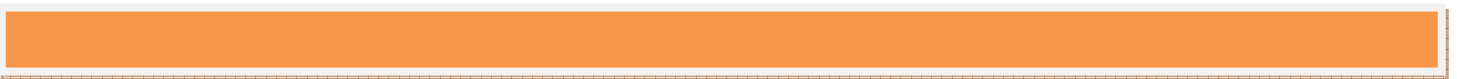




**Association Québécoise des Bénévoles en
Recherche et Sauvetage**

Norms for certification of K9 teams

Version 1.3



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1 - Introduction

1.1 Aim

To define the minimum common norms and standards that the member groups of the AQBRS will have to commit to respect regarding the training, certification and actual volunteer services of their K9 teams.

1.2 Lexicon

Mission: The responsibility for a search given to the person in charge of a search and rescue team.

Dog handler: A dog handler is a person who has been trained in the handling of a search dog and who is responsible for the K9 search team with which he carries out the mission entrusted to him.

Search dog: A dog that has been specially trained for search and rescue work by a dog handler.

K9 search team: A team composed of at minimum, a K9 team and a navigator (or accompanist).

K9 team: A team composed of a search dog and a dog handler.

Accompanist: A person who accompanies a K9 team during a mission and to whom the dog handler can delegate some of his functions such as navigation, communications or note taking.

Navigator: A dog handler or searcher who has completed the levels of certification for navigators (Levels to come) and accompanies the K9 team during a mission and to whom the dog handler may delegate some of his functions such as navigation, communications or note taking.

K9 unit: A group of searchers who are specialized in K9 search methods. This type of unit is composed of dog handlers, search dogs, searchers and of a leader who has a special interest in K9 search methods.

To be recognized by the AQBRS, a K9 unit must have a competent person as its leader and have at least 3 members including the leader.

In the case of a search group, which is specialized in canine searching, the term "K9 unit" means the entire group.

Operational K9 team: Indicates the status of a K9 team that has met the norms of the AQBRS, its K9 unit and the search and rescue group of which it is a member as to the evaluation of its capacity to successfully complete search missions that are entrusted to it. The status operational of a K9 team can be revoked or suspended by the AQBRS or by the group of which it is a member.

Operational conditions: A group of factors that define in real time the actual condition of a K9 team regarding its capacity to successfully carry out a specific search mission with which it has been entrusted. The factors that define the operational condition of a K9 team are notably (but not exclusively):

- A change in the state of the health (temporary or permanent) of the search dog or of the handler;
- The state of fatigue of the dog or of the handler;
- The meteorological conditions;
- The topography of the terrain;
- The knowledge and the expertise of the dog handler;
- Etc.

Upwind: Indicates that the victim is situated on the side that the wind is coming from.

Downwind: Indicates that the victim is situated on the opposite side from which the wind is coming.

Evaluator: A person who is considered apt by the AQBRS, to carry out an evaluation of a K9 team.

Search leg: Is defined as being the path followed by a searcher from a starting point up to an arrival point without any change in azimuth.

2 - Scope

Article 2.1

The norm described in this document determines the basic parameters to be respected by the member groups of the AQBRS, in matters of K9 training and searching. In no way does it limit the right of each of the member groups of the association, to put in place higher norms regarding the training and certification of their K9 teams, providing that the group's own norm respects at minimum, that of the AQBRS.

Article 2.2

The obtaining of AQBRS certification by a K9 team does not commit the responsible authorities of a search effort in any way, as to their decision to recruit or not to recruit the services of the certified team. The authorities in charge of each search effort will decide which missions will be entrusted to those search teams who are on site.

3 - The Dog Handler

Article 3.1

The handler's physical and mental fitness must be sufficient to allow him to successfully carry out the missions that are entrusted to him.

Article 3.2

The handler must personally train his search dog.

Article 3.3

The handler must belong to a member group that has a K9 unit. It is also possible for a dog handler in a group that has no K9 unit to be certified by the AQBRS, on the condition that he is sponsored by a K9 unit from another member group (see the section, "special cases" of this document for details.).

Article 3.4

The handler must conform to the norms of the AQBRS, of his K9 unit and of the Search group of which he is a member.

Article 3.5

The handler must see to maintaining the health, well-being and good physical conditioning of his search dog. He must in particular see to the comfort of his dog during breaks between search missions.

Article 3.6

The dog handler is responsible for his K9 team's training.

Article 3.7

The handler must keep a diary of K9 activities (also called a logbook), conforming to the requirements stipulated in the present document.

Article 3.8

The handler must without delay, inform his search group and K9 unit of any temporary change in the operational condition of his K9 team.

Article 3.9

The dog handler must do whatever is required to effectively control his search dog at all times.

Article 3.10

The handler must acquire sufficient competence in various fields, so as to be able to successfully carry out missions entrusted to him. The list of competencies to be acquired is defined in each step of certification.

Article 3.11

The handler must strive to maintain and improve his competence, by doing regular practices as well as participating in simulations and other training of his choice.

Article 3.12

The handler must be a member of a search group and of a K9 unit to obtain and maintain his operational status with the AQBRS (see special cases for the exceptions).

Article 3.13

The dog handler has the responsibility of evaluating the missions that are entrusted to him. He is responsible for the development of his K9 team and for the management of his efforts in the field. Thus, he has the right to refuse any mission entrusted to him and the duty to inform the authorities in the case where:

- The mission entrusted to him surpasses his operational status or requires certifications that he has not yet acquired.
- The time allotted for the completion of a search mission is unrealistic given the search conditions.
- The search conditions (terrain, weather, temperature) are not conducive to a search by a K9 team.

