluators must be chosen to take the role of Chief Evaluator.

All Civilian Evaluators shall meet the following requirements:

1. Canine Search Evaluator (Basic)
2. Canine Search Specialist (Advanced)
3. FRSITO Industry Certificate in USAR Response (Orange Card).
4. Hold unit standard 4098 *Assess candidates using standards*.
5. Formal endorsement by NZ USAR Search Dog Association.
6. Hold either unit standard 497 or 10425 – Health & Safety.

The position of Police Evaluator is designed to add neutrality and professional search dog experience to the evaluator team. All Advanced Police Evaluators shall be appointed by the National Coordinator- Police Dogs. They will preferably have been a Basic Evaluator on at least two previous CREPs.

A veterinary advisor shall also be appointed. The veterinary advisor shall evaluate element 5 and provide veterinary support throughout the CREP. Veterinary advisors shall hold current registration as a Veterinary Surgeon with the Veterinary Council of New Zealand.

Please note: Initially not all requirements for each evaluator may be met- the decision to proceed with an evaluator will be made by the USAR Training and Standards Working Group. It is envisaged that by end 2005 all requirements will be able to be met.

Application for Evaluation

Canine Search Teams that wish to be evaluated for advanced disaster work must forward the attached application form to:

Canine Search Programme
C/- Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management
PO Box 5010
Wellington

Application forms are available from the rear of this guideline.

Operational Status (Certification)

The USAR Steering Committee will hold a national register of operational specialists. The names of certified specialists may be published on the USAR website.

It should be noted that achievement of certification, does not automatically entitle the canine search specialist to membership of a Task Force or Registered Response Team (RRT). Should the specialist be invited to join a Task Force or RRT, further training and recruitment requirements may be applied.

Upon certification, the specialist shall make application to FRSITO to have their USAR Orange Card endorsed for *K9 Advanced*.

Between evaluations it is the responsibility of the certified canine search specialist to notify the Association Coordinator of NZ USAR Search Dog Association, and if applicable their Task Force Leader, of any change in their operational status.

If a certified canine search specialist resigns from or is forced to leave the NZ USAR Search Dog Association then their certification is immediately revoked.

Skills Maintenance

All dogs certified and deemed operational under this guideline are subject to the following skills maintenance and revalidation requirements.

All handlers are responsible for maintaining their dog's skills and performance between evaluations up to or beyond the Advanced CREP standard. If the handler believes that their dog has fallen below the required standard it is his/her responsibility to notify the NZ USAR Search Dog Association Coordinator, and if applicable their Task Force Leader.

All handlers shall have a personal training/operational logbook that is formatted similarly to the standard logbook as designed by the NZ USAR Search Dog Association and recognised by the USAR Steering Committee. A sample of the logbook shall available from www.usar.govt.nz.

Having passed the Advanced CREP a dog and handler will retain their operational status for one year. After this time the dog and handler must be fully re-assessed at another CREP. For practical purposes a 90 day grace period is allowed after the year end for the dog and handler to attend this CREP before they actually lose their operational status.

If a dog and handler successfully pass two consecutive Advanced CREPs, not closer than 9 months apart but within 15 months, then they qualify for a two year operational period. Again there is a 90 day grace period after the end of two years to simplify the scheduling of the CREP. For as long as the dog and handler keep passing their two-yearly CREPs they maintain the privilege of a two year operational period. However as soon as one CREP is failed, the dog and handler must return to yearly assessments.

In the event of a team being assessed as NYC on Element 6 (Disaster site) the evaluators will determine whether the team is still performing to the level of Basic Certification. If so, the team will maintain Basic certification. If not the team will be considered non-operational and will need to pass the Basic level CREP again before being considered for Advanced evaluation.

As a guideline the evaluators will considers whether the canine has:

- Has demonstrated a focused bark alert on at least 2 victims on one pile.
 - Has not missed more that 2 victims
 - Has had no more than 2 false alerts
 - Has shown consistent high search drive throughout the evaluation
- They may also question the handler to ascertain their ability to read and interpret their dogs actions.

Video Storage

This procedure applies to any video footage taken and formally used for certification and revalidation. Video footage outside these occasions is not affected by the procedure.

