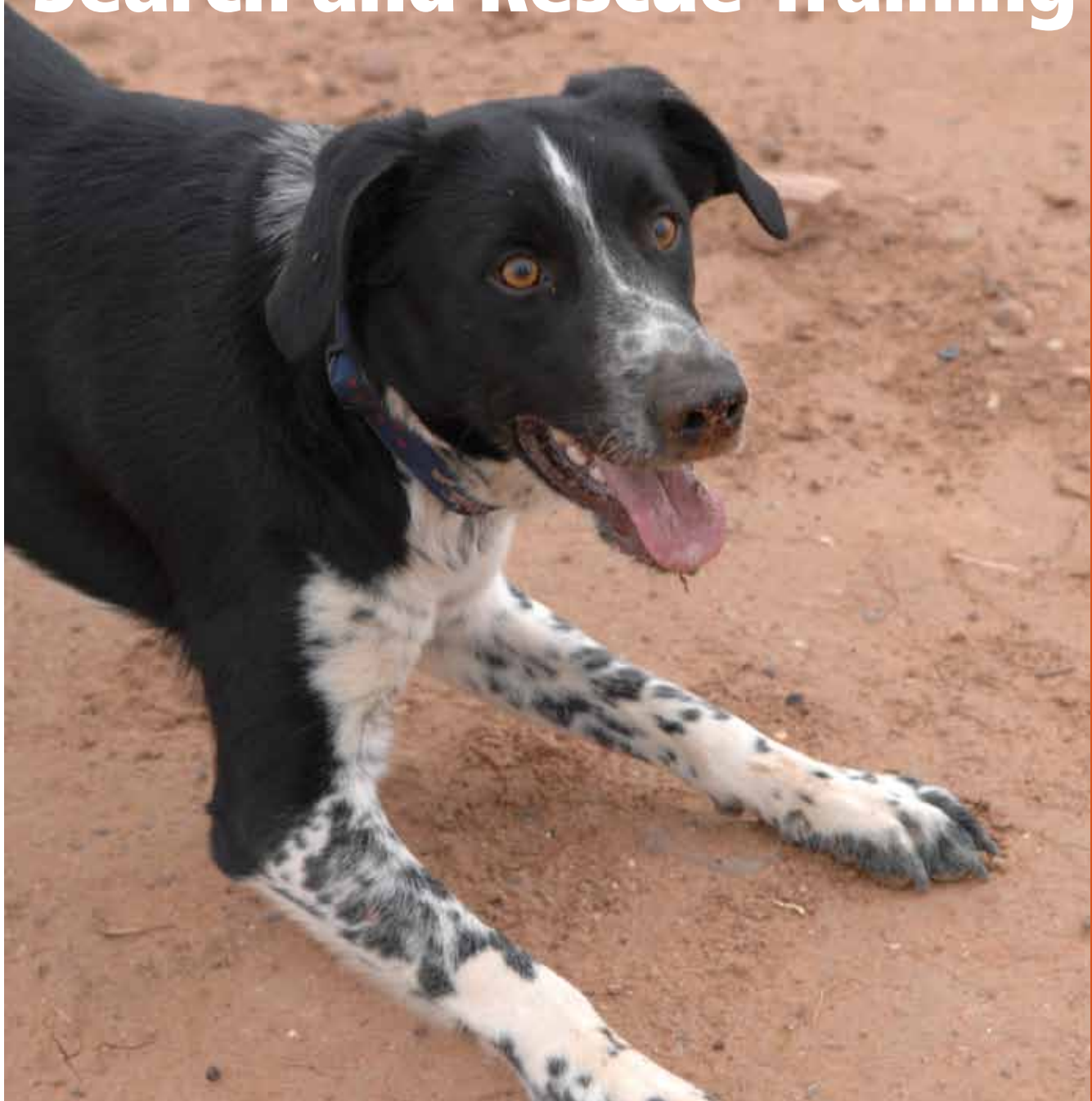


Best Friends SEARCH AND SERVICE DOG PROGRAM

Selecting Shelter Dogs for Search and Rescue Training



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Best Friends Animal Society is a nonprofit organization building no-kill programs and partnerships that will bring about a day when there are No More Homeless Pets. The society's leading initiatives in animal care and community programs are coordinated from its Kanab, Utah, headquarters, the country's largest no-kill sanctuary. This work is made possible by the personal and financial support of a grassroots network of members and community partners across the nation. In 2009, Best Friends celebrated its 25th anniversary.

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About the Authors

Karen Dashfield

Karen Dashfield, DVM, has a wide range of experience both in search and rescue and in working with shelter dogs. As a search and rescue handler, veterinarian and instructor for approximately 15 years, she has come to recognize the need for volunteer handlers to gain access to truly qualified training candidates without resorting to the purchase of high-priced “purpose bred” dogs.



As a shelter veterinarian and animal disaster coordinator, she has seen that the local animal shelter is likely to contain just the candidate the search and rescue handler is seeking, and that often these are dogs who have been labeled as difficult to adopt or unadoptable by shelter staff who are ill-equipped to handle the needs of a dog who requires a job. The missing piece in the puzzle was a means to medically screen, house, and provide basic training to these “diamonds in the rough” until they could be matched with appropriate handlers.

While working with Sherry Woodard of Best Friends Animal Society in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Karen recognized a kindred spirit who shared her goal of helping shelter dogs to become search and rescue candidates. In 2009, their shared goal became a reality with the creation of the Best Friends Search and Service Dog program.

Sherry Woodard

Sherry Woodard is Best Friends Animal Society’s resident animal behavior consultant. As an expert in animal training, behavior and care, she develops resources, provides consulting services, leads workshops and speaks nationwide to promote animal welfare.

Sherry came to Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in 1996 as a dog caretaker and in 1997, she was asked to manage Dogtown, where she oversaw the daily care and medical needs of 600 dogs. As manager, Sherry was responsible for the intake of new dogs to the sanctuary, the placement of dogs in appropriate social groups, dog adoption programs, student and volunteer group visits, the foster care program, supply orders, and all matters relat-

ing to personnel. She participated in the design of new buildings and exercise areas in Dogtown that have provided stimulating and comfortable environments for thousands of dogs over the years. Early in 2003, Sherry joined Best Friends' No More Homeless Pets national team.

Today, representatives from humane organizations and shelters across the country seek out Sherry for advice. Sherry assists individuals and shelter and rescue personnel with animal behavior, management and enrichment. She gives workshop presentations on animal care, animal behavior, training and adoptions at national conferences as well as local shelters.

Sherry has been certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CPDT) as a certified professional dog trainer – knowledge assessed (CPDT-KA). In March 2008, Sherry's Dog Behavior and Handling Workshop was approved for continuing education credit by CPDT.



Sherry has developed a canine behavior assessment method to help people learn what dogs need so that they can be placed safely in new homes. She has written over 50 animal care, behavior and training documents for Best Friends Animal Society that are used across the U.S. and in other countries. She has also been featured in the National Geographic Channel's TV series called *DogTown*, which chronicles the physical and emotional rehabilitation of dogs living at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Sherry gained on-the-ground leadership experience in disaster response and management of ongoing emergency relief projects when she spent eight months in Tylertown, Mississippi, helping with rescue, assessment and socialization of dogs; supervising staff and volunteers; and working with all types of animals, including exotics.

Sherry's latest project is Best Friends' Search and Service Dog program, a training program that places qualified dogs in loving homes with experienced search and rescue handlers after identifying these dogs as strong candidates through behavioral/medical screening and providing training on the fundamentals of search and rescue.

About This Manual

This publication is intended to assist a search and rescue handler, dog trainer, behaviorist or shelter caregiver with identifying potential search and rescue candidates from the population of an animal shelter, pound or sanctuary; determining if their facility is capable of undertaking a basic training program for these dogs; and finding loving homes for these dogs within the search and rescue community. Many ideal search and rescue candidates exist in animal shelters, and often their high energy, lack of manners, and borderline obsessiveness with toys make them difficult to adopt out.

By looking at innovative means of placing these dogs, lives will be saved and volunteer search and rescue handlers will benefit, too, by adopting rescued dogs capable of performing the work they might otherwise have purchased dogs to perform. Because the vast majority of search and rescue canines are owned and handled by volunteers, and live in the home as valued family members, this becomes a win/win situation for the shelter, the dog, and the search and rescue handler.

Disclaimer: Best Friends Animal Society is not responsible for any injuries to anyone using the techniques described in this manual. Any person using the techniques described here does so at his/her own risk.

Chapter 1: What Is a Search and Rescue Dog?



Chapter 1: What Is a Search and Rescue Dog?

“Search and rescue dog” is a term used to describe a dog who is trained to locate missing persons, either alive or deceased. (The term “recovery dog” is also used to describe dogs who find deceased people.) The most common types of search and rescue dogs are:

- Air scent wilderness dog
- Urban search and rescue dog
- Tracking/trailing dog
- Avalanche dog
- Cadaver or human remains detection (HRD) dog
- Water search dog

Some dogs are specialists and are trained in just one style of search and rescue, while others are trained in more than one of these disciplines. Luckily, there are many similarities in the type of dog and the behaviors desirable for all of the specialties.

What follows is a brief general description of search and rescue dogs. More information can be found on the Internet or in other publications. If you have a strong interest in selecting or training dogs for search and rescue work, we encourage you to obtain a broad knowledge about search and rescue through the use of all available resources.

The **air scent wilderness dog** is trained to locate live people in a wilderness setting by detecting the scent being carried from the person by air movement. These dogs work with their heads held high in the air, because they are looking for the fresh scent being shed by a person into the air. Some of these dogs are simply trained to find any person who might be in the wilderness environment, while others are trained to “scent discriminate” — to look only for the person whose piece of clothing or other scent article has been presented to them. These dogs must be capable of working for long periods of time in rugged terrain, and they are worked off-lead.

