



# DIVISION OF REFUGE LAW ENFORCEMENT

## NATIONAL CANINE UNIT MANUAL

(SUPPLEMENTS POLICY AT 471 FW 1)

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
National Wildlife Refuge System

DECEMBER 2023

Version 2.0

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# **1. PROMULGATION**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (DRLE) National Canine Unit Manual is established by Service Manual chapter 471 FW 1, *Division of Refuge Law Enforcement Canine Units*, to set forth detailed direction and procedures for Federal Wildlife Canine Officers' (FWCO) use of Federal Wildlife Canines (FWC). The procedures and standards in this manual will be implemented uniformly throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) Law Enforcement (LE) program. The provisions of this manual are applicable to all FWCOs, and any other Federal Wildlife Officer (FWO), who utilize or interact with FWCs as part of their law enforcement duties.

The National Canine Chief, Branch of Field Support and Policy, Headquarters, will issue updates to the DRLE National Canine Unit Manual as needed or necessary. Updates will include any relevant Chief's Directives as well as any changes as recommended by the Chief of Refuge Law Enforcement and approved by the Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

This National Canine Unit Manual supersedes and cancels any canine (K9) manuals or memoranda previously issued by the Service.

This manual supplements and supports all Service and Department of the Interior (Department) publications. Nothing herein shall be construed as superseding or replacing any instruction or directive issued by higher authority.

## **2. CANINE PROGRAM POSITIONS**

### **A. NATIONAL CANINE CHIEF**

The National Canine Chief serves as part of Headquarters in the Branch of Field Support and Policy. The National Canine Chief is the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement's (DRLE) National Canine Unit program manager responsible for canine unit policy development and is the first point of contact for DRLE FWC issues. They advise and assist in the canine unit training curriculum and evaluates the FWC Teams (i.e., the FWCO and FWC). The National Canine Chief maintains a list of all qualified FWC Teams and their training records. They ensure the DRLE's FWCs have a property number and are tracked in the personal property management system (PPMS) as Headquarters DRLE property.

The National Canine Chief consults with the Chief, Branch of Field Support and Policy on issues relating to the National Canine Unit. They ensure pertinent information concerning National Canine Units is disseminated to FWCOs, Patrol Captains and the Regional Chiefs of Law Enforcement (RCLEs). Lastly, the National Canine Chief advises the Chief, DRLE on unit-wide matters.

## **B. FEDERAL WILDLIFE CANINE OFFICERS (FWCO)**

FWCOs are commissioned law enforcement officers who enforce criminal statutes, are authorized to carry firearms, serve warrants, search, seize, make arrests, and perform such duties as authorized by law.

### **i. Qualifications**

Federal Wildlife Officers (FWOs) who wish to apply to become FWCOs must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- (a)** Have been a fully commissioned FWO for a minimum of 3 years,
- (b)** Not have any pending or sustained allegations of misconduct that would compromise the integrity of the National Canine Unit,
- (c)** Agree to provide a home environment for the proper care and supervision of the assigned FWC,
- (d)** Be physically fit, and
- (e)** Pass a Service-approved canine handler course and perform all the requirements associated with the position.

### **ii. Selection**

The number of positions and the locations of DRLE FWC Teams will be determined by the requisite RCLE with the concurrence of the National Canine Chief. Selection of FWCOs is a competitive process. A Federal Wildlife Canine Officer position announcement will be made through standard hiring processes.

### **iii. Promotion of FWCO to Patrol Captain**

As GS-11s, FWCOs are eligible to compete for Patrol Captain positions nationwide. However, the selection of a FWCO to a Patrol Captain position must be made in concurrence with the RCLE, the National Canine Chief and the Chief, DRLE.

If an FWCO is selected for a Patrol Captain position, the FWCO/Patrol Captain will agree to the following:

- (a)** The FWCO will continue to work with their currently assigned FWC until the canine's retirement, removal, or death, after which the FWC will not be replaced for the FWCO/Patrol Captain;
- (b)** Their duties as an FWCO will be secondary to their Patrol Captain duties;
- (c)** The newly hired FWCO/Patrol Captain will have the FWCO employee performance appraisal plan (EPAP) element added to their Patrol Captain EPAP and they will continue to be evaluated as a canine handler so long as they have an FWC;
- (d)** The FWCO/Patrol Captain will attend all required training, certify nationally as a team, and stay current in all FWC Team documentation (deployments/uses, training, and medical);

- (e) The FWCO/Patrol Captain will be required to adhere to the standards set forth in the National Canine Unit Manual; and
- (f) Administratively Uncontrollable Overtime (AUO) and other FWC Team costs for a FWCO/ Patrol Captain will be the responsibility of the Region and will not be funded from the National Canine Unit.

If the FWCO/Patrol Captain or FWC does not meet performance, certification, training, documentation, or National Canine Unit Manual requirements, the National Canine Chief, with concurrence from the Chief, DRLE, will determine if the FWC should be retired or removed and the FWCO designation removed from the Patrol Captain.

If the FWCO/Patrol Captain chooses not to continue the duties of a canine handler, the National Canine Chief, with concurrence from the Chief, DRLE, will determine if the FWC should be retired or transferred inside the National Canine Unit.

#### **iv. FWCO Compensation**

FWCOs must be compensated in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act when they provide for their FWC's care while off duty.

The Service must provide the FWCO with at least 8 on-duty hours per every 2 weeks or 16 on-duty hours per month of FWC Team training time.

The Service must provide 30 minutes of regular pay per day during regular workdays and 30 minutes of overtime pay per day on non-workdays for the care of the FWC. If for any reason the FWCO is unable to take the 30 minutes due to other work, the Service will pay their respective overtime rate.

FWCOs may use AUO to compensate for hours beyond the scheduled workday when the FWCO has performed unforeseen duties that did not give them the opportunity to train or care for the FWC. The care and the training of the FWC is compelling to the interests of the Service (see 225 FW 8).

On days of leave when in possession of the FWC, the FWCO should take 1 less hour of leave per day to make up for the hour they spend caring for the FWC.

### **C. FEDERAL WILDLIFE CANINES (FWC)**

FWCs are canines assigned to the DRLE that are trained and certified in resource protection duties such as patrol, locating, tracking, and detection.

#### **i. Selection**

FWCs must meet the following criteria to be selected for the DLRE National Canine Unit:

- (a) They must be a German, Dutch, or Belgian Shepherd or like breed; or a mix of German,

- Dutch, or Belgian Shepherd, and
- (b) They must pass a general physical examination by a veterinarian familiar with working dogs.

The National Canine Chief or their designee will test and evaluate the candidate canine for its fitness for service before any are considered for training. The purpose of pre-testing is to determine if the canine has any undesirable temperament characteristics that would adversely affect their serviceability as an FWC. The Chief, DRLE has final approval authority based on the recommendation after testing.

The pre-testing for all canines considered for service as FWCs must measure the following qualities:

- (a) Temperament,
- (b) Alertness,
- (c) Prey and defense drives, and
- (d) Play and retrieving drives.

Service employees who have a fiduciary interest in the breeding, sale, or training of police service dogs in a private capacity must not be involved in the purchase or sale of dogs for the DRLE.

Personally owned dogs must not be certified for use by DRLE.

FWCs are not allowed to participate in any business enterprises (i.e. breeding, dog shows, off duty law enforcement, etc.).

## **ii. Replacement**

An FWCO may request a replacement FWC after their current partner has retired or become deceased. The FWCO shall prepare and forward an official request memorandum for FWC replacement through the FWCO's Patrol Captain. The request must be approved by the Patrol Captain, RCLE, and the National Canine Chief.

## **D. CANINE TEAM INSTRUCTORS AND EVALUATORS**

The Chief, DRLE, with concurrence from the National Canine Chief, designates FWCOs to provide FWC Team training and evaluation. An FWC Team Instructor or Evaluator must successfully complete instructor or evaluator training approved by the National Canine Chief in conjunction with the Chief, Branch of Training.

An FWCO must have a minimum of 3 years of FWC handling experience in the DRLE to be designated as an instructor or evaluator for the National Canine Unit.

The National Canine Chief, with concurrence with the Chief, DRLE Branch of Training, will determine what refresher training FWC Team Instructors and Evaluators must take. Instructors and Evaluators who do not receive appropriate instructor refresher training every

3 years must not provide FWC Team training or certification evaluation to FWCOs and their FWCs.

### **3. UNIT-SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT**

#### **A. FWCO UNIFORMS**

The assigned FWCO uniform should be equipped for the duty of a canine handler. Uniform components should be made of a ripstop material. The uniform must be a brown or tan shirt, have a Service patch on both shoulders, and have a badge and nameplate that says:

“K9 Officer”  
“Name”

The back of the shirt may display “FWS K9” printed across the shoulder.