Footage may be provided on VHS Tape, DVD or CDROM on a commonly available format.

Footage shall be forwarded to the Ministry of Civil Defence and stored for moderation, reference, appeals and review. And is subject to use both internally, externally, both nationally and internationally.

Revalidation footage may be disposed of, or returned should archive storage become an issue. In such case, the minimum footage kept by the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management shall be the dog/handlers respective initial evaluation and most recent revalidation.

Aggression

Aggression Policy

Each Handler shall be responsible for ensuring that aggressive behaviour by their dog is modified. An aggressive canine shall not be eligible to participate in evaluations or operations.

A canine must be able to tolerate other canines off lead, and under Handler supervision, without showing aggression.

A canine must allow another person to move it to a different location in the absence of its Handler without showing aggression.

Proof of Sociability

Each handler must provide a written statement, preferably from their Team Leader, that the canine/s meets the above criteria.

Aggression Testing

Aggression tests are incorporated into the obedience portion of the Evaluation.

Evaluation Procedure

1. The evaluators shall determine the testing area.
2. A safety officer must be present at all times.
3. Rescue and medical capabilities must be readily available.
4. Media and observers, simulated and/or real may be present on the site.
5. Only one Canine Search specialist shall be evaluated at a time, with the exception of the stay evaluation. For the purpose of evaluation efficiency the evaluators may have dogs all complete one Rubble Pile before moving onto the next Rubble Pile.
6. The Handler must report to the Evaluators as directed.
7. The Evaluation will consist of 6 elements (Obedience, Bark Indication, Direction and Control, Agility, Veterinary Care and Disaster Site)
8. At least two approved evaluators shall conduct the evaluation of Elements 1-5. For element 5 the Veterinary Advisor is to be one of the evaluators. All three evaluators should be present for Element 6- the Disaster Site.
9. The Chief Evaluator shall moderate any dispute over evaluation.
10. All elements shall be video recorded and centrally filed with the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management, and made available for review, publicity and moderation as required.
11. Video footage may also be subject to international review, to ensure national capability is moderated internationally.
12. Video footage of each element should be un-edited and continuous, however any failure to adhere to this is the responsibility of the evaluators and as such will not affect the candidate's ability to pass that element.
13. A pass must be achieved in all aspects of all elements to achieve certification. Elements 1 to 5 must be achieved before undertaking element 6.
14. The first five elements can be tested in any order except that Element 5 is to be scheduled by the evaluators at a time that is least likely to impact the dog's ability and inclination to undertake any following elements.
15. The handler shall hold a training logbook that provides sufficient evidence of competency against elements 1 and 3 of the basic USAR search dog unit standard (19659). This shall be made available to the NZ USAR Search Dog Association, CREP Evaluators and/or USAR Training & Standards Working Group.
16. At the end of the evaluations, evaluators will meet and form a decision.
17. An individual debrief shall be given to each handler, and if the handler requests it a review of their videoed elements should be provided.
18. Evaluation shall be conducted consistent to Unit Standard 19658.

Appeals

This appeals procedure applies to both certification and revalidation.

In the first instance the handler shall make an appeal to the Chief Evaluator within 7 days of the assessment. Ideally, the handler shall raise any issues at the time of evaluation and then discuss within the feedback session.

If the appeal is unresolved with the evaluator, the handler shall make an appeal in writing to the NZ USAR Search Dog Association within 30 days of the evaluators appeal decision.

The Committee shall then convene an appeals panel consisting of:

- Training Standards Working Group member.
- Police Evaluator
- Civilian Evaluator
- Independent Evaluator
- ANTEC/NZQA Provider Moderator (if assessed for unit standard).

Such panel members shall not hold multiple positions within the panel.

International experts may also be co-opted onto the appeals panel.

The appeal panel's decision shall be final and binding.

Appeals outside this procedure shall not be entertained.