The **urban search and rescue dog**, or disaster dog, is trained to locate missing persons buried in the debris after a man-made or natural disaster. While this generally involves searching collapsed or partially collapsed structures, it can also include outdoor or wilderness areas that have been strewn with debris from a natural disaster such as a tornado. The ma-



Ollie, a graduate of Best Friends' Search and Service Dog program, does a training exercise.

ajority of these dogs are trained to locate live persons, but a new specialty of “cadaster” (cadaver/disaster) dogs has recently been recognized.

These dogs must be capable of working in an extremely loud and unpredictable environment. They will have to navigate over debris, cross large openings between surfaces, climb ladders, and bark loudly to indicate that they have located the missing person(s). These dogs are not scent-discriminating, but instead search for and indicate the location of any person trapped in the debris. While some dogs are cross-trained to locate both live and deceased people, many dogs specialize in locating only one or the other.

The **tracking/trailing dog** is trained to locate the missing person by following the scent that has

settled on the ground near where the person has walked. Generally, the term “tracking dog” is used to describe a dog who has been taught to follow the exact tracks where a person has walked, and the dog may be following not only human scent but crushed vegetation, too. The term “trailing dog” is used to describe a dog who follows human scent that has settled to the ground near where the person has walked. (Note: AKC competition tracking training may not produce the desired skill sets for a working search and rescue dog.)

Almost all of these dogs are trained to be scent-discriminating, and these scent-discriminating dogs must be provided with a starting scent — either through use of a scent article, such as a piece of clothing, or a known location where the person has been recently (e.g., sitting on a car seat, standing by a tree). These dogs are most often worked on a long leash, but in some parts of the country, dogs are trained to track or trail off-lead.

The **avalanche dog** is trained to locate missing persons buried in the snow primarily as a result of avalanche. These dogs must be capable of working quickly and accurately in a cold and snowy environment, riding comfortably on snowmobiles and ski

lifts, and tolerating the extreme cold commonly encountered in a winter environment. Avalanche dogs are often taught to dig aggressively at the location of the entrapped person, which aids in the recovery of the person.

The **cadaver/human-remains recovery dog** is trained to locate a deceased person, or a portion of the person’s remains. These dogs are worked both on and off lead, and must be capable of both working slowly and methodically, and covering large areas rapidly, based on the needs of the search. Subspecialties include searching for the location of historical (very old) remains, mass casualty remains and disaster (cadaster) remains, and detecting minute amounts of blood and trace evidence at a crime scene.

The **water search dog** is trained to locate the scent of a drowning victim as it rises to the surface of the water. These dogs may be worked from the shoreline or from a boat, and must be willing to sit tirelessly for long hours in the bow of a boat while a trained boat operator drives the boat in a grid pattern to provide maximum coverage of the body of water. These dogs must be comfortable in and around the water and on a moving boat.

Chapter 2: Placement of Search and Rescue Candidates



If you are a shelter manager, trainer or caregiver, the placement of a search and rescue (SAR) dog candidate can be accomplished through several methods. The first (and potentially best) method is identifying a likely candidate in your shelter and then locating a potential handler. The advantage of this method is that you can identify the strengths and weaknesses of an individual dog, and then seek a handler either in your area or nationally who is the best match for the dog. The limitation of this method is that you must dedicate housing space until a suitable adopter is found.

The second method is to first locate a handler who is seeking a dog, and then look for a dog that meets his/her needs. The advantage of this method is that you don't need to provide long-term housing for the canine candidate. The limitation of this method is that you may pass by many wonderful search and rescue candidates while searching for the perfect match for this individual handler.

If you are already an experienced search and rescue handler, before looking at dogs, you should create a written list of the factors that are most important to you. The purpose of this is to ensure that you do not end up rescuing a dog whom you feel sorry for, but who is not an appropriate candidate. While these dogs need to be rescued, attempting to train a dog who is not an appropriate candidate will likely lead to disappointment, and unfortunately will leave others with the impression that rescue dogs in general are not good candidates for search and rescue training. You need to be realistic in evaluating the potential you see in the dog, and know what behaviors you can build on.

If you are a new search and rescue handler just getting into search and rescue, bring an experienced handler with you when you look at dogs, but make sure that the experienced handler isn't biased against rescued dogs. (While there are a number of handlers willing to train and work a rescued dog, there are still some who truly believe that rescued dogs are somehow inferior to purchased dogs.)

Finally, if you are a shelter, rescue or sanctuary employee or volunteer, you must also remember to be realistic and honest when selecting dogs to represent

as qualified search and rescue candidates. Promoting dogs who are not truly qualified will only lead to failure for the individual dogs and, in the long run, failure for your search and rescue program.

2.1 Developing placement guidelines

When developing guidelines for the placement of SAR dog candidates, organizations should first look at their general adoption policies. Consider whether there are any requirements in your general screening process that would be different for the search and rescue candidate dog. Considerations may include:

Will you place dogs only in private homes or can they be transferred to other training programs? Do you already do shelter-to-shelter transfers, and would these dogs be treated in the same manner?

Consider: If your organization is not a no-kill/adoption-guaranteed organization, what are the consequences of these decisions? For example, if you decide only to place SAR candidates in private homes, might a dog be euthanized if there is no home available?

Will you require that the dog's placement when fully trained be with a handler who is the owner of the dog and takes the dog home with him at night, or will you allow the dog to be placed with an agency, such as a police department, where the dog may live in a kennel environment?

Consider: If your organization is not no-kill/adoption-guaranteed, what are the consequences of deciding not to place dogs with agencies? Might the dog be euthanized even though placement with an agency is available?

Will you require the adopter to be an experienced SAR handler and/or belong to a SAR team, or will you adopt the dog out to anyone who wants to "try" search and rescue?

Consider: Are you just looking to get the dog into a great home, or is it critical that the dog actually be trained to be a search and rescue dog? While the ultimate goal is always to find a loving forever home for every dog, are you receiving grant or sponsorship funds that will require you to show successful placement of SAR dogs?

Will you be willing to send the dog across the country or only be able to place the dog locally?

Consider: If your organization is not no-kill/adoption-guaranteed, and you aren't able to send dogs across the country, might a dog be euthanized if no local home is available?

Will you have specific requirements as to the style of training (positive vs. coercive) that can be used with the dog? What is your general adoption policy in regard to training methods used by adopters?

Consider: If your organization is not no-kill/adoption-guaranteed, what are the consequences of deciding to place dogs only in homes where positive training is practiced? Might a dog be euthanized even though a home that uses "older" training methods is available?

What if the handler who is interested in the dog uses electronic (shock) collars in training? What is your general adoption policy in regard to training methods used by adopters?

Consider: If your organization is not no-kill/adoption-guaranteed, what are the consequences of deciding to place dogs only in homes where positive training is practiced? Might a dog be euthanized even though a home (albeit one that uses shock collars) is available?

What medical screening will you provide prior to adoption? Will you take the dog back if he/she fails appropriate medical screening?

Consider: A search and rescue candidate must be in excellent health and be free from hip dysplasia or other disease that might affect his/her future working career.

What will your adoption fees be? Will they be higher for SAR candidates, in order to cover additional screening and possible training? Will they be lower, to recognize volunteer handlers' commitment to public service and reward them for choosing a rescued dog over a purchased dog?

Consider: Most search and rescue handlers are volunteers who pay for their search and rescue expenses out of their own pockets. If a rescued dog costs the same as a purpose-bred dog, the handler may decide to follow tradition and go for the purpose-bred dog.

Will you require a home visit prior to placement of the dog?

Consider: There are national networks that can assist with home inspections on long-distance adoptions.

Will you allow handlers to adopt an intact (not neutered) male if they feel that only intact dogs make good working dogs?

Consider: If your organization is not no-kill/adoption-guaranteed, what are the consequences of deciding not to place intact dogs? Might a dog be euthanized if only homes that require intact males are available? Note: Some vets will perform a vasectomy so the dog will be "intact" from a hormonal point of view, but will not be able to be bred.

Will you be willing to take a dog back if the handler or organization determines after a period of time that the dog is not a good candidate for training? What is your general return policy, and will SAR dogs be treated differently?

Consider: The training the handler has provided should make the dog that much more adoptable.

Will you allow the handler or organization to give the dog away to others if the dog does not work out as a SAR candidate? What is your general rehoming policy, and will SAR dogs be handled differently? What if the handler wishes to transfer the dog to another SAR handler for whom the dog is a better fit?

Consider: What are your general adoption, return and rehoming policies?

These are just a few of the decisions that need to be made to ensure that you have a complete set of guidelines in place for adopting out these heroes in the making. While Best Friends believes in purely positive training methods, and the majority of search and rescue organizations agree, we recognize that there are both shelters with dogs who might be euthanized if not placed in homes using other training methods and working dog organizations that still use older, less positive training methods.

2.2 Locating search and rescue teams

The vast majority of search and rescue dogs are handled by volunteer handlers, and the dog is both a working dog and a family pet. The volunteer teams these handlers belong to may be private nonprofits or coordinated through a sheriff's office, fire department or emergency management agency. Some handlers train and field their dogs as independent handlers, while others act as a paid "detective agency." Finally, some law enforcement agencies, fire departments and emergency management agencies have search and rescue teams that field dogs who are owned by the organization.

There are many online lists for canine search and rescue organizations, but all of them are incomplete and include many out-of-date links. The appendix in this manual lists SAR teams and here are some lists that are available online:

- National Association for Search and Rescue: Go to www.nasar.org, click on Specialty Fields and then SAR Dogs.

- SARINFO: www.sarinfo.bc.ca/Sartteams.htm
- Bloodhounds.com resource list: www.bloodhounds.com/tbn/sregion.html
- Texas SAR Network: www.angelfire.com/tx4/rescuetechs

Many states have search and rescue councils that may be able to connect you to local and regional SAR teams. Some states and lists require that teams be members and meet minimal requirements to be listed; many other organizations simply act as a directory of anyone who claims to perform search and rescue. Before placing a dog for SAR, shelters are encouraged to take the time to learn more about the search and rescue team and the individual member interested in adopting the dog.