4 - The search group and the K9 unit

Article 4.1

In general, each search group and each K9 unit remains responsible for maintaining the operational status of their K9 teams and for the respecting of the norms of the AQBRS.

Article 4.2

It is the K9 unit which determines the minimal frequency each K9 team must train. The frequency must however allow the team to maintain a high level of quality in the carrying out of the missions that it accepts.

Article 4.3

Every search group and every K9 unit must, without delay, inform the AQBRS, whenever the permanent operational status of one of their K9 teams needs to be modified.

5 - Search dogs

All breeds of dogs, including mixed breeds are accepted, however, the physical characteristics of the dog must be such that it is able to complete the tasks with which it is entrusted.

Article 5.1

The training of the dog may begin at three months of age on the condition that it has previously received its first vaccinations.

Article 5.2

It is obligatory that every search dog be given an annual medical checkup by a veterinary to be chosen by its handler, with the objective of obtaining a certificate of good health and of having its vaccination booklet updated. The handler must be able to show the certificate of good health and the vaccination booklet to his search group, his K9 unit or to a representative of the AQBRS within a reasonable delay, when requested.

Article 5.3

Every search dog must be vaccinated against rabies, diseases by other dogs and insects, in view of the territory in which it will be working.

Article 5.4

When it is working (during searches, practices, evaluations, etc.) the dog must be easily identifiable as being a search and rescue dog through the use of a harness or a vest. The device must incorporate reflectors that will facilitate locating the dog in poor lighting conditions.

Article 5.5

When working (during searches, practices, evaluations, etc.) after sunset, the dog should also wear a luminous device (e.g. a light stick) allowing it to be located at a distance in the dark.

Article 5.6

The use of a flat collar, a choke or half-choke chain is permitted, however, the handler must make sure that the type of collar chosen does not put the dog at risk of being strangled in view of the type of environment in which it is working. On the other hand, the use of electric collars, of chokers with prongs or any other abusive control or training devices is forbidden at all times.

Article 5.7

The dog must be socialized. It should not show any aggressiveness towards humans or other dogs.

6 - The logbook of K9 activities

Article 6.1

The assiduous upkeep of a logbook of K9 activities is obligatory for all K9 teams.

Article 6.2

The handler must be able to produce within a reasonably short delay, his “up to date” logbook of K9 activities, for consultation by the AQBRS, his search group or his K9 unit upon simple request.

Article 6.3

The handler must at minimum write a description of all the training and search activities of his K9 team in his logbook.

Article 6.4

Every entry in the logbook must be made in chronological order and contain at a minimum, the following information (in the cases of training and searches):

1. Date, time and location of the activity;
2. Meteorological conditions;
3. A description of the terrain;
4. A general description of the activities and their purpose;
5. A detailed description of how the activity unfolded;
6. The results (success or failure);
7. A description of the victim or volunteer who served as a victim in the case of a practice;
8. The coordinates (name, address, telephone no.) of the victims (training) so that they can be contacted to validate the handler’s version of the event;
9. An evaluation of the unfolding of the activity;
10. A sketch of the activity.

Article 6.5

Using the information contained in his logbook, the dog handler must be able to give a detailed description of the unfolding of the activities contained therein.

Article 6.6

The person in charge of the K9 unit and/or the search group to which the K9 team belongs must sign and date the handler's logbook when he consults it.

7- Responsibilities of the AQBRS

Article 7.1

The AQBRS is responsible for keeping up the norms and for promoting them with the authorities that call upon the expertise of its member groups.

Article 7.2

The AQBRS has a responsibility to validate the operational status of a K9 team about which it has received a complaint.

Article 7.3

The AQBRS has a responsibility to ensure that the norms have been respected prior to issuing a certification or recertification to a K9 team.

Article 7.4

The AQBRS will furnish a list of their authorized evaluators to the various K9 units.

8 - Assigning of evaluators

1. A minimum of two evaluators recognized by the AQBRS is required for the evaluation of a K9 team.
2. **At least one of the evaluators must not be a member of either the K9 unit or of the search group that the K9 team is a member of.**
3. The K9 unit is responsible for contacting the authorized evaluators to ensure their availability for the evaluation.
4. The AQBRS may request that a supplementary evaluator chosen by them be present at an evaluation.

5. The K9 unit must inform the AQBRS of the holding of an evaluation at least 10 days in advance, by sending an email using the form provided for this purpose (see the form annexed). List the names of the authorized evaluators who have accepted to participate in the evaluation for approval by the AQBRS.
6. The AQBRS will authorize or not the holding of the evaluation within the 3 days following the reception of the request form and will emit if necessary, an authorization number.

9- Assigning of victims

The assigning of volunteers to play the role of victim in the framework of an evaluation must be done judiciously, since their behavior can have a direct influence on the final results of an evaluation.

1. The persons who are chosen must be able to:
 - Stay in the place that was designated for the duration of the evaluation (which could mean several hours);
 - Have in their possession the minimum of items that will allow them to safely stay in place with a minimum of comfort until the arrival of the dog handler (e.g. a ground sheet, a fly sheet in case of rain, water, a snack, flashlight, etc.);
 - Have in their possession a communication device which will allow them to communicate with the evaluators if required;
 - Must be at least 18 years of age unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult;
 - Know their role in the evaluation;
 - Know what is expected of them once the dog handler takes them in charge when they are discovered.
2. What's more, the K9 team being evaluated must not know these individuals.

