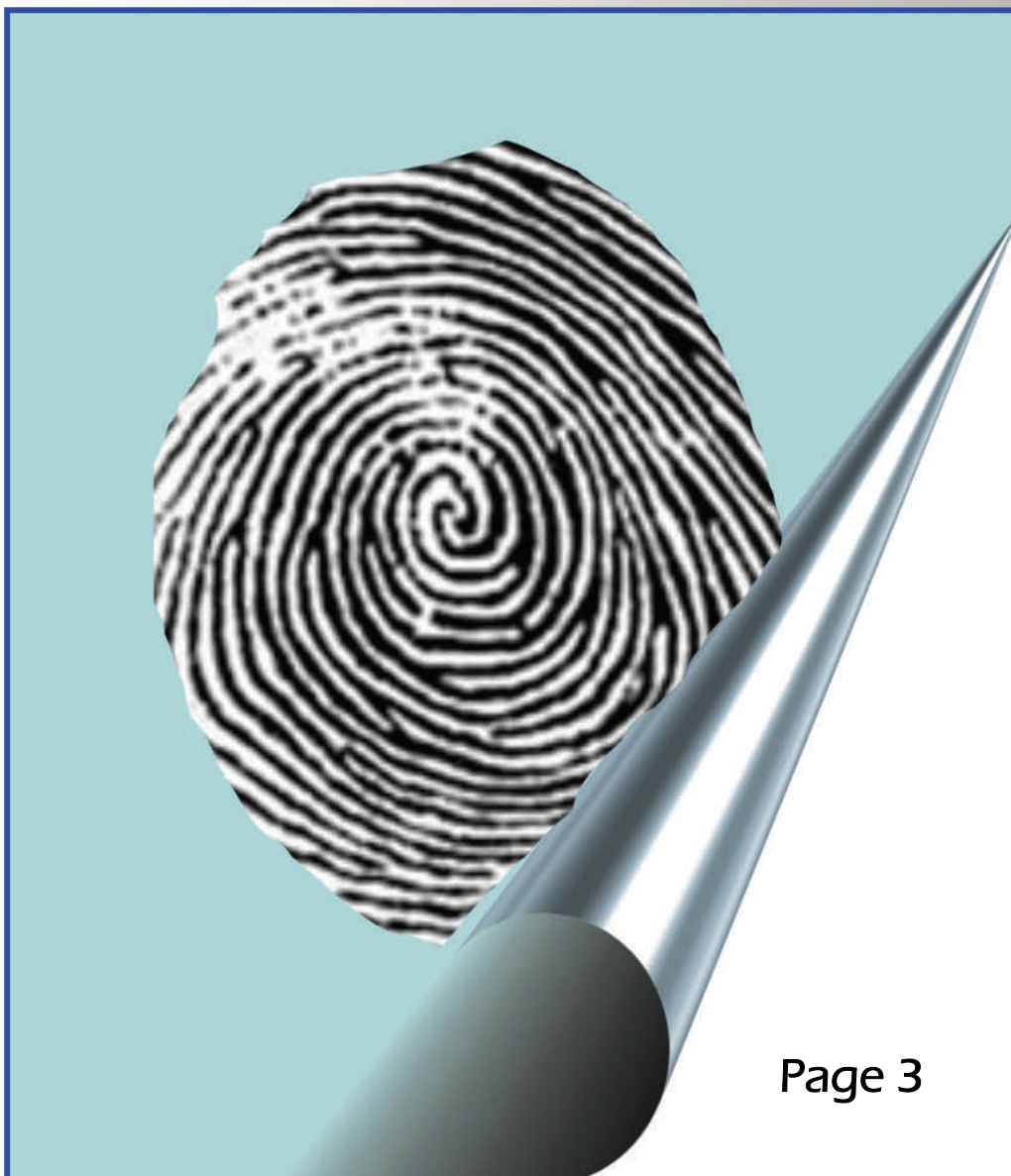


4 LEGGED RESCUERS

Year 2, volume 2

May 15th 2009

THE PROTECTION OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCES



Page 3

Summary

Front page



Page 3

In this edition:

The protection of physical clues.....3

The severe allergenic reaction of the anaphylactic type...6



Necrology.....6

A drowning victim is found by a dog.....7

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Version française également disponible

This newsletter is being published for the fourth time. Many of you have expressed your appreciation. Since its first appearance, almost 75 persons have asked to be added to our mailing list. **Four-legged Rescuers** is now distributed in France.

