



RCMP Civilian GSAR Dog Standards



RCMP Civilian GSAR Dog Standards

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RCMP Civilian GSAR Dog Standards

Definitions

RCMP - Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

PDS - Police Dog Service.

PDSTC - Police Dog Service Training Centre.

Police Force of Jurisdiction - The police force responsible for the delivery of policing duties within that municipal, provincial, territorial, or federal area.

Dog Handler - Any person who is in control of a canine for the purpose of working or training for an official purpose (SAR or police duties).

Dog - Any canine used for police or SAR duties.

Dog Team - A combination of a person and a dog that are working together to be or have been validated to perform SAR duties.

Validation - Annual testing of the dog team to determine if the dog team meets the national standards for a civilian SAR dog team.

Validator - An active/current RCMP Provincial/Territorial coordinator or delegate police dog handler.

Delegate - An active/current RCMP dog handler or a police dog handler from another police agency that is trained and validated by the RCMP Police Dog Service Training Centre.

Live Hide - A living person.

Article - A piece of cloth or other object with human scent on it.

Indication - A behaviour or action from the dog to demonstrate the dog has detected some form of human scent.

Search - Dog using its nose and the air currents in order to try and locate human odour.

Search Area - An area defined by the validator.

Tracking - A nose down dog that uses its nose to detect and follow a human scent trail on the ground.

Track- A human scent trail on the ground.



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Handler Selection – Requirements

- Must have successfully completed Basic GSAR and Team Leader training that is equivalent to or exceeds the Core Competency Standards (Z1620-15) for GSAR.
- Must have been a GSAR member for at least 3 years.
- Must be a member in good standing with a recognized provincial/territorial GSAR group with documented support from the Board of Directors.
- Must be identified as a team player and possess the ability to take direction.
- Must be able to demonstrate the ability to utilize a map, compass and GPS (Appendix I).
- Must complete a Criminal Records check including vulnerable persons every 3 years.
- Must be physically fit with supporting documentation from a physician at the time of annual validation.
- Must have a valid First Aid and CPR certification.
- Must have successfully completed Incident Command System training to the level of at least ICS 200.
- Must be familiar with Search Urgency and be prepared to discuss the categories used to determine Urgency.
- Must be familiar with Lost Person Behaviour and be prepared to discuss subject categories.
- Must possess a personal survival kit and be prepared to demonstrate its use.
- Must have completed Bear Safety training (in applicable geographical locations).
- Must have completed Helicopter Safety training in areas where helicopters are utilized during GSAR deployments.

* The administration of handler selection is the responsibility of the province / territory of jurisdiction.



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Civilian SAR Dog Requirements

- Must have strong retrieve/search drive.
- Must have an even temperament.
- Must be of suitable age.
- Must be of a suitable breed for SAR work (Sporting, Retrieving and Herding dogs are preferred).
- Must be well socialized, including with other animals.
- Must **not** be dog or person aggressive.
- Must be healthy and physically fit.
- Must be fully vaccinated.

* The administration of appropriate dogs to be used for Search and Rescue is the responsibility of the province / territory of jurisdiction.



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Validation Process

Annually, each civilian GSAR dog team will be required to successfully complete a validation process. The annual validation will be conducted by the RCMP PDS Provincial Coordinator or his/her delegate. This delegate must be a current validated RCMP PDS handler, or a PDS handler from another agency that was trained and validated by the RCMP.

The civilian GSAR dog team must successfully meet all of the standards set forth for Obedience, Tracking, Searching and Agility. Once the team has achieved this standard, the team will be validated for 1 year.

If a civilian GSAR dog team fails to meet any part of the standards set forth, the team will immediately be removed as an active team and cannot be used in any capacity during a SAR deployment. Re-testing will be at the discretion of the validator in consultation with the handler and applicable GSAR executive.

If a team fails to validate in 2 consecutive years, regardless of the profiles it fails, that team will not be considered for any further validation attempts.

Annual validation dates, times and location will be determined by the RCMP PDS Provincial Coordinator. All civilian GSAR dog teams will be required to attend during their assigned validation period. Failure to attend will result in the team's validation being removed, and the team not being allowed to work on active GSAR deployments. Recognizing that civilian handlers are volunteers, as much advance notice as possible for validation dates will be given.

If a civilian GSAR dog team knowingly participates in a SAR deployment without a valid annual validation, the handler will forfeit his/her rights to be validated in the future.

Prior to participating in the annual civilian GSAR dog validations, each handler will need to produce a document showing support from their respective SAR group. This document must be updated annually. It should also: list the name of the SAR group, and the handler and dog which that SAR group is supporting; be dated for the current year; and, signed by an executive member of that SAR group. If this document is not produced, the team will not be validated. As well, the respective GSAR executive will be notified.



