

Scent Sources

The scent source for all signoffs and testing shall be authentic or synthetic cadaver scent. In any body of water which is part of a drinking water source, only a synthetic source, or a combination of a synthetic source and hair, should be used. The scent source should be invisible to the dog and handler. The scent source shall be located between two feet and five feet below the water surface. Evaluators must consider the duration of the scent given the product used and water conditions.

Requirements must be signed off by SWSD primary evaluators.

Handler Skills

1. Lecture. Handler must attend a boating and swift water safety lecture that includes at least the following topics:

- Loading and unloading from small boats such as canoes, inflatables, motor boats and pontoon boats. Importance of weight placement.
- Advantages and disadvantages of each type of Personal Flotation Device (PFD) and importance of wearing PFD when around water.
- Dog safety on boats and near bodies of water: Retrieval of dog overboard. Hazards of leashes and collars, especially around propellers, etc. Dog first aid.
- Hazards associated with flowing water such as currents, whirlpools, eddies, strainers, low head dams, rocks, etc.
- Techniques for wading/crossing streams, etc. Handler safety.
- Extricating handler and dog from rapid/flowing water immersion. Awareness of still-water and swift-water lifesaving skills.

2. Marking where alerts occur. The handler should be aware of the following methods of marking alerts: stake triangulation, compass triangulation, marker buoys, and GPS. The handler must explain how to use GPS and one other method for marking alerts. The handler shall explain the technique and its advantages and disadvantages to the evaluator.

3. Scent discussion. The handler will discuss currents, wind, whirlpools, eddies, and thermoclines with an evaluator. This discussion can consist of a question/answer format, analyzing scenarios, discussion/lecture at a training, etc.

4. Equipment. Water search teams must own a Coast Guard approved Class III-V PFD. Appropriate footwear (wet suit booties, tennis shoes, boating shoes, etc.) shall be worn on boats. The handler should be aware of additional equipment which may need to be carried on some water searches. For example, a dog safety harness and/or dog PFD, equipment to mark alerts, a water helmet, and/or a throw rope if one is not available on the boat.

Dog Requirements

5. Walking on dock. This skill sign-off is intended to demonstrate the dog's willingness to walk on an unstable surface. The handler may have the dog on or off leash. If the dog is on leash, the leash is to be loose, not tight. The dog should proceed on its own will, and is not to be dragged, pushed or pulled onto the dock. The dog should not rush off the dock.

6. Shoreline alert. The team must locate an off-shore scent source. The scent source must be placed so that the dog can get access to within a few feet of the source. The scent source may be submerged along docks, along shore, etc. The scent source should not be more than 15 feet from shore and the location shall be unknown to the handler. Using the dog's behavior, and wind, water, and shoreline conditions, the handler should describe to the evaluator the area that divers, in a real search situation, would be directed to search.

7. Boat alert. Any suitable type of boat may be used. The scent source should be offshore, submerged, and invisible to both handler and dog. The handler should inform the evaluator of the location of the dog's alerts and indicate where the dog had the strongest alert. Using the dog's behavior, and wind, water, and surface conditions, the handler should describe to the evaluator the area that divers, in a real search situation, would be directed to search.

8. Flowing water alert. Creeks, streams, rivers, dam outflows, etc., can all be used for purposes of this sign off. The scent source should be submerged and invisible to both handler and dog. The handler should inform the evaluator of the location of the dog's alerts and indicate where the dog had the strongest alert. Using the dog's behavior, and wind, water, and riverbank conditions, the handler should describe to the evaluator the area that divers, in a real search situation, would be directed to search.

9. Distractions. The dog will demonstrate the ability to work in the presence of distractions. This ability may be demonstrated by having the dog work on the shore in close proximity to other dogs, people making noise, or wandering wildlife. Working the dog simultaneously with another dog on a boat will also demonstrate this skill. The dog is not expected to totally ignore all such distractions. The distraction can temporarily distract the dog from working the problem, as long as the dog returns to the task and performs satisfactorily.

10. Swim. The handler may use any method deemed humane by the evaluator to demonstrate the dog's ability to enter a body of water and swim a total distance of 100 feet.

Team Requirements

11. Participation in two water training sessions.

12. Loading and unloading from a boat. The handler and dog shall both demonstrate, as a team, the ability to safely load and unload from a small boat.

13. The team is at ease in a boat. Neither the dog nor the handler should exhibit fear or appear ill at ease in a small boat. The handler should have control of the dog. Neither the handler nor the dog shall behave in a manner that endangers any person's safety or puts the boat at risk.

Handler: _____ **Dog:** _____

Instructions: It is the handler’s responsibility to have each of the skill requirements listed signed and dated by a primary evaluator.

Requirement	Date	Signature
Handler Skills		
1. Safety lecture		
2. Marking alerts		
3. Search strategy and scent		
4. Equipment		
Dog Requirements		
5. Walk on dock		
6. Shoreline		
7. Boat search		
8. Flowing water		
9. Distractions		
10. Swim		
Team Requirements		
11. Water training #1		
Water training #2		
12. Safe boarding/unloading		
13. Team at ease in boat		