Despite the enthusiasm that you have shown, I must admit to being disappointed by the lack of participation of the dog handlers from Quebec. I would remind you that the idea behind this project is to give you an opportunity to share your experiences and to tell your own story.

Guy Lapointe, publisher

Translation of the K9 norms of the AQBRS:

We are pleased to announce that the K9 norms of the AQBRS are now available in English.

Thank you to Robert Savage for the translation.

Visit the AQBRS website at www.aqbrs.ca



In the next edition: (August 15th 2009)

The use of dogs to search for human remains

Deadline: July 15th 2009

THE PROTECTION OF PHYSICAL CLUES

In Quebec, volunteer members of structured organizations are often called upon to take part in wilderness search and rescue operations. The term rescue would indicate that the volunteers are involved mostly in cases where they are searching for a potentially live person. The confidence that the police have come to have in the abilities of these volunteers has led to their being involved in searches where it is suspected that the victim is deceased. In spite of the rapid deployment of all the required resources, unfortunately it happens that the person is not found in time to save his life.

Thus it is important for volunteers such as ourselves to prepare to be faced with a crime scene.

To be certain that a crime will not be "disturbed", the Quebec Provincial Police require that the members of the volunteer groups be made aware of the way that clues found during a wilderness search operation should be treated. Without making crime scene technicians of us, a 3-hour training course has nevertheless proven to be necessary. For my part, I give the members of my group an 8-hour course, which includes practical training. In order not to forget the basic principles, our members have to be recertified every year.

Briefing

During briefing sessions, confident of finding someone alive, we too often neglect the basic principles regarding the protection of evidence. This happens, even though it is an important part of a search operation. Don't forget that when you take part in a search operation, you become part of a long investigation process that may be aimed at charging a suspect with a crime. Remember that you could be called to testify in court.

Searching for clues

A search operation may lead you to find many clues, which in turn may lead you to a victim. Therefore, you should concentrate on searching for evidence. Examine the pertinence of each clue that is found. Above all, **do**

not touch anything unless you are asked to. Every discovery must be reported to the team leader who will in turn advise the command post.

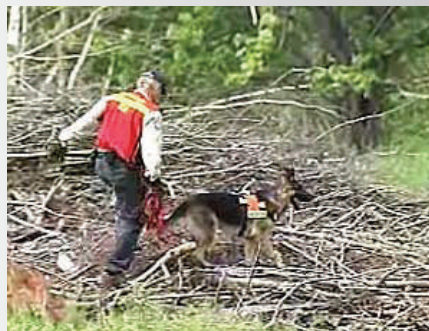
Record the precise location, the date, time, climactic conditions and the names of everyone present. Don't forget to include any other pertinent information. As required, draw a sketch of the location. These notes will be useful to the investigators and crime scene technicians. They will also prove helpful in jogging the memory when preparing to testify in court.

When approaching a crime scene:

When you approach a crime scene, pay close attention to the smallest details that are around you. While being concerned chiefly with the safety of your teammates and yourself, be careful not to disturb any imprints. Unless you are faced with one or more of the criterions for "obvious death", your priority should be to transport the victim to a hospital.

When you find a body that shows one or more of the criterions for "obvious death", you should not move it. If you are not certain that the body is showing one of those particular indications, take the time to verify the vital signs. If you cannot find any, contact the command post and wait for instructions. Don't forget that you have an obligation to give aid to a victim. A live victim will eventually be able to help in an investigation.

The handler must be sure to maintain complete control over his dog so as to avoid destroying evidence. In particular, do not reward him within the perimeter of a potential crime scene. Dis-



tance yourself from the area immediately and designate someone else to take charge of the crime scene.

If for the security of you, your teammates or the victim you must move items, take care to note their exact location. Inform the investigators of what you did. Do not move anything unless it represents a security risk.

Assure your own safety

While the rescuer has an obligation to help, he is not obliged to do it at the risk of his own life. At the moment of finding someone who was lost, rescuers have a tendency to go quickly to the person. They must absolutely avoid having this tunnel vision and maintain peripheral vision to avoid any possible danger to themselves, their team and the victim.

Even though there is little probability, it may happen that an aggressor is still in the area. It is equally possible that a firearm or other weapon is present, whether it is a case of suicide or homicide. It is not our role to unload a firearm but it would certainly be advantageous to have taken a course in gun handling so as to be able to properly secure one if the need arose.

Get help:

After the initial examination of the vital signs and at the decision of the search authorities, the rescuer should obtain the help required to: either evacuate the subject or to protect the scene in order to preserve any evidence.