Finally, the Best Friends Search and Service Dog program may be able to assist you in locating a search and rescue team nearby after you have properly screened a dog and determined that he/she is a likely candidate.

2.3 Pre-existing training programs

There are a number of pre-existing programs for training working dogs. While many of these programs are regional and only look for local dogs that they can easily screen for themselves, others are willing to accept dogs from throughout the nation. These organizations can be located by searching the Internet. Again, shelters are encouraged to take the time to learn about these agencies and their training methods before placing dogs in these programs. Some programs use positive training methods, while others use older methods of training that may employ physical force and electronic collars. All reputable organizations should be willing to discuss their training methods with you. Remember, it is up to you to determine whether or not a pre-existing program uses training and placement procedures that meet your requirements.

Currently, the Best Friends Search and Service Dog program is only able to work with a small number of dogs from Best Friends Animal Sanctuary or surrounding shelters.

Chapter 3: The Basics of Screening Search and Rescue Candidates



Before screening for candidates:

- Get a strong basic knowledge of what a search and rescue dog is.
- If possible, attend SAR trainings and consult SAR handlers. By knowing what the finished “product” looks like, you will better understand what the ideal SAR candidate looks like.
- Make sure the person doing the screening is capable of selecting a candidate or (even more important) deciding that no good candidate exists based on a logical selection process. The person doing the screening should not be unduly influenced by a desire to save dogs by offering them as SAR candidates. (By all means, save these dogs — just don’t represent them as SAR candidates when you know they are not!)

3.1 Size of the dog

While the size of the dog might seem relatively unimportant, it is critical when considering the type of task the dog will be asked to perform. While a miniature dog might be able to work scent and perform all the basic functions of a search and rescue dog, the law enforcement community would never accept such a canine if he/she appeared on a search. Further, a miniature dog might have a hard time navigating through the dense underbrush in a wilderness search or climbing over rubble in a disaster setting, and would also have difficulty detecting scents that are pooled high on a wall, since the dog’s head is less than a foot off the ground.

On the other end of the spectrum, if you are training a dog to locate tobacco in a prison, and you know that the ceiling and top bunks are going to be search locations, you may want to steer away from training a 100-pound dog, who will be difficult to lift into the top bunk. Giant dogs are generally less agile and athletic, and can have significantly lower life expectancy as a group. Generally, search and rescue candidates are dogs in the medium to large category, with toy breeds and giant breeds not as versatile or desirable.

3.2 Breed of the dog

While any breed of dog can perform scent work, generally the herding, working and sporting breeds and mixes of these breeds are more likely to demonstrate the behaviors we are looking for. Keep in mind that we want a dog who not only has a good nose and likes to find things, but a dog who will work closely with his human partner, reliably follow direction, and share the information he gathers. While northern breed types such as huskies have remarkable noses, they are very independent and have a tendency to run off and chase wildlife, so they can be difficult to train to be reliable search and rescue dogs.

Some dogs have been historically bred specifically to use their noses (e.g., bloodhounds) and other dogs have been historically bred specifically to use visual cues (sight hounds, such as greyhounds). Further, some dogs have been bred to have particularly short legs, making them less agile, and others have been bred with short muzzles, which can interfere with breathing and scenting ability.

This information can be used to guide selection of an appropriate candidate, but it’s only one part



It can be difficult for a smaller dog to negotiate rough terrain.

of the puzzle. Shelters generally contain mostly mixed-breed dogs and a smaller number of purebred dogs; often both groups will have unknown backgrounds. When looking at a mixed-breed dog, we sometimes think we see obvious characteristics of certain breeds, but recent advances in DNA testing show that often we are seeing breeds that aren't really there and we're missing breeds that are strongly represented by the DNA.

So, it's important to judge each dog as an individual, based on the combination of his/her individual characteristics. Currently, the most commonly represented breeds in search and rescue are Labrador retrievers, German shepherds, malinois and border collies. While mixed-breed dogs are currently underrepresented in the SAR community, there is nothing that makes them inappropriate for SAR work.

3.3 Coat length and color

While coat length and color do not directly affect a dog's working and scenting ability, you must consider the type of work, the duration of work, and the work environment when selecting a search and rescue candidate. For example, with their giant size and thick black coats, Newfoundlands may make excellent water search and avalanche dogs, but they don't fare very well in many climates for prolonged outdoor searches. Extremely short-haired dogs can make excellent bomb dogs, narcotics dogs, and search and rescue canines, but they do not carry enough natural coat to tolerate extremely cold temperatures for prolonged periods without a manmade coat.

Dogs with short white coats are prone to sunburn in sunny, arid areas, while dogs with black coats will absorb more direct sunlight and overheat a bit faster. Certainly, a long-haired dog can be shaved down, and a short-haired dog can be given a coat or have sunscreen applied, so coat length and color are not deal-breakers, but they need to be taken into consideration. Knowledge of how the dog behaves when outside at various temperatures can be an important piece of information, too, so remember to interview

caregivers, especially if the dog has been with the facility for a period of time. Dogs who have been observed to be intolerant of either heat or cold are poor candidates for search and rescue work.

3.4 Age of the dog

While it is technically true that you CAN teach an old dog new tricks, you should be realistic when selecting a scent detection candidate. Most handlers will want to acquire a dog who is young enough to provide a reasonable length of service, taking into consideration that it is likely that a SAR dog may need to retire or become limited in his/her abilities around eight years of age. As a general rule, the ideal candidate for search and rescue training is between six months and two years of age, although slightly younger or slightly older dogs could still be considered.

Very young puppies learn quickly, but there are many unknowns in regard to the final size, orthopedic soundness and temperament of a young puppy. Much time may be spent training a candidate only to discover that the dog has hip dysplasia, eye problems or an adult temperament that makes him/her a less than suitable candidate. However, some handlers are willing to take a gamble with a young puppy, feeling that the early imprinting opportunity is worth the risk of the pup developing health issues that cannot be detected at an early age.

Random-source dogs (i.e., shelter dogs) are difficult to age exactly, though a general age category can often be assigned to a dog with an unknown history. Some handlers will be willing to accept a dog who appears slightly older than two years, if the dog displays skills that indicate he/she can be trained quickly.

When representing a dog as a SAR candidate, be honest about the age of the dog. Don't try to pass the dog off as younger than you know or believe the dog to be. Being less than honest about a dog's age may get that one dog adopted, but it will harm your reputation, and make it less likely for SAR dog handlers to be willing to work with you.

3.5 Sex of the dog

There are many different opinions on whether the sex of the dog affects his/her ability to work scent. Some people and agencies feel that males are more scent-oriented, but we would argue that it is not sensitivity to sexual pheromones that we are looking for. Some people feel that neutered dogs have less “drive” and make poor working dogs. These opinions don’t have any scientific backing. There are many highly skilled male and female SAR canines, and a majority of these dogs are spayed or neutered. The sex of the dog should not be a consideration when selecting a training candidate, unless the individual handler is requesting a specific sex so the dog can better blend into the household.

Since we are dealing with shelter populations, most training candidates will likely be spayed or neutered. Individual organizations must decide whether or not they are willing to place intact male dogs with organizations that will only take intact dogs. Vasectomies, which are available for dogs, may be an acceptable compromise, since this surgery prevents the dog from siring any puppies while leaving the dog hormonally intact. You may have to look around for a veterinarian who is trained and experienced in this procedure, as it is not commonly performed.

There is no justifiable reason to leave a female rescue dog intact to improve her working ability. Intact female working dogs are generally intended for breeding, to produce more working dogs. Even working dog organizations that use purebred dogs strongly discourage the use of intact female dogs, since they cannot be worked when in heat because of the distraction it causes for other dogs.

3.6 Health of the dog

A SAR dog candidate should be in good health and should be likely to maintain good health for a prolonged period of time. Shelters can handle the required medical screening in several ways:

- They can provide the medical screening prior to offering the dog as a training candidate. This is

Brief Search Dog Candidate Profile

- Medium- to large-sized dogs are best. (Medium-sized dogs are the most agile.)
- You can use any breed or mix that is physically appropriate for SAR work.
- SAR dogs must be reliable off-lead, and have good stamina and focus. Herding, working, and sporting breeds and mixes of these breeds most commonly display these characteristics.
- Consider whether the dog’s coat length and type will be a limitation in the working environment. The dog could wear a manmade coat or be shaved if needed.
- Six months to two years of age is ideal for starting the training.
- Either sex, spayed or neutered, is appropriate.

most easily provided by facilities that have a staff veterinarian, though this service could also be offered by other organizations.

- They can allow the potential adopter to take the dog as a foster for the period of time required to get the necessary medical screening.
- They can adopt out the dog with an agreement that if the dog is found unfit for search and rescue based on medical screening, the adopter can return the dog.

Obviously, a dog who has been medically screened by the facility prior to adoption as a SAR candidate will be more appealing to the search and rescue community.

Dogs should be screened for any underlying disease using a thorough physical exam to rule out obvious lameness and heart or eye conditions. Heartworm testing and tick serology are also important screening tests. (The Idexx Snap 4dx is a good in-house screening tool for heartworm and tick-borne diseases.)

Radiographs (x-rays) of the hips should be performed and only dogs that could receive an OFA-certification of fair or greater should be considered appropriate candidates for search and rescue training. (Handlers requesting PennHIP x-rays should

be directed to obtain them on their own, since the procedure requires general anesthesia in all dogs and is much more costly than a plain x-ray.) Elbow radiographs or a good elbow exam should also be performed to rule out any growth disorders of the elbows.

Labrador retrievers are among the purebred dogs who make excellent search and rescue canines, but several genetic disorders have recently been found to occur in significant numbers of these dogs. If the dog appears to be a purebred Labrador, then consider screening the dog for progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) and exercise-induced collapse (EIC).^{*} Again, because of the cost involved, these tests can be made the responsibility of the prospective adopter. If another type of purebred dog is being considered for SAR work, do research on the breed so that common genetic diseases can be ruled out.