FWCO tan shirt and tan pants can be approved for use on a Regional level.

FWCOs must wear the appropriate dress uniform with the approved National Canine Unit Pin when required during special events or occasions.

#### **B. FWC PATROL VEHICLES AND TRANSPORTATION**

Refer to existing Service policy (451 FW 1) for law enforcement vehicle markings. A waiver may be requested for vehicle standards from the RCLE when they can clearly explain how the vehicle poses a threat to an FWCO or FWC safety, or when the FWC must be transported in a rental vehicle.

Otherwise, the following equipment is required for all Federal Wildlife Canine patrol vehicles:

- i.** A secure and stable transport system must be configured or installed.
- ii.** A security screen must be installed where any passenger area opens to the FWC transport area.
- iii.** Window screens of metal mesh must be installed on rear doors of vehicles to prevent unintentional FWC bites or exits.
- iv.** Vehicles must be equipped with a heat sensor that monitors the interior temperature of the vehicle and notifies the FWCO when the FWC may be in distress due to heat. This requirement can be waived based on a detailed explanation explaining why the vehicle shouldn't be equipped this way. The request for a waiver must be approved by the FWCO's RCLE with concurrence from the National Canine Chief.
- v.** A bailout system must be installed to allow the FWCO to summon the FWC in an emergency.

If an FWCO considers transporting an FWC in a vehicle other than their dedicated K9-equipped patrol vehicle (i.e., on a boat or in a side-by-side all-terrain vehicle), the FWCO must reasonably evaluate those alternative types of transportation in the best interest of safety



of the FWC and others present.

An FWC can be transported in a personally owned vehicle (POV) when the FWC is secured in a travel kennel approved by the National Canine Chief.

### **C. CANINE-SPECIFIC GEAR**

New FWC Teams will initially be provided with basic equipment by the National Canine Unit. These items are only the basic requirements. Given the diverse locations of our teams, additional items may be required to be provided by the Region assigned.

The Service issues credentials to FWCs who pass certification that include a badge and a photo of the FWC. FWCs must keep these credentials readily accessible when on duty with the FWC. The FWC must wear sufficient markings that readily identify the canine as a Service FWC while on duty except in cases where doing so would endanger the team or others.

### **D. TRAINING AIDS**

FWC training aids are those items required by an FWC Team to maintain both their certification and to ensure a constant state of readiness. FWC training aids may consist of wildlife, plant, or narcotic items. All training aids must be properly secured and maintained. Wildlife training aids should be stored properly and certified by a biologist or equivalent professional. Narcotics training aids should be obtained from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Diversion Division or an approved State agency. Narcotics training aids should be stored in accordance with standards issued by the DEA or requisite State agency standards. FWC Teams must not use or train with pseudo training aids.

### **E. CANINE EQUIPMENT FUNDING**

Headquarters will fund the following with regards to FWC Teams:

- i.** The costs of start up for a new FWC Team including:
  - (a)** FWC purchase and academy training,
  - (b)** K9 upfit (the Service Region supplies the patrol vehicle),
  - (c)** Home kennel, and
  - (d)** Start-up equipment and uniforms.
- ii.** AUO.
- iii.** Unexpected medical expenses.
- iv.** Replacement FWC (if approved through the replacement process).

The Region an FWC Team is assigned to is responsible for funding:

- i.** Food and care expenses for the FWC.
- ii.** Preventative medications (e.g., heartworm and tick); we recommend all FWCs are on preventatives because of the nature of their details to anywhere in U.S.).

- iii. Annual veterinarian visit/checkup.
- iv. Replacement K9 gear and uniforms.
- v. Replacement K9 upfit for new patrol vehicles. The following conditions apply:
  - (a) Replacement K9 upfits must be consistent and standardized throughout the National Canine Unit, and
  - (b) The National Canine Chief and FWCO should be contacted to determine the specific K9 upfit and accessories, GSA pricing, and the installation process.
- vi. FWC care overtime.

## **4. CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

The Chief, DRLE, through the DRLE Branch of Training and with guidance from the National Canine Chief, approves training curriculums related to FWC teams. Upon selection, an FWO must pass a Service-approved canine handler course and complete all requirements associated with the position to become an FWCO.

### **A. MAINTENANCE TRAINING**

The FWCO and FWC must undergo frequent maintenance training in accordance with accreditation standards. Multi-purpose patrol K9s must train a minimum of 8 hours every 2 weeks or 16 hours in a month. Documented FWC Team medical and annual leave can excuse the minimum training requirement for a month.

### **B. ANNUAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

All FWC Teams are required to attend a minimum of 24 hours of annual in-service training. Required training topics at each in-service must include:

- i. FWC team fundamentals (e.g., legal update, obedience, scent work, etc.).
- ii. FWC care (e.g., basic grooming, health care, and first aid for canines, etc.).
- iii. FWC team bite response (e.g., medical treatment, photographs, investigation, etc.).
- iv. FWC team reporting requirements.
- v. FWC team use policies.

### **C. CERTIFICATION**

FWC Teams are required to participate in a pass/fail certification each service year (see Appendix A for the FWC Team Certification Guide and Evaluation). Each FWC Team must certify in the areas of its expertise (i.e., Patrol and Narcotic Detection or Wildlife/Plant Detection). Evaluators outside the Service may conduct the annual certification if they have been approved by the Chief, Branch of Training, and the National Canine Chief.

The FWCO must keep all certification, training, and medical records in a database system approved by the National Canine Chief. The RCLC and the National Canine Chief must review FWC team certifications, training, and medical records every other year.

## **D. REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION**

The National Canine Chief, in conjunction with the Chief, DRLE, may revoke an FWCO's canine certification for any of the following circumstances:

- i.** Violation of the Service Law Enforcement Code of Conduct.
- ii.** Violation of the National Canine Unit policy or manual.
- iii.** Receiving a less than fully successful performance rating.
- iv.** Any suspension of their law enforcement commission.
- v.** Receiving a disciplinary action that would negatively affect the professional reputation of the National Canine Unit.
- vi.** Declining assignments without reasonable justification.
- vii.** Failing to attend a National Canine Unit in-service within the prescribed time period.
- viii.** Failing to maintain the "team" work ethic and performance level established by the specific FWC Team and the National Canine Unit.
- ix.** Insubordinate behavior.

The list above is not all inclusive. Other circumstance may warrant revocation of an FWCO's certification at the discretion of the National Canine Chief.

## **5. CARE OF FEDERAL WILDLIFE CANINES**

An FWCO must immediately report any FWC injury, illness, or deficient performance to their Patrol Captain and the National Canine Chief. FWCOs shall ensure FWCs receive proper levels of exercise appropriate to weight and breed as recommended by a veterinarian.

The National Canine Chief or their designee must conduct and document a minimum of one annual welfare evaluation on the FWC, their work transportation conditions, and housing, to include adequate grooming, residential housing accommodations, and general care for FWC.

Impromptu inspections may also be conducted at any time by a Patrol Captain, Deputy Regional Law Enforcement Chief, or RCLE to ensure compliance with standards for residential kennel maintenance, security, care, medical status, and the welfare of the FWC. The FWCO must pass all required welfare evaluations. If discrepancies are noted, the FWCO must correct the discrepancies as soon as practical. Failure to correct discrepancies could result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from the National Canine Unit.

### **A. HOUSING**

The Service must ensure FWCs are provided with appropriate housing at the FWCO's residence. The FWC's kennel must be in an area that does not allow for public contact and

maximizes security.

The FWC's housing must provide for and adhere to the following standards:

- i. Constructed of a material that prevents escape or injury.
- ii. Minimum dimension is 3 feet by 10 feet.
- iii. The floor prevents escape or injury and can be maintained in a sanitary condition.
- iv. Covered to prevent escape and provide shade.
- v. Contains an insulated interior area.
- vi. Provides maximum protection from the elements.
- vii. Can be secured with a lock when a FWCO is not present.

The above-listed specifications may be waived if the National Canine Unit purchases a prefabricated kennel that is specifically made to contain an FWC.

## **B. MEDICAL CARE, GROOMING, AND DAILY CARE**

The FWCO must ensure their FWC receives proper levels of exercise appropriate to weight and breed as recommended by a veterinarian.

The FWCO must ensure the FWC receives one routine veterinary visit annually to include a full examination, annual vaccinations, preventative medications, and a fit-for-duty notification.

FWCs are required to be microchipped and the chip must be verified by a veterinarian. Microchip identification shall be on the FWC's property record.

Any prescribed medications must be administered in accordance with veterinary orders. The FWCO must ensure the safe and secure storage of prescribed and over the counter medications.