Control access by establishing a secure perimeter:

The rescuer is usually the first person on the scene. He may be accompanied by a police officer. In that case, the scene "belongs" to the officer. The rescuer may lend a hand. In most cases, the rescuer should establish a secure perimeter based on what he observes. The extent of the perimeter is relative. It is preferable to establish a larger than necessary perimeter providing there are sufficient human and material resources to restrict access.

Ideally, the rescuer should carry enough flagging tape to allow him to clearly identify the limits of the perimeter. There should be only one entrance and it must be controlled until you are relieved.

Establishing a perimeter:

Establish a perimeter based on what you observe. It is preferable to have a perimeter that is too large rather than too small. On the other hand, it is possible to enlarge a perimeter or to create another one after having discovered new clues. Make sure that you control the access. The essential condition of establishing a perimeter is that it that it should be sealed and that the point of access is easily identified.

An efficient security perimeter should be a good size. The point of access should be easily identifiable

When a crime is perpetrated in a residence, the police will usually establish a perimeter by installing a tape around the entire property. In a wooded area however, it is more difficult to establish a distinct perimeter. The team must do the best it can and rely on the observations of its members.

Use whatever comes to hand to mark a perimeter: (Flagging tape, branches, cord, other searchers, etc.).

Prevent any new disturbance:

The rescuer who initially entered the perimeter may have disturbed the scene and this, the police understand. However, the team leader must assure that access to the scene is kept to a strict minimum and that any unnecessary moving of things is avoided. Pro-

tect any clues from ambient conditions such as rain, snow, wind or sun.

Remove all unauthorized persons from the area:

In the excitement, people have the tendency to come into the perimeter of an area in order to help. It can also happen that family members or the media arrive rapidly on the scene well ahead of the investigators. Even though the majority of media personnel are aware, it is our role to explain the importance of respecting a scene to them.

Stop all unauthorized persons from entering the area:

Everyone has his or her role. Until the police relieve you, it is your responsibility to protect the scene. It is normal that the investigators, crime scene technicians and morgue employees enter a crime scene. The chances are strong that by the time these people are on the scene, a policeman may have already relieved you. The analysis of a crime scene can involve many people.

Keep a list of the names of every person who has accessed the scene as well as the exact times of their entries and exits:

You are part of the investigation and of the chain of evidence. You must note the name and/or badge number of every person who enters and exits the perimeter. You must also note the times.

You Control access until you are relieved:

You should never leave your post unless a police officer relieves you. At that time, note their name, badge number and the time that they replaced you. Stay available. It is possible that the investigators will need a statement from you or possibly a copy of your personal notes.

Stay vigilant:

Don't forget that you are acting as a police officer. Maintain a wide field of vision. Pay attention to every new fact and report it to the police. Take good notes. Perfect control of the crime scene will contribute to the success of the investigation and allow everyone involved to do his or her job effectively. Reconstruction of the scene is made much easier.

Use a minimum of resources:

The fewer people that are inside the crime scene, the less chance that the crime scene will be disturbed.

Identify the witnesses:

When you arrive at the site, it is possible that someone is already there. Do your best to identify these individuals. Give their names to the police. If they refuse to identify themselves, inform the police.

Take notes:

Don't forget that you are a part of an investigation. Take notes of your **personal** observations and interventions. Your notes are a reflection of what **YOU** have seen and done. It is these notes that will help you if you are asked to testify.

Make a sketch of the area:

Use your note pad to make a sketch of the site. If you have to move something, you will have a better idea of where it was originally. It will also make it easier to recall the scene if you have to testify in 2 or 3 years



Take photos of the site:

I suggest that every rescuer carries a disposable camera in their backpack. It can be useful if you have to move something. At the end of the operation, you should give your camera to the police. The photos taken by this camera may contain evidence that leads to a conviction. Even though they are allowed in some cases, photos taken with a digital camera or a cellular telephone may become a subject for evaluation by a court. It is possible to modify digital photos using certain software.

Always enter and leave the scene by the same place:

It is easier to control a crime scene if we allow access only in one spot. We must be practical but the best entrance is not necessarily the nearest to the scene. You should favor the spot where the access is easiest to control.

A conscientious intervener will keep their hands in their pockets as they move about the scene.

Objects must never be touched or moved except for reasons of security.

"Obvious death" is not always obvious:

Even though in Quebec, we qualify a body that we have found and that is in a condition such that it has no chance of being alive as "obvious death", the principle of "obvious death" is not as obvious as we may think.

According to the law of the coroner of Quebec, two police officers can declare "obvious death". Despite the establishment of this law, some coroners continue to require the presence of ambulance technicians and the use of defibrillation monitors to confirm a person's death.

