

Detection Dog Program

This is a program of the Global Forensic and Justice Center (GFJC) at Florida International University (FIU). Detector dog certification is evidence that the trainer and/or detection team has satisfactorily met and passed all applicable standards. The certification from GFJC is valid for one year from the date of issuance and non-transferable. To be eligible for re-certification, the trainer's agency must have a written policy mandating the keeping of training records by the detector dog team.

Global Forensic and Justice Center Minimum Certified Detector Dog Trainer requirements shall include:

- A minimum of five (5) years' experience as a detection canine trainer.
- A minimum of 200 hours of formalized training by recognized detection canine trainers.
- Completion of a 40-hour GFJC Trainer Certification Course, or approved equivalent, including instruction by recognized detection canine trainer(s), law enforcement, legal and scientific experts in the area of detection canines.
- Supplying the GFJC with standardized detector dog school certification guidelines, relevant to the trainer's agency, approved by an external review panel of at least two (2) individuals from outside the trainer's agency.
- Successful training of detector dog team(s), using the approved guidelines, as determined by a review team of at least two approved individuals from outside the trainer's agency.
- Separate guidelines should be developed, and separate detection teams trained, for each class of odors such as accelerants, cadavers, currency, explosives, hidden persons, narcotics, etc.
- Multiple specific odors, varying amounts of target odors, and varying conditions should be incorporated into the trainer's course and testing protocols.
- Training/judging with members of local, national or international detector dog organizations.
- Occasional videotaping of training sessions for trainer/handler critiquing.
- Archiving of videotapes is not recommended.

Detector Dog Team Certification recommendations:

- Finds may be provided by GFJC or the requesting agency.
- Pseudo scents must not be used for certification tests.
- For narcotics detection, each find should be less than two years old or authenticated by an approved local, State or Federal lab prior to use in a certification. A purity of 85% or greater is recommended.
- Scented rewards must not be used during the tests.
- Each hide should contain at least one (1) gram or item to be detected with a maximum of 1000 grams for any one test.
- There should be only one find of each type in each designated area.
- At least two different search areas/items should be incorporated into the certification tests such as building, vehicle, luggage, open areas, etc. At least one blank search area/item should be incorporated into the certification tests for each different search area/item.
- Distractors should normally not be part of the certification test but should be widely employed in training and results documented in training records.
- All finds should be placed in the search area at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the test.
- Ideally, the search area should be previously swept by the dog(s) to be tested to reduce the potential of contamination interference and to randomize dog odor if multiple dogs are to be tested in the same area.
- There should be a minimum of 10 total finds (including blanks) and the team should accurately locate 9 finds out of 10 (90%) or greater for certification.

- Results of the certification tests should be pass or fail rather than judgments of style (see Example Certification Sheet).
- The maximum time to complete an individual search should be less than five minutes but disqualification due to time should be left to the discretion of the master trainer.
- Recommended search areas include the following: Vehicles – at least 3 vehicles including one interior, one exterior and one blank; Building – a minimum of 200 sq. ft. and maximum of 1200 sq. ft. (with furniture) including at least one blank room; Baggage – a minimum of 10 articles and a maximum of 25 articles; Open area – a minimum of 1000 sq. ft. and a maximum of 3000 sq. ft.
- Certification is for the handler and the dog as a team. If the dog changes handlers, a new certification is required.
- The Certification Team should include at least one individual from outside the trainer's agency and should preferably include at least one trainer and one scientist.
- Documentation of the team's detection proficiency training should be maintained by the Certified Trainer and available for inspection including the certification documents, training records and a certificate of completion of an approved narcotic detection academy which includes the number of hours the team attended the school.
- A detection team which fails to complete the certification process should wait at least 30 days (and complete additional training) before making another attempt to certify.
- Any complaints or suggestions regarding how the certification was conducted should be sent in writing to the trainer and GFJC within two weeks of the completion of the test.
- Determination of the reliability of the detection team should be based primarily on the certification records and secondarily on the regular training records but should not use deployment logs as unconfirmed alerts do not accurately evaluate a detection team's performance (i.e. residual odor can be present or concealment may preclude discovery).

Detector Dog Certification Team
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Example Certification Sheet

The GFJC Certified Detector Dog Trainer Guidelines scientific review panel includes:

Dr. Jose Almirall, Ph.D., International Forensic Research Institute _____
Signature Date

Dr. Kenneth G. Furton, Ph.D., College of Arts, Sciences & Education _____
Signature Date

Kevin Lothridge, M.S., National Forensic Science Technology Center _____
Signature Date

Dr. Lawrence J. Myers, D.V.M., Ph.D., Auburn University _____
Signature Date

Dr. Stefan Rose, M.D., Univ. Medical and Forensic Consultants, Inc. _____
Signature Date

Name of trainer submitting guidelines _____

Agency and title of guidelines submitted _____

Submitted training testing guidelines are:

1. Approved with no changes required _____

2. Approved with the following recommendations _____

3. Approved with the following required changes _____

4. Disapproved - resubmit after the following substantive changes have been made _____

5. Failed with resubmission not recommended _____

Example Certification Sheet

Certification results for: _____

Handler's Title and Name (as it will appear on certificate) _____

Handler's Agency & Address Phone # Fax #

K-9's name K-9's Breed Trainer's Name & Agency

Location of Certification Date of Certification

| Vehicle | Interior | Exterior | Blank | Item | Weight | Alert / No Alert | Correct |
|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------|---|------------|
| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No 3 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |

| Luggage | Description | Item | Weight | Alert / No Alert | Correct |
|---------|-------------|-------|--------|---|------------|
| 1 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No 2 |
| | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 3 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 4 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 5 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 6 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 7 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 8 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 9 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 10 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 11 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 12 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |

| Room | Location | Item | Weight | Alert / No Alert | Correct |
|------|----------|-------|--------|---|----------|
| 1 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 2 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 3 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 4 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |

| Other | Location | Item | Weight | Alert / No Alert | Correct |
|-------|----------|-------|--------|---|----------|
| 1 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 2 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |
| 3 | _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes / No |

Total # hides (including blanks) _____ # hides missed _____ Pass / Fail

Evaluator 1 _____ Name Signature

Evaluator 2 _____ Name Signature

Comments _____