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Validation Standards

Tracking

At the beginning of the tracking evaluation, the handler will be assessed on the level of preparedness (clothing, footwear, equipment). If the evaluator believes that the handler is not properly prepared, the evaluation will be terminated.

The team must be able to complete a 2 km unknown, unmarked, approximately 45 minutes old track laid by 1 quarry in a rural environment over a variety of terrain including open fields and bush. The track should have, but is not limited, to:

- 2 road crossings;
- 8 turns, 4 of which must be 90 degrees;
- 1 dead end at least 15 metres in length;
- at least one track related article, no more than 4, to be placed by track layer;
- the task must be completed within 1 hour.

Key Points

- The dog must display drive and focus, and have a “nose down” tracking attitude.
- The dog must be able to work past distractions (animal, people or environment).
- The dog must not aggress the quarry.
- The dog must indicate a minimum of one, and no more than 4, track related articles.
- The handler must demonstrate an ability to work and read the dog.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to “cast” the dog in order to locate the track in a general area.
- The handler must maintain contact and control of the dog throughout the tracking exercise.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to keep up with the dog and not impede its pace or abilities due to poor fitness.



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- If there is “track loss”, the handler must demonstrate the ability to circle the dog and relocate the track. Circling is a systematic approach to covering terrain in order to relocate. Aimless wandering is not acceptable.
- The task must be completed within an hour.
- At the conclusion of the track, the handler must demonstrate the ability to debrief the validator by describing where he/she tracked, if and where anything was indicated or located by the dog, and show where the track went on a map.



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Validation Standards

Searching

At the beginning of at least one (1) search scenario, the handler must be prepared to discuss Search Urgency, Lost Person Behaviour, Decision Points and Hazard Assessment in relation to the details provided. Before deploying the dog, the handler must discuss his/her search plan with supporting rationale (terrain features, wind direction) and display proper use of equipment such as map/compass/GPS.

The handler must be able to explain the environmental factors that may affect the dog's performance and what the handler can do to mitigate those factors.

The handler must be able to explain the importance of maintaining the integrity of the scene if a deceased person is located. Upon recovering either an article or victim, the handler must demonstrate proper procedure with respect to communicating with the Incident Command Post (ICP), recording the exact location (GPS), handling the item found, and written documentation.

When working in Bear Country, the handler must be able to explain the disadvantage of searching with a dog and discuss steps that the handler can take to mitigate the risk.

Scenario 1

Live Hide. In an area 400 m x 400 m, have a quarry hiding for 20 minutes in light bush. The team must demonstrate the ability to plan and execute the search using good patterning and the wind. The team must also locate 2 medium sized articles. The search will be deemed finished when the handler indicates to the validator that they have completed the exercise.

Scenario 2

Night Search. In an area 400 m x 400 m including open field and light bush, using good navigational skills, patterning, and by taking advantage of the wind, the team will conduct a search locating 2 medium sized articles. The articles must have been in place for a minimum of 10 hours. The search will be deemed finished when the handler indicates to the validator that they have completed the exercise.



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Scenario 3

Negative Search. In an area 400 m x 400 m including open field and light bush, the team must conduct a search for a person or article. The search area will not have any people or articles to find. The team must be able to complete the search and state to the validator that the entire area has been searched, and that they did not locate anything. The search will be deemed finished when the handler indicates to the validator that they have completed the exercise.

During all search scenarios, the team must demonstrate the ability to safely navigate and cover the entire search area. There is a 45-minute time limit for each scenario to be conducted.

Key Points

- The dog must demonstrate the ability to range, show determination and drive.
- The dog must be able to work through distractions (animal, people, or environment).
- The dog must be in control and respond to all commands.
- The dog must not aggress the quarry.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to read the dog, and be able to differentiate the difference between animal and human interest.
- The handler must demonstrate the ability to plan a logical and efficient coverage of search areas which gives their team the best possible chance of success, and to implement the plan effectively. Successful implementation of the plan includes the ability to change the plan appropriately if required (e.g., due to environmental changes), and coverage of ground missed due to dog indicating and pursuing a scent. The search must be implemented in a manner such that no significant portion of the designated search area is omitted.
- The handler must demonstrate good control of the dog.
- The handler must effectively debrief the validator as to the area searched by the dog, any indications made by the dog, and any items found by the dog. The handler will also be required to show the area searched by the dog on a map.



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Validation Standards

Obedience

Both on and off line, individually and in a group, the team must demonstrate the ability to:

- heel;
- sit;
- down;
- heel at jog and walk;
- down at heel;
- stay at 5 minutes (handler in sight at least 15 m away);
- recall (come from 15 m).

Key Points

- The handler will be assessed on his/her ability to execute the above noted exercises.
- The handler may use verbal or hand signals, or both, to direct the dog.
- The dog will be assessed on his/her focus on the handler, execution of the commands and ability to work around distractions (people or animals).
- The team should be able to complete all movements with minimal corrections from the handler.



