



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE DOG ORGANISATION

GUIDELINE

IRO Mission Readiness Test Area

for the holding of International IRO Mission Readiness Test Area
used in calculating the allocation of funds from Sponsor's Donations

First edition	18.04.2009, Delegates meeting, Ljubljana, SLO
Revised	

Planing and execution

The application to hold an IRO Mission Readiness Test Area has basically to be forwarded to the IRO office. The execution of the event lies within the responsibility of the organising NRO. The deadline for submission is the 30th of June in the year prior to the year of execution, as approved in the Meeting of the Executive Board on the 18th of January, 2009. The IRO Mission Readiness Test Area will be integrated in the annual IRO calendar.

To rate the event as an IRO Mission Readiness Test Area participation of a minimum of 10 different dog handlers with their dogs is necessary. If there are less than 10 dog handlers notified at the deadline, the event is to be canceled as an IRO Mission Readiness Test Area and IRO bears no costs for it.

The invitation to the Mission Readiness Test Area must be sent by the organizing NRO to all NRO's of the IRO and simultaneously to the IRO Office. The actual lists of members can be requested from the IRO office at any time. It must include the place and date of the event, a contact and registration address, the deadline, and the registration fee. The registration fee may not exceed €50,-

The registration deadline is to be set at four weeks prior to the event date. Late entries will only be accepted if they can be accommodated without difficulty in the schedule. Late registrations have to be agreed with the spokesperson for deployment via the IRO office.

Dog Handlers of IRO-NROs and participants in the Sponsor's Recruitment have priority over other dog handlers regarding approval to participate in the test. Double-Entries (1 dog handler – 2 dogs) of teams is only permissible when no other IRO member applicant would be excluded from the test as a result. A dog can only be handled by one handler during the Mission Readiness Test Area. A double-entry of the dog (2 handlers – 1 dog) is not possible.

Dogs on which a participation ban has been imposed by the Board of Directors of the IRO at the request of the Spokesperson for Training may not participate in any IRO tests for the duration of the ban. The list of these dogs is to be obtained by the event organiser from the IRO office at the registration deadline.

The end of the Mission Readiness Test Area on the last day (if planned longer than 1 day) has to be scheduled with 4 p.m. at the latest.

The department of deployment is to be informed via the IRO office of the total number of the registered dogs within 5 days after the deadline.

A confirmation of registration is to be sent to the Dog Handlers or their respective NRO's in a timely fashion and must include a schedule, or at least the beginning times for each test-day, as well as directions for reaching the test site.

A completely filled-out and signed rating list that is clearly showing the respective NRO-membership of each participant is to be forwarded to the IRO office immediately after testing.

All forms (Application for holding the event, registration of dog handler for the event, notification of participants to the IRO office, rating list) are available for download at the IRO Homepage. The forms can be completed with the computer and submitted via E-Mail. Only exception is the rating-list which has to be signed by the judges and the original has to be sent to the IRO office. Of course you still have the possibility to hand in all the forms via normal post.

NRO Evaluators / Judges

The evaluators / judges must be from IRO member organisations (NROs) or be from national entities that are FCI member. The nomination, assignment and payment of the evaluators lies within the responsibility of the organising NRO. Evaluators / judges can be from the organising NRO or from other NROs or FCI member organisations.

IRO Observers

The IRO department of deployment will nominate two IRO observers at the minimum who will ensure that the Mission Readiness Test Area is carried out in compliance with the guideline. The IRO observers are nominated from the IRO evaluator pool for Mission Readiness Tests.

IRO covers the costs for the observers for travel, accommodation and breakfast and daily allowance according to the valid regulations for allowances of IRO. IRO office will organise all relevant details with the respective observers. The organising NRO is responsible for the transport of the evaluators on site.

If the organizers do not act according to this guideline, it may be a decision of the Spokesperson for deployment to cancel the event from the list of events, which are used in calculating the allocation of funds from Sponsor's Donations. All costs in regard to observers then have to be covered by the organising NRO.

IRO Mission Readiness Test - Area

Prerequisite: passed IPO-R Area B Test

The Mission Readiness Test Area is carried out in a realistic area. The participant has to complete mission tasks in regard to searching for a missing person including a minimum of three searches. All participants are allowed on the same search area for each task. During the Mission Readiness Test the number of hiding persons has to be the same for all participants. The places of the hiding persons can be changed after each search per team. Within one day the following searches have to be completed by a participating team:

- ☐ **2 x area search with different character**
- ☐ **1 x search along a path, incl. orientation with a map, compass, GPS**
- ☐ **First aid human and first aid dog**

Area search

Search time	max. 1 hour per search
Searches	2 x within 24 hours
Search terrain	2 different search areas per participant in field- / forest- / meadow- or mixed areas, a minimum of 50% has to be covered by natural cover, no artificial hiding places
Search area	maximum of 75.000 m ² of search area per search, 1 search is possible at complete darkness
Hiding persons	1 - 4 hiding persons per search, the number is not announced
Hiding places	sitting or laying on the ground at max. 2 meters of height (in a tree or similar)