Finally, the geographic history of the dog should be considered when determining whether any other testing or screening is advisable. For example, dogs from the South are more prone to transmissible venereal tumors, heartworm disease, and certain tick-borne disease; dogs who have been in fights are more prone to certain blood-borne parasites.

Honestly relay any medical knowledge you have about the dog to the prospective handler. A dog who has had a previous serious illness — such as heartworm disease, parvovirus or Lyme disease — may have chronic but hidden health problems that may affect the long-term working ability of the dog. Misrepresenting a dog's medical history may get that one dog adopted, but it will damage your reputation and make it unlikely that other working dog handlers will be willing to take a chance on working with you. In the long run, this may cost dogs their lives.

** The PRA test can be run on blood or a cheek swab. For more information about PRA, the testing process, and how to submit samples for testing, go to www.optigen.com. The EIC test is run on a cheek swab or blood. You can find more information about EIC, the testing process, and how to submit test samples at www.vdl.umn.edu/guidelines/canine_neuro/home.html.*

Health Screening

A minimal health screening consists of the following:

- A good physical exam with no findings that would prevent the dog from being an athlete
- A good eye exam with no abnormalities detected
- Testing for heartworm and tick serology, to rule out possible underlying pre-existing diseases (Dogs who have been previously treated for heartworm may have chronic but mild heart or lung damage and therefore are not ideal candidates)
- Hip x-rays: capable of OFA certification with a rating of fair or above
- Elbow x-rays or exam to rule out any signs of elbow dysplasia
- Additional testing based on breed predisposition and geographic history of the dog

3.7 Dog-to-dog interaction

The SAR canine is likely to encounter other dogs while working on a search, and as such must be capable of working in their presence. These dogs may be other SAR dogs, law enforcement canines, or local dogs who inhabit the search area. The SAR dog must be capable of working without being unduly distracted by the presence of other canines. A dog who constantly loses focus is not a reliable worker.

The SAR dog must also be capable of working without showing aggression toward other dogs. The ideal SAR candidate is neither aggressive toward other canines nor overly friendly and distracted. Certainly an over-friendly dog can be taught obedience and control that will allow the dog to work around other animals without distraction, and we would certainly prefer to work with an overly friendly candidate rather than a candidate with dog-to-dog aggression issues. Serious consideration should be given to the advisability of selecting a dog with known dog-to-dog aggression issues. If the dog has reportedly had incidents with other



SAR dogs must be able to work in the presence of other dogs. Here, a group of SAR candidates participate in a training exercise.

animals, his/her behavior should be observed to determine whether the dog is truly aggressive or just socially inept.

Remember that these dogs will likely work both on-lead and off-lead. Again, **RELIABILITY** is key in the scent-work canine, and trainers must be realistic when deciding whether they are capable of reshaping their candidate's behavior. Consideration must also be given to the likelihood that the new handler will be able to maintain reliable behavior in this canine. Additionally, many handlers keep their dogs in their homes, so they are likely to have other pets with whom this dog must interact on a daily basis.

Review and honestly relay any known behavioral history on the dog to the prospective handler. Hiding the dog's behavioral background will lead to a failed adoption, the potential of injury to other animals, and the loss of your reputation as an honest, reliable source of SAR candidates.

3.8 Interaction with other animals

Search and rescue dogs work off-leash in environments where they are likely to come in contact with other pets and wildlife. These dogs must be capable

of working without showing aggression or being unduly distracted by the presence of other animals in the search environment. A dog who runs off to chase a lizard, rabbit or cat during a search is not doing his job.

If the potential candidate shows that he/she is likely to chase other animals, consideration must be given to whether the dog can be trained to reliably ignore other animals. Keep in mind that many dogs will show a mild interest in chasing a running animal, but there is a big difference between a dog who can quickly be redirected away from the animal and a dog who remains fixated and will not refocus on anything else. Any dog who has killed another animal, or who has shown an obsession with chasing other animals, is not an appropriate SAR candidate.

Remember that these dogs will likely work both on-lead and off-lead. Again, **RELIABILITY** is key in the search and rescue canine, and trainers must be realistic when deciding whether they are capable of reshaping their candidate's behavior. Consideration must also be given to the likelihood that the new handler will be able to maintain reliable behavior in this canine. Additionally, many handlers are likely to have other pets with whom this dog must interact on a daily basis.

Review and honestly relay any known behavioral



SAR dogs must be able to ignore other animals.

history on the dog to the prospective handler. Hiding the dog's behavioral background will lead to a failed adoption, the potential of injury to other animals, and the loss of your reputation as an honest, reliable source of SAR candidates.

3.9 Human interaction

During search deployment, the SAR canine is likely to come into contact with people other than the handler, and as such must be capable of working in their presence. These other people may be the search subject, other canine handlers, law enforcement officers, or persons who live in the search area. Remember that the canine will often be looking for people who may behave oddly and may even act aggressively toward the dog (e.g., children, the mentally ill, Alzheimer patients, and persons under the influence of drugs—prescription or illegal—or alcohol or suffering from the effects of extreme heat or cold).

The dog must be capable of working without being unduly distracted by the presence of people in the search area. The dog must also be capable of working without showing aggression toward any person, no matter what action the person takes toward the canine. When selecting a good scent-work candidate from a shelter, the ideal dog is friendly and

shows no aggression toward humans. Keep in mind, though, that high-energy dogs may have a history of accidentally grabbing a person when going after a toy the person is holding, or may have displayed inappropriate play behavior and grabbed at clothing. A trainer may be able to redirect this inappropriate play, so it should not be interpreted as aggression.

Shy dogs and aggressive dogs are not appropriate for search and rescue training. Remember that these dogs will likely work both on-lead and off-lead. As mentioned above, RELIABILITY is key in scent-work canines. Because many handlers keep their SAR dogs in their homes, and they are likely to have spouses and/or children, the dogs must be capable of being safe and reliable family members.

3.10 Reward motivation

The SAR canine must have a reason to perform the behaviors necessary to find the missing person and tell his/her handler the location of the missing person. It is critical that the dog is highly motivated, so positive training that includes a strong reward system is a key component of the training program. While praise has its value, SAR handlers have found that play is vital when training a scent-work canine. The dog must have something that she values so greatly that she will perform almost any task to get it. That “something” gives the SAR canine a reason to chase after a stranger in early training and to spend hours searching for a stranger in more advanced training. Many SAR handlers have a strong preference for toy rewards over food rewards during SAR training, but use food rewards for teaching many basic behaviors, obedience and agility.

Toy motivation

Motivation for a toy can be tested in several ways.

1. Using a variety of toys (tugs, balls, Frisbees, stuffed animals, etc.), test the dog's interest in and focus on both the toy itself and the interaction with the person. It is great to have a dog who loves a tennis ball, but not so great if the dog wants to just run away with the ball and chew it up.



Liv is highly motivated to get that toy!

Choose one toy at a time and throw the toy, noting whether the dog will chase after the toy and retrieve it. Make notes as to the level of interest the dog has when you first throw the toy, whether he chases the toy, and whether he picks up and retrieves the toy, or picks it up and runs off with it. Try multiple different toys and see if the dog has a preference.

Next, choose one toy at a time and offer the dog a game of tug. Note whether the dog engages with the toy and tugs vigorously, or seems timid about tugging. Try different toys and see if the dog has a preference for a particular toy. **DO NOT** correct the dog for vocalizing during the play session, since this is part of the game of tug. Remember to avoid moving forward toward the dog or leaning over the dog during the game of tug; this is an invasion of the dog's space and may be perceived as a threat or correction, causing the dog to drop the toy.

If the dog has shown good interest in a toy, and in interacting with people, get the dog excited about the toy and then stand still holding the toy. See if

the dog will remain focused on the toy for a period of time — either by nudging you for the toy or waiting.

2. Use a soft, floppy toy or rag on the end of a light line or horse lunging whip to create “live” movement in the toy. Observe the dog's willingness to pursue, capture and stay focused on the toy. (This is actually a test of “prey motivation.”) Once the dog captures the toy, see if the dog will engage in a game of tug. Note whether the dog is only interested in the toy when it is “live” and moving, or whether he maintains interest in the toy when you allow it to go “dead” (i.e., stop moving).

Initially work with the dog in a quiet fenced area with minimal distractions. Dogs who show good toy motivation in a quiet area can then be further tested in an area with distractions to see how committed they are to the toy reward. The ideal scent-work candidate will have a very strong toy motivation or toy/prey motivation both in quiet areas and areas with distractions. The motivation to play with a toy can be strengthened with dedication.

A trainer who has the time and ability to build these reward games should not dismiss the candidate with less than stellar toy motivation. Instead, the trainer should look for the potential in the dog. When time allows, work with the dog daily for a week and note whether the dog improves in her toy motivation,

Reward Motivation

- The dog must have something he cares about greatly and will work for.
- A dog who is toy-motivated has either an extreme focus on playing ball or tugging with a toy. Most SAR handlers use toy motivation in search training.
- Toy motivation can be further developed, but you must seriously consider the time commitment involved.
- A dog who is food-motivated is extremely focused on the food reward even if he is tired or has just eaten. Most SAR handlers use food rewards only for obedience and agility and not in search training.

loses interest, or remains the same. Keep in mind that many shelter dogs have never seen a toy before and/or have belonged to people who didn't interact with them in play. Often, once someone takes the time to build this motivation in the dog, it takes minimal effort to maintain the toy/play game. If the intention is to pass the dog on to another person to handle once trained, then consideration must also be given to the likelihood that the new handler will be able to maintain the dog's motivation to work by maintaining the dog's reward game.

Food motivation

Motivation for food can be tested using a "high value" food reward, and noting how focused the dog stays on the food. (High-value food rewards are usually meats and are often human foods.) Most SAR handlers will use food mainly for obedience and agility, but some will incorporate food into the reward system during search training.

3.11 Hunt motivation

Hunt motivation is the willingness and dedication a dog displays in searching for an item. The trained search and rescue dog will be expected to use his scenting ability almost exclusively in this "hunt"; the untrained candidate, however, may also rely heavily on visual cues.

One of the most important steps in testing for hunt motivation is having something that the dog wants badly enough to hunt for it. (For example, if you don't smoke, you wouldn't care if someone threw a pack of cigarettes into the woods, and hence wouldn't exert much energy or time looking for them. If someone threw your car keys into the woods, however, you would be highly motivated to find your keys.) Some dogs will be highly oriented to people and will be willing to pursue and search for a person simply because of their love of people in general. Some dogs may only be interested in pursuing and searching for a person familiar to them, such as an owner, caregiver or trainer. Others will need to have a more specific reason (e.g., a toy or food reward) to pursue and locate the person.

To test for hunt motivation, choose a fenced location that contains some longer grass or obstacles that will visually hide an item (or person) as well as a cleared area. If the dog is not reliable off-lead, or a fenced area is unavailable, consider working with the dog on a long line to avoid losing the dog's focus if he starts to wander off. For initial testing, pick a quiet area without distractions. If the dog does well in a quiet area, then you can perform additional testing in different areas that do have distractions.



Liv does a short runaway demonstration.

Testing for hunt motivation using a person

Start by interacting with the dog closely by playing, jumping around and generally making a fool of yourself. (Note: If sudden movements startle the dog and she does not quickly recover, she is not an ideal SAR candidate.) If the dog is particularly bonded with someone, have that person perform the test. Use the reward item (e.g., toy or food) that you identified in earlier testing to create a bond with the dog. Once you have the dog engaged in play, follow these steps:

1. Without restraining the dog in any way, after you have gotten the dog's attention through play, run away from the dog into the clear area and see if the dog will pursue you. If he does, reward the dog with more silly play (or food) when he reaches you. If the dog is on a leash, make sure the person holding the lead does not restrain the dog in any way from pursuing you, as the dog may interpret the restraint as a correction.

2. If the dog will pursue you when not restrained, have an assistant lightly restrain the dog while you run a short distance and squat down. Do not allow the assistant to correct any pulling or attempts the dog makes to go after you. The assistant should simply hold the dog using a leash and flat collar or harness. Initially, run a short distance and have the other person release the dog while you are still running. If the dog successfully pursues you, then repeat the exercise, this time with your assistant holding the dog until you stop moving. If the dog is again successful, gradually have the assistant delay releasing the dog for longer periods after you have

Remember: A dog will only hunt for something he or she cares about. Use the results of the reward motivation testing to determine what to use for the hunt motivation test. If the dog is not interested in toys, but is very people-oriented, then you may be able to test for hunt drive using a person. If the dog is not interested in people or toys, he/she is not a good search and rescue candidate.



Petey, another graduate of the Search and Service Dog program, hunts for a toy.

- stopped moving. Remember to reward the dog with silly play when he reaches you. Note if the dog loses interest in pursuing you if his release is delayed.

3. Next, without restraining the dog, try running a short distance into some long grass or behind a tree or other obstruction. See if the dog will navigate the obstruction to pursue you, again remembering to reward the dog with some silly play when he reaches you.

4. If the dog will pursue you through an obstruction, have an assistant gently restrain the dog, initially releasing the dog while you are still in motion. If the dog successfully pursues you, then repeat the exercise, this time with your assistant holding the dog until you have stopped moving and have ducked down out of sight behind the obstruction. If the dog is again successful, gradually have the assistant delay releasing the dog for longer periods after you have stopped moving and are out of sight. Be sure to reward the dog each time with silly play. Again, note if the dog loses interest in pursuing you when his release is delayed.

If the dog is willing to pursue you and continue hunting until he has found you, the dog has good hunt motivation. If the dog initially pursues you, but gives up before he finds you, does he just wander off, showing a lack of commitment, or does he come back and look to the “handler” (your assistant) for help, showing good teamwork? If the dog does not pursue you, is it because he has a low reward motivation, and you have not yet built up this motivation?

The ideal candidate should pursue the “victim” and search until he/she has been located. An acceptable SAR candidate may initially search for the victim and then return to the handler (the assistant) looking for help. Dogs who don’t seem to care that a person has just run off or who quickly lose interest are not appropriate candidates.

If the dog stays focused during each of these exercises when there are no distractions, add in some mild distractions, such as people and other dogs walking by, and repeat the exercises again.

Testing for hunt motivation using a toy

If the dog has shown good focus on toys during the test for reward motivation, test for hunt drive using a toy. Make sure to use the type of toy the dog prefers (which you determined in the reward motivation exercises), and the type of play (fetch versus tug) he likes.

1. Engage the dog in a game with the toy, and then throw the toy to an assistant in sight of the dog. If the dog runs to the assistant to get the toy, have the

Helpful Hints

- Make sure your assistant does not correct the dog’s enthusiastic behavior.
- During “runaways,” disconnect the lead or make sure that the lead does not get tangled in vegetation and inadvertently make the dog think he is being corrected.
- Keep all of the exercises fun and always reward the dog.

A dog with good hunt skills and scent awareness will:

- Show a willingness to hunt for something or someone until he makes a find
- Show an ability and willingness to use his nose to locate something of value to him

assistant play with the dog, and then continue with the testing.

2. With an assistant holding the dog on lead, engage the dog in a game with the toy. Once the dog is focused on the toy, throw it a short distance out of sight into long grass or behind an obstacle. Have the assistant release the dog while the toy is still in the air, and allow the dog to pursue the toy. (Remind the assistant that he/she should not correct or discourage any enthusiastic behavior the dog demonstrates.) If the dog is willing to pursue the toy and continue hunting until she has found it, she has good hunt motivation. If the dog initially pursues the toy, but gives up before she finds it, does she just wander off, showing a lack of commitment, or does she come back and look to the “handler” (your assistant) for help, showing good teamwork? If the dog does not pursue the toy, is it because she has a low reward motivation, and you have not yet built up this motivation?

3. If the dog performs well on the first throw of the toy, repeat the throw in the same area, but this time delay the dog’s release until the toy has landed. Again, observe the dog’s efforts to locate the toy.

4. If the dog performs well on both types of short throws (immediate release and delayed release), try longer throws, first with immediate and then delayed releases. Again, observe the dog’s efforts to locate the toy.

The ideal candidate should pursue the toy and continue searching until he/she finds the toy. Acceptable candidates may initially pursue the toy and then return to the handler (the assistant) looking for help. If the dog did not show high toy motivation initially, he/she will not care about the toy enough to hunt for it. The hunt motivation test is only valid

if you have first discovered something that the dog actually cares about enough to hunt for it.

3.12 Scent awareness

A dog who shows awareness of scent and is interested in investigating will more naturally use his nose to locate items. To test a dog's scent awareness, get a toy or a food with a strong odor (e.g., tennis balls have a strong odor, and liver or liverwurst are good food choices) and place the item in a concrete block. Hide the block in a small pile of leaves or other light cover.

Allow the dog to watch you hide the object, and then turn him loose to explore the area undirected. See if the dog locates the scent and follows it to the source. Keep in mind that you have to use a toy or food item that the dog actually wants — or he won't expend much effort looking for the item.

You should have been able to determine the dog's interest in food and toys during the reward motivation testing. If the dog is highly social with people, you could also try hiding a person in the area, and wander with the dog through the area watching for signs that the dog recognizes human scent and wishes to find the person.

3.13 Willingness to please

SAR dogs are just one part, albeit an important one, of a team. A SAR dog candidate should show a willingness to please the humans around her. While the desire to please can be strengthened, a dog who doesn't seem at all concerned about human wants or needs will likely be a difficult animal to train, and will have issues with reliability.

3.14 Human bond

Again, because a SAR dog must work with a human partner, she should be capable of bonding with a person or persons. Most SAR dogs have a single handler, but some agencies use multiple handlers for



Petey shows his comfort level with climbing on odd surfaces.

a single dog. A dog who would rather not interact with people will be a poor candidate for training to locate missing persons. However, a “one man” dog may be totally suitable as long as that “one man” is his intended handler, or it is felt that the dog will transfer that loyalty to another person. Though the dog doesn't have to be willing to bond with more than one person, she must not show undue concern for or aggression toward other people, and the presence of other people in the search area must not be a distraction to her.

3.15 Energy level

Energy level is different from drive or motivation. An air-scent dog needs to have an appropriate amount of energy to be successful at his intended line of work. Candidates for wilderness air-scent SAR or tracking/trailing should be high-energy dogs likely to develop stamina. Since search areas usually encompass hundreds of acres, these dogs must be willing and able to cover large areas in a relatively short amount of time. These dogs, who may work on-lead or off-lead, are not doing fine or detailed work.

FOCUSED ENERGY is needed for SAR work, not frantic energy.

In contrast, a “forensic” detection canine, who is looking for evidence of a crime (e.g., narcotics, bombs, human remains), will often perform concentrated and detailed searches of small areas, such as a car, a yard or a house. These dogs need to have the stamina to work for prolonged periods, but they also must be capable of working slowly and methodically, and at times must be willing to work at a specific pace set by the handler (directed searching).

A good working knowledge of the style of detection work a dog is intended to perform will aid in choosing candidates with appropriate levels of energy. Keep in mind that a calm dog may be able to “rev up” for a search, and a high-energy dog may learn to work in a controlled manner. Decisions should be made with knowledge and consideration of both the dog and the abilities of the trainers involved in the program. Also, based on his/her lifestyle and personality, a handler may express a preference for a high-energy or a moderate-energy dog. Remember that the majority of search and rescue dogs are also house pets, so they must be able to live in a home without destroying it!

3.16 Agility and tolerance of odd surfaces

The SAR dog may be required to climb up and over natural obstructions, may be lifted over fences or into vehicles, or may work in locations where dogs might normally be uncomfortable. You’ll need to determine if the possible SAR candidate seems to be relatively agile and willing to follow you up and over obstacles, or if he/she seems to get very nervous climbing on odd surfaces. Dogs who are relatively “body confident” can be taught to accept new surfaces and locations. Dogs who become very stressed when placed on odd surfaces tend to make less than reliable SAR dogs because the underlying fear can resurface even after extensive training.

To start testing the dog’s confidence with new sur-

faces, first take the dog into a normal office or home environment and watch how the dog handles steps and slippery (i.e., uncarpeted) floors. If linoleum is too much for the dog, the rest of the testing will not be necessary.

Next, create some odd surfaces and obstacles on which to test the dog. Be creative with what you have lying around the shelter: Put an exercise pen, a folding metal crate or a chain-link panel flat on the floor; stack some concrete blocks and lay a board between them. Walking the dog over these surfaces will give you a good idea of his willingness to approach new situations with confidence. You should walk the dog slowly over each item several times. The first pass will tell you whether the dog is willing to try new things, and the next several passes will tell you whether the dog is willing to repeat an experience that may have been a little scary.

3.17 Sound sensitivity

Search and rescue dogs must be willing to continue working regardless of what is going on around them. Candidates should be tested for sensitivity or severe startle reactions to loud noises (e.g., whistles, sirens, clattering food dishes, loud engines). Dogs destined to work in urban search and rescue must have strong tolerance of the noisy chaos of a disaster scene, which can include heavy machinery, generators and horns. Wilderness dogs should also not be disturbed by noises to the point where they

Additional Considerations

- Because all search work is done as a human/canine team, the dog must be interested in pleasing his person/handler and must be willing to bond with one or more persons.
- The dog must have a good “core of confidence” and must be willing to negotiate odd surfaces and obstacles, and tolerate loud and startling noises.
- Think about all the unexpected things that may occur in the real world: Can this dog handle just about anything that comes along?

are pulled off task, even though their search environment may be less chaotic. It is acceptable for dogs to show a brief startle to a sudden noise, but the ideal candidate should recover quickly and not lose focus on the task at hand.

3.18 Real-world experience

A final test is to take the dog out into the real world and see how confident he is. Walking the dog through a downtown area, into a pet store or through a parking lot will help you find out if the dog's confidence extends to new and unfamiliar areas. Does the dog seem nervous around new dogs, new people, shopping carts or moving cars? If the dog shows some nervousness from lack of exposure, make several trips to the real-world location to see how quickly the dog learns that being out and about is a fun experience.

Chapter 4: Deciding on a Candidate's Suitability



Chapter 4: Deciding on a Candidate's Suitability

Now that you have gathered as much information as possible about a potential candidate for search and rescue training, you need to make a decision. While Best Friends is not a big believer in the pass/fail system, some dogs are not appropriate candidates for SAR training. So, the most important piece of this decision-making process is to be honest about the dog's qualifications. Do not sugar-coat or overlook anything you know or have discovered in your evaluation process; by misrepresenting a dog, you will set up the dog and the handler/adopter for failure, and harm your reputation.

Consider especially the reliability of the dog. Do you truly believe that this dog will be able to reliably perform trained behaviors? Remember that search and rescue involves saving lives, and an unreliable team can contribute to the death of a person.

Carefully review the criteria for a SAR candidate, and take a good hard look at your evaluation results. The decision may be easy: All your results may indicate that the dog is a strong candidate for search and rescue training, or you may have a single criterion (such as aggression toward humans) that indicates the dog is not a candidate. The decision is harder to make if the dog has some criteria that indicate he/she is a weaker but still a potential candidate. In that situation, you have to decide whether your trainers and/or the new adopters have the skills to take the potential the dog has shown and mold it into reliable SAR behaviors.

To help with the final decision, copy the review chart on the following pages, and circle the findings that best apply to the possible SAR candidate based on your findings during the evaluation process.



Ollie has been adopted by a family in Colorado and continues his training toward becoming certified as a SAR dog.

Search and Rescue Candidate Evaluation

Name of dog _____

Breed of dog _____ Age of dog _____

Evaluated by _____ Date _____

1. Size of the Dog

Toy or miniature	poor candidate
Small: 20-35 lbs.	possible candidate
Medium: 35-55 lbs.	ideal candidate
Large: 55-90 lbs.	possible candidate
Giant: over 90 lbs.	poor candidate

2. Breed Characteristics of the Dog

Herding, sporting breeds and mixes	ideal candidate
Other breeds and mixes	possible candidate

3. Coat Length and Color

Dog can likely work in any weather	ideal candidate
Dog will be limited in some weather	possible candidate

4. Age of the Dog

8 weeks – 6 months	possible candidate
6 months – 2 years	ideal candidate
2–3 years	possible candidate
3–4 years	poor candidate
Over 4 years	not a candidate

5. Sex of the Dog

Either sex, spayed/neutered

6. Health of the Dog

Good health: no known serious illnesses	ideal candidate
Recovered from previous serious illness	poor candidate
Poor health or orthopedic issues	not a candidate
Eye or visual issues	not a candidate
Hearing issues	not a candidate

7. Dog-to-Dog Interaction

Calm around or ignores other dogs	ideal candidate
Overly friendly or excited with other dogs	possible candidate
Shy or fearful around other dogs	possible candidate
Aggressive with other dogs	poor candidate

8. Interaction with Other Animals

Ignores or shows mild interest	ideal candidate
Mild focus: chase instinct	possible candidate
Shy or fearful around other animals	possible candidate
Extreme focus: chase instinct	poor candidate
Has killed other animals	not a candidate

9. Human Interaction

Friendly with all people	ideal candidate
Shy around people	poor candidate
Aggressive toward people	not a candidate

10. Reward Motivation

Strong play with multiple toys	ideal candidate
Strong play with one type of toy	strong candidate
Moderate play with one or more toys	possible candidate
Poor interest in play	poor candidate
No interest in toys	not a candidate

11. Hunt Motivation

Hunts for hidden article/person until found	ideal candidate
Hunts for article/person but looks for help	possible candidate
Hunts for article/person but gives up after time	possible candidate
Chases person/article only when moving	poor candidate
Doesn't chase or hunt for article/person	not a candidate

12. Scent Awareness

Uses nose to locate hidden food/toy	ideal candidate
Uses visual cues more than nose	possible candidate
Unable to successfully complete test	poor candidate

13. Willingness to Please

Eager to work for praise, food or toy	ideal candidate
Works only for food or toy	possible candidate
Distracted even when food or toy is offered	poor candidate
Not interested in pleasing people	not a candidate

14. Human Bond

Shows strong bonding to people	ideal candidate
Bonds to one person	possible candidate
Not bonded to people	not a candidate

15. Energy Level

Good energy and good focus	ideal candidate
Extremely high energy but can focus	possible candidate
Low energy and good focus	possible candidate
Frantic, unfocused energy	poor candidate
Low energy and poor focus	not a candidate

16. Agility and Tolerance of Odd Surfaces

Willing to try and repeat anything	ideal candidate
Initially nervous but succeeds and repeats	possible candidate
Tries something once but won't repeat	poor candidate
Fearful of new surfaces and locations	not a candidate

17. Sound Sensitivity

Remains focused regardless of noise	ideal candidate
Initially startles, then recovers	possible candidate
Startles and has prolonged recovery	poor candidate
Startles and doesn't recover	not a candidate

18. Real-World Experiences

Not frightened by real-world experiences	ideal candidate
Initial fear followed by recovery	possible candidate
Fearful with prolonged recovery	not a candidate

Appendix: U.S. Search and Rescue Teams Using Canines

Appendix: U.S. Search and Rescue Teams Using Canines

The following is a list of search and rescue teams around the country that have been identified through Internet research, referral and personal contacts. Best Friends Search and Service Dog program staff are not personally familiar with the majority of these teams, and do not represent that the team or the individuals within the team have been screened in any way. People and shelters thinking of placing dogs as search and rescue dogs should perform their own screening process before adopting a dog out to any person or organization.

Please contact the Best Friends Search and Service Dog program at kdashfield@nac.net or sherry@bestfriends.org if you know of additional search and rescue teams using canines in your area, or find that any of these teams are inactive.

International Organization

Canine Search and Recovery
www.csar.org

Training Assistance Organizations

Northeast Wilderness SAR
www.newsar.us/contact.asp

Search and Rescue Assist (SARA)
www.searchandrescueassist.com/
MD-USAR training assistance organization

Alabama

Alabama Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.alabamataskforce1.com/GetHome.event

HEMSI Search Dog Unit
www.hemsi.org/hemsi-special-teams/search-dog-uni

North Alabama Search Dog Association
www.nasdak9.org

North Baldwin Sheriff's Search and Rescue
www.nbssar.org/page6.html

Southwest Panhandle SAR
www.swpansar.org

Alaska

Alaska Search and Rescue Dogs
www.asard.org

SEA Dogs
www.seadogs.us

Arizona

Apache K9 Search and Rescue Unit
apachedogaz.tripod.com

Arizona Search Track and Recue
www.azstar.org

Arizona Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue (FEMA)
phoenix.gov/FIRE/aztf1.html

Coconino County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Flagstaff Unit, Inc.
coconinosar.org/sarhome.html

Maricopa Canine SAR
www.maricopa-k9.com

Navajo County Sheriff's Search and Rescue
www.navajocountyaz.gov/sheriff

Sonoran Search and Rescue
www.sonoransar.org

Southwest Rescue Dogs Inc
www.sarci.org/SRDI.htm

Yavapai County Sheriff's Response Team, Inc.
www.ycsrt.org

Arkansas

Crawford County Search and Rescue
sites.google.com/a/crawfordcountysar.org/www

Four States Search and Rescue
www.fourstatessar.com/index.htm

Franklin County Search and Rescue
www.fcoes.com/fcsar.htm

Pope County K9 Unit
www.popecok9.com

Saline County Search and Rescue
scsosherriff.org/page_view.php?id=6

Search Dog Alliance of Arkansas
sdaoar.com/index.html

Washington County Search and Rescue
www.co.washington.ar.us/SAR/Index.htm

California

California Task Force 1 (FEMA)
lafd.org/usar/LAFD%20Server/CATF1.html

California Task Force 2 (FEMA)
fire.lacounty.gov/default.asp

California Task Force 3 (FEMA)
www.usar.org/catf3

California Task Force 4 (FEMA)
www.catf-4.us

California Task Force 5 (FEMA)
www.catf5.org

California Task Force 6 (FEMA)
www.fema.gov/emergency/usr/locations.shtm

California Task Force 7 (FEMA)
www.sacfire.org/indexSub.cfm?page=794220

California Task Force 8 (FEMA)
www.sandiego.gov/fireandems/about/urban.shtml

Campbell County Search and Rescue
www.campbellcountysar.com

CARDA District 1
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_1

CARDA District 2
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_2

CARDA District 3
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_3

CARDA District 4
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_4

CARDA District 5
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_5

CARDA District 6
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_6

CARDA District 7
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_7

CARDA District 8
search-dogs.carda.org/join_district_8

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Reserve Forces Bureau — Search Dogs
www.lasearchdogs.org

Monterey Bay Search Dogs
www.montereybaysearchdogs.org

Southwest Search Dogs
www.swsdogs.org

Squaw Valley Avalanche Rescue Dogs
www.squawdogs.com/Home.html

Ventura County Sheriff's K9 Search and Rescue
www.vcsark9.org

Wilderness Finders Search Dog Teams (WOOF)
www.searchdogs.com

Colorado

Colorado Task Force 1 (FEMA)
www.co-tf1.org

El Paso County Search and Rescue
www.epcsar.org/Contact.aspx

Front Range Rescue Dogs
www.frontrangerescuedogs.org

K9 Search and Rescue
www.k9team.org/contact.html

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La Plata County Search and Rescue
www.laplata-sar.org

Larimer County SAR
www.larimercountysar.org/SARdogs.htm

Montezuma ARDA, Colorado Search Dogs
www.macsardogs.org

Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado
www.sardoc.org

Search and Rescue Dogs of the U.S.
www.sardogsus.org

Connecticut

Connecticut Canine Search and Rescue
www.ccsar.org

Connecticut Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.susar.org/teams/state.cfm?state=CT

DAWGS
www.dawgs.org

Florida

Florida Task Force 1 (FEMA)
www.miamidade.gov/mdfr

Florida Task Force 2 (FEMA)
www.ftf2.us

Florida Urban Search and Rescue Task Force 4 (SUSAR)
www.ftf4.org/ftf4

K9 Mounted Search and Rescue of South Florida, Inc.
www.angelfire.com/fl/k9sarsfl

Sarasota K9 Search and Rescue Inc.
www.k-9sar.net

Search and Rescue of Central Florida
www.sarcf.net

Georgia

Alpha Team K9 Search and Rescue
Dallas, Georgia
www.atsar.org

Central Georgia Search and Rescue
Eatonton, Georgia
centralgeorgiak9sar.com

Cohutta Search Dogs
www.cohuttasearchdogs.org

Dogs South K9 Search and Rescue Inc.
www.orgsites.com/ga/dogs-south/index.html

Georgia Piedmont Region K9 Search and Rescue
www.georgiasearchandrescue.com

Search and Rescue Dogs of Georgia
www.mindspring.com/~khuffines/sardog

Southeast Search and Rescue
sites.google.com/site/southeastsar

South Georgia Search Dogs
www.southgeorgiasearchdogs.com

Idaho

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue
www.imsaru.org/imsaru_dogs.html

Idaho Search and Rescue Dogs
isard.org

Search Dog North Idaho, Inc.
searchdognorthidaho.net

St. Joe's Valley Search and Rescue
stjoevalleysar.spaces.live.com

Illinois

Cross Roads Search and Rescue of Illinois
www.crsar.com

ILL-WIS Search Dogs
www.illwissardogs.org

Illinois Search Dogs
www.illinoissearchdogs.org

Illinois Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.mabas-il.org/MABASILUSAR/Pages/default.aspx

North Central Search and Rescue Dogs of Illinois
www.ncsar.org

Search and Rescue Dogs of Illinois
www.searchandrescuedogsofillinois.org

Vermillion County Search and Rescue
www.co.vermilion.il.us/ema/SAR/VCSAR.htm

Indiana

Advance K9 Search and Recovery
Indianapolis, Indiana
www.advancek9sar.com

Gibson County Emergency Management
www.gibsoncounty-in.gov/departments/ema/default.aspx

Indiana K9 Search and Recovery
indianak9sar.org

Indiana Task Force 1 (FEMA)
www.indy.gov/eGov/City/DPS/INTF1/Pages/INTF-1Home.aspx

Indy Search Dogs, Inc.
indysearchdogs.tripod.com

Midwest Search Dogs
www.midwestsearchdogs.org

PAWSAR
www.pawsarinc.org

Iowa

Iowa Task Force I (SUSAR)
www.iowausar.org

ISAR K9 (Iowa Search and Rescue)
www.isark9.org

Ohio Valley Search and Rescue
www.vsar.org

SAR Unit
www.sarunitinc.org

STAR 1 Search and Rescue
www.star1.org

Kansas

Kansas Search and Rescue Dog Association
www.ksarda.org

Midwest Special Response Teams
www.msrt.info

SAR Unit
www.sarunitinc.org

Sedgwick County EMA K9 Search and Rescue
www.scemk9.com

Kentucky

Bluegrass Search and Rescue
Lexington, Kentucky
www.bluegrasssar.com

Commonwealth Canine Search and Rescue
www.commonwealthcanine.org

Four Rivers K9 Search Rescue and Recovery Team
fourriversk9team.org/team.aspx

Grand Paws Search Dog Association
www.owencountyemergencyservices.com/grandpawssearchdog.htm

Jefferson County Search Dog Association
www.jcsda.com

Kentucky Search and Rescue
www.kysar.org

Louisiana

LaSAR Dog Team
www.lasardogs.org

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Louisiana Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.selatf-1.com

Maine

Maine Association for Search and Rescue
www.mesard.org

Maine Search and Rescue Dogs
www.mesard.org

Maryland

Bay Area Recovery Canines
Annapolis, Maryland
www.bayarearecoverycanines.com

Chesapeake Search Dogs
www.chesarda.org

Maryland Task Force 1 (FEMA)
www.mcfrc-spec-ops.org/mdtfl.html

Maryland Task Force 2 (SUSAR)
www.mdtf2.org

Mason Dixon Rescue Dogs
www.mdrd.org

Search and Rescue Dogs of Maryland
www.sardom.org

Massachusetts

MACRT (Massachusetts Canine Response Team)
www.macrt.net

Massachusetts Rescue and Recovery Canine Unit
www.mark9.us

Massachusetts Task Force One (FEMA)
www.matf.org

Search Dogs Northeast
www.searchdogsne.org

Michigan

Headwaters Search and Rescue K9
www.hsark9.org

K-9 ONE Search and Rescue
www.k-9one.org

Michigan Search and Rescue
www.michigansar.org

Michigan Search Dog Association
www.msdk9.com/publicsite/index.aspx

Michigan Urban Search and Rescue (SUSAR)
www.mitfl.us/?page_id=114

Mid Atlantic Dogs
www.midatlanticdogs.org

Midwest Special Response Teams
www.msrt.info

Superior Search and Rescue
www.cee.mtu.edu/~hssantef/sar/intro.html

West Michigan Search and Rescue
www.wmsar.org

Wolverine Canine Search and Rescue
www.wolverinek9sar.org

Minnesota

Central Lakes Search and Rescue
www.centrallakessar.org

K-9 Emergency Response Teams
kert.synthasite.com

MinnSARDA
www.minnsarda.com

Minnesota Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.mntf1.org/pub_home.php

Northstar Search and Rescue Dog Association
www.northstarsarda.com

Search, Rescue and Recovery Resources
of Minnesota
www.srrrmn.org

Missouri

Eureka Fire Protection District Mounted/Canine
Unit
www.efpd.org/?mdp=msar

Gateway Search Dogs, Inc.
gatewaysearchdogs.org

Missouri K9 Search and Rescue, Inc.
mok9sar.org/default.aspx

Missouri Region C K9 Search and Rescue
moregionck9search-rescue.com/K9/Default.aspx

Missouri Search and Rescue K9
www.missourisearchandrescue.com

Missouri Task Force One (FEMA)
www.bcfdm.com/missouri_tf1

North Central Missouri K9 Search and Rescue
www.ringsurf.com/tv/30147-ncmo_search_and_rescue.html

SAR Unit
www.sarunitinc.org

Scott County Search and Rescue K9 Unit
scottcok9unit.org

Shawn Hornbeck Foundation Search and Rescue
Team
www.sarteam.com

Show Me Search and Rescue K9 Unit
showmek9.homestead.com

St. Charles Search and Rescue K9 Unit
www.scsark9.com

Montana

Absaroka Search Dogs
www.absarokasearchdogs.org

Central Montana Search Dogs
searchdogscmsd.org

Clarkfork-Bitterroot Search Dogs
sardogsmontana.com/contact

Dave Thompson Search and Rescue Association
dtsar.org/whatis

Flathead County Search and Rescue
www.flatheadsar.com/0506II/roster.htm

Western Montana Search Dogs
www.westernmontanasearchdogs.org

Nebraska

Midwest Special Response Teams
www.msrt.info

Nebraska Task Force One (FEMA)
lincoln.ne.gov/city/fire/usar/index.htm

SAR Unit
www.sarunitinc.org

Nevada

Elko County Sheriff Search and Rescue
www.ecsposse.org

Nevada Task Force One (FEMA)
[fire.co.clark.nv.us/\(S\(tlthcb45mxinlz55jdhobd55\)\)/home.aspx](http://fire.co.clark.nv.us/(S(tlthcb45mxinlz55jdhobd55))/home.aspx)

New Hampshire

New England K9 Search and Rescue
www.nek9sar.org

Search Dogs Northeast
www.searchdogsne.org

New Jersey

Central Jersey Technical Rescue Team, Inc.
Fanwood, New Jersey
www.cjtrt.org

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New Jersey Initial Response Team
www.njirt.org

New Jersey Rescue and Recovery Canines
www.njrescue-recoveryk9.org

New Jersey Search and Rescue
www.njsar.org

New Jersey Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.state.nj.us/njoem/taskforce1/index.html

Palisades Search and Rescue Dogs
www.palisadesk9sar.org

West Jersey Search and Rescue
www.westjerseyk9.org

New Mexico

Cibola Search and Rescue
www.cibolasar.org/intro.shtml

Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue
www.mvsar.org

Mountain Canine Corps
www.mc2sar.org

New Mexico Search and Rescue Council
www.nmesc.org/resources.htm

New Mexico Task Force One (FEMA)
www.nmtf1.org

Sandia Search Dogs
pages.swcp.com/ssd

New York

Amigo Search Dogs
Walton, New York
www.nysfedsar.org/01amigo.htm

Cayuga County Highland SAR
Auburn, New York
www.cayuganet.org/highlandsar/index.htm

Central Montana Search Dogs of New York
searchdogscmsd.org

Eagle Valley Search Dogs
evdogs.org

Lower Adirondack SAR
www.nysfedsar.org/10lowad.htm

Massasauga Search and Rescue Team
www.nysfedsar.org/11massa.htm

New York Search and Rescue
www.newyorksearchandrescue.org

New York Task Force One (FEMA)
www.nytf1.org

New York Task Force Two (SUSAR)
www.cdutsara.org/k9.html

Oswego County SAR
www.oswegosar.org

Ramapo Rescue Dog Association
www.ramaporescuedog.org

Search and Rescue of Northern Adirondacks
www.sarnak.org

Search Team 5-1
www.nysfedsar.org/22team51.htm

Western NY Search Dogs
www.wnysd.org

Wilderness SAR Team Inc.
www.wsar.org

North Carolina

Brunswick SAR
www.brunswicksar.org

NC CERT Inc.
www.nccert.org

North Carolina Search and Rescue Council
www.ncsarac.com

North Carolina Rescue Dog Association
www.ncsarda.org

Wake Canine SAR
wcsar.net/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

Ohio

Big Creek Search Dog Team
Painesville, Ohio
www.bigcreekk9sar.com

Buckeye Search and Rescue Dogs
Madeira, Ohio
www.buckeyesardogs.org

K-9 SOS
k9sosinc.org

K9 Response, Inc.
www.k9response.org

Northern Ohio Search Emergency Services
www.ohfedk9sar.org/html/members.html

Ohio K9 Search Team, Inc.
www.ohiok9.org/contact.html

Ohio Region Two USAR (SUSAR)
www.uhems.com/usar

Ohio Search Dog Association
www.osdak9.org

Ohio Task Force One (FEMA)
www.ohtf1.com

South Western Ohio Search and Rescue
swosar.org

Steel Valley Search Dogs
www.ohfedk9sar.org/html/members.html

Tri-State Search and Rescue
www.tssar.com

Oklahoma

Independent Canine Handlers
www.independentk9handlers.org

Pathfinder SAR
www.pathfindersar.org

Oregon

Oregon K9 Search Teams
www.ok9st.org

Oregon Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/.../USAR/USAR.../Rescue_Technician.pdf

Pacific Northwest Search and Rescue
www.pnwsar.org

Search One K9 Detection
www.searchonek9.org

Pennsylvania

Canine Aided Emergency Search and Rescue
www.caesarinc.org

Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
www.amrg.info

Greater Philadelphia SAR
www.gpsar.org

Mason Dixon Rescue Dogs
www.mdrd.org

Pennsylvania Task Force One (FEMA)
www.pa-tf1.com

Pocono Search and Rescue
www.psar.us

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Red Rose Canine Search and Rescue
www.redrosek9.com

Search and Rescue Dogs of Pennsylvania
www.sardogs.org

Somerset County Search and Rescue
www.scsar.org

Specialty Dog Unit
www.angelfire.com/pa4/SpecialtyDogUnit

STRIKE Canine
www.strikek9.org

Susquehanna Search and Rescue
sqsar.com

Valley Search and Rescue
valleysar.com

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Canine Search and Rescue
www.ricsar.org

Rhode Island Urban Search and Rescue
www.riusar.com/contact.php

Search Dogs Northeast
www.searchdogsne.org

South Carolina

South Carolina Search and Rescue Dog Association
www.scsarda.org

South Carolina Search Dogs Inc.
www.scsearchdogs.com

South Carolina Task Force One (SUSAR)
www.sctf1.sc.gov

STARR Team
www.starrsearchteam.com

Urban Search and Rescue K9
www.usark9.org

South Dakota

South Dakota SAR Dog Association
www.sdsrda.org

Tennessee

Tennessee Task Force One (FEMA)
www.tntf1.org

Tennessee Task Force Two (SUSAR)
www.tntf2.org

Tennessee Task Force Three (SUSAR)
www.susar.org/teams/state.cfm?State=TN

Texas

Alamo Area Search and Rescue
Helotes, Texas
www.alamoareasar.org

Central Texas Search and Rescue
www.rothcala.com/CenTexSAR.html

Amarillo Alliance of Search K-9's
www.aask-sar.org/index_aboutus.htm

Galveston County SAR
www.netpets.org/dogs/dogsar/texas.html

Greater Bexar County K9 SAR
www.angelfire.com/tx4/rescuetechs

Greater Houston Search Dogs
www.ghsd.org

Hudson Fire Department K9 Search and Rescue
www.etk9sar.com

K-9 Search and Rescue of Texas
www.k9sartx.org

MARK-9 Search and Rescue
www.mark9.org

North Texas Volunteer Mantrailers
www.netpets.org/dogs/dogsar/texas.html

Panhandle Search and Rescue
pansar.voices-inc.com

Randall County Sheriff's Posse
randallcountysheriffsposse.org

San Antonio's Blacksun Search and Rescue
Canine Team
www.blacksunrb.com/SAR.htm

SARquest Search Specialists
www.sarquest.org

Search Dog Network
www.searchdogs.org

Search One Rescue Team
www.searchone.org

Southeast Texas Search and Rescue Alliance
www.saralliance.org

Special K-9's
www.special-k9s.org

South Texas K9 Search and Rescue
www.southtexask9sar.com

TASK Canine (Texas Alliance of Search Canines)
www.taskcanine.com/task/default.htm

Texas Bloodhound Search and Rescue
www.portarthur.com/tbsar

Texas Task Force One (FEMA)
usar.tamu.edu

Texas Task Force Two (SUSAR)
www.northtexasusar.com

Travis County Search and Rescue
www.tcsar.org

True North K-9 Search and Rescue
www.truenorthk9sar.com/index.html

US-HERO
www.ushero.org

Van Zandt County BloodHound Team
www.members.tripod.com/v.z.c.b.t

Utah

American Search Dogs
www.americansearchdogs.org/home.php
Ogden, Utah

Great Basin K9 Search and Rescue
greatbasink-9sar.org/home

Rocky Mountain Search Dogs
www.rockymountainrescuedogs.com

Utah Task Force One (FEMA)
www.utahtaskforce1.org/default.aspx

Vermont

New England K9 Search and Rescue
www.nek9sar.org

Virginia

Blue and Gray Search and Rescue Dogs
Harrisonburg, Virginia
blueandgraysearchdogs.com

Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group
Charlottesville, Virginia
www.brmmrg.org

Dogs East
www.dogseast.com

Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs
www.gardk9.org

K9 Alert
k9alert.org

Top of Virginia Search and Rescue
www.tovsar.org

Virginia Bloodhound Association
www.vbsar.org

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Virginia Search and Rescue Dog Association
www.vsrda.org

Virginia Task Force One (FEMA)
www.vatf1.org

Virginia Task Force Two (FEMA)
www.vatf2.com

Washington

Dog Alert Rescue Team
wa-sar.net/DetailRecord.php?RecID=90

German Shepherd Search Dogs of Washington State
www.gssd.org

Justice SAR Dogs
wa-sar.net/DetailRecord.php?RecID=91

Kent County Sheriff Emergency Management
Division
www.kentcounty.com/ema

King County Search Dogs
kcsearchdogs.org/contactus.htm

Mantrackers and Search Dogs
wa-sar.net/DetailRecord.php?RecID=92

North Cascade K-9 Search and Rescue
wa-sar.net/DetailRecord.php?RecID=219

Northwest Bloodhound Search and Rescue
www.nwbloodhounds.org

Northwest Disaster Search Dogs
ndsd.net/index.php?q=contact

Search One K9 Detection
www.searchonek9.org

Washington Task Force One (FEMA)
www.fema.gov/emergency/usr/locations.shtm

West Coast Search Dogs of Washington
www.wcsearchdogs.org

Yakima County Sheriff Search and Rescue K9 Team
www.yakimacounty.us/sar/canine.html

West Virginia

Barbour County Tactical Search and Recovery
Teams
www.bctsr.com/BCTSRT/Welcome.html

Northern Ohio Valley Search and Rescue
www.novasar-team.us

Three Rivers Search and Rescue
www.trasar.org/index.html

West Virginia K9 SAR
www.wvk9sar.org

Wisconsin

911 BC K9 Search and Recovery
Dousman, Wisconsin
www.911bc.org

Headwaters Search and Rescue K9
www.hsark9.org

K-9 Emergency Response Teams
kert.synthasite.com

People and Paws SAR
www.peopleandpaws.org

Sunshine Service Dogs Search and Rescue
www.sunshineservicedogsinc.org/search-and-rescue.php

Wisconsin Interstate Search and Recovery K9 Team
www.wisark9.org

Wisconsin K9 SOS Search and Rescue
www.k9sos.org

Wolf River K9 Search and Rescue
www.wolfriverk9searchandrescue.org

Wyoming

High Country Canine Wyoming
www.highcountryk9.org

Jackson Hole Search Dogs
www.jhsearchdogs.org

Northwest K9 Search and Recovery
www.nwk9sar.com

Wyoming K9 Search and Rescue
www.wyomingk9sar.org