The FWCO must ensure the FWC receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, affection, and living conditions. FWC's kennel, living space, and vehicle transport must be visually inspected daily and kept free of feces, urine, and debris. The FWC's food and water bowls must be kept clean, be free of debris and feces, and frequently sanitized to prevent potential illness.

FWCOs must feed and provide clean water to their FWC daily. Food quantity and type must be determined with veterinary advice and Food and Drug Administration guidelines.

FWCOs must ensure FWCs are groomed and brushed as necessary. FWCs should be groomed to prevent matting of hair, overgrown toenails, and excessive shedding. FWC dental care must be provided as directed by veterinary personnel. A daily inspection of the FWC must be performed to look for insect activity, injuries, or foreign objects within the skin or hair.

FWCOs must maintain a basic knowledge of first aid and emergency treatment for their FWCs. FWCOs should become familiar with the symptoms and emergency treatment of major injuries, illnesses, and afflictions to include heat stroke, convulsions, poisoning, snake bites, burns, and insect bites or stings.

### **C. TRANSFER OF CARE**

An FWC may be temporarily transferred to another caregiver at the discretion of the FWCO and with concurrence by the National Canine Chief. The FWC must be cared for by one of the following when the FWCO is unable to care for the daily needs of the FWC due to leave or other situations:

- i.** Another FWCO.
- ii.** A law enforcement officer who has bonded with the FWC.
- iii.** A Service employee who has bonded with the FWC.
- iv.** An immediate adult family member who has bonded with the FWC.
- v.** An approved commercial kennel.
- vi.** Veterinary office.

### **D. REST**

Work-rest cycles in the field will vary due to environmental conditions, the operational tasks being performed, and the FWC's current physical and mental condition. Rest periods should allow for the FWC's physical and mental recovery from previous operational work. Work-Rest allows an FWC to recover their sustained attention and recuperate quicker for upcoming operational tasks.

The following shall be considered in the duration of Work-Rest cycles:

- i.** The FWC's fitness, current medication regimes, and current hydration level; the current environmental humidity; and the search terrain.
- ii.** Work-Rest periods shall be implemented between significant operational tasks, and work-rest times must be adapted to ambient temperature, e.g., the hotter it is, the longer the rest time.

It is recommended that FWCOs carry adequate water and ensure their FWC is well hydrated before performing moderate-intensity exercise in hot or arid climatic conditions. FWCOs are encouraged to prepare FWCs for hot and arid climates through repeated exposure and moderate-to-high-intensity operational simulated exercise. Preparing FWCs before operational use in these settings can acclimate the FWC and may invoke adaptive cellular responses that lower the risk of heat-related events. Collectively, physical conditioning and acclimation can mitigate heat-related illnesses in operational canines.

### **E. CONTINUITY OF CARE PLAN**

Circumstances may arise that can prevent a FWC from receiving the normal level of care from the FWCO. Serious injury, death, natural disasters, and other major events can prevent the FWCO from caring for the assigned FWC and necessitate the development of a Continuity of Care Plan (CCP) for each FWC. The FWC CCP identifies individual FWC needs from the FWCO, medical care, housing, and training. See Appendix B for an example of an FWC CCP.

## **F. EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

In the event of a medical emergency, the FWC must be transported immediately to a veterinary hospital for treatment.

Serious illness or injury that may result in high veterinarian expenses, pose a long-term debilitating or fatal outcome for the FWC, or result in the dog's death, should immediately be reported to the Patrol Captain, RCLE, and the National Canine Chief.

The Patrol Captain must coordinate with a purchasing official in the event the veterinary services incur costs over the micro-purchase single purchase limit.

A veterinary examination record will be submitted to the Patrol Captain, RCLE, and the National Canine Chief advising the nature and prognosis of the illness or injury.

FWCs will be required to receive a fit-for-duty notification before returning for full duty. All injuries must be reported in the approved reporting system with veterinary records attached.

## **G. RETIREMENT**

An FWC may be retired from the unit when the FWC:

- i.** Is no longer needed for official purposes.
- ii.** Has a temperament incompatible with Service guidelines for the type of work for which the FWC is trained.
- iii.** Fails to pass certification based on the approved standards.
- iv.** Can no longer perform the requirements for the certification due to age, sickness, or injury.

The decision to retire an FWC requires input from the FWCO, Patrol Captain, RCLE, and the National Canine Chief. If the team decides to retire the FWC, the National Canine Chief must follow the requirements for personal property found in 310 FW 4.

The FWCO must be given the first opportunity to adopt the FWC.

All costs and medical needs associated with the FWC are transferred to the receiving party once the FWC is retired and the property transfer process is complete.

The canine's new owner must agree to diligently care for the canine in a humane and responsible manner. They must agree to provide vaccinations and veterinary care.

Retired FWCs should not be considered "pets." Even though retired, they have been trained as a law enforcement asset.

Retired FWCs should not be transported in Government vehicles, taken to Service office buildings while the FWCO is on duty, or taken on patrol, details, or outreach events.

The use of retired FWCs by other agencies is not approved or allowed.

## **H. EUTHANASIA**

The FWCO, Patrol Captain, RCLE, and the National Canine Chief must have input when considering euthanasia of an FWC. The decision-making process should be made with veterinary advice and with the concurrence of the FWCO, Patrol Captain, RCLE, and the National Canine Chief in the best interest of the FWC's long-term health.

The FWC's FWCO must be involved in the decision-making process for decisions related to the FWC's useful life and euthanasia.

If there's a serious injury to an FWC and the injury, treatment, and recovery will not allow the FWC to return to Government service, the FWCO must be given the opportunity to obtain medical care for the FWC in lieu of euthanasia. In this situation, ownership of the FWC must be officially transferred to the FWCO in accordance with property management requirements.

## **6. FEDERAL WILDLIFE CANINE OPERATIONS**

### **A. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Departmental policy (446 DM 23.6 A (1)) requires a clear supervisory chain-of-command for FWCOs in the field. FWCOs must report directly to a Patrol Captain for day-to-day activities. The RCLE manages deployment and incident reporting at the Regional level.

FWCOs are responsible for the actions of their assigned FWCs at all times both when on duty and during off-duty hours.

FWCOs shall not leave FWCs unattended in any area where the public may have access.

### **B. DEPLOYMENTS AND USE**

The FWCO makes the final decision to deploy/use an FWC. The FWCO makes the decision based on the facts of the incident known to them at the time and the decision to deploy/use a FWC cannot be superseded by higher authority extemporaneously or "in the moment" during a rapidly unfolding incident. The FWCO cannot be forced to deploy/use an FWC if the FWCO deems the use inappropriate due to the totality of the circumstances.

All decisions to deploy a FWC to locate and apprehend a suspect must be consistent with *Graham v. Connor* (490 U.S. 386 (1989)), and include balancing:

- i.** The severity of the crime at hand.
- ii.** Whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officer or others.
- iii.** Whether the suspect is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.

Before deploying the FWC to locate and apprehend a suspect, the FWCO must give a clear release warning. The FWCO must consider factors such as language barriers, distance, and probable location of the suspect. The FWCO must allow a reasonable amount of time for the suspect to comply with commands. The FWCO does not have to give this warning if it may endanger the safety of the FWC, FWCO, or others.

Except in exigent circumstances or where there is imminent danger of death or serious injury, the FWCO should ensure that they can continue to see the FWC when deployed.

An FWCO may NOT use an FWC for crowd control.

An FWCO may deploy an FWC to locate and apprehend a suspect if they believe that the individual has either committed or is about to commit a serious offense, and in any one of the following situations:

- i. The FWCO believes that the individual poses an immediate threat of violence or serious harm to the public or any officer.
- ii. The FWC is needed to search for and locate suspects who have fled the scene of a serious crime or to locate evidence of a crime when the FWCO believes the person is hiding.
- iii. The FWC is needed to assist in the arrest of suspects when the suspect is known to be armed with a weapon.
- iv. The FWC is needed to assist in the arrest of, or to prevent the escape of, serious or violent offenders.

The DRLE recognizes that situations may arise that do not fall within the provisions of this handbook but may still compel deployment/use. In such cases the FWCO must use their best judgment and consider the totality of the circumstances.

Unless an FWCO reasonably believes that an individual has committed or is about to commit a serious criminal offense, mere flight from a pursuing officer is not cause for deploying an FWC to apprehend someone.

FWCOs may use FWCs in accordance with law and Departmental policy to search vehicles, buildings, bags, outdoor areas, and other articles necessary to further an investigation, protect the public, and protect trust resources.