Search along a path

Search time	max. 2 hours per search
Searches	1 x within 24 hours
Search terrain	various parts of field- / forest- / meadow- and farmers paths
Search track	max. of 6.000 Meters, adapted changes of running direction within the search area on attached paths, no marking of assigned paths, no artificial hiding places, the crossing of roads is allowed, search is also possible at complete darkness if no area search is planned at darkness
Orientation	the stretch of way to be searched has to be assembled in a way that the dog handler is only able to orient oneself by map, compass or GPS
Hiding persons	1 - 2 per search, the number is not announced
Hiding places	sitting or laying on the ground at max. 2 meters of height (in a tree or similar) and max. 5 meters to the right or to the left of the middle of the path

First aid Human / Dog

The dog handler must be able to apply immediate life-saving measures for humans and dogs according to the respective customary training standards. For each field the participant will be given two practical tasks from the catalog of Basic Life Support (BSL)

Task and implementing rules for dog handlers and evaluators

Central point of the evaluation during the IRO Mission Readiness Test Are is the team work between dog handler and dog as well as the success rate within the three search tasks.

Work of the dog handler

The dog handler has to ask, explore and evaluate the size and distinctiveness of the search area at the evaluator team.

The search task given by the evaluator team is limited to the formulation of the main contents of the respective search area.

The dog handler is free to decide with strategy or search model he will choose with his dog. Evaluators are not allowed to influence the decision of the dog handler or to limit the free moving space of the handler by any parameter.

The handler can subdivide the assigned search area or search it all at once. Within a search breaks can be taken (incl. giving water to the dog) upon the decision of the handler – breaks are included in the search time.

The handler can decide if he wants to make a scanning search or starts directly with a detailed search.

Evaluation of search work

Overall it is important if the dog is fulfilling the task in a calm, independent and ceaselessly manner. Criteria are joy at running and work, independence, endurance, drive, self-assuredness, free and unforced work within the given task, control and steering behaviour, communication to and trust in the dog handler and tendency of the dog to give up his task.

a. Searches - Nosework

The dog has to search persistently and intensively for the scent of the person that has been placed in the open area in field, forest or meadow. The dog has to filter the human scent that is coming as area scent from the open area in field, forest or meadow from all other scents. During the search the “willingness to find” is of utmost importance. If the dog autonomously switches to a track while following the area scent which leads to the hiding person and follows the track to the hiding person with deep nose, this behaviour is not incorrect.

b. Systematic work / team work

The trained rescue dog basically works independently within the assigned search area but has to be under control of the dog handler in terms of directability. The dog handler has to direct his dog in order to reach the goal. This requires in depth knowledge of search strategies by the dog handler in order to be able to search the assigned area with his dog. During all phases of the evaluation it has to be obvious that the dog is under control of the dog handler (basic obedience)

c. Alert

At the hiding person (alert place / place outdoor) the dog has to alert independently and without any influence of the handler with the respective alert. Any influence or interference of the handler in regard to the alert results to an evaluation of 0 points – the hiding person is evaluated as not found. Alerts are barking, bringsel or recall/refind. During the evaluation the handler is allowed to confirm his dog after every correct alert. The use of food is not allowed for confirmation.

d. Dexterity / Self-assuredness

The dog is not allowed to be distracted by any difficulties during the search – neither by a difficult terrain that imposes a barrier to his forward movement nor by involved rescue teams. If the dog refuses to access areas that would basically not exhibit a problem, the self-assuredness of the dog is not impeccable and therefore unsatisfactory.

e. Social compatibility

If the dog shows aggression against involved persons during the evaluation the evaluation process has to be stopped due to obvious character deficiencies of the dog.

Search work at day and/or night

It is obligatory for the dog to wear a rescue dog harness. He has to wear the harness during the day and the night search. Only harnesses that do not impose a safety risk are allowed. Colours such as neon yellow or neon orange as well as reflecting strips are allowed. Also bells and blinking lights, if attached to the harness, are allowed.

If the search work has to be carried out at night the search has to be done without the use of floodlight. Only headlamps (e.g. helmet) and flash lights are allowed.

The number of gesture and audible commands is unlimited for the dog handler as long as the command does not influence the alert behaviour of the dog at the hiding person.

If the dog moves completely independent in the search area, disobeys all gesture and audible commands and is not under control of the dog handler anymore the evaluation has to be aborted due to “lack of obedience of the dog”.

Rest period / Regeneration period

Between the first two searches a rest period of min. 1 hour has to be scheduled. Further the timetable has to include a 4 hour regeneration period (off-time in a rest area) per dog after the second search.

Result and Certificate

Decisive for a positive evaluation of the rescue dog team are:

- All hiding persons in hiding places or open area are found within the determined time
- Max. 1 hiding person has not been found during the three searches (over running the hiding person counts as not found)
- Max. 1 false alert in three searches
- Alerts carried out independently by the dog at the hiding person (barking, bringsl and recall/refind are the accepted alerts)

A limitation of the above mentioned evaluation criteria during the Mission Readiness Test will have a negative influence on the evaluation itself. The evaluation is within the discretion of the evaluators. The assessment of evaluators at the respective working sites is final. No objections can be raised concerning the assessments. Evaluation will be announced as “passed with success” or “not passed”. Any other announcement of results is not allowed.

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