10 - Disclosure of test results

1. The disclosure of test results must take place in the presence of the evaluators and the dog handler, during a debriefing that must be held within 24 hours following the evaluation.
2. A copy of the evaluation report must be given to the handler within 24 hours following the disclosure of the results.
3. Details concerning the success or failure of a K9 team must remain confidential and be communicated only to the person in charge of his K9 unit, the person in charge of his search group and to the AQBRS (by means of the evaluation report).

4. Whether the evaluation is successful or not, a copy of the dog handler's report, the scenario and the duly completed evaluation report must be sent to the AQBRS so that they can confirm the results and complete the file of the K9 team in question.
5. The AQBRS will ensure that the file is complete, and then will confirm the new status (if need be) by email to the handler, his K9 unit and his search group.
6. The results of an evaluation of a team by the evaluators are final and cannot be appealed, however the AQBRS could refuse to acknowledge the results of an evaluation if they judge that the criteria of the Association were not respected.

11 - Certification of searching by air scenting

11.1 Basic description of the method

Searching by air scenting consists principally of locating an object or a person, by detecting human odor in the air as opposed to tracking which consists principally of following a "track" of odor left by a person. When using this method, the search dog is guided through the search area by the handler in such a way that the dog has the best chance of pinpointing the odor of a victim by taking into account the factors meteorological, topographical and vegetation, present in the area.

Air scenting can take place in two ways, either by allowing the dog to search freely in front of the handler or by maintaining a link between the handler and the dog through the use of a leash or a lead.

11.2 Description of the stages of certification

Certification of K9 search teams that use the air scenting method of working is divided into four stages:

- The 400 meter hasty;
- The 800 meter nighttime hasty;
- The 400m X 400m grid search – without GPS;
- The 400m X 400m grid search – with GPS.

After each evaluation, the dog handler has 72 hours to turn in a written report of the search to the person in charge of the evaluation who must then validate it for accuracy. This report must contain at a minimum, the information contained in the annex to the present document.

Each stage corresponds to an evaluation and some prerequisites. Prior to being able to undergo an evaluation for a stage, the K9 team must demonstrate to his search group that it has mastered the skills and knowledge required for the stage.

11.3 Description of the various statuses

As the training progresses towards the obtaining of operational status, the K9 team is acquiring experience in search and rescue. This apprenticeship is evaluated at the various stages of certification and recognized by the obtaining of a distinct status.

The first status: K9 team in training

The K9 team obtains this status, when it has successfully completed the stage of the 400-meter hasty.

Obtaining this status allows the K9 team:

- To be present at a search site;
- To accompany, with the aim of apprenticeship, a search team on the ground during a search.

Attention: The impact on the level of probability of detection that the presence of a K9 team among the ranks of a search team on the ground can have will vary greatly depending on several factors.

This scenario should never be evaluated by the person in charge as being the equivalent of a search done by an operational K9 team that was followed by an on the ground search.

The second status: K9 team level 1

The K9 team obtains this status when it has successfully completed the 2 first stages, i.e. the 400-meter hasty and the 800-meter nighttime hasty.

Obtaining this status allows the K9 team:

- To carry out search missions along trails for missing persons;
- To carry out perimeter confinement missions from trails.

Final status: Operational K9 team

This status is granted to a K9 team that has successfully completed all of the stages of certification.

Obtaining this status allows the K9 team:

- To carry out search missions along trails for missing persons;
- To carry out perimeter confinement missions from trails;
- To carry out grid search missions in search zones using air scenting techniques;
- To carry out perimeter confinement missions.

11.4 The first stage: The 400-meter hasty

11.4.1: Aim of the stage

The aim of this first stage is to evaluate:

1. The ability of the dog handler to determine whether his dog has detected a victim (an alert);
2. The bonds that exist within the K9 team;
3. The ability of the handler to judge the distance covered by his K9 team as well as the general direction of the search;
4. The ability of the handler to faithfully record the progress of the search;
5. The ability of the handler to take notes of the information given about the scenario;
6. The ability of the handler to give an oral explanation of how the search unfolded;
7. The capability of the handler to make a written report of his search;
8. The capability of the search dog to detect a victim from a trail and to determine his location by making its way to him;
9. The capability of the search dog to understand the search command used by its handler;
10. The attitude of the dog during the search.

11.4.2 Prerequisite of the stage for the handler

1. Have started the training of his K9 team at least 3 months prior;
2. Have demonstrated in the eyes of the K9 unit of his search group, sufficient knowledge in the following areas:
 - The method of functioning for an air scenting K9 team;
 - The movements of odors;
 - Air scent training methods;
 - Methods for socializing a search dog;
 - Anatomy and functioning of the dog's sense of smell;
 - Factors that influence the working of a search dog.
3. Have completed the training required by his search group for this stage;
4. Have demonstrated consistency in the assiduous recording of his search activities in his team's logbook of K9 activities;
5. Have acquired the knowledge and ability required to effectively use a compass;

6. Be able to estimate the distance covered by his K9 team during a search;
7. Have completed many hasty search exercises from a trail:
 - That ended successfully and within the time allotted to complete the evaluation of the stage;
 - In different locations and having varied topography;
 - With different victims known and unknown by the dog.
8. The exact number of hasty search exercises that a team must do before being considered to be ready to be evaluated for certification, is determined by the K9 unit to which he belongs. However, the number must allow the K9 team to acquire enough experience to enable it to attain the level required to complete the exam for the stage.

