

Criteria for earning the SAR badge:

Examples of potential search locations for the test:

- Near a playground with a tunnel the person can hide in (if this has not been practiced- Meaning the dog will not just go to the tunnel to check it without nose work)
- In a park with natural cover (dense vegetation, fallen trees, large rocks, etc.)
- Field of high weeds/grass
- Field or other area with multiple barrels or other objects a person might hide in (note- a "double barrel" is needed for most adults to fit inside)
- Large warehouse with lots of hiding places
- Dirt or grass parking lot with person hiding in a car (need several other non-target cars)

Handler needs to tell the evaluator (in their own words):

- What the dogs smell
- How scent can travel
- The effects barriers and terrain can have on scent
- How they read their dog's signs indicating he's on and off the scent
- The difference between tracking, air scenting, and SAR
- How to communicate a find using at least 2 methods
- Do's and Don'ts of proper radio protocol
- How to preserve the scene
- What alert their dog will show (barking, digging, etc.) if doing urban find

If by video or for an Evaluator that did not witness the training- include a brief description and demo of the steps used to train the dog.

Dog's part of the test:

OUT OF SIGHT: Person being found should not be visible to the dog and cannot make any sounds until after the find is made. If it looks like the dog has suddenly alerted to a sound or movement of the target, the test will need to be re-done. The dog needs to be following his nose, not just checking likely hiding places.

WHO IS LOST: The person being found should not be a person the dog lives with, but can be someone well known to the dog.

TARGET SCENT: While not required, a target scent can be given to the dog at the start. This is typically something recently worn by the target to let the dog know what scent he is expected to find/follow. This is not discussed in the training steps, but may be a method used by some trainers.

BLENDING IN: The hiding place should not be out of place in the environment. A single barrel in a field would not be an acceptable hiding place. But if it's in the woods, hidden from view with branches and other vegetation that matches other piles of branches or hidden in a natural rock outcropping or some other way that doesn't make it look out of place, that would be ok.

REWARDS: The target person can have food rewards for the dog as long as the food is carried to the hiding spot in a sealed container and kept sealed until after the find is made. The dog needs to follow human scent, not food scent. The target person can have a toy (also carried in a sealed plastic bag) for the dog if the dog is more motivated by toys.

TWO FINDS in different areas that are new to the dog for scent work should be shown. They can both be wilderness finds, both be urban/disaster finds or can be a mixture of the two showing the components required for each. The dog should not have worked the test area before (to find a person or hidden object). This is to reduce the chances of the dog just checking previously used hiding spots without using his nose.

DISTANCE: The dog and target hiding spot should be at least 200' apart in an area that is big enough to give the dog a chance to show his skills. Age of the track or hide and the wind/air direction should set the dog up for success.

LOCATION UNKNOWN: The dog's handler cannot know where the target person is hiding, they must trust the dog to do the find and correctly read the dog's indication. The handler will only know the parameters of the search area (which should be a large outdoor area or a huge full warehouse). Dog training centers are not large enough and don't have enough visual barriers/hiding places to qualify as a search area for this badge.

HELPING: The handler should offer only minimal help- to keep the dog within the search area and keep the dog safe. Directing the dog to look in the only areas where a human could hide is not allowed. The dog should be using his nose to find the person, not simply following his handler's cues to likely locations. The handler CAN help the dog get started in the right direction and direct some zig zagging back and forth on the start of the search line until the dog indicates a scent is found and starts to follow it. There should not be visible tracks left by the person hiding.

URBAN/DISASTER FINDS should include the dog not being able to reach the target person (behind a barrier, up high, in a container, etc.) and the dog should show an obvious alert that the handler has told the evaluator the dog will do. Typically the dog is on a standard leash for disaster work, but the dog may work off-lead.

WILDERNESS FINDS should include a "re-find". Wilderness finds for the badge need to be done with the dog off-leash or on a long line. The dog may not always be visible to the handler, so when the dog rushes ahead (or into deep cover to make a find while out of sight) the dog should leave the target person, return to the handler and lead the handler to the target person. Usually the dog will only return to the handler during a search if he is called or if a find is made. The handler may need to stop or hang back to give the dog a chance to do the re-find.

SAFETY: The dog needs to be safe with people even when excited by a find. The dog should not be jumping on, mouthing or digging into a person's body during the alert. We don't want the dog to cause the target to have a heart attack or other injuries.

LEAVE-IT: The leave it must show a test of the dog's ability to choose to leave-it when told. Three successive, correct, straight line, passes on a loose leash past or over an object the dog really really wants with the dog close enough to get the object and instead choosing to leave it. See the Dog Scout test guidelines for more details and training info.