Ground Rules

The following rules apply to all Evaluations:

- A reward is allowed on the rubble.
- No collars or search vests on agility or rubble pile.
- Muzzles are not permitted in any phase of the evaluation process.
- No short lead, traffic lead, training tab or other weighted object may be attached to the collar at any time.
- No prong or electronic collars.
- No practice on any element before the evaluation.
- The Handler must maintain continual control of the canine.
- The Handler is responsible for the care and safety of the canine at all times.
- Safety procedures must be followed. The Handler is required to wear the following safety gear on the rubble pile: helmet, gloves, eye protection, long sleeve shirt, long pants and safety toe, steel shank boots and whistle.
- Aggression will not be tolerated at any time.
- All testing teams will complete all elements unless excused by agreement of the evaluators for reasons of aggression, lack of safety or control, injury, at Handler request or for failing two or more of the first five elements.
- Any accident/emergency shall be reported immediately to the Evaluators, and safety officer.
- Dogs shall be toileted before assessment.
- Food must not be dropped on the rubble pile/s by any handler

Element Descriptions

- **Element 1- 5**
As per the New Zealand USAR Canine Readiness Evaluation Process
– Basic Level

Element 6- Disaster Site

Rationale

- The Canine Search Team must be capable of working together in disaster search operations to locate victims. The handler will be evaluated on his/her ability to function as a Canine Search Specialist. The canine must be capable of searching independently and efficiently, as directed by the handler. The canine must demonstrate strong commitment to each scent source, however the focus of the bark indication may be towards either the victim or the handler.

Required Skills

- Ground Rules
 - Handler follows all Ground Rules
- Interview and Planning
 - Site assessment/interview
 - Establish an initial search strategy
- Directability
 - Directs away from handler on command
 - Ranges out of sight
- Searching
 - Searches Independently
 - Demonstrates appropriate canine care/safety/welfare
 - Covers search site
- Indication
 - Canine Indicates Independent of Handler
 - Focused Bark Indicating Live Human Scent
 - Identifies and Marks Scent Source
- Debriefing Technique
 - Site sketch
 - Follow-up search recommendations

Handler Information

- To successfully complete the evaluation, the team must cover each search site, locate five of the six victims and have no more than one false alert, and pass the performance criteria and evaluation guidelines.
- Handler shall establish scene safety. This interview may include the following:
 - What time did the structure collapse?
 - What type of occupancy was the structure (school, office, apartment bldg., etc.)?
 - What is the number of suspected missing persons?
 - Has this structure been searched before?
 - Has a structural engineer checked the building?
- > What were the findings?
- > Is it safe to enter?
- > Are blueprints available?
- > Has HazMat checked the building?
- > What were the findings?
- > Have the utilities been secured? How and by whom?
 - ◆ Gas
 - ◆ Electric
 - ◆ Water
 - Is Heavy Rescue available?
 - Is Medical available?
 - Is there a veterinarian available?

Course Construction

- There will be three separate search sites. Each site will be no closer than 10 metres to the others.
- Each search site will consist of an area 600 – 1500 sq. metres, with a minimum average height of 2-3 metres. The intention is to provide criteria to adjust the footprint of the pile based on the complexity and height, with more complex rubble reduced in area and less complex rubble increased in area. Where possible the rubble debris should consist of concrete, wood, mixed material, partially or completely collapsed structures. A structure that meets the above criteria and consistent with a disaster scene can be used as one of the three search sites. Banner tape is to be used to reduce the search area when larger rubble sites are being used.
- One or more search sites will be contaminated with distractions:
This may include, but not limited to, people (up to 3 per site), animals (dead or alive/caged), food, smoke, artificial cadaver scent etc.
- Food should be hidden carefully and inaccessible to the canine
- There should be noise distractions such as running generators, machinery, rescue tools, etc.
- Some of the noise distractions may be supplied by audiotapes. The environment should mirror the real situation.

Victim Placement

- There will be a total of six (6) victims. They shall be placed at least 20 minutes before the evaluation begins. There will be from 0 - 3 concealed victims in each search site.
- The victims shall be well concealed from both handler and canine.
- The hiding areas should be carefully constructed to prevent small/large canines from accessing the victim.
- There will be several false victim locations constructed.
- All victims will have a radio with an earpiece (if available), and should be monitored on a constant basis.

