



## K9 TRAILING/TRACKING CERTIFICATION

### ORGANIZERS

The Organizer of this certification is K-9.LV dog training center. The organizer is responsible for providing personnel, equipment, and the site that is suitable for tracks that meet the requirements of this certification.

### JUDGES

If a certification event is planned for multiple teams, the organizer has a right to invite an independent judge(s) to oversee the certification process and results. The main purpose of the judge(s) is to keep the certification process within the double blind methodology and certification rules framework. The judge(s) will also oversee the draw process and resolve possible disputes between participants and organizers.

The decisions of the judge(s) are final in all matters. Judge(s) are required to explain their decisions but discouraged to enter into a discussion with any party who is dissatisfied.

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

The purpose of this certification is to evaluate the K9 team's ability to locate a specific person following his/her route and to provide K9 handlers participating in the certification with their dog assessment. **This certification is not a competition, we do not compare teams and do not determine who took which place.**

All certification tracks are judged on pass (the track layer has been found) or fail (the track layer has not been found) basis with the following exceptions:

- To exclude an area-search find no certification will be granted if a team makes a find but the dog air-scented the track layer in the first half of a trail.
- To exclude an accidental find no certification will be granted if a team makes a find but the dog route according to its GPS record is not consistent with the route of the track layer.

*Note: We understand that sometimes both types of finds can happen in real life and are, in general, very positive events but the purpose of this certification is to check K9 team tracking/trailing abilities only.*

### TEAM

Each team consists of a K9 and a K9 handler and is accompanied by a team assistant appointed by the organizers and, if desired, one more person of the choice of the dog handler (handler's backup).

Team assistant will follow the handler and will do his/her best to not interfere with the team movement or distract the team. The assistant or backup is not allowed to provide any help or advice to a K9 handler (except help with automotive traffic if necessary).

### DOUBLE BLIND

All tracks will be double blind with GPS verification. A track is considered double blind if no one following a K9 team has any knowledge of track direction, configuration or location of a track layer at the end of the track.

### GPS VERIFICATION AND VIDEO RECORDING

The certification can be video recorded.

Every track layer and every K9 team carries a GPS device and records their trails. After the certification trail is finished, organizers overlay the trails to see whether the team was on trail. This does not mean

the team needs to be right on the trail, but it must follow the flow of the trail, taking into account wind and terrain. There is no penalty for getting off trail and correcting.

## **SAFETY**

Each K9 handler is fully responsible for his own health and safety, as well as for the health and safety of his dog. Throughout the certification, the K9 handler is required to fully control his K9, paying particular attention that:

- the dog does not threaten the health and safety of people and other dogs in the certification areas;
- the dog is not interfering with the work of other dogs;
- the dog cannot damage other people's property.

Dogs present close to the certification areas should be isolated in cars or cages. K9 handlers will be informed about designated walking areas.

## **K9 SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

All dogs participating in the certification must appear healthy and overall in a good condition. The organizers may excuse any dog that they feel is unfit to participate.

K9 handlers should provide proper care of K9 (water, physical examination, rest periods, etc.) before, during and after the certification. Cruel or abusive treatment of a K9 is prohibited. The team will not be allowed to participate in the certifications or the certifications results will be deemed invalid if such a behavior is observed.

K9 handlers are allowed to carry water, ice on the trail and provide it to the dog for drinking or use it to cool the dog. K9 handlers are encouraged to carry first aid kits and necessary safety tools on the trail and use them if necessary. K9 handlers are allowed to verbally encourage and pet their K9.

## **CONDUCT**

If the K9 handler fails to comply with the certification rules or shows disrespectful or rude behavior towards other participants, organizers or judges, the K9 team may be withdrawn from the certification. No fees will be refunded.

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF TRACK LAYING**

Since this certification is not a competitive event, the organizer does not aim to provide all participating teams with the certification tracks that are absolutely equal in terms of age, length, terrain, etc, but reasonable efforts will be made to keep the tracks within the certification requirements.

## **TRACK LAYERS**

A track layer has to be unknown to the dog. A person cannot act as a track layer for a K9 if

- he/she is a family member or a friend regularly visiting the house where the dog lives;
- he/she laid track for or regularly communicated with the dog within 90 days prior to the certification.

Every track layer receives instructions from the organizers for the desired parameters of the certification trail. The track layer should report any significant errors made in the laying of the track to the organizers. The organizers will then decide whether the use of this track meets the requirements of the certification. The track layer should raise issues of concern about the safety of the track (meaning their own safety and the safety of a dog, handler and accompanying people) as soon as possible if such issues appear during track laying or while waiting at the end of the track.

The track layer will be present at the end of the track in all cases except for the vehicle-pick up scenario.

## **GEAR**

By default, during the certification a dog works on a long leash and wears a harness and/or a collar. Use of vests for K9 cooling/warming is allowed, other K9 gear is allowed subject to organizer's consent. K9 handlers are allowed to carry a backpack containing necessary gear and tools such as, for example, a first aid kit, a set of rescue tools, weather gear, extra leash etc.