11.4.3: Prerequisites of the stage for the search dog

1. The dog must have been given all of its vaccinations;
2. It must understand the search command;
3. Have demonstrated its capability to detect different victims known and unknown ,from a trail both upwind and downwind;

11.4.4 Parameters of the evaluation

1. Distance to be covered on the trail: 400 meters;
2. Time allowed to complete the evaluation: 30 minutes;
3. The victim may use the same trail that will be used by the K9 team;
4. The victim is placed at a distance of at least 90 meters from the start and in such a way that he cannot be seen from the trail by the K9 team;
5. The victim must be placed at a distance of about 10 meters from the trail and in a way that allows his scent to be carried to the trail;
6. The victim must be unknown to the dog or the handler (unfamiliar scent);
7. The victim must have been hidden at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the evaluation;

8. The person playing the role of the victim must pretend to be an unconscious victim who is unable to respond to the calls of the K9 team. The victim must stay in place as immobile as possible until the arrival of the handler. At that time, the victim will be able to «regain consciousness » to allow the handler to finish is intervention.
9. The evaluation must take place on a trail that is not known by the K9 team;
- 10.The K9 team can go back and forth along the trail in order to find the victim;
- 11.The dog handler may use the services of a navigator or an accompanist during the test, however this person cannot help the handler at any time to accomplish the tasks for which he is being evaluated;
- 12.Use of a GPS by the dog handler is not allowed for this stage;
- 13.The use of an electrical or mechanical device that automatically measures distances covered (e.g. pedometer or GPS) is forbidden to the handler. He may however use a counter of his choosing in order to count his every second step (double pas);
- 14.The dog handler must carry with him all of the required search equipment as defined by his K9 unit and his search and rescue group;
- 15.The dog handler must carry and use all the personal protection materials as defined by Civil Protection.

11.4.5: Preparation of the evaluation

Preparatory activities

1. The handler's search group ensures that the K9 team to be evaluated has fulfilled all of the prerequisites **PRIOR** to holding the evaluation;
2. The handler's search group must:
 - Inform the K9 team of the date that the evaluation will be held on at least 48 hours in advance;
 - Give him a blank copy of the evaluation, so that he will be aware of the points that he will be evaluated on;
 - Give him a list of the items that he must have with him for the evaluation (for himself and his dog).

Assignment of the evaluators

Members of the search team of which the handler is a member do this evaluation. Thus, it is not necessary to assign evaluators.

11.4.6 Evaluation

Summary description of the running of the evaluation

The evaluation consists, for the K9 team, of finding a (1) victim from a trail.

The progression of the evaluation

1. The person playing the role of the victim must be briefed concerning the running of the evaluation;
2. The person playing the role of the victim must be installed in the place where she will stay for the duration of the test;
3. A delay of at least 30 minutes must be observed, starting from the moment that the victim is in place, before beginning the search;
4. The handler must be briefed concerning the running of the evaluation prior to starting;
5. The handler must be given a coherent scenario for the search that he will be making;
6. The handler must have with him all of the items as required by his search group and that he needs to do his search;
7. The handler will advise the person in charge of the evaluation when he is ready to start the search. The person in charge will then give the signal to begin the evaluation. From this moment, the K9 team has 30 minutes to complete the test;
8. The handler, using flagging tape, must identify the start and the end of the course that was assigned to him. On each tape must be written, the date, the identity of the K9 team and either a name or number (optional). *During a real search, this mark will permit a search team to easily find the exact perimeter of the search area that has already been covered and to avoid the possibility that the areas bordering two perimeters would be missed;*
9. The handler must point out to the evaluation team, the moment that his search dog detects the presence of the victim (an alert);
10. The search dog must determine the position of the victim by going all the way to them;
11. The evaluation will end when the allotted time has passed, or when the handler has reached the victim once the dog found him;
12. At the end of the evaluation, the handler must be able to give a verbal account of the search to the evaluators by using his notes.

11.4.7 Disclosure of the results

The disclosure of the results must be made while respecting the elements described in point 9 of the present document.

11.5 Second stage: The 800 meter nighttime hasty

11.5.1: Aim of the stage

The aim of this stage is to evaluate:

1. The aptitude of the handler for determine the moment when his dog has detected a victim (alert);
2. The bonds that exist within the K9 team;
3. The capability of the handler to judge the distance covered by his K9 team as well as the general direction of the search;
4. The capability of the handler to faithfully record the progress of a search;
5. The capability of the handler to effectively use a topographic map as well as a compass and/or a GPS;
6. The capability of the handler to make effective radio communications;
7. The capability of the handler to adequately take charge of the victim during first aid procedures;
8. The capability of the handler to note down the information communicated to him in the scenario briefing;
9. The capability of the handler to give an oral explanation of the unfolding of his search;
10. The capability of the handler to make a written report of his search;
11. The capability of the dog to detect a victim from a trail, to determine his position and to alert his handler;
12. The capability of the search dog to understand the search command that his handler uses;
13. The capability of the handler to manage the stress brought on by all the elements of the evaluation;
14. The attitude of the search dog during the search;
15. The capability of search dog to return to the handler after a find (recall) and to lead him back to the victim (refind), when a victim is detected (for K9 teams that do not use leads);
16. The capability of the K9 team to find more than one victim during the same search;
17. The capability of the K9 team to work at night;
18. The capability of the handler to evaluate the probability of detection;
19. The aptitude of the handler to ensure adequate hydration of his search dog before and during a search;