Search Procedures

- The three search sites will have different accessibility to the handler.
 - One site is completely accessible to the handler.
 - One site will provide access to the perimeter and high point of the site to gain a visual overview of the entire site. The handler may enter the site to mark an alert and restart the canine. After restarting the canine, the handler must return to the perimeter or high point.
 - One site will provide access to only one well-marked portion of the perimeter. The canine must search the area out of the handler's sight in order to locate the victim(s). The handler may access the rubble to mark the alert location and restart the canine. The handler may remain within a 1.5-meter radius of the alert location or return to the perimeter while the canine continues to search for victims.
- Up to 5-minutes briefing will be provided at each site.
- Each handler will be issued flagging tape to mark scent sources as indicated by the canine - the canine may be encouraged to clearly identify the source of scent.
- The team has 20 minutes to search each site.
- The handler shall have 10 minutes to draw a site sketch and debrief. The handler shall make a site sketch indicating alerts, prominent features and compass orientation (ie N).

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Best practice guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process (Advanced)

- The Chief Evaluator at each site shall be responsible for designating an individual who will be tasked with retrieving the flagging tapes and returning them to the handler.
- The team will be allowed at least a 10-minute rest period (plus any relocation time, if necessary) between each search site. Note: For evaluation purposes all canines being assessed may be assessed on the first rubble pile before moving on to second rubble pile and so on. This will be explained to candidate at the start of the evaluation process.

Evaluation Completion

Evaluation completion will be based on the Performance Criteria and Evaluation Form guidelines, including the requirements of locating five (5) of the six (6) victims and having no more than one (1) false alert.

Performance Criteria and Evaluation Form Guidelines

The evaluators shall consider the following list of key skills in determining the team's success for each of the elements.

Ground Rules

- Handler is required to follow all Ground Rules
 - Did Not Complete Handler did not follow all Ground Rules
 - Completed Handler did follow all Ground Rules

Interview and Planning

- Site assessment/interview
 - Did Not Complete Doesn't establish scene safety
 - Completed Established scene safety
- Establish an initial search strategy
 - Did Not Complete Does not have an appropriate search strategy
 - Completed Has an appropriate search strategy

Directability

- Directs away from handler on command
 - Did Not Complete Won't follow handler's command
 - Completed Can be directed away from handler
- Ranges out of sight
 - Did Not Complete Won't range out of sight
 - Completed Ranges out of sight

Searching

- Searches independently
 - Did Not Complete Does not search independently
 - Completed Canine searches independently
- Demonstrates canine care/safety/welfare
 - Did Not Complete Handler doesn't demonstrate canine care/safety/welfare
 - Completed Handler demonstrates canine care/safety/welfare
- Covers search site
 - Did Not Complete Canine does not cover search site
 - Completed Canine covers search site

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Best practice guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process (Advanced)

Indication

- Canine indicates independent of handler
 - Did Not Complete Does not indicate independent of handler
 - Completed Indicates independently
- Focused Bark Indicating Live Human Scent
 - Did Not Complete Doesn't bark or multiple false alerts
 - Completed Barks and stays close to the scent source
- Handler identifies and marks scent source
 - Did Not Complete Handler does not identify and mark scent source
 - Completed Handler does identify and mark scent source.

Debriefing Process

- Site sketch skills
 - Did Not Complete Does not draw an acceptable site sketch
 - Completed Correctly draws site sketch indicating victim locations
- Follow-up Search Recommendations
 - Did Not Complete Makes no recommendations
 - Completed Makes recommendations confirming indications and follow-up actions

Disaster Search Canine Application for Evaluation- Advanced

Test Date	Test Location
Applicant's Personal Information	
Name	Training Unit
Address	
City	Date of Birth
Home Phone	Pager/Cellphone
Work Phone	Fax
e-mail address	NZQA ID
Physical data (please list any relevant physical limitations)	
Emergency contact	
Relationship	
Address	Home Phone
Pager/Cellphone	Work Phone
Canine Information	
Name	Date of Birth
Breed/markings	Microchip Ref
Sponsoring Unit	Gender
Date of evaluation	
Location	
Canine Immunisations (or attach copy of vaccination certificate)	
Type	Date
My dog and I are physically sound and are currently under no restrictions. I understand and accept that the evaluator's decisions are final and binding. I agree to the terms and conditions of the USAR Best Practice Guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process.	
Signature	Date
Supervising Authority Endorsement	
The above team complies with the USAR Best Practice Guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process. The above team has completed the aggression test and is considered ready to participate in this evaluation	
Team Leader	Date
Applicant	Date

Post to USAR Programme, Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management, PO Box 5010, Wellington.