Once "obvious death" is established, the means of transport will change. The body will be transported by morgue technicians and taken to the morgue (not the hospital), where in most cases, an autopsy will be performed. In fact, the coroner's law does not allow an ambulance technician to transport a body after a declaration of "obvious death".

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Prior to the modifications to the law, the presence of a doctor was mandatory to be able to confirm a death. When a case of "obvious death" is established, the coroner must be informed and it will be he/she that takes the decision on which procedures to follow.

Here is what article 5 of the coroner's law defines:

The coroner or person exercising the powers of a coroner must ensure that a doctor confirmed the death before

the body is transported to the morgue and obtain a written death certificate from the doctor.

However, a death certificate from a physician is not necessary when it comes to bones or when the corpse of a person shows evidence at its discovery of:

- Decapitation;
- Complete sectioning of the body;
- Complete crushing or draining of the skull;
- Advanced putrefaction;
- Adipoceros;
- Mummification;
- Carbonization.

If it is not a case of "obvious death":

In a case where the criterions for "obvious death" are not met, the police must communicate with ambulance technicians. The technicians must then have access to the interior of the perimeter.

A hung person:

A rescuer has the responsibility to take down a hung person, unless he observes one or more of the criterions for "obvious death". One must avoid cutting the noose since it helps the medical examiner to establish the cause of death and it is an essential part of the investigation.

If the death is recent (the body is warm), the rescuers must follow the procedures for reviving a victim and arrange for their rapid transportation to a hospital. On the other hand, if the death is not recent (the body is cold), the rescuers should do an ABC. If they do not detect any breathing and if it is impossible to detect a pulse due to the rigidity of the body, they should record their findings on the monitor/defibrillator. They are not certifying the death but the fact that it is impossible to perform any reanimation procedures.

In this case, the police should call in a doctor to confirm the death. By doing it this way, we avoid disturbing a possible crime scene.

If there is no doctor available to confirm the death at the site, then the ambulance technicians can leave the body with the police to allow them to proceed with the crime scene.

The chain of evidence:

When requested, you may be required take charge of the clues that were collected during the search. Keep these items in your possession until you are able to give them to the police officer that is responsible for the securing the evidence. This will avoid breaking the chain of evidence. Take note of the date, time and the name and badge number of the officer that you give the physical items to.

In court:

The rescuer's role can continue all the way to the time that he appears to testify in court. This may happen a few years after the actual search operation.

"In court, more often than not it is the investigation that is being tried rather than the accused".

His personal notes may be the only way to recall the events. This is why it is important to keep good notes.

Recent events remind us of the importance of the quality of an investigation. What could be more frustrating than seeing a suspect go free due solely to a flaw in the investigation.

Guy Lapointe



The anaphylactic type of severe allergenic reaction

Anaphylaxis, the severest form of allergic reactions happens suddenly after contact with a causal agent (bee or wasp sting, peanuts, seafood etc.) A chemical from these items can provoke a strong reaction from the immune system causing a massive release of histamine and other chemicals which in turn cause vasoconstriction (reduced circulation and shock), constriction of the airways (respiratory distress) and/or increased secretion of mucus.

In the case of an anaphylactic reaction in a victim known to be allergic, the rescuer must administer epinephrine at the first sign of the allergenic reaction when there was or we suspect that there was contact with an allergen.

In the case of a victim who is not known to be allergic:

You must identify or strongly suspect what the causal agent was (the victim must have been in contact with the agent within the last twelve hours) and detect respiratory distress, lack of circulation (the onset of shock) or



edema (swelling) of the tongue to administer epinephrine.

Epinephrine is the first line of medication in the case of a severe anaphylactic allergic reaction. It should be noted that the sooner that it is administered, the less serious the complications will be. Also to be noted is that when there is a death, the medication was often underused, in other words, given too late or not at all.

In the absence of a first responder or an ambulance technician, **all other persons who have had a 4-hour course** in the administration of adrenaline should give it using an auto-injector when faced with a severe anaphylactic allergic reaction.

Responsibility of an allergic person:

Anyone having an allergy that joins a volunteer organization should inform the person in charge. He has the responsibility of carrying a dose of epinephrine (preferably two). Before venturing into a high-risk area, he must inform his teammates of the exact location of the injectors and of the type of allergy involved.

Duration of a dose:

The effect of a dose of epinephrine lasts about twenty minutes. Following the initial dose, the person may feel a progressive relief. However, the symptoms usually reappear after ten or fifteen minutes. Search operations often take place in places that are difficult to access. It is strongly recommended

that the person carry a minimum of two doses of epinephrine. This will give the evacuation team the time to come to his aid.