## **C. CANINE BITES**

### **i. Bites Occurring During Deployments/Uses**

FWCOs must report any FWC bite that occurs during a deployment/use following the serious incident reporting requirements in 054 FW 1 and 446 DM 17.

The FWCO must ensure that the Patrol Captain, the RCLE, and the National Canine Chief are advised as soon as possible after a bite during deployment/use. We consider bites



to be a use of force and, as such, the FWCO must also follow guidance set forth in 442 FW 2, *Use of Force*, for reporting and investigative purposes.

FWCOs must call off the FWC during a bite when it is safe to do so. The FWCO should take into consideration the safety of themselves, other officers, and bystanders at the scene along with whether the suspect has been controlled.

Whenever there is an injury or a complaint of an injury related to the deployment/use of a FWC, the FWCO handling the FWC must ensure the following steps are completed:

- (a) Anyone who needs immediate medical attention receives it.
- (b) The FWCO must document reported injuries, including color photographs of the injuries at the time of the incident or as soon as possible after the individual receives medical attention, but before the application of bandages.
- (c) The FWC involved in the engagement should be removed from the scene as soon as practical. If possible, the FWCO involved in the deployment/use should not be the lead investigating officer for the incident.
- (d) The investigating officer should take photographs (in addition to those taken by the FWCO at the time of the incident). When practical, the investigating officer should take photographs after the individual receives medical attention, but before the application of bandages. Treat photographs as evidence. Maintain the investigative report, FWCO report, and evidence in accordance with Service reporting procedures.
- (e) The investigating officer must document the attending physician's identification information, as well as request a diagnosis and prognosis of the sustained injuries. The officer should include that information in the investigative report.

#### **D. FWCO INJURIES**

Each area that has a FWC Team must develop procedures to address a possible FWCO injury. If the FWCO is disabled or unresponsive, the FWC is likely to stand guard and prevent anyone from approaching. The FWC may exhibit extreme protective behavior. All FWOs and employees within the FWCO's area of responsibility should be briefed on the following course of action if an FWCO is injured and unable to command their assigned FWC:

- i. Attempt to contact another K9 handler to take control of the FWC.
- ii. DO NOT rush in on the FWCO or the FWC.
- iii. Call to the FWCO. If possible, the FWCO will call the FWC off.
- iv. Drive the FWCO's vehicle toward the FWC with the door open to the in-vehicle kennel; the FWC may enter the kennel. If so, close the door to the vehicle.
- v. If necessary, consider removing a training sleeve from the FWC Team's patrol vehicle and wear it to assist in controlling the FWC.
- vi. Attempt to contact the FWCO's spouse or other family member who may be able to assist in gaining control of the FWC.
- vii. Destroying the FWC should be the last resort.

## **7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The National Canine Chief approves and maintains a computerized database in order to store and maintain the following National Canine Unit records:

- i.** FWC Team deployments, including utilization statistics.
- ii.** FWC certification and training accomplishments.
- iii.** FWC medical records.
- iv.** Reports on bite incidents.

In addition to standard Service use of force and incident reporting requirements, DRLE must report use of force incidents related to FWC Canine Teams as required in 446 DM 17, Serious Incident Reporting.



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## **Introductory Statement**

Federal Wildlife Canine Teams consisting of a Federal Wildlife Canine Officer (FWCO) and a Federal Wildlife Canine (FWC) are required to locate and assist in the detection of crimes and contraband, search for missing and lost persons, and assist in the apprehension of criminal suspects. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Canine Unit requires all FWC Teams to be evaluated regularly for proficiency in the skills and tasks required of successful FWC Teams related to their specific trained discipline(s). FWC Teams pass obedience skills tests and are trained and certified in all Patrol disciplines and one Detection discipline. The canine disciplines include:

- Patrol
  - Criminal Apprehension
  - Area Searches
  - Article/Evidence Searches
  - Building Searches
  - Tracking/Trailing
- Narcotic-contraband Detection
- Wildlife/Plant Detection

## **Goals/Objectives**

The objective of this document is to establish best practice rules and regulations for FWC Team certification and evaluation. The skills test for each canine discipline is included.

## **Definitions**

Best practices: A system of processes, checks, and testing that may deliver an outcome that has fewer problems and fewer unforeseen complications, and that may combine the attributes of the most efficient and most effective ways of accomplishing a task based on proven and provable methods, while maintaining overall operational integrity and remaining within the bounds of legally accepted practices.

Certification: A process that attests to the successful completion of an examination of relevant skills for the canine team.

Corrective action plan: A training course of action used to remediate performance deficiencies with a canine team.

Evaluator: An individual with relevant training and experience in the discipline being evaluated, who assesses the performance of canine, canine handler, or canine team.



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Handler error: Any action or cue made by the handler that causes the canine to perform incorrectly.

## **Rules and Regulations**

The following guidelines have been established to ensure that the USFWS Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (DRLE) FWC Certification Evaluation is administered with consistency and objectivity.

## **Evaluation Validity**

Certification for the FWC Teams is valid for up to 1 year (365 days or 366 in a leap year).

## **Evaluators**

The evaluator must not be routinely involved in the day-to-day training of the FWC Team being evaluated.

The evaluator must not be the FWC's handler.

The evaluator must not have a monetary interest in the FWC Team being evaluated.

The evaluator must determine if the FWC Team will be certified upon the completion of each test(s).

The evaluator may fail the FWC Team due to FWCO errors and breaches of safety, that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Not maintaining positive control of the FWC, which may lead to safety issues.
- Allowing the FWC outside of the search area.
- Not following directions of the evaluator.
- Any other reason as specified in the discipline-specific rules and regulations.



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## **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

During evaluation, FWCs must not carry any rewards that are contaminated with any substance.

Other equipment and aid use and prohibition will be specified in the discipline-specific rules and regulations.

## **General Evaluation Rules**

The following general evaluation rules have been established to ensure the FWC Team Certification Evaluation is conducted with national consistency and objectivity.

Certification for the FWC Teams are valid for up to 1 year (365 days or 366 in a leap year). Certification does not remove the requirement for continuous maintenance and proficiency training.

The FWC Team must certify in all trained disciplines (i.e., Patrol and Narcotic Detection or Wildlife/Plant Detection).

The evaluator must be made aware of any relevant existing medical condition of the FWC Team prior to the beginning of any skill testing.

Deliberate compromise of an evaluation will not be tolerated. Any communication concerning specifics of the evaluation will constitute a compromise and lead to termination of the FWC Team's certification.

A reasonable amount of time must be afforded for completion of each test. Disqualification due to time is left to the discretion of the evaluator. The test must end if the evaluator determines that the FWC Team is no longer working.

If in the opinion of the evaluator, the FWC Team's performance was prejudiced by peculiar circumstances, the evaluator may, at their discretion, re-evaluate the FWC Team on the entire exercise, or that portion of the exercise, the FWC Team failed, unless otherwise stated in these rules and regulations.

If the team fails during any phase of testing, they will have one opportunity the same day to retake that portion of the test. If the team fails twice in the same day, they have 24 hours to be reevaluated. If the team fails the third evaluation, the evaluator must notify the National Canine Chief, the Regional Chief, DRLE, and the Patrol Captain.



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An FWC team that fails the certification process must complete a documented corrective action plan before making another attempt to test, evaluate, or certify the FWC Team. The National Canine Chief, the Regional Chief, DRLE, and the Patrol Captain must recommend a corrective action plan.

The evaluator(s) should identify the performance deficiency to the FWCO so that the trainer, the National Canine Chief, the Regional Chief, DRLE, and the Patrol Captain can determine the minimum amount of time for that deficiency to be remediated before another certification attempt.

During this remediation time frame, documentation should be provided by the FWCO to demonstrate that efforts have been enacted to correct the deficiency.

If the FWC Team re-tests or is re-evaluated during the certification period for phases for which they are already certified, and fails, then the initial certificate issued for the phase(s) becomes null and void. The evaluator must send documentation of the voided certification(s) to the FWCO, the National Canine Chief, the Regional Chief, DRLE, and the Patrol Captain.

The FWC Team must pass the Obedience Skills Test before continuing to any other testing, evaluation, or certification.

## **Other Recognized Certifications**

Certification from a nationally recognized law enforcement canine association or other agency-approved association certification may be substituted for annual certification only in extenuating circumstances based upon the needs of the USFWS. A waiver for the substitution must be approved in writing by the National Canine Chief and the Chief, DRLE Branch of Training. The National Canine Chief and the Chief, DRLE Branch of Training determine if the standards of other outside organizations are sufficient to fulfill the obligation of the annual certification.



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**Obedience Skills Test**

**Introductory Statement**

FWCOs are required to keep the FWC under control while on duty. Obedience is a fundamental skill in all canine disciplines and therefore the FWC Team must be evaluated in obedience skills.