## **SCENT ARTICLE**

Prior to starting a track, a K9 handler will either receive an uncontaminated scent article (level 1,2) or will be shown the area/object from which to collect/create the scent article according to the

certification scenario (level 3 and higher) or will be shown the general starting area ("Area Last Seen", level 3 and higher).

A handler is not obliged to use a scent article.

## **FIND**

No formal ID is required at the end of the trail. If no easy-readable ID is performed by the dog, providing dog food, toy or vocal prize close to the person who is a possible track layer is considered as a positive ID.

If a dog ID includes aggressive barking, confrontational physical contact or bite and/or if the dog is rewarded with an aggressive/confrontational play or a bite, the dog handler must notify the organizer in advance. The organizer will try to employ a track layer qualified for such a job, but if such a person cannot be found, the dog handler and organizers will try to find another solution that suits K9 team and at the same time, provides the necessary level of safety for the track layer (for example, the dog can wear a muzzle).

Track layer at the end of the track should not be easily visible and can be disguised. Track layer must remain still until the positive ID.

## **DRAWING FOR TRAILS**

If multiple K9 teams are taking part in the certification event, there will be a draw for the certification trail for each team.

## **PARTICIPATION FEES**

Organizers will not refund any certification fees if a K9 handler is removed for violation of these rules or in case of no show.

## **BITCHES IN SEASON**

Bitches in season may participate in the certification subject to following conditions

- the organizers are notified that a bitch is in season prior to the event
- the dog does not use common walking areas

## **RETEST**

If a team fails the certification track, they can ask for re-test no earlier than 30 days after the previous certification attempt. If the length, age or another parameter of the track significantly deviates from certification requirements or in cases of other unforeseen circumstances, the organizers may, in rare instances, retest the team on a new track earlier.

## **PUBLICITY**

The certification results and track overlay picture together with a short description will be posted publicly on online platforms.

## **CERTIFICATION LEVELS**

### **DEFINITIONS**

**ENVIRONMENT.** For the purposes of this certification there are 2 types of environment:

- 1) Natural environment - woods, fields, meadows, swamps, etc.
- 2) Suburban environment - all the above plus some populated areas with hard surface roads and streets with houses and buildings (villages, suburban housing areas, industrial areas)

**SURFACES.** For the purposes of this certification there are 2 types of surfaces:

- 1) Soft surface - grass, leaves, moss, weeds, dirt, bark, wood chips, gravel, etc.
- 2) Hard Surface - cobblestone/brick, concrete, hardly pressed gravel, asphalt, etc.

**SEQUENCE.** Level 1 certification should be passed before attempting level 2 certification, Level 2 certification should be passed before attempting Level 3 certification, Level 3 before level 4, etc.

**TIME LIMIT.** The K9 team must find the track layer within the time limit. The countdown starts at the moment K9 is given a command to start tracking or, if no command is given, at the moment the

handler starts moving after the scent article presentation. The time limit can be extended at the organizers discretion, for example, if the trail is longer than planned or for whatever unforeseen circumstances.

### **LEVEL 1 "NATURAL ENVIRONMENT"**

Surface criteria: Soft surface

Age of the track: 60 - 90 min

Length of the track: 600 - 800 meters

Contamination: Zero to Low level of known contamination (depends on the location)

Start of the track: Any direction possible from a starting point including backtrack

Scent article: Given to K9 handler in a glass jar

Elements:

- at least 3 turns (at least 4 changes in track direction)
- at least one non-linear element (backtrack, loop, scent pool, etc.). This element can occur at any point of the trail including the starting or finishing area.

Time limit: 20 minutes

### **LEVEL 2 "SUBURBAN ENVIRONMENT"**

Surface criteria: Approximately 60-70 % soft surface, 30%-40% hard surface

Age of the track: 45 - 60 min

Length of the track: 500 - 700 meters

Contamination: Low to Medium level of known contamination (depends on the location)

Start of the track: Soft surface, any direction possible from a starting point including backtrack

Scent article: Given to K9 handler in a glass jar

Elements:

- at least 2 turns (at least 3 changes in track direction)
- at least one hard surface road (street) intersection.

Time limit: 30 minutes

### **LEVEL 3 "MIXED" (NATURAL + SUBURBAN ENVIRONMENT)**

Surface criteria: Approximately 50% soft surface, 50% hard surface

Age of the track: 120 - 150 min

Length of the track: 800 - 1000 meters

Contamination: Low to Medium level of known contamination, other people tracks should be fresher than the track laid by the track layer assigned to the team (depends on the location)

Start of the track: Any direction possible from a starting point including backtrack

Scent article: Given to K9 handler in a glass jar or a well-preserved object of any size and matter belonging to the track layer

Elements:

- at least 3 turns (4 changes in track direction)
- if there are doubts about the presence of enough contamination along the trail, one intentional cross or split trail of any configuration will be made by the 2nd person (the 2nd person starts moving in 30-60 minutes after the original track layer leaves the starting area)

Time limit: 40 minutes

### **LEVEL 4 "NATURAL ENVIRONMENT"**

SCENARIOS BASED LEVEL, TO BE DEFINED LATER

### **LEVEL 5 "SUBURBAN ENVIRONMENT"**

SCENARIOS BASED LEVEL, TO BE DEFINED LATER