11.5.2: Prerequisites of the stage for the handler

1. Have successfully completed the first stage of the certification process namely the 400 meters hasty, at least 3 months before;
2. A 2 month delay must be observed between each evaluation in the case of a repeat;
3. Have demonstrated to his K9 unit, sufficient knowledge in the following area:
 - The prerequisites for the preceding stage;
 - Use of a compass and topographical maps;
 - Radio communications;
 - First aid;
 - Preservation of a crime scene;
 - The behavior of missing persons;
 - Use of a GPS.
4. Have completed training in search techniques (Search Training by Wayne Merry);
5. Have successfully completed his certification as a regular searcher;
6. Have completed the training required by his search group and of his K9 unit for this stage;
7. Have shown consistency in the assiduous recording of his search activities in his logbook of K9 activities;
8. Have done many hasty searches from a trail:
 - That ended successfully and within the time allotted to complete the evaluation of this stage;
 - In areas with varied topography;
 - With different victims known and unknown by the dog;
9. Have done many night exercises;
10. The K9 unit that he belongs determines the exact number of hasty search exercises that must be completed prior to standing for the test. However, the number must allow the K9 team to acquire enough experience to be able to obtain the level needed to complete the test for the stage;

11. This stage can be done using a compass, a GPS or both, based on the preferences of the K9 team being evaluated. Despite this flexibility in the parameters of the evaluation, it remains that no less than success in this stage will permit a K9 team to do real searches from a trail. For this reason, the dog handler must have demonstrated to his K9 unit his ability to:
 - Get to a point in a terrain based on a coordinate;
 - Use a GPS for the recording of a track and precise waypoints;
 - Configure the GPS for the use of a specific cartography system (e.g. NAD 27, NAD 83, etc.);
 - Know the reset mode of the GPS, to be able to erase recorded tracks and waypoints.

11.5.3: Prerequisites of the stage for the search dog

1. The dog must have received all of its vaccinations;
2. Have demonstrated its capability to do all of the above-noted prerequisites and in daytime as well as at nighttime.

11.5.4: Parameters of the evaluation

1. Distance to be covered along the trail: 800 meters
2. The normal amount of time allotted to complete the evaluation: 1 hour (excluding the time required by the handler to take charge of the victim during the administration of first aid);
3. The evaluators may if they judge it appropriate, allow a K9 Team more time to complete the evaluation when warranted by extenuating conditions (terrain, weather, etc.);
4. Use of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 victims;
5. In the case where a second victim becomes indisposed just prior to the evaluation, the second and the third victim may be replaced by clothing of different persons who are unknown to the dog and its handler. In this case, adjustments must be made to the complexity of first aid to be given to the first victim as compensation;
6. The victims must not use the same trail to get to their positions as that which will be used for the evaluation;
7. The victims must be placed so that they are not visible to the K9 team from the trail;
8. The victims must be placed here and there at a distance of 20 meters from the trail (upwind and downwind);
9. The victims must be unknown to the dog and the handler (unfamiliar scent);
10. The victims must have been hidden at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the evaluation;

11. The persons playing the role of victim must play the role of an unconscious victim who does not respond to the calls of the K9 team. They must stay in place remaining as immobile as possible until the arrival of the handler. They could then regain consciousness (or remain unconscious) to simulate the first aid condition assigned to them;
12. The evaluation must be held using a trail unfamiliar to the K9 team;
13. The K9 team may go back and forth along the trail in order to find the victims;
14. The K9 team can choose to continue its search along the trail beyond the 800 meter mark so as to ensure complete coverage of the assigned area, providing that they announce their intention at the time;
15. The handler can use the services of a navigator or accompanist during the test, however this person must at no time help the handler to complete the tasks for which he is being evaluated;
16. The use of a radio between the handler and his navigator (or his accompanist) is permitted but the radio frequency must be monitored by a member of the evaluation team to ensure that the handler does not receive any help;
17. The use by the handler of an electrical or mechanical device (e.g. a pedometer) that allows distances to be measured automatically is not permitted. He could however use his choice of a counter to count his every second step (double pas);
18. The handler must carry all of the obligatory search materials as defined by his k9 unit and his search group;
19. The handler must carry and use all of the items of personal safety as required and defined by Civil Protection.

11.5.5: Preparation for the evaluation

Preparatory activities

1. The K9 unit will ensure that the team to be evaluated has fulfilled the prerequisites for the stage PRIOR to the holding of the evaluation;
2. The search and rescue team must inform the K9 team of the date and time that the evaluation will be held at least 48 hours in advance and provide him with a copy of the evaluation form so that the handler can become aware of the points on which he will be evaluated.

Assignment of the evaluators

The evaluators must be assigned in accordance with point 8 of the present document.

11.5.6: Evaluation

Summary description of the running of the evaluation

The evaluation consists, for the K9 team, in finding two (2) to three (3) victims alongside an 800-meter trail.