**Goals/Objectives**

The FWCO must demonstrate the ability to control the FWC during an obedience performance evaluation. The evaluation will be conducted using reasonable job-related distractions.

**Definitions**

Heel: Heeling on the right or left side is the FWCO's choice. However, the FWCO must heel the FWC throughout the entire test on the same side in which they started. The FWC must be in line with the direction the FWCO is facing at the FWCO's left or right side. The FWC should be as close to the left or right leg as practical without crowding to always permit the FWCO's freedom of movement. The area from the FWCO's head to shoulders must be in line with the FWC's left or right hip.

Heel Position: When the FWCO and FWC come to a halt position, or when the FWC is called to a heel while the FWCO is stationary, the FWC must come to either a sit or down position, with the FWC's head to shoulders in line with the FWCO's left or right hip. The FWC must be facing parallel with the FWCO. The FWC must come to this position upon command to recall or whenever the handler comes to a halt while the dog is heeling.

Normal Pace: A brisk even gait.

Quick Pace: The FWC Team is moving forward together at a noticeably accelerated speed.

Stay: A command given by the FWCO to the FWC to remain in a down or sit position.



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## **Rules and Regulations**

- **Evaluation Validity**

The Obedience Skills Test must be passed during the evaluation period prior to attempting certification in the Criminal Apprehension Skills Test, Area and Building Search Skills Tests, Article/Evidence Skills Test, Tracking/Trailing Skills Test, Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test, and Wildlife/Plant Detection Skills Test.

- **Evaluator**

Obedience Skills Test Phases may be performed in any order at the discretion of the evaluator.

- **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

All standard equipment normally worn in the working environment may be worn during the skills test. The FWCO may not operate an electronic collar during the Obedience Skills Test.

- **Obedience Skills Evaluation Rules**

All phases of obedience skills test must be conducted off lead and the FWCO must not touch the FWC during any phase of testing (unless directed by the evaluator).

All phases of the Obedience Skills Test are on a pass or fail basis. A FWC Team failing any phase of the Obedience Skills Test fails the Obedience Skills Test in its entirety.

- **Phases of Obedience Skills Test**

- Heeling Phase

The FWC must perform the following maneuvers, both at a normal and quick pace.

1. Forward heel at normal pace (minimum of 30 feet long)
2. Forward heel at quick pace (minimum of 30 feet long)
3. Left turn (perform twice)
4. Right turn (perform twice)
5. About turn (perform twice)





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6. Stop and stay (perform twice)

\*\* During a stay the FWC may be placed in either a sit, down, or stand position.

o Distance Phase

The FWCO must stay the FWC and then move to a position of distance from the FWC at the discretion of the evaluator. The FWCO must remain at the evaluator's directed distance from the FWC.

The FWC must remain in the stay position for a minimum of 3 minutes, while the FWCO maintains the evaluator's directed distance from the FWC.

The FWCO must recall the FWC, however, stay the FWC in motion prior to the FWC reaching the FWCO.

The FWCO must then recall the FWC to the heel position.

\*\* During a stay the FWC may be placed in either a sit, down, or stand.



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**Criminal Apprehension and Aggression Control Skills Test**

**Introductory Statement**

At times FWC Teams trained in criminal apprehension may be called upon to assist in the apprehension of a criminal suspect. The apprehension of criminal suspect by an FWC may be a use of force. It is important to ensure that FWC Teams trained in criminal apprehension have sufficient skills to complete criminal apprehension tasks.

**Goals/Objectives**

The Criminal Apprehension and Aggression Control Skills Test is to determine if the FWC Team capable of performing exercises encountered by the FWC Team under simulated situations while working. The skills test is designed to test the FWC's ability, proficiency, courage, and the FWCO's total control of the FWC.

**Definitions**

Adjustment Bite: A repositioning of the bite because of grip or awkward position of the FWC or decoy position or decoy actions.

Aggression: Description of an act of a canine that is an outcome of an agonistic interaction. It can be appropriate or inappropriate, and involve a threat, challenge, or contest. NOTE: The word "aggressive" is often used as a descriptive term for intense, enthusiastic, or forceful behavior of any kind, and these canines may not be truly aggressive or possess aggression.

Bite: A mouth contact with a firm grip.

Deployment: The FWCO's ability to control the canine during a systematic and thorough search of a building, area, or criminal apprehension.

Pre-deployment warning announcements: The FWCO-issued K-9 warnings that the FWC will be released that are announced prior to deploying the FWC to search the building or area and before sending the FWC to apprehend the decoy on the recall and apprehension.



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## **Rules and Regulations**

- **Evaluation Validity**

The Obedience Skills Test must be passed during the evaluation period prior to attempting certification in the Criminal Apprehension Skills Test, Area and Building Search Skills Tests, Article/Evidence Skills Test, Tracking/Trailing Skills Test, Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test, and Wildlife/Plant Contraband Detection Skills Test.

- **Evaluator**

The order of this skills evaluation will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

- **Decoys**

Decoys employed for the Apprehension and Aggression Control Skills Test must:

1. Have the training and experience to safely conduct the skills test at the discretion of the evaluator,
2. Be knowledgeable in skills procedures and requirements, and
3. Follow all directions from the evaluator.

- **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

All standard equipment normally worn in the working environment may be worn during the skills test.

- **General Evaluation Rules**

All phases of the Criminal Apprehension and Aggression Control Skills Test are on a pass or fail basis. An FWC Team failing any phase of the Criminal Apprehension and Aggression Control Skills Test fails the Criminal Apprehension and Aggression Control Skills Test in its entirety.

In the phases requiring the dog to physically apprehend the decoy, the FWC must fully bite and hold/fight the decoy. Failure to bite or excessive, unnecessary mouthing and readjusting of the apprehension is grounds for failure.

In the phases requiring the FWC to stop the pursuit and apprehension of the decoy, the FWCO may use any command or series of commands to control the FWC. Failure of the FWC to release or to respond to obedience commands in a timely manner is grounds for failure.



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- **Phases of Criminal Apprehension and Aggression Control Skills Test**

- **Interview and Escort Phase**

The FWC must be off lead and the FWCO must not touch the FWC until directed by the evaluator.

The FWCO must interview the decoy for 1 minute without FWC contact with the decoy. The distance between FWCO and decoy must be no more than 6 feet. The distance between the FWC and the FWCO and decoy must be no more than 15 feet.

FWCO must perform an escort of the decoy with the FWC under the reasonable verbal control of the FWCO for a distance at the discretion of the evaluator.

The Interview and Escort Phase is completed when the FWCO, upon command from the evaluator, places the FWC on lead.

- **Termination of Chase**

The FWC must be off lead and the FWCO must not touch the FWC until directed by the evaluator.

The FWC must start in a heel position.

The decoy must start in a position and distance from the FWC Team at the discretion of the evaluator.

The FWCO must issue pre-deployment warning announcements, while maintaining the FWC in the heel position. The number of pre-deployment warning announcements will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

The evaluator must instruct the FWCO to deploy the FWC to apprehend the decoy.

The call off used is at the discretion of the FWCO; the call off may be, but is not limited to, one of the following:

1. The FWC is recalled to the heel position, without decoy contact;



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2. The FWC sits, downs, or stands and stays, without decoy contact;  
or
3. The FWC goes into a revere or a hold at bay, bark and hold.

Any decoy contact will result in a failure. Decoy contact includes biting, mouthed contact, or other aggressive contact at the discretion of the evaluator. Decoy contact does not include incidental or non-aggressive contact made by the FWC and therefore is not a reason for failure.

The Termination of Chase Phase is completed when the FWCO, upon command from the evaluator, places the FWC on lead.

## ○ **Criminal Apprehension Phase**

The FWC must start in a heel position. The tactical position may be from a vehicle or an area of cover or concealment.

The FWCO must issue pre-deployment warning announcements, while maintaining the FWC in the heel position. The number of pre-deployment warning announcements will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

The evaluator must instruct the FWCO to deploy the FWC to apprehend the decoy.

The FWC must pursue and apprehend the decoy.

Once the decoy has been apprehended by the FWC, the FWCO must tactically approach the decoy and the FWC's location upon command from the evaluator.

After compliance is gained from the decoy, the FWCO must use reasonable control to remove the FWC from the apprehension. The reasonable control removal must be consistent with trained techniques. The removal may include, but is not limited to, one of the following:

1. Lift off techniques without further decoy contact,
2. Communication utilizing the e-collar without further decoy contact, or
3. The use of a breaker bar without further decoy contact.



