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Standard Guide for Demonstrating Obedience and Agility in Search and Rescue Dogs[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F1879; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This guide establishes the minimum obedience and agility expected of canines that are part of a search dog team or crew.

1.2 Further training is required for a canine before it may perform as a member of a search dog team or crew.

1.3 This guide applies to canine members of all search resources classified in ASTM F1848 Standard Classification System for Canine Search Resources.

1.3.1 The advanced obedience and agility skills required for canine members of Kind D (Disaster/Collapsed Structure Search) dog teams or crews are not defined in this guide.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.5 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*[2]

F1633 Guide for Techniques in Land Search (Withdrawn 2017)[3]

F1848 Classification System for Canine Search Resources

F2209 Guide for Training of Land Search Team Member

2.2 *Other Document:*[4]

SWGDOG SC1 Terminology

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *about turn, n*—an abrupt 180° reversal of direction performed by a dog upon the command of the handler.

3.1.2 *aggressive behavior, n*—attempted or actual unprovoked attack on another canine or person. A canine may also be evaluated as aggressive if it exhibits significant warning signs of imminent unprovoked attack (continuous growling, snarling, fear-barking, etc.)

3.1.3 *agility, n*—an aspect of a dog's physical condition that characterizes the dog's dexterity and ease of movement.

3.1.4 *obedience, n*—an aspect of a dog's behavior that characterizes the dog's ability to follow instructions.

3.1.5 *off-lead, n*—a working mode for a dog where the dog and handler are not connected physically, and control of the dog is established through audible commands or visual signals.

3.1.6 *on-lead, n*—a working mode for a dog and handler physically attached by a leash.

3.2 Definitions of terms not defined in this standard can be found in Guide F1633, Guide F2209, Classification F1848, and SWGDOG SC1.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This guide establishes the minimum level of obedience and agility required for canines to perform safely and effectively on a search dog team or crew.

4.2 Obedience skills ensure that a dog is under the control of the handler, that it will not interfere with other resources such as search team members, rescue personnel, other search dogs, and members of the public, it can be left without the handler's supervision, and it can be evacuated by someone other than the handler.

4.2.1 All search dogs shall demonstrate the on-lead obedience skills defined in this guide.

[1] This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F32 on Search and Rescue and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F32.02 on Management and Operations.

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[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

[3] The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

[4] Scientific Working Group on Dog and Orthogonal detector Guidelines, FIU - MMC, Miami, FL 33199, http://casgroup.fiu.edu/pages/docs/1062/1335294274_SC1_Terminology_%28abcdefghijk%29.pdf

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4.2.2 All search dogs that work off-lead shall also demonstrate the off-lead obedience skills defined in this guide.

4.2.3 Off-lead obedience skills shall be demonstrated in the vicinity of a group of people and other dogs, with the accompanying noise and confusion common to search and rescue operations.

4.3 Agility skills demonstrate the dog's ability to negotiate terrain and obstacles that may be present in a search area. They also demonstrate the dog's ability to work in an unfamiliar environment with unstable or loose objects underfoot.

4.3.1 All search dogs shall demonstrate the agility skills defined in this guide.

4.3.2 Off-lead search dogs shall perform all agility skills off-lead. On-lead search dogs may perform agility skills on or off lead, at the discretion of the handler. The use of a lead shall neither enhance nor diminish a dog's ability to demonstrate its agility.

4.3.3 Spotters should be provided for dogs demonstrating agility skills. The spotters, however, should neither enhance nor diminish a dog's ability to demonstrate its agility.

4.4 Handlers shall direct the dog with minimal commands.

4.4.1 Continuous commands, or excessive talking to the dog, shall not be allowed.

4.4.2 Occasional reminder commands and some praise shall be acceptable.

4.5 This guide may be used by units, handlers, and requesting agencies to evaluate canine search resources. It may also be used for establishing local performance guidelines or standards.

4.6 This guide by itself is not a training document, but may be used to develop a training document or program.

4.7 Nothing in this guide precludes an AHJ from adding additional obedience or agility requirements.

4.8 The skills and abilities presented in the following sections are not in any particular order and do not represent a training sequence.

4.9 The AHJ is responsible for determining how to evaluate the obedience and agility of search dogs.

5. Obedience Skills

5.1 A search dog shall demonstrate that it will ride in a controlled manner in or on means of transportation used in the normal area of operations, such as motor vehicles, watercraft, helicopters, snow machines, etc.

5.2 A search dog shall not display aggressive behavior towards people or other canines in the following situations:

5.2.1 When in a vehicle with its handler, moving or parked, with other dogs and handlers.

5.2.2 When a person approaches and engages in conversation with the handler while the search dog is at heel or sitting.

5.2.3 When finding or approaching a person in the field.

5.3 A search dog that works primarily on-lead shall demonstrate that it will perform the following skills, under the direction of the handler, while on-lead in a moving crowd of at least five people. Commands may be audible, visual, or both. The lead shall be loose and the dog shall be at heel (that is, beside the handler, under the handler's control, and attentive to the handler):

5.3.1 Right turn,

5.3.2 Left turn,

5.3.3 About turn,

5.3.4 Stop or halt, and

5.3.5 *Change Pace*—Normal, fast, and slow.

5.4 A search dog that works primarily off-lead shall demonstrate that it will, on command, perform the following off-lead skills under the direction of the handler, while off lead with the dog at a heel (that is, beside the handler, under the handler's control, and attentive to the handler). Commands may be audible, visual, or both:

5.4.1 Right turn,

5.4.2 Left turn,

5.4.3 About turn,

5.4.4 Come directly to the handler from at least 50 ft (15 m) away,

5.4.5 *Unattended Stay*—Perform an unattended stay of at least 5 min in duration where the handler remains in sight of the dog and the handler is at least 20 ft (6.1 m) from the dog, and

5.4.6 *Emergency Stop*—The canine is sent out to free roam. Once the dog is at least 25 m from the handler, the handler shall command the dog to stop (sit down or stand) and the dog must stop within 10 m of where it was when the command was given.

6. Agility Skills

6.1 A search dog shall demonstrate that it will, upon command, perform the following:

6.1.1 Jump at least 2.5 ft (0.76 m) from the ground up to a specified area, such as a pick-up truck bed.

6.1.2 Crawl under an obstacle no higher than ½ the dog's height at its shoulder.

6.1.3 Jump over a ditch as wide as the height of the dog's withers, or perform a broad jump of an equal width.

7. Keywords

7.1 agility; canine; conditioning; dog; obedience; obstacle course; training

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