Progression of the evaluation

1. The preparations surrounding the holding of the evaluation can be done before sundown. It is important however that the dog handler does not start his search before nightfall;
2. The persons playing the role of victim must be briefed concerning the running of the evaluation;
3. The persons playing the role of victim must be placed in the location where they must stay for the duration of the test;
4. A delay of at least 30 minutes must be observed between the time that the victims are in place and the start of the search;
5. The handler must be given a briefing concerning the running of the evaluation before the start of the test;
6. The handler must be given a coherent scenario regarding the search that he will undertake;
7. The handler will advise the person in charge of the evaluation when he is ready to start the search. The person in charge will then give the signal to begin the evaluation. From this moment, the K9 team has one (1) hour to complete the test;
8. The handler, using flagging tape, must identify the start and the end of the course that was assigned to him. On each tape must be written, the date, the identity of the K9 team and either a name or number of the location. *During a real search, this mark will permit a search team to easily find the exact perimeter of the search area that has already been covered and to avoid the possibility that the areas bordering two perimeters would be missed;*
9. The handler must point out to the evaluation team, the moment that his search dog detects the presence of the victim (an alert). On each tape must be written, the date, the identity of the K9 team and either a name or number of the location. *During a real search, this mark will permit another search team to easily find the exact alert point in the trail.*
10. The search dog must determine the position of the victim, return to the handler (recall), then bring the handler to the victim (refind) (for K9 teams that do not use leads);
11. The evaluation team will stop the chronometer when the handler reaches the victim. The handler must administer the appropriate first aid;
12. The handler must make radio reports regarding the progress of the search following the parameters established by the evaluation team;

13. The handler must inform the evaluation team when he has reached the 800-meter limit imposed by the evaluation. The location must be identified to allow the distance covered to be validated;
14. The evaluation ends when the allotted time has passed or when the handler declares that he has covered the area assigned to him;
15. At the end of the evaluation, the handler must be able to give a verbal report of the unfolding of the search to the evaluators using his notes, including a probability of detection.

11.5.7: Disclosure of the results

The disclosure of the results must be done according to the elements described in point 9 of the present document.

11.6 Third stage: Grid search (400 meters X 400 meters – without GPS)

11.6.1: Aim of the stage

The aim of this stage is to evaluate:

1. The ability of a dog handler to be able to get himself to a starting coordinate by using a GPS, a compass and a topographical map;
2. The ability of a handler to effectively plan his grid search (direction of the legs, distance between two legs) taking into account the topography and meteorological conditions;
3. The ability of the handler to effectively execute the grid search of his search zone, by following his own plan (azimuth of the legs, distance between two legs, etc.);
4. The ability of the handler to adapt (when required) his plan, based on conditions found on the terrain;
5. The ability of the handler to judge the distance covered by his K9 team as well as the direction of his off-trail search;
6. The ability of a handler to effectively use a topographical map and a compass off-trail;
7. The ability of the handler to continue his grid search following the discovery of a victim, starting from the point where he had left his last leg;
8. The ability of the handler to give a verbal explanation of the progression of his search;
9. The capability of the handler to make a written report of his search;
10. The capability of the search dog to detect one (1) to three (3) victims by doing a grid search;
11. The attitude of a search dog during an off-trail search;
12. The capability of a handler to judge the probability of detection;
13. The capability of a handler to ensure the adequate hydration of his search dog before and during the search.

11.6.2: Prerequisites of the stage for the handler

1. Have successfully completed the second stage of the certification process namely the: 800-meter nighttime hasty and this, at least 3 months previously;
2. A 2 month delay between evaluations must be observed in the case of a repeat;
3. Have demonstrated to his K9 unit, sufficient knowledge in using a compass and topographical maps in off-trail work;

4. Have completed the training required by his search group and K9 unit for this stage;
5. Have demonstrated consistency in the assiduous recording of his search activities in his team's logbook of K9 activities;
6. Have completed a minimum of five (5) 400-meter X 400-meter grid search exercises that ended in success and within the time allotted for the evaluation of the stage;
7. Have completed many grid search training exercises in different areas with varied topography;
8. Have completed many grid search training exercises using different victims both known and unknown to the dog.

11.6.3: Prerequisites of this stage for the search dog

1. The dog must be given all of its vaccinations;
2. Have demonstrated the capability to meet the requirements for the preceding stages;
3. Have demonstrated the capability to find victims in terrain with a variety of topography.

11.6.4: Parameters of the evaluation

1. Dimensions of the terrain to be searched: 400-meters X 400-meters;
2. Amount of time allowed to complete the evaluation; two (2) hours. However, the chronometer will be stopped while the handler is in the process of administering first aid to the victims;
3. The evaluators may if they judge it appropriate, allow a K9 team more time to complete the evaluation when warranted by extenuating conditions (terrain, weather, etc.);
4. The use of one (1) to three (3) victims (to be determined by the K9 unit of which the handler is a member);
5. The victim(s) may be placed anywhere in the zone to be searched, providing that it is a minimum of 60 meters inside any of the borders of the area;
6. The victim(s) must be unknown to the dog and its handler (unfamiliar scent);
7. The victim(s) must be in place at least 30 minutes before the start of the evaluation;
8. The persons playing the role of victim must play the role of an unconscious victim who does not respond to the calls of the K9 team. They must stay in place remaining as immobile as possible until the arrival of the handler. They could then regain consciousness (or remain unconscious) to simulate the first aid condition assigned to them;
9. The evaluation must be run in an area that is unfamiliar to the K9 team being evaluated, ideally it will have varied topography;

10. The handler can use the services of a navigator or accompanist during the test, however this person must at no time help the handler to complete the tasks for which he is being evaluated;
11. The use of a radio between the handler and his navigator (or his accompanist) is permitted but the radio frequency must be monitored by a member of the evaluation team to ensure that the handler does not receive any help;
12. The handler may use a GPS to locate his starting point using the coordinates. However, using the GPS during the evaluation is not permitted for this stage;
13. The use by the handler of an electrical or mechanical device (e.g. a pedometer) that allows distances to be measured automatically is not permitted. He could however use his choice of a counter to count his every second step (double pas);
14. The handler must make use of a topographical map of the area. The map must be in color. It may have been electronically produced from a software program but should not be an enlarged photocopy, so as to avoid distortion in the distances;
15. The handler must carry all the required search equipment as specified by his K9 unit and search group;
16. The handler must carry and use all of the personal safety equipment as required by Civil Protection.

11.6.5: Preparation of the evaluation

Preparatory activities

1. The K9 unit will assure itself that the K9 team to be evaluated has fulfilled the prerequisites for the stage PRIOR to holding the evaluation;
2. The search and rescue group must inform the K9 team of the date of the evaluation at least 48 hours in advance and give an unused copy of the evaluation, so that the handler can familiarize himself with the points on which he will be evaluated.

Assigning of the evaluators

The assignment of evaluators must conform to the procedures described in point 8 of the present document.

11.6.6: Evaluation

Summary description of the running of the evaluation:

The evaluation consists for the K9 team of finding one (1) to three (3) victims, by doing a grid search of an area of 400-meters X 400-meters.

Progression of the evaluation

1. The person(s) playing the role of victim must be briefed concerning the running of the evaluation;
2. The person(s) playing the role of victim must be placed in the location where they must stay for the duration of the test;
3. A delay of at least 30 minutes must be observed between the time that the victims are in place and the start of the search;
4. The handler must be given a briefing concerning the progression of the evaluation before the start of the test;
5. The handler must be given a coherent scenario regarding the search that he will undertake; This scenario must include the coordinates of the starting point of the evaluation, which must be located at least 50-meters from the briefing location;
6. The handler must make his way to the starting point with the evaluators;
7. Using a flagging tape, the handler must identify the beginning of the area that was assigned to him. Included on the tape should be the date, the identity of the K9 team as well as either the name or number of the location ;
8. The person in charge of the evaluation will confirm the accuracy of the starting point or correct it if necessary (taking into account the margin of error of GPS units of course);
9. Before beginning the evaluation, the handler must inform the evaluation team of his strategy for the search and of the reasons that made him choose this strategy;
10. The handler must put his GPS in his backpack or give it to one of the evaluators before beginning his search;
11. The handler will advise the person in charge of the evaluation when he is ready to begin the search. The person in charge will then signal the start of the evaluation. As of this moment, the K9 team has two (2) hours to complete the test;
12. The handler must signal the evaluation team, the moment that his search dog detects the presence of a victim (alert);
13. The search dog must determine the position of the victim, return to the handler (recall), then bring the handler to the victim (refind) (for K9 teams that do not use leads);
14. The evaluation team will stop the chronometer when the handler reaches the victim. The handler must administer the appropriate first aid;

15. The handler must make radio reports regarding the progress of the search following the parameters established by the evaluation team;
16. After finding a victim, the handler must resume his grid search from the point where he had left off and finish searching the area;
17. The handler must inform the evaluation team when he reaches the limit of each leg of his search;
18. Each leg of the grid must be identified at its start and at its end using flagging tape. Included on the tape should be the date, the identity of the K9 team as well as either the name or number of the location;
19. During the evaluation the handler may, if he wishes, modify his search strategy by informing the evaluation team at the moment of his decision;
20. The evaluation ends when the allotted time has passed or when the handler declares that he has covered the area assigned to him;
21. At the end of the evaluation, the handler must be able to give a verbal report of the unfolding of the search to the evaluators using his notes, including a probability of detection.

11.6.7: Disclosure of the results

The disclosure of the results must be done according to the elements described in point 9 of the present document.

11.7 The last stage

Grid search (400-meters X 400-meters – with GPS)

11.7.1: Aim of the stage

The aim of this stage is to evaluate:

1. That the points evaluated in the previous stage have been well assimilated by the K9 team;
2. That the handler has the knowledge to use his GPS effectively;
3. That the handler has maintained his knowledge of first aid.

11.7.2: Prerequisites of the stage for the dog handler

1. Have successfully completed the third stage of certification i.e. the grid search (400-meters X 400-meters – without GPS) since at least 1 month;
2. A delay of 2 months must be observed between each evaluation in the case of a repeat;
3. Have demonstrated to his K9 unit and his search group, sufficient knowledge in the administration of first aid to a victim;
4. Have completed the training for this stage that is required by his search group and his K9 unit;
5. Have acquired the basic concepts of wilderness survival;
6. Have demonstrated consistency in the assiduous recording of his search activities in his team's K9 activities logbook;
7. Have made, since the successful completion of the previous stage, a minimum of five (5) 400-meter X 400-meter grid search exercises that ended in success and within the time allotted for the evaluation of the stage;
8. Have completed, since the successful completion of the previous stage, many grid search training exercises in different areas with varied topography;
9. Have completed many grid search training exercises using different victims both known and unknown to the dog.

11.7.3: Prerequisites of the stage for the search dog

1. The dog must have been given all of its vaccinations;
2. Have demonstrated its capability in the performance of all of the prerequisites of the preceding stages;

11.7.4 Parameters of the evaluation

The parameters of the evaluation are the same as for the previous stage with the exception of the following points:

1. The handler is permitted to use a GPS throughout the entire evaluation;
2. The handler must administer first aid to a victim as soon as he finds him;
3. The nominal amount of time allowed for the completion of the stage is two (2) hours, however the chronometer is stopped once the handler is involved in administering first aid to the victim(s).

11.7.5: Preparation of the evaluation

Preparatory activities

1. The K9 unit will assure itself that the K9 team to be evaluated has fulfilled the prerequisites for the stage PRIOR to holding the evaluation;
2. The search and rescue group must inform the K9 team of the date of the evaluation at least 48 hours in advance and give an unused copy of the evaluation, so that the handler can familiarize himself with the points on which he will be evaluated.

Assigning of the evaluators

The assignment of evaluators must conform to the procedures described in point 8 of the present document.

11.7.6: Evaluation

Summary description of the running of the evaluation:

The evaluation consists for the K9 team of finding one (1) to three (3) victims by doing a grid search of an area of 400-meters X 400-meters.

Progression of the evaluation

1. The person(s) playing the role of victim must be briefed concerning the running of the evaluation;
2. The person(s) playing the role of victim must be placed in the location where they must stay for the duration of the test;

3. A delay of at least 30 minutes must be observed between the time that the victims are in place and the start of the search;
4. The handler must be given a briefing concerning the progression of the evaluation before the start of the test;
5. The handler must be given a coherent scenario regarding the search that he will undertake; This scenario must include the coordinates of the starting point of the evaluation which must be located at least 50-meters from the briefing location;
6. The handler must make his way to the starting point with the evaluators;
7. Using a flagging tape, the handler must identify the beginning of the area that was assigned to him. Included on the tape should be the date, the identity of the K9 team as well as either the name or number of the location;
8. The person in charge of the evaluation will confirm the accuracy of the starting point or correct it if necessary (taking into account the margin of error of GPS units of course);
9. Before beginning the evaluation, the handler must inform the evaluation team of his strategy for the search and of the reasons that made him choose this strategy;
10. The handler will advise the person in charge of the evaluation when he is ready to begin the search. The person in charge will then signal the start of the evaluation. As of this moment, the K9 team has two (2) hours to complete the test;
11. The handler must signal the evaluation team, the moment that his search dog detects the presence of a victim (alert);
12. The search dog must determine the position of the victim, return to the handler (recall), then bring the handler to the victim (refind) (for K9 teams that do not use leads);
13. The evaluation team will stop the chronometer when the handler reaches the victim. The handler must administer the appropriate first aid;
14. The chronometer is re-started once the handler leaves the victim to resume his grid search;
15. After finding a victim, the handler must resume his grid search from the point where he had left off and finish searching the area;
16. The handler must inform the evaluation team when he reaches the limit of each leg of his search;
17. Each leg of the grid must be identified at its start and at its end using flagging tape. Included on the tape should be the date, the identity of the K9 team as well as either the name or number of the location;
18. The handler must take a GPS reading at the beginning and at the end of each of the legs of his grid search. This information must be recorded in his search report;
19. During the evaluation the handler may, if he wishes, modify his search strategy by informing the evaluation team at the moment of his decision;

20. The evaluation ends when the allotted time has passed or when the handler declares that he has covered the area assigned to him;
21. At the end of the evaluation, the handler must be able to give a verbal report of the unfolding of the search to the evaluators using his notes, including a probability of detection.

11.7.7 Disclosure of the results

The disclosure of the results must be done according to the elements described in point 9 of the present document.

12 – Recertification

1. To retain his operational status, every team must be recertified at least every 2 years;
2. Recertification uses the same parameters of evaluation as are used for the last stage of certification, i.e. those of a grid search (400-meter X 400-meter – with GPS);
3. The K9 team is responsible for ensuring that his K9 unit plans for his recertification;
4. The AQBRS could request that a K9 team be recertified prior to the lapse of the 2-year time period. In this case, a recertification will be planned for within a reasonable delay.

13 – Complaint procedures

1. Any person who believes that they have a reasonable motive to make it, can lodge a complaint concerning a K9 team with the AQBRS;
2. To be considered as official, the complaint must be lodged in writing to the Association and should include the following elements:
 - The name of the K9 team or of the handler involved;
 - The name of the complainant;
 - The coordinates of the complainant (address, telephone no., etc.);
 - A description of the complaint (place, date of the incident, circumstances, etc.);
3. Upon reception of a complaint, the AQBRS will inform the K9 team involved, his search group and his K9 unit, of the existence of the complaint. A copy of the complaint will be forwarded to them (without the coordinates of the complainant);
4. The AQBRS will contact the complainant if needed, to obtain details of the circumstances of the complaint;

5. A meeting (in person or by telephone) with the handler involved, the leader of his K9 unit and the leader of the search group of which he is a member, could take place if necessary. At a minimum, the AQBRS will contact the handler to obtain his version of the events;
6. The Association will attempt to find, in concert with the handler, the leader of his K9 unit and the person in charge of his search group, an area of mutual understanding in order to remedy the situation if necessary;
7. If necessary, the AQBRS could temporarily revoke the status of a K9 team (to allow the team to acquire additional skills or to correct a situation for example) or in more serious cases, permanently.

14 – Special cases:

14.1 A dog handler in a group with no K9 unit

1. It is also possible for a handler in a member group of the Association which does not have a K9 unit, to be accredited by the AQBRS, provided that he is sponsored by the K9 unit of another member group;
2. The sponsored handler should conform to the requirements of his search group and to those of the K9 unit that sponsored him, in order to obtain and retain his operational status;
3. The K9 unit who sponsors a handler, has the same responsibilities towards him as it does if he were a member of their search group.