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Any “further decoy contact” will result in a failure. “Further decoy contact” includes biting, mouthed contact, or other aggressive contact at the discretion of the evaluator. “Further decoy contact” does not include incidental or non-aggressive contact made by the FWC and therefore is not a reason for failure.

The FWC release of the apprehended decoy must be completed in a reasonable amount of time at the discretion of the evaluator.

The Criminal Apprehension Phase is completed when the FWCO, upon command from the evaluator, places the FWC on lead.

#### ○ **Tactical Criminal Apprehension Phase**

The FWC must be off lead and the FWCO must not touch the FWC until directed by the evaluator.

The FWC must start in a tactical advantage. The tactical position may be from a vehicle or an area of cover or concealment.

The FWCO must issue pre-deployment warning announcements, while maintaining the FWC in the heel position. The number of pre-deployment warning announcements will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

The evaluator must instruct the FWCO to deploy the FWC to apprehend the decoy from a position of tactical advantage.

The FWC must pursue and apprehend the decoy.

Upon command of the evaluator, the FWCO will verbally call off the FWC from a reasonable and tactical position away from the decoy and FWC. The call off may be, but is not limited to, one of the following:

1. The FWC is recalled to the heel position, without any further decoy contact; or
2. The FWC sits, downs, or stands and stays, without any further decoy contact.

Any “further decoy contact” will result in a failure. “Further decoy contact” includes biting, mouthed or other aggressive contact at the



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discretion of the evaluator. “Further decoy contact” does not include incidental or non-aggressive contact made by the FWC and therefore is not a reason for failure.

The Tactical Criminal Apprehension Phase is completed when the FWCO, upon command from the evaluator, places the FWC on lead.



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## Area and Building Search Skills Test

### Introductory Statement

At times FWC Teams trained in area search and building search may be called upon to assist in the location of a criminal suspect in an open outdoor area, building, or other structure. It is important to ensure that FWC Teams trained in area search, building search, or both have sufficient skills to complete area search and building search tasks.

### Goals/Objectives

The Area Search Skills Test and the Building Search Skills Test is designed to test the FWC's ability to locate a decoy hidden from sight in an open area, building, or structure.

### Rules and Regulations

- **Evaluation Validity**

The Obedience Skills Test must be passed during the evaluation period prior to attempting certification in the Criminal Apprehension Skills Test, Area and Building Search Skills Tests, Article/Evidence Skills Test, Tracking/Trailing Skills Test, Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test, and Wildlife/Plant Contraband Detection Skills Test.

- **Definitions**

Active alert: A type of response that the canine displays/indicates in a manner that may disturb the environment and or forensic evidence (i.e., dig, bark, scratch, paw, jump, and bite after the detector canine has detected a trained odor/scent).

Alert: A characteristic change in ongoing behavior in response to a trained odor/scent, as interpreted by the canine handler. The components of the alert may include change of behavior (COB), interest, and final response or indication.

Area search: The act of using a canine to search a designated area for a target odor/scent.

Blank: Any area or container where target odor/scent is not present.

Building search: A training or certification exercise that is conducted on the interior or exterior of a building or structure.

Handler error: Any action or cue made by the handler that causes the canine to perform incorrectly.





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Open area: A designated search area for the purpose of conducting canine team exercises.

Pre-deployment warning announcements: The FWCO-issued K-9 warnings that the FWC will be released that are announced prior to deploying the FWC to search the building or area and before sending the FWC to apprehend the decoy on the recall and apprehension.

Scent: Volatile chemicals emitted from a live human that are perceived by the canine through olfaction. “Scent” has traditionally referred to canine detection of humans. “Odor” has traditionally referred to canine detection of a substance.

- **Evaluator**

The order of this skills evaluation will be at the discretion of the evaluator.

The evaluator chooses the hide location of the decoy and also picks the starting point for the FWC Team.

The evaluator must inspect the area to be utilized for the Area Search Test to determine its suitability for the test.

- **Decoys**

The decoy must be hidden in a place of concealment that is not visible to the FWC Team. The decoy may be hidden at any height and will have protective equipment if necessary.

The decoy must be hidden at least 10 to 30 minutes prior to the test skills test start.

The decoy must be a person not normally used in training with the FWC.

- **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

All standard equipment normally worn in the working environment may be worn during the skills test.

The building or structure utilized for the Building Search Skills Test will be inspected and suitable to the evaluator. The building or structure chosen should be, but is not limited to, one of the following:

1. Residential buildings,



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2. Schools,
3. Warehouses, or
4. Office buildings.

The building or structure utilized for the Building Search Skills Test must be at least 2,000 square feet and have multiple rooms and hiding places.

The open area for the Area Search Skills Test must be at least 1 acre.

- **General Evaluation Rules**

All phases of the Area and Building Search Skills Test will be on a pass or fail basis. An FWC Team failing any phase of the Area and Building Search Skills Test fails the Criminal Area and Building Search Skills Test in its entirety.

- **Phases of Area and Building Search Skills Test**

- **Building Search Skills Test Phase**

The FWCO must issue pre-deployment warning announcements.

The building search skills test may be administered on or off leash. If a leash is utilized, it must be no less than 15 feet nor longer than 30 feet in length.

The FWCO may follow the FWC into the building or structure only at the direction of the evaluator.

The FWC must alert the FWCO to the location of the decoy with acceptable alerts. Acceptable alerts include, but are not limited to:

1. Bark and hold (the canine must stay within a reasonable proximity to the suspect), or
2. Other alerts if the FWCO informs the evaluator of the canine's response.

The FWC's alert of the location of the decoy must be obvious to the evaluator. The FWCO must inform the evaluator of the decoy's location.

The FWCO must not, at any time, open doors that are closed within the building or structure search area.



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The evaluator will have the final say as to when the test is terminated. Failure of the test may be for, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The FWC refuses to search,
2. The FWC stops searching,
3. The FWC fails to give an alert at the decoy's location, or
4. The evaluator feels too much time has elapsed.

#### ○ **Area Search Skills Test Phase**

The FWCO must issue pre-deployment warning announcements.

The area search skills test may be administered on or off leash. If a leash is utilized, it must be no less than 15 feet nor longer than 30 feet in length.

The FWCO may follow the FWC into the area only at the direction of the evaluator.

The FWC must alert the FWCO to the location of the decoy with acceptable alerts. Acceptable alerts include, but are not limited to:

1. Bark and hold (the canine should stay within a reasonable proximity to the suspect), or
2. Other alerts if the FWCO informs the evaluator of the canine's response.

The FWC's alert of the location of the decoy must be obvious to the evaluator.

The FWCO must inform the evaluator of the decoy's location.

The evaluator will have the final say as to when the test is terminated. Failure of the test may be for, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The FWC refuses to search,
2. The FWC stops searching,
3. The FWC fails to give an alert at the decoy's location, or
4. The evaluator feels too much time has elapsed.



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**Article/Evidence Search Skills Test**

**Introductory Statement**

Article/Evidence Search is the canine scent detection discipline used to search areas, usually near crime scenes, for human-scented articles that were thrown away or inadvertently left behind.

**Goals/Objectives**

The Article/Evidence Search Skills Test is designed to test the FWC's ability and proficiency in searching a designated area for articles having human scent on them.

**Definitions**

Alert: A characteristic change in ongoing behavior in response to a trained odor/scent, as interpreted by the canine handler. The components of the alert may include: change of behavior (COB), interest, and final response or indication.

Article: (1) A particular item or object, typically one of a specified type used to present to the canine for scent discrimination. (2) Scented objects left on the track or in a search area at various intervals to which the canine is expected to indicate.

Article search: The process of locating and indicating items that contain non-specific or targeted human scent.

Blank: Any area or container where target odor/scent is not present.

Distractor odors/scents: Non-target stimuli placed within a search area. These can include: humans, toys, food, animal odors, or other blank-target odors/scents.

Handler error: Any action or cue made by the handler that causes the canine to perform incorrectly.

Miss: When the canine fails to alert in the known presence of the target odor/scent.

Open area: A designated search area for the purpose of conducting canine team exercises.

Passive alert: A trained final response given by the canine that requires an inactive behavior such as sitting, staring, or lying down. These types of behaviors are typically trained so as not to disturb the environment, forensic evidence, or both.



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Positive alert: A trained detection alert in the presence of the target odor/scent.

Scent: Volatile chemicals emitted from a live human that are perceived by the canine through olfaction. “Scent” has traditionally referred to canine detection of humans. “Odor” has traditionally referred to canine detection of a substance.

## **Rules and Regulations**

- **Evaluation Validity**

The Obedience Skills Test must be passed during the evaluation period prior to attempting certification in the Criminal Apprehension Skills Test, Area and Building Search Skills Tests, Article/Evidence Skills Test, Tracking/Trailing Skills Test, Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test, and Wildlife/Plant Contraband Detection Skills Test.