Gerald Marcil

Gerard Marcil is an operational dog handler with Sauvetage Canin des Laurentides. A former ambulance technician, he is now a trainer for the CSST and FMCO. He can be reached at mb_reanimation@hotmail.com

He has left behind a feeling of emptiness...

The day after the publication of the last newsletter, last February 15th, I had to face a difficult reality. The health of Jake, my faithful companion of the last two and a half years was deteriorating.

He had a first epileptic seizure on December 14th. In the next few weeks, he had another eight seizures. He became visibly unstable and by this fact alone, unpredictable.

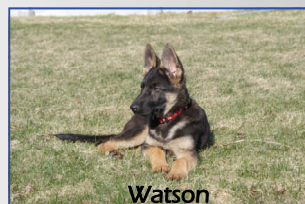
I will always remember Jake as a dog who was particularly enthusiastic. All alone, he covered a vast amount of territory.

In August of 2008, he was one of the first dogs to be evaluated according to the new norms of the AOBRs.

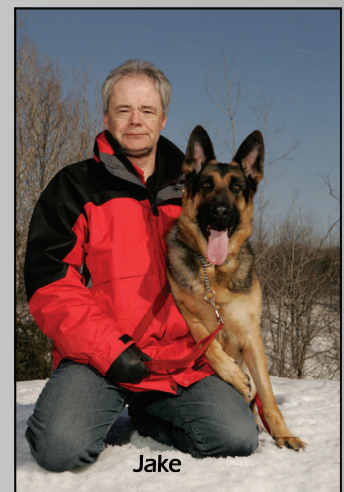
He achieved the stage of **level 1** with the successful completion of his second test. Jake had also participated in search operations.

I would like to introduce his replacement. **Watson** is now four months old and is showing great promise.

Guy Lapointe



Watson



Jake

A DROWNING VICTIM IS FOUND THANKS TO OUR FOUR-LEGGED RESCUERS

A few days prior to publishing the newsletter, teams from Sauvetage Canin des Laurentides recovered the body of a person that had drowned.

Ever since his disappearance last April the 23rd, Jean Filion a man from the Brownsburg area in Quebec has been the subject of an intensive search following the discovery of his vehicle near the North river in the Laurentian town of Piedmont. His vehicle was found with the motor still running and with the driver's door wide open. This attracted the curiosity of a passerby. Everyone feared the worst.

Since then, a helicopter, firemen from the St. Sauveur and Piedmont fire departments, divers and dog handlers from the Quebec Provincial Police have searched a large area without success.

The spring runoff made search conditions particularly difficult and we can assume that the victim's body may have been swept along for a great distance unless it became hung up on some obstacle.

On May 09th, at the request of The Regie du Nord Police Department, teams from Sauvetage Canin des Laurentides began a new search. By then, the water level had gone down almost 1.5 meters making the river much easier to navigate.

While some teams searched the surrounding woods, others were searching the river using a watercraft.

As well, fearing that the body had been carried some distance; we started the search about 2 kilometers downstream from where the vehicle had been found.

However, at about 800 meters from the vehicle, Caroline Maisonneuve's dog Morgan gave an alert that caught the attention of both Caroline and Sylvain Dumas who was operating the craft. They continued their search and were finally able to locate the body of Mr. Filion which was barely visible. It was in fact hung up on an obstruction.

Our finding the body has allowed the family to properly mourn their loss. I believe that there is nothing more agonizing than not knowing.

I am extremely proud of the work that was done by the members of my organization. The police officers who were in assistance throughout the day admitted to some reservations concerning the ability of our dogs to discover the victim of a drowning.

Since 1993, the teams of Sauvetage Canin des Laurentides train mainly for wilderness searches but like all the other Quebec volunteer teams we have been trying to convince the authorities that K9 teams can prove to be useful in helping to find the bodies of drowning victims. Without claiming that the method is infallible, our experience has proved us to be right.

The cost of financing all of the specialized equipment that is required for this type of search remains a major preoccupation. Unfortunately, fund raising is a part of our reality.

Caroline and Sylvain have been members of Sauvetage Canin des Laurentides for about 11 years. Morgan, who is 12 years old and thought to be close to retirement, has shown that he is still capable of doing the work.



Caroline Maisonneuve, Sylvain Dumas and Morgan

Thanks to the Regie de Police Riviere du Nord for the confidence they showed us.

Guy Lapointe

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Share this newsletter with all the search and rescue dog handlers who you know.

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