Disaster Search Canine Evaluation Form

Name of Handler

Date

Name of Canine

Age of canine

Canine Microchip Ref

Evaluators

Location

Recommended for certification (circle one)

Yes

No

Chief Evaluator Signature

Element	Required Skills	Completed	Did not complete	Comments
Pre-requisites	CAT1R Orange Card			
	Current Basic Certification			
	Pre-requisite unit standards held			
	Current First Aid Cert			
Dog Requirements	Current registration			
	Current vaccinations			
	Micro chipped (ISO/NZVA)			
Ground Rules:	Handler followed all Ground Rules			
Obedience:	Human Aggression Test			
	Canine Aggression Test			
	Off-lead handling			
	Emergency Stop			
	10 minute stay			
Bark Indication	Barks repetitively and remains focused			
	Stays at victim location/barrel after locating source of scent			
	Handler does not communicate with canine after first indication of scent			
Direction & Control:	Goes up on elevation as directed			
	Waits on elevation until directed by Handler			

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Best practice guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process (Advanced)

Agility:	Must complete 5 of 6 obstacles including the 4 compulsory (*)	Obstacles		Canine precedes Handler	
		Completed	Did not complete	Completed	Did not complete
Obstacle 1	Ladder*				
Obstacle 2	Elevated plank*				
	Stop, slow and turn on plank				
Obstacle 3	Wobbly surface*				
Obstacle 4	Tunnel*				
Obstacle 5					
Obstacle 6					
		Completed	Did not complete		
K9 welfare	Handler able to irrigate nose and eyes of dog				
	Handler able to check condition of feet pads (dog)				

New Zealand Urban Search & Rescue:
Best practice guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process (Advanced)

Disaster site 1		Completed	Did not complete	Interview	Asked	Didn't ask
	Handler interview process			Time of collapse		
	Responsive to Handler direction and control			Type of occupancy		
	Searches independently			Known missing		
	Indicates by barking on victims with no false indications			Suspected missing		
	Focused commitment to each scent source			Searched before		
	Informs evaluators of finds			Structural engineer		
	Canine agility/ability to negotiate rubble			-findings		
	Handler able to negotiate rubble			-safe to enter		
				-prints / plans		
				Hazmat checked		
				-findings		
Notes:				Utilities-gas, elec, water		
				Utilities-gas, elec, water		
				-who / how		
				Medical support		
				Veterinary support		

New Zealand Urban Search & Rescue:
Best practice guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process (Advanced)

Disaster site 2		Completed	Did not complete	Interview	Asked	Didn't ask
	Handler interview process			Time of collapse		
	Responsive to Handler direction and control			Type of occupancy		
	Searches independently			Known missing		
	Indicates by barking on ___ victims with no false indication			Suspected missing		
	Focused commitment to each cent source			Searched before		
	Informs evaluators of finds			Structural engineer		
	Canine agility/ability to negotiate rubble			-findings		
	Handler able to negotiate rubble			-safe to enter		
				-prints / plans		
				Hazmat checked		
				-findings		
Notes:				Utilities-gas, elec, water		
				Utilities-gas, elec, water		
				-who / how		
				Medical support		
				Veterinary support		

New Zealand Urban Search & Rescue:
Best practice guideline: Canine Readiness Evaluation Process (Advanced)

Disaster site 3		Completed	Did not complete	Interview	Asked	Didn't ask
	Handler interview process			Time of collapse		
	Responsive to Handler direction and control			Type of occupancy		
	Searches independently			Known missing		
	Indicates by barking on _____ victims with no false indications			Suspected missing		
	Focused commitment to each cent source			Searched before		
	Informs evaluators of finds			Structural engineer		
	Canine agility/ability to negotiate rubble			-findings		
	Handler able to negotiate rubble			-safe to enter		
				-prints / plans		
				Hazmat checked		
				-findings		
Notes:				Utilities-gas, elec, water		
				Utilities-gas, elec, water		
				-who / how		
				Medical support		
				Veterinary support		