- **Evaluator**

The area to be searched must be no less than a half an acre but no more than 1 acre. It will be covered by vegetation that must conceal the articles. The area must be chosen by the evaluator with consideration of the safety of FWC and person(s) who enter the area.

- **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

All standard equipment normally worn in the working environment may be worn during the skills test.

Three articles of different composition (metal, wood, paper, etc.) will be thrown at random into the area. The FWC Team to be tested must not view the articles being thrown out. One article must be of metal composition. The articles to be used may be selected from, but are not limited to, the following list:

1. Credit card,
2. Match book,
3. Shotgun shell,
4. Leather wallet,
5. Screwdriver 4 to 6 inches in length,
6. Metal handgun (empty), or
7. Keys (at least one key on a ring with tab),

The articles must be pre-scented for a minimum of 30 seconds.



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- **General Evaluation Rules**

The FWC must locate two out of three articles selected by the evaluator.

The test may be conducted on lead or off lead at the FWCO's discretion.

The FWCO may enter the search area and direct the search as they would in an actual situation.

The FWC must alert the FWCO to the articles with an acceptable alert such as, but not limited to, downing, sitting, or standing next to the items. The FWCO will inform the evaluator what the FWC's alert is.

The FWC must be tested on the alert to the search article. This must be obvious to the evaluator.

The evaluator may terminate this test or fail the FWC Team for one or more of the reasons listed below:

1. Lack of FWCO control;
2. Disinterest on the part of the FWC;
3. FWC gives two or more false alerts; or
4. Too much time has elapsed, with the amount of time being at the discretion of the evaluator.



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## Tracking/Trailing Skills Test

### Introductory Statement

Tracking or trailing people based on their last known position is the area of canine scent detection that utilizes a canine team to search for and follow a specific person's track or trail after the canine has been started on the person's last known position or a scented article associated with that person. The primary goal is for the canine to detect and follow the track or trail to the exclusion of all other tracks or trails, leading to a specific person, location, or article associated with that person. This is done within the canine team's mission-specific environment. A secondary goal of this task may be to locate articles left by this specific person along the track or trail.

### Goals/Objectives

The FWC Team will demonstrate the ability to locate a suspected criminal or lost person by tracking, trailing, or a combination of both.

### Definitions

Scent: Volatile chemicals emitted from a live human that are perceived by the canine through olfaction. "Scent" has traditionally referred to canine detection of humans. "Odor" has traditionally referred to canine detection of a substance.

Target: The odor/scent for which the canine is trained to respond.

Target trail: A pathway that was laid by a target subject that matches the scent article presented to the canine.

Track/trail: The scent pathway left by an individual that is moving.

Tracking: The propensity or learned ability of a canine to methodically follow odor/scent on the ground (human/ground disturbance) by working the canine close to the pathway. Canines are not typically pre-scented on an object.

Trailing: The propensity or learned ability of a canine to methodically follow the target scent. The canine may follow a scent plume which could be either air borne or settled on the ground/vegetation. The canine will use whichever technique will get them to the target the most efficiently. Canines are typically pre-scented on an object.



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## **Rules and Regulations**

- **Evaluation Validity**

The Obedience Skills Test must be passed during the evaluation period prior to attempting certification in the Criminal Apprehension Skills Test, Area and Building Search Skills Tests, Article/Evidence Skills Test, Tracking/Trailing Skills Test, Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test, and Wildlife/Plant Contraband Detection Skills Test.

- **Decoy Target**

The human scent target should not be routinely involved in the day-to-day training of the FWC team.

- **Evaluator**

The evaluator may terminate this test or fail the FWC Team for the reasons listed below:

1. Failure of the FWC Team to locate the person (track layer/target scent) or the article/toy left at the end of the track by the track layer, or
2. Excessive error of the FWC Team.

- **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

All standard equipment normally worn in the working environment may be worn during the skills test.

- **General Evaluation Rules**

The track must have a minimum set time of 15 minutes.

The parameters of the test include:

1. A track or trail that is 300 to 800 yards in length with a minimum of two turns (three legs) and two surface changes, and
2. The evaluator must notify the FWCO if the track ends with a person (the track layer/target scent) or an article/toy left by the track layer. The person (track layer/target scent) or the article/toy left at the end of the track by the track layer must not be in view of the FWC Team.





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**Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test**

**Introductory Statement**

FWC Teams are often called upon to assist with the detection of narcotic-contraband odor(s). FWC Narcotic-contraband Detection Teams are required to search in a variety of environments and search a variety of objects.

**Goals/Objectives**

This evaluation is designed to determine the proficiency and reliability of the FWC Team in the detection of a trained narcotic-contraband odor(s). Narcotic-contraband odors may include but are not limited to marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine.

**Definitions**

Active alert: A type of response that the canine displays/indicates in a manner that may disturb the environment, forensic evidence, or both (i.e., dig, bark, scratch, paw, jump, and bite after the detector canine has detected a trained odor/scent).

Alert: A characteristic change in ongoing behavior in response to a trained odor/scent, as interpreted by the canine handler. The components of the alert may include change of behavior (COB), interest, and final response or indication.

Blank: Any area or container where target odor/scent is not present.

Building search: A training or certification exercise that is conducted on the interior or exterior of a building or structure.

Contraband: An article or substance that is prohibited by law or regulation within a specific area.

Distractor odors/scents: Non-target stimuli placed within a search area. These can include humans, toys, food, animal odors, or other blank-target odors/scents.

False alert: An indication/trained final response demonstrated by the canine in the absence of the target odor/scent; a situation in which the canine exhibits the trained final response in the absence of the odor/scent the dog was trained to find.

False indication: Any location, person, or item incorrectly identified by the canine handler.



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False response: In a controlled environment, the canine responds as if a trained substance was present when it is known that it is not.

Final response: A behavior a canine has been trained to exhibit in the presence of a target odor/scent source. This behavior may be either passive (sit, stare, down, point, etc.) or active (bite, bark, scratch, jump, etc.). Also known as a trained final response.

Handler error: Any action or cue made by the handler that causes the canine to perform incorrectly.

Miss: When the canine fails to alert in the known presence of the target odor/scent.

Odor: Volatile chemicals emitted from a substance that can be perceived by olfaction. “Odor” has traditionally referred to canine detection of a substance. “Scent” has traditionally referred to canine detection of humans.

Open area: A designated search area for the purpose of conducting canine team exercises.

Passive alert: A trained final response given by the canine that requires an inactive behavior such as sitting, staring, or lying down. These types of behaviors are typically trained so as not to disturb the environment, forensic evidence, or both.

Positive alert: A trained detection alert in the presence of the target odor/scent.

Vehicle search: Utilizing a canine to locate a target odor/scent source in any type of motor vehicle.

## **Rules and Regulations**

- **Evaluation Validity**

The Obedience Skills Test must be passed during the evaluation period prior to attempting certification in the Criminal Apprehension Skills Test, Area and Building Search Skills Tests, Article/Evidence Skills Test, Tracking/Trailing Skills Test, Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test, and Wildlife/Plant Contraband Detection Skills Test.

- **Evaluator**

The evaluator must place the narcotic hides in locations unknown to the FWC team.

The evaluator will determine what order the phases will be conducted in.



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- **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

All standard equipment normally worn in the working environment must be worn during the skills test.

The FWC Team must test in all odors for which they seek certification. The FWC Team must demonstrate the ability to detect all trained odors.

Distractor odors may be utilized at the discretion of the evaluator.

All phases must include a minimum of one blank uncontaminated area.<sup>1</sup>

The amount of narcotic substance used for testing must not be less than 5 grams.

Pseudo odors must not be used for evaluation or testing.

Finds must be concealed in search area at least 30 minutes prior to search.

- **General Evaluation Rules**

Only one incorrect response overall (miss, false alert, false indication, or false response) by the FWC Team is permitted for a successful “pass” evaluation. If the evaluating FWC team has more than one team incorrect response/failure, the FWC Team must retest in all the phases and odors they are seeking evaluation for. A minimum acceptable level required for successful evaluation is 90 percent.

The FWC must alert to the trained odors in which the FWC Team seeks evaluation. Upon interpreting the FWC’s alert, the FWCO must notify the evaluator of the hide location based on their interpretation of the FWC’s alert. After the evaluator notifies the FWCO of a correct alert, the FWCO may reward the FWC.

- **Building/Structure/Indoor Phase**

1. The search area must contain a minimum of four rooms,
2. The search area must contain four narcotic substance odor hides (to include at least one of each narcotic substance odor the FWC Team seeks to be evaluated),
3. The search area must contain one blank uncontaminated room, and

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with NPCA; NAPWDA; SWGDOG; and USPCA.



