



For the Search Manager

Preplanning and Utilization of Search Dog Resources (v. 2014a)

LINVILLE-CENTRAL RESCUE SQUAD, INC.
SEARCH DOG TASK GROUP
AVERY COUNTY, NC
www.Linville-CentralRescue.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Richard Schaffer, K9 group leader** (Avery County Dispatch Unit ID 1731)
- **24 hr: 828-765-0340**
- **Cell: 828-265-6307** (if no answer, text received faster than voice mail)
- **Email: ncsardog17@gmail.com**
- Additional contact, Bob Garland, LCRS Chief, 828-387-1505
- Official agencies may contact Avery County dispatch or request through *NC Division of Emergency Management*

WHEN TO CALL

- Call early, during hasty search if possible.
- Standby or advance notice is appreciated if possible.
- 24 hour availability.
- If possible, give subject information and minimum search data when calling.

INITIAL RESPONSE

- **Number of Teams** – Unless command specifies otherwise, we will initially respond with two or three dog teams. Additional teams may be put on standby.
- **Types of Dogs to Expect** – All dogs are scent discriminating and trained in one or more of the following: tracking, air scent, area search, and cadaver, on land or water.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF DOG TEAMS

- **Hasty Search**
 - No need to wait on arrival of dog teams to begin. Conduct hasty search as usual.
 - Okay to put your crews in the field.
- **Reducing Scent Contamination**
 - As usual, locate command and staging away from PLS/LKP or residence. Although dogs are scent discriminating, let's not make it any more difficult than necessary.
 - Where possible, please turn off vehicle engines, especially diesel, or remove from scent area.
 - Secure subject's vehicle, campsite, bedroom, and articles, and protect from scent contamination.
 - If nursing home, please request staff not to enter room.
 - Please glove before touching subject's vehicle (including door handle), bedding, or personal articles.
 - Do not sit in subject's vehicle as we may use gauze pad on steering wheel or headrest for scent.
 - If LEO enters vehicle, e.g., to obtain ID, please exit as soon as possible.
- **Obtaining Scent Articles** - We prefer to obtain our own scent articles. However, trained personnel charged with obtaining an article should follow these protocols.
 - Glove and treat articles as though contaminated with bodily fluids.
 - Bag article only in unused zip lock bag. Handle article and bag with gloved hands.
 - Use no trash bags or bags used for any other purpose.
 - Obtain preferably from upper body – hat, shirt, pillow case.
 - Avoid shoes and socks – this is foot and shoe odor to us, but poor source of human scent for dogs.
 - Avoid articles touched by others (shared bedding) or placed in a common laundry.
 - First handler on scene will cut the article and individually bag it for other dog teams.

STAGING DOG TEAM VEHICLES

- Stage dog teams away from vehicle exhaust and generators.
- Stage in shaded area during hot weather.
- Expect that dogs will remain with handler's vehicle until assignment.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING AND OPERATIONS

- **Planning and Operations** – The task group leader or senior handler present will assist command in any capacity needed. If requested, he or she can plan dog team missions, assign the appropriate dog for the mission, and brief and debrief handlers. We hope that command will consult with the senior handler about the capabilities of teams in his or her unit, because some teams are more effective than others in various tasks or tactics. Selecting a dog requires more than knowing whether it is a “tracking dog” or “air scent dog”. Some dog teams may be more suited to some work than others. For example, some may work better in daylight, while others may work just as well at night. Some dogs may be “high drive” and range far from their handler, and be more suited to clear large areas. Others may work more methodically, or work better on leash or along highways. Teams that train together know their capabilities and the senior handler will always be willing to consult with command personnel to match the best dog to the mission.
- **Equipped with Terrain Navigator Pro and GPS Tracking** –Most dogs are equipped with GPS collars that transmit dog's track to handler's GPS for uploading to our computer running Terrain Navigator Pro. This gives command an exact track for both dog and handler during debriefing. Allows command to compare actual mission to mission assignment, assures accuracy, and creates permanent record.
- **Functions and Typical Assignments**
 - Determining direction of travel or hasty search.
 - Clearing hidden areas of subject's home and surrounding area.
 - Clearing larger sectors with a higher POD than most typical ground teams, particularly ATV teams.
 - In working along roads, dogs are effective in probing and clearing adjacent drainages and wooded areas.
 - Able to work effectively at night, especially during hot weather.
 - More effective off-trail and in dense vegetation than typical ground teams.
 - Effective at confining search area by working air scent dogs back into projected direction of travel.
 - Effective with subjects not able to call out for help.
 - Effective with evasive subjects, or with children or mentally handicapped who may hide from strangers.
 - HRD/Cadaver on land or water, or along streams and rivers.
 - Use of second dog to confirm, or rule out, interest by previous dog assigned to an area.
 - Able to locate buried or hanging subject missed by ground teams.
 - Cadaver teams can work by raft or boat.
 - Assures family that all available resources have been utilized.
- **Search Crew Assignments and Personnel – What do We Need?**
 - Ideally two or three crew members assigned to dog/handler team.
 - Preferably crew members who know local area, conditions, terrain.
 - Crew assists and flanks, and where capable, handles navigation and communications.
 - Many crew members do not realize that we will follow the dog off trail and through rugged terrain. Our missions may also be longer than what they are accustomed to. Therefore we suggest they come adequately prepared (2-3 liters water, flashlight, snack, and rain gear at all times) and with enough time to complete an extended mission.

*Member of the NC
Association of Rescue and
Emergency Medical Services*

