



# Tonto Rim Search and Rescue (TRSAR) K9 Team Mission Statement and Protocols

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## SECTION I. MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Tonto Rim Search and Rescue Squad (TRSAR) Dog Team is to develop teams of dogs, handlers and support personnel to efficiently and effectively conduct a search and rescue/recovery of lost or missing subjects in both wilderness and urban settings. The Dog Team is a TEAM EFFORT and requires an extensive amount of time and training to develop the skills and coordination that our teams require in order to successfully complete our mission. It also requires a positive and cooperative attitude by our members in order to work together, focus our efforts and inspire our dogs to effectively do their jobs. Any negative distractions are only detrimental to the successful completion of the mission. Only those members who demonstrate a long term commitment to the above principles, may be considered for participation on the Dog Team. We recognize that the dog team is only one tool in TRSAR's tool bag to accomplish TRSAR overall mission and we are committed to coordinating our efforts with those resources in order to compliment and facilitate the successful completion of TRSAR's overall mission.

## SECTION II. PROTOCOLS FOR DOG TEAM: MISSIONS:

### A. MISSIONS:

1. The most important part of utilizing the Dog team is getting the dog and handler to the Point Last Seen (PLS) quickly.
2. Preserve the scene for a tracking/trailing or area search dog.
3. Attempt to get a good scent article.
  - a. Primary - Soft:
    - (1) T-Shirt, Scarf, Hat, Pillow Case, Towel, Child's Soft Toy - Any article of clothing that has not been laundered.
  - b. Secondary - Hard:
    - (1) Toy, Plastic Cup, Knife Handle, Gun Grip, Keys, Cell Phone
  - c. Tertiary - Exotic:
    - (1) Anything with body fluids (difficult to obtain)
  - d. Good footprints are a scent source for track/trail dogs.
4. Use gloves, place any scent article into an unscented plastic bag.
  - a. If a scent article is not easily obtained and the subject's vehicle is available.

- (1) Use a gauze 4x4s to wipe over door handles, the crack of the seat, steering wheel, etc.
  - (2) Place gauze pad in unscented plastic bag.
  - (3) ID the bag with the subject's name and date.
  - (4) Never place Exotic scent articles into a plastic bag - the plastic can create heat and moisture that will destroy the scent.
5. It is permissible for the handler to touch the scent article, but only if necessary:
  - a. The dog can distinguish between the handler's and the subject's scent.
6. It is also permissible to carry the scent article, as long as it is in a bag.
7. Attempt to get as much information that would assist the DogTeam
  - a. PLS is most important, along with any information that would also be given to the man trackers.
8. The best case scenario is to begin with only one dog at a time, but this is not always possible.
  - a. Be prepared for any change in scenario.
  - b. If using one dog at a time, as soon as the first dog has exhausted his efforts:
    - (1) Have all other potential tracking dogs waiting and in a place where they are cool and can be kept rested.
  - c. If a dog does not want to work get a different dog.
9. If using multiple dogs and handles, as when a child is lost or adverse weather is moving in:
  - a. Attempt to put the best trailing dog on the track and the best air scent dog in such a way as to make use of the available air currents.
10. Be an advocate for your dog:
  - a. Know when to say "no".
  - b. Don't do something that the dog is not trained for or unfit for.
11. Understand that a dog may be a directional indicator only.
  - a. Other search methods might be brought into play ahead of a dog which has indicated a direction of travel.
12. It is recommended that the handler not run with the dog to avoid injury.
13. In the event of a "find", where the dog was not on site first, the dog should scent the subject at the end of the search.
  - a. This gives the dog positive reinforcement of a job well done.
14. Use a support team.
  - a. The optimal support team would be two (2) people along with the dog handler and the dog.
    - (1) The minimum would be one person.
  - b. The preferred support team would be squad members who have worked with us in training.
    - (1) But any member could be used as long as they follow the directions of the handler.
15. Make sure you have the right dog team in place:
  - a. Good attitude and properly outfitted for the task.

- b. All Dog Team and support team members are required to carry extra water and a collapsible bowl for the dogs.

## **B. TRAINING:**

1. Dog Team handling Training is usually practiced once a week, all locations and times are TBA.
  - a. All squad members are invited to predicate as either subject, trail setter or observer.
  - b. Guest are also invited,
2. Marked trails or blind trails can be used at any time for training, or as the dog handler request.
3. Dog Team handlers are required to participate in being trail setters for other handlers.
  - a. This includes whether you are participating with a dog or not.
4. Each dog team handler decides what each track or challenge will be for his or her dog.
  - a. Trail setters must do exactly what the dog team leader or handler asks them to do.
  - b. This is a very important point: the intent of training is not to trick either the handler or the dog by changing the track.
  - c. Trail setters may make suggestions for a track before the track is set, but must follow the handler's directions.
5. The trail setter will place the clip (flagged clothpins) on a marked trail approximately every 30 to 40 yards apart, within clear sight of each other while laying out the track.
6. Make sure that each time the game is played to completion, and that the dog is rewarded.
7. Have fun with the dog, get him excited and make sure to reward him at the end of a successful training.
  - a. Do not get discouraged or frustrated as the dog will often pick up on those emotions.
8. Always be aware of the terrain, temperature, weather conditions and most importantly what the wind is doing as this affects how the dog will track.
9. Practice negative starts, remote starts and missing man starts.
10. Each handler is required to keep training records and logs.

## **C. PUBLIC RELATIONS:**

1. Often dog handlers are asked to participate in public relations:
  - a. Our fund raising booth, local events, parades, conferences, demonstrations, etc.
  - b. Only TRSAR dogs and handlers will be allowed to participate.
  - c. No other family dogs will be allowed in the fund raising booth or at special events.

#### **D. MANDATORY EQUIPMENT:**

1. Communications: Each participating dog team handler, trail setter or subject must have a working radio secured to their belt or chest pack with either a functioning belt clip or a lanyard or both.
  - a. This is so that the radio cannot come loose and fall off , resulting in the radio being lost, turned off, volume turned down or channel changed.
  - b. Any participant not willing to abide by this rule will not be allowed to participate in dog team training or missions.
2. Water: Each dog team handler, trail setter or subject must have enough water for both themselves and a dog readily available during training, and enough on their person for themselves and a dog during a mission.
  - a. Any participant not willing to abide by this rule will not be allowed to participate in dog team training or missions.
3. Working GPS and basic knowledge on how to use it.
  - a. Basic knowledge is turning the unit on before leaving command and setting a waypoint, knowing how to navigate to the page that gives your coordinates, able to use "goto", understand how to track back to command and being able to change between units and map datum.
4. Helmets: On all trainings and all missions everyone on the dog team must wear a helmet, guest included.
5. Other Equipment: All other equipment will be the regular equipment required on the TRSAR list for training and missions.
  - a. A 24 hour pack is recommended.

#### **SECTION III. DOG TEAM PERSONNEL IS LISTED AS SUCH:**

- A. Active Dog Team: Handlers that own a dog that has been certified by an independent evaluator as a tracking/trailing/are search dog, as per the team's standards of qualifications.
- B. Reserve Dog Team: Handlers and dogs that are in training and have yet to be certified.
- C. Support Dog Team Member: Those team members who have trained as track setter and subjects numerous times with the dog team.
  1. Those support members would be asked to accompany the active and reserve dog team members during a search because they would be familiar with and able to assist using our techniques and objectives.
- D. Lifetime Dog Team: Active handlers and dogs that have retired or semi-retired.