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4. All trained odors should be concealed.

- **Vehicle Phase**

1. The search area must contain a minimum of four vehicles,
2. The search area must contain four narcotic substance odor hides (to include at least one of each narcotic substance odor the FWC Team seeks to be evaluated),
3. The search area must contain one vehicle that has an exterior and interior narcotic substance odor hide,
4. The search area must contain one blank uncontaminated vehicle, and
5. All trained odors should be concealed.

- **Open Area/Perimeter Phase**

1. The search area must be a minimum of 1 acre at the discretion of the evaluator,
2. The search area must contain one narcotic substance odor hide as determined by the evaluator, and
3. All trained odors should be concealed.

- **Container Phase**

1. Containers may be parcels (of similar shape, size, and material), luggage or baggage, or lockers;
2. The search area must contain a minimum of five containers;
3. The search area must contain one narcotic substance odor hide as determined by the evaluator; and
4. All other containers used during the exercise must be blank uncontaminated.



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**Wildlife/Plant-contraband Detection Skills Test**

**Introductory Statement**

FWC Teams are often called upon to assist with the detection of wildlife/plant-contraband odor(s). FWC Wildlife/Plant-contraband Detection Teams are required to search in a variety of environments and a variety of objects.

**Goals/Objectives**

This evaluation is designed to determine the proficiency and reliability of the FWC Team in the detection of a trained wildlife/plant-contraband odor.

**Definitions**

Active alert: A type of response that the canine displays/indicates in a manner that may disturb the environment, forensic evidence, or both (i.e., dig, bark, scratch, paw, jump, and bite after the detector canine has detected a trained odor/scent).

Alert: A characteristic change in ongoing behavior in response to a trained odor/scent, as interpreted by the canine handler. The components of the alert may include change of behavior (COB), interest, and final response or indication.

Blank: Any area or container where target odor/scent is not present.

Building search: A training or certification exercise that is conducted on the interior or exterior of a building or structure.

Contraband: An article or substance that is prohibited by law or regulation within a specific area.

Distractor odors/scents: Non-target stimuli placed within a search area. These can include humans, toys, food, animal odors, or other blank-target odors/scents.

False alert: An indication/trained final response demonstrated by the canine in the absence of the target odor/scent; a situation in which the canine exhibits the trained final response in the absence of the odor/scent the dog was trained to find.

False indication: Any location, person, or item incorrectly identified by the canine handler.

False response: In a controlled environment, the canine responds as if a trained substance was present when it is known that it is not.



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Final response: A behavior a canine has been trained to exhibit in the presence of a target odor/scent source. This behavior may be either passive (sit, stare, down, point, etc.) or active (bite, bark, scratch, jump, etc.). Also known as a trained final response.

Handler error: Any action or cue made by the handler that causes the canine to perform incorrectly.

Miss: When the canine fails to alert in the known presence of the target odor/scent.

Odor: Volatile chemicals emitted from a substance that can be perceived by olfaction. “Odor” has traditionally referred to canine detection of a substance. “Scent” has traditionally referred to canine detection of humans.

Open area: A designated search area for the purpose of conducting canine team exercises.

Passive alert: A trained final response given by the canine that requires an inactive behavior such as sitting, staring or lying down. These types of behaviors are typically trained so as not to disturb the environment, forensic evidence, or both.

Positive alert: A trained detection alert in the presence of the target odor/scent.

Vehicle search: Utilizing a canine to locate a target odor/scent source in any type of motor vehicle.

## **Rules and Regulations**

- **Evaluation Validity**

The Obedience Skills Test must be passed during the evaluation period prior to attempting certification in the Criminal Apprehension Skills Test, Area and Building Search Skills Tests, Article/Evidence Skills Test, Tracking/Trailing Skills Test, Narcotic-contraband Detection Skills Test, and Wildlife/Plant Contraband Detection Skills Test.

- **FWCO**

The FWCO being evaluated must provide verifiable testing materials along with the scientific (Genus and species) names of the target wildlife/plant. For large game, materials must be taken from the upper torso of the animal.

A Certificate of Authenticity from a recognized lab, veterinarian, or wildlife biologist is the only allowable method of verifying test materials.



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Target odor materials material must be reasonably fresh as determined by the evaluator.

- **Evaluator**

The evaluator must place the target wildlife/plant hides in locations unknown to the FWC team.

The evaluator will determine what order the phases will be conducted in.

- **Equipment/Aid Use and Prohibition**

All standard equipment normally worn in the working environment must be worn during the skills test.

The FWC Team must test in all odors for which they seek certification. The FWC Team must demonstrate the ability to detect all trained odors.

Distracter odors may be utilized at the discretion of the evaluator.

All phases must include a minimum of one blank uncontaminated area<sup>1</sup>.

Quantities of scent material: For large species (defined as any wildlife whose potential adult weight is 100 pounds or greater) used as scent material, the total amount of scent material must weigh no less than one-half pound, with each individual aid weighing no less than 18 grams. For smaller species (less than 100 pounds), the recommended total scent material weight is no less than an ounce. This ultimately will be at the discretion of the evaluator and based upon species size and availability.

Pseudo odors must not be used for evaluation or testing.

Finds must be concealed in the search area at least 30 minutes prior to search.

- **General Evaluation Rules**

Only one incorrect response overall (miss, false alert, false indication, or false response) by the FWC Team is permitted for a successful “pass” evaluation. If the evaluating FWC team has more than one team incorrect response/failure, the FWC Team must retest in all the phases and odors they are seeking evaluation for. A minimum acceptable level required for successful evaluation is 90 percent.

The FWC must alert to the trained odors in which the FWC Team seeks evaluation. Upon interpreting the FWC’s alert, the FWCO must notify the evaluator of the hide location based on



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their interpretation of the FWC's alert. After the evaluator notifies the FWCO of a correct alert, the FWCO may reward the FWC.

- **Building/Structure/Indoor Phase**

1. The search area must contain a minimum of four rooms,
2. The search area must contain four wildlife/plant substance odor hides (to include at least one of each wildlife/plant substance odor the FWC Team seeks to be evaluated),
3. The search area must contain one blank uncontaminated room, and
4. All trained odors should be concealed.

- **Vehicle Phase**

1. The search area must contain a minimum of four vehicles,
2. The search area must contain four wildlife/plant substance odor hides (to include at least one of each wildlife/plant substance odor the FWC Team seeks to be evaluated),
3. The search area must contain one vehicle that has an exterior and interior narcotic substance odor hide,
4. The search area must contain one blank uncontaminated vehicle,
5. All trained odors should be concealed,

- **Open Area/Perimeter Phase**

1. The search area must be a minimum of 1,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet at the discretion of the evaluator,
2. The search area must contain one wildlife/plant substance odor hide as determined by the evaluator, and
3. All trained odors should be concealed.





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- **Container Phase**

1. Containers may be parcels (of similar shape, size, and material), luggage or baggage, or lockers;
2. The search area must contain a minimum of five containers;
3. The search area must contain one wildlife/plant substance odor hide as determined by the evaluator; and
4. All other containers used during the exercise must be blank and uncontaminated containers.



## APPENDIX B USFWS DRLE National Canine Unit

### *Federal Wildlife Canine Continuity of Care Plan*

#### **FWC: Name**

- DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight Range: \_\_\_\_\_ Kennel Size: \_\_\_\_\_
- Home Kennel Location (Address and Lat/Long):
  - POCs and Contact Information
- **Medical Care & Records**
  - Veterinary Clinic
- **General Care & Boarding**
  - Name
  - Contact Information
- **Nutritional Requirements:** Feeding and Supplement Instruction (i.e., how many times a day, etc.)
- **Prescriptions, Vaccinations & Treatments**
  - Specific food
  - Supplement types
  - Preventatives
  - Last Exam Date
    - Vaccinations and when next due
- **Commands**
  - Here: \_\_\_\_\_ Down: \_\_\_\_\_ Heel: \_\_\_\_\_ Track: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Out: \_\_\_\_\_ Engage: \_\_\_\_\_ Mark: \_\_\_\_\_ Article Search: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Sit: \_\_\_\_\_ Detection: \_\_\_\_\_
- **Training Aides**
  - Toys
  - Tugs
  - E-collar, flat, type of lead, etc.?
- **Exercises**
  - Types: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Example: Water retrieving/swimming
- **Aggressions or Fears**
  - Examples:
    - Kennel & crate barking toward strangers
    - Aggressive Engagement Equipment Fixation
    - Fireworks
- **Injuries, Surgeries & Medical Considerations**
  - Injury and Date
  - Procedures and Date