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Validation Standards

Agility

The team must be able to demonstrate the ability to travel through a variety of different types of terrain including light bush, heavy bush, and open fields. This will be evaluated throughout this validation process.

Key Points

- The dog's abilities and willingness to work in different environments (jumping, balancing, breaking trail, etc.).
- The handler's abilities to assist the dog where needed.



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Additional Points

- The handler must have the inherent skill level and ability to read and interpret the dog's actions and behaviours.
- The handler must demonstrate appropriate management of the canine member of the team, including a rest schedule, access to water, encouragement, appropriate praise and guidance through directional control.
- The handler should have an understanding of human scent, and how the terrain and weather and time can affect it.
- The handler must be able to safely and efficiently navigate a variety of terrain.
- The handler must demonstrate a proficiency with line handling whenever a line is being used.
- The handler should be able to handle or lift the dog in order to overcome some obstacles.
- The dog must show a willingness to work and a determination to continue working for extended periods of time.



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Appendix I

Maps

- Handler must explain the different types of maps that may be utilized during a GSAR deployment and the pros/cons of each.
- Handler must demonstrate the ability to obtain a UTM coordinate from a topographical map for a given point.
- Handler must demonstrate the ability to read terrain features from a topographical map, and explain areas that would be suitable for dog deployments and areas that would not be suitable. The handler must also be able to speak to Hazard Assessment for particular terrain features.
- Handler must be able to explain map scale.

Compass

- Handler must explain the 360-degree system.
- Handler must explain declination and demonstrate the ability to set declination on a compass for the particular evaluation location.
- Handler must be able to list possible interference factors.

GPS

- Handler must demonstrate the ability to load coordinates and the ability to set travel route.
- Handler must be able to explain the importance of map datum, and demonstrate the ability to load the proper map datum for the particular search map.
- Handler must demonstrate the ability to manipulate the GPS unit with different coordinate systems.
- Handler must explain the importance of calibrating the GPS unit and demonstrate the ability to do so.
- Handler must demonstrate the ability to start, save and clear track logs.



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Appendix II

CIVILIAN SAR DOG TEAM VALIDATION

Handler/Dog

Date:

Location:

SAR Group:

Support Letter: Y N

OBEDIENCE

Heel	Y	N	Sit	Y	N	Down	Y	N
Heel at jog	Y	N	Heel at walk	Y	N	Sit at heel	Y	N
Down at heel	Y	N	Stay (5 mins)	Y	N	Recall (15 m)	Y	N
Individual	Y	N	Group	Y	N			
Off line	Y	N						

Objectives met: YES NO



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TRACKING

Nose down Y N Does dog distract Y N

Track loss Strong Weak Relocations Strong Weak

Pace Fast Normal Slow Articles Y N

(Strong = dog behaviour easy to see. Weak= dog behaviour subtle to see or not present)

Line work Strong Weak Circling Strong Weak

Reading the dog Strong Weak Pace management Strong Weak

Verbal commands Strong Weak Debriefing Strong Weak

(Strong = demonstrates solid ability for skill. Weak = needs to improve skill)

Team may have up to 2 (two) “weak” areas and still meet the objectives

Time to complete:

Objectives met: YES NO



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AGILITY

Dog willing to push bush	Y	N	Dog can jump	Y	N
Handler can assist dog	Y	N	Dog well familiarized	Y	N

Objectives met: YES NO

SEARCHING

Live Hide

Indications	Strong	Weak	Does dog range	Y	N	
Verbal commands	Strong	Weak	Does dog distract	Y	N	
Response to commands	Strong	Weak	Hide aggression	Y	N	
Reading dog	Strong	Weak	Area covered	Y	N	
Intensity	Strong	Weak	Line	On	Off	Dragging

(Strong = demonstrates solid ability for skill. Weak = needs to improve skill)

Time to complete search:



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Objectives met: YES NO

Night Search

Indications Strong Weak Does dog range Y N

Verbal commands Strong Weak Does dog distract Y N

Response to commands Strong Weak Hide aggression Y N

Reading dog Strong Weak Area covered Y N

Intensity Strong Weak Line On Off Dragging

(Strong = demonstrates solid ability for skill. Weak = needs to improve skill)

Time to complete search:

Objectives met: YES NO



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Negative Search

Indications Strong Weak Does dog range Y N

Verbal commands Strong Weak Does dog distract Y N

Response to commands Strong Weak Hide aggression Y N

Reading dog Strong Weak Area covered Y N

Intensity Strong Weak Line On Off Dragging
(Strong = demonstrates solid ability for skill. Weak = needs to improve skill)

Time to complete search:

Objectives met: YES NO



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ALL OBJECTIVES MET:

YES

NO

NOTES:

Validator:

Handler: