

**Arizona Search Track and Rescue, Inc.  
AZ STaR**

**STANDARDS AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES  
FOR  
HANDLERS, SUPPORT AND SEARCH MANAGEMENT  
PERSONNEL**

**GENERAL  
SEARCH MANAGEMENT,  
HANDLER,  
&  
SUPPORT PERSONNEL  
INFORMATION**

**SECTION I**

**Arizona Search Track and Rescue, Inc.**  
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**STANDARDS AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES  
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There are three basic divisions:

**SUPPORT PERSONNEL  
K-9 HANDLERS  
SEARCH MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL**

Within each division there are three proficiency levels:

**NON-OPERATIONAL LEVEL I  
OPERATIONAL LEVEL II  
OPERATIONAL LEVEL III**

Each proficiency level is determined by passing a series of tests, one in navigational skills, one in man-tracking and clue awareness, one in first-aid & CPR, one in radio communications, one in desert & wilderness survival, and one in search ability.

Each Person who applies for membership, in Arizona Search Track and Rescue, Inc. (hereafter, referred to as “**AZ STaR**”), will be considered **NON-OPERATIONAL** in ALL search divisions and will undergo training in navigational skills, man-tracking, clue awareness, first aid, CPR, radio communications, desert & wilderness survival, and search proficiency. This applies to Handlers, Support Personnel and Search Management Personnel. When the member feels ready to be tested and after their 1 year probationary period has passed, they may request that an evaluation be conducted by the **EVALUATION COMMITTEE** as provided for within the bylaws of AZ STaR. The member may be evaluated in any combination or sequence of divisions at the discretion of the Evaluating Committee.

Existing SAR Applicants’ transferring in from other units that are currently operational/certified within their agency may request that their probationary period be shortened. **NO** probationary period may be less than six (6) months. Any prospective member requesting an adjustment to their probationary period will be required to produce a letter of reference from their previous agency and turn over their training logs for review. **No exceptions** will be made for any Handler, Support, or Search Management Applicant.

To qualify for an Operational Status, the member must pass navigational, man-tracking and clue awareness, first aid, CPR, radio communications, desert & wilderness survival, and search proficiency tests beginning with the first operational level (I). The team being evaluated will pass or fail, each test, with no gradations in between. The search proficiency tests will be conducted in an area **TOTALLY UNFAMILIAR** to the team being evaluated.

The **EVALUATION COMMITTEE** will consider the Members’ overall performance and throughout all levels of testing, the Evaluation Committee will be looking at the following characteristics:

1. The Member should be in good physical condition for the position to which they are applying; and

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2. The Member should show a mutual liking and respect for working with K-9's, Handlers and other Search Personnel; and
3. The Member should give be willing to give appropriate encouragement and help to any other member; and
4. The Member should demonstrate his ability to work, control and help care for his team-mates, including K-9 team-mates effectively (for a minimum of 24 hours) in a variety of areas and conditions according to the terrain and weather; and
5. The Member should be able to work effectively in a range of stress situations; and
6. The Member must have the ability to interact with other resources, while maintaining a constructive and positive attitude; and
7. The Member must have the ability to operate safely in desert, wooded, and rough terrain areas.

Each Member may be evaluated, separately, for all tests, except for the desert & wilderness survival and search proficiency tests in which they will be evaluated with a dog team, so the EVALUATION COMMITTEE can pay special attention to how the Applicant Member interacts under a stressful situation with his team-mates. The EVALUATION COMMITTEE may offer candid, helpful advise for any Member who fails any portion of the test and may openly discuss the reasons for failure with the Member in question. Immediate or future opportunities for re-testing will be up to the discretion of the EVALUATION COMMITTEE. When the EVALUATION COMMITTEE decides to re-test Member, it has the discretion to re-test immediately or to set a date for the next test (within reasonable limits, i.e. at the next BI-annual testing date). If the Member fails some aspect of search work, the EVALUATION COMMITTEE may work closely with the Member to solve the problem, keeping in mind that high proficiency teams benefit AZ STaR and more importantly, any lost **person**.

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**SUPPORT  
PERSONNEL**

**SECTION II**

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**NON-OPERATIONAL LEVEL I**

**All members** of AZ STaR will be considered **Non-Operational Level I** until such time as they are tested and demonstrate adequate levels of proficiency in all areas required for Operational Level II. Members may not be tested for Operational Level II until such time as they have completed their probationary period.

Non-Operational Members may, however, upon the discretion of the Training Officer be allowed on searches with an Operational Handler, Support or Search Management person if they meet the following requirements:

1. Have attended 70% of all meetings and mandatory training's to date; and
2. Have demonstrated proficiency in desert & wilderness survival, land navigation skills, basic first aid, clue awareness, and communications; and
3. Have the ability and equipment needed to spend twenty-four (24) hours in the wilderness; and
4. They will be under the direct supervision, **at all times**, of an Operational Level III Support Person, K-9 Handler, or Search Management Person.

The Non-Operational Members proficiency in the above mentioned areas must be in the form of written documentation by the Training Officer.

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**OPERATIONAL LEVEL II**

Members testing for Operational Level II must demonstrate the following on written and/or field exercises.

1. The Member must have the ability to plan the search area for best use of wind and efficient coverage for that terrain if working with an air-scent, trailing or tracking dog and handler; and
2. The Member must have the ability to evaluate the search area and revise the search tactics based on conditions present in the field and type of resource being used; and
3. The Member must have excellent land navigation skills, including appropriate use of a compass, topographical maps, and grid coordinates; and
4. The Member must be able to recognize, define, and follow human tracks and clues; and
5. The Member must have the ability to use a portable radio effectively for efficient operations between the command post and field; and
6. The Member must have the ability to judge the probability of detection after a sweep of an area based upon the current conditions; and
7. The Member must have the ability to relate accurate information to the command post which as a minimum shall include, but not be limited to, the route taken, areas left uncovered, alerts & locations, clues & location, weather, wind direction, hazards, and POD; and
8. The Member must have an understanding of the components of the Incident Command System; and
9. The Member must have completed the Law & Legal Course as required by AZ STaR; and
10. The Member must have completed the First-Aid and CPR Course as required by AZ STaR; and
11. The Member must have completed the FunSAR/Fundamentals of Search and Rescue or Basic Search and Rescue as required by AZ STaR; and
12. The Member must have participated in not less than 10 searches as a trainee with a qualified Operational Member; and

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13. The Member must have the ability and equipment to spend 24 hours outdoors under moderate weather conditions; and
14. The Member must have the knowledge, ability, and supplies to render basic first aid under field conditions; and
15. The Member should be able to discuss appropriately, lost person characteristics; and
16. The Member should be able to identify and protect the crime when a clue or the subject is found.

Proficiency in all of the above areas should be in the form of written documentation to include written/oral testing by the Training Officer or other approved, "Formal Evaluator(s)". "Mock Searches" / Field exercises designed to evaluate the skills of the members shall also be utilized. The Training Officer shall conduct written reviews after these exercises documenting the skill demonstrated by the Member.

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**OPERATIONAL LEVEL III**

Members testing for Operational Level III must first demonstrate proficiency in all areas of Operational Level II, as defined in Section III. Members testing for Operational Level III must demonstrate the following on written and/or field exercises.

1. The Member must be able determine whether AZ STaR units will respond to a search; and
2. The Member must be able to determine the number and type of dog teams, support members and Search Management Personnel that will be needed to respond initially and as backup; and
3. The Member must be familiar with all required I.C.S. forms, AZ STaR Search Response forms, and AZ STaR Individual forms required for documentation purposes; and
4. The Member must be able to give the precise location of the Incident Command Post to all unit members responding; and
5. The Member must be able to assume responsibility for segmenting search areas and deploying teams for the best coverage according to resources available; and
6. The Member must be able to confidently assist in the care of any tracking, trailing, or air-scent dogs in the case of a handler injury; and
7. The Member must be able to demonstrate a good understanding of how tracking, trailing, and air-scent dog teams work and demonstrate how to work a search area based upon the given type of SAR K-9; and
8. The Member must be able to bivouac under any weather conditions for 24-48 hours; and
9. The Member must be able to demonstrate an intermediate skill-level or above, in man-tracking, navigational skills, clue-awareness, radio communications, desert & wilderness survival skills, and overall search proficiency skills; and
10. The Member must have completed the MSF/Managing the Search Function Course or Advanced Search and Rescue Course; and
11. The Member must have the ability to recognize when any dog handler team and/or other resource is working in an inefficient or unsafe manner and report the condition; and



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12. The Member must have the ability to recognize hazards to dogs, handlers, and support personnel and be willing/able to tell the SAR Coordinator of the incident that AZ STaR resources, will not be utilized due to the hazards.
13. The Member must have completed a course in Evidence Search Techniques, as required by AZ STaR; and
14. The Member must have completed a course in Crime Scene Preservation, as required by AZ STaR; and
15. The Member must have completed a course in Water Search Techniques, as required by AZ STaR; and
16. The Member must have excellent skills in Wilderness and Desert Search Techniques

Proficiency in all of the above areas should be in the form of written documentation to include written/oral testing by the Training Officer or other approved, "Formal Evaluator(s)". "Mock Searches" / Field exercises designed to evaluate the skills of the members shall also be utilized. The Training Officer shall conduct written reviews after these exercises documenting the skill demonstrated by the Member.

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**K-9  
HANDLER**

**SECTION III**

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**NON-OPERATIONAL LEVEL I**

**All K-9 Handler Members** of AZ STaR will be considered **Non-Operational Level I** until such time as they are tested and demonstrate adequate levels of proficiency in all areas required for Operational Level II K-9 Handlers. Members may not be tested for Operational Level II until such time as they have completed their probationary period and one year as Operational Support.

Non-Operational Members may, however, upon the discretion of the Training Officer be allowed on searches with an Operational Handler, Support or Search Management person if they meet the following requirements:

1. Have attended 70% of all meetings and mandatory training's to date; and
2. Have demonstrated proficiency in desert & wilderness survival, land navigation skills, basic first aid, clue awareness, and communications; and
3. Have the ability and equipment needed to spend twenty-four (24) hours in the wilderness; and
4. Will be under the direct supervision, **at all times**, of an Operational Level III K-9 Handler.

The Non-Operational Members proficiency in the above mentioned areas must be in the form of written documentation by the Training Officer.

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**OPERATIONAL LEVEL II**

All Members testing for **K-9 Handler Operational Level II**, must have already completed and demonstrated proficiency in all areas required for Support Personnel Operational Level II and have a SAR K-9 ready to test at an Operational Level II for K-9's. In addition, Members testing for Operational Level II must demonstrate proficiency in the following on written and/or field exercises:

1. The handler must have complete control over their SAR K-9 at all times; and
2. The handler must have the ability to interact with other resources, while maintaining a constructive and positive attitude; and
3. The handler must be willing to assist in the training of other team members; and
4. The handler must have completed a Basic SAR Dog class; and
5. The handler must have the ability to plan the search area for best use of wind and efficient coverage for that terrain if working an air-scent, tracking or trailing dog; and
6. The ability to evaluate the search area and revise the search tactics based on conditions present in the field; and
7. Land navigation skills, including appropriate use of a compass, topographical maps, and grid coordinates; and
8. An ability to operate safely in desert, wooded, and rough terrain areas;
9. An ability to judge the probability of detection after a sweep of an area based upon the current conditions; and
10. An ability to relate accurate information to the command post which as a minimum shall include, but not be limited to, the route taken, areas left uncovered, alerts, wind direction, location of any clues and POD; and
11. An understanding of the components of the Incident Command System; and
12. An ability to recognize when any dog handler team is working in an inefficient manner and report the condition.
13. The handler should be able to identify and protect a crime scene properly.
14. The handler must have participated in not less than 10 searches as a trainee with a qualified Operational handler; and

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15. The handler must have the ability and equipment to care for self and K-9 for 24 hours outdoors under moderate weather conditions; and
16. The handler must have the ability and supplies to render first aid to other search personnel and SAR K-9 in the field.

Proficiency in all of the above areas should be in the form of written documentation to include written/oral testing by the Training Officer or other approved, "Formal Evaluator(s)". "Mock Searches" / Field exercises designed to evaluate the skills of the handler shall also be utilized. The Training Officer shall conduct written reviews after these exercises documenting the skill demonstrated by the Member.

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**OPERATIONAL LEVEL III**

Members testing for **K-9 Handler Operational Level III** must first demonstrate proficiency in all areas of Support Personnel Operational Level II & Level III, as defined in Section III. They must also be / have been an Operational K-9 Handler Level II, as defined in Section IV, for a minimum of 1 year and have a SAR K-9 ready to test at Operational Level III for SAR K-9's. In addition, Members testing for Operational Level III must demonstrate the following on written and/or field exercises.

1. The handler must be able determine when and whether AZ STaR K-9 units will respond to a search; and
2. The handler must be able to determine the number and type of dog teams and support members that will be needed to respond initially and as backup; and
3. The handler must be familiar with all required I.C.S. forms, AZ STaR Search Response forms, and AZ STaR Individual forms required for documentation purposes; and
4. The handler must be able to assume responsibility for segmenting search areas and deploying teams for the best coverage according to resources available; and
5. The handler must be able to confidently assist in the care of any tracking, trailing, or air-scent dogs in the case of a handler injury; and
6. The handler must be able to demonstrate an advanced understanding of how tracking, trailing, and air-scent dog teams work and demonstrate how to work a search area based upon the given type of SAR K-9; and
7. The handler must have completed an Advanced SAR Dog Course; and
8. The handler must have the ability to recognize when any dog handler team and/or other member is working in an inefficient or unsafe manner and report the condition; and
9. The handler must have the ability to recognize hazards to dogs, handlers, and support personnel and be willing/able to tell the SAR Coordinator of the incident that AZ STaR resources will not be utilized due to the hazards; and
10. The handler must have participated in, not less than, twenty (20) searches as an Operational Level II Handler; and
11. The handler must have excellent wilderness, desert, water, evidence and cadaver search techniques utilizing SAR K-9's; and

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Proficiency in all of the above areas should be in the form of written documentation to include written/oral testing by the Training Officer or other approved, "Formal Evaluator(s)". "Mock Searches" / Field exercises designed to evaluate the skills of the members shall also be utilized. The Training Officer shall conduct written reviews after these exercises documenting the skill demonstrated by the Member.

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**SPECIALTY  
K-9  
HANDLERS**

**SECTION IV**



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**SPECIALTY K-9 HANDLERS**

It is recognized that in some instances, Handler may want to “Specialize” in only one area of search work with their K-9. In this event, K-9 Handlers that are interested in only doing "**Specialty Search**" (i.e. Cadaver & Water Search) with their K-9's, may request exemption from some of the testing that does not pertain to their specialty. This request must be addressed to the Evaluation Committee and must be in writing. The Evaluation Committee will then make a written recommendation for any exemptions and outline the testing required for that “Specialty”. In this event, the team will only be utilized for very specific call-outs.

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# **SEARCH MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL**

## **SECTION V**

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**NON-OPERATIONAL LEVEL I**

**All Search Management Members** of AZ STaR will be considered **Non-Operational Level I** until such time as they are tested and demonstrate adequate levels of proficiency in all areas required for Operational Level II. At Operational Level II they may be assigned only certain search management duties to which they have attained adequate proficiency and under direct supervision of a Search Management Operational Level III member, while continuing their training towards achieving Search Management Operational Level III. Search Management Members may not be tested for Operational Level II until such time as they have a) completed their probationary period and b) completed 4-5 years as Operational Support or Operational K-9 Handler

Non-Operational Members may, however, upon the discretion of the Training Officer be allowed on searches with an Operational Search Management Level III person if they meet the following requirements:

1. Have attended 70% of all meetings and mandatory trainings' to date; and
2. Have demonstrated proficiency in desert & wilderness survival, land navigation skills, basic first aid, clue awareness, and communications; and
3. Have the ability and equipment needed to spend twenty-four (24) hours in the wilderness; and
4. Will be under the direct supervision, **at all times**, of an Operational Level III Search Management Member.

The Non-Operational Members proficiency in the above mentioned areas must be in the form of written documentation by the Training Officer.

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**OPERATIONAL LEVEL II**

Members testing for Search Management Personnel Operational Level II must demonstrate the following on written and/or field exercises.

1. The Member must have completed all requirements for Operational Support Personnel Level II, Section III in addition to the following:
2. The Members must have been Operational Support Level II or Operational Level II K-9 Handler or above, for a minimum of 4 years and:
3. The Member must have participated in not less than 30 searches as a trainee with a qualified Operational Search Management Member; and
4. The Member must have the ability to plan the search area for best use of wind and efficient coverage for that terrain if working with an air-scent, trailing or tracking dogs and handlers; and
5. The Member must have the ability to plan the search area for best use of all resources needed for efficient coverage; and
6. The Member must have the ability to evaluate the search area and revise the search tactics based on conditions present in the field; and
7. The Member must have excellent land navigation skills, including appropriate use of a compass, topographical maps, and grid coordinates; and
8. The Member must be familiar with the Lost Person Questionnaire; and
9. The Member must have the ability to use a portable radio effectively for efficient operations between the command post and field; and
10. The Member must have the ability to judge the probability of detection after a sweep of an area based upon the current conditions and resource used; and
11. The Member must have the ability to accurately plot information relayed to the command post from field personnel onto a map of the search area, which as a minimum shall include, but not be limited to, the routes taken, areas left uncovered, alerts & locations, clues & location, weather, wind direction, hazards, and POD; and
12. The Member must have an understanding of the components of the Incident Command System and familiarization with all I.C.S. forms; and

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13. The Member should be able to discuss appropriately, lost person characteristics; and
14. The Member should be able to identify and protect the crime scene when a clue or the subject is found.
15. The Member should be familiar with “Debriefing” of field resources; and
16. The Member should be involved in advanced training for specific Search Management Functions (i.e. Incident Commander, Logistics, Planning, & Communications)

Proficiency in all of the above areas should be in the form of written documentation to include written/oral testing by the Training Officer or other approved, “Formal Evaluator(s)”. “Mock Searches” / Field exercises designed to evaluate the skills of the members shall also be utilized. The Training Officer shall conduct written reviews after these exercises documenting the skill demonstrated by the Member.

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**OPERATIONAL LEVEL III**

Members testing for Search Management Operational Level III must first demonstrate proficiency in all areas of Support Personnel Operational Level II and Level III as defined in Section III. Members testing for Operational Level III must demonstrate the following on written and/or field exercises.

1. The Member must be able to determine the number and type of resources to include dog teams, support personnel and Search Management Personnel that will be needed to respond initially and as backup; and
2. The Member must be familiar with all required I.C.S. forms, AZ STaR Search Response forms, and AZ STaR Individual forms required for documentation purposes, and be able to complete and disperse them appropriately; and
3. The Member must be able to assume responsibility for segmenting search areas and deploying teams for the best coverage according to resources available, for multiple Operational Periods; and
4. The Member must be able to demonstrate a good understanding of how various resources work and how best to utilize them in a given scenario; and
5. The Member must be able to demonstrate an advanced skill-level or above, of search proficiency skills; and
6. The Member must have completed the MSF/Managing the Search Function Course or Advanced Search and Rescue Course; and
7. The Member must have the ability to recognize hazards to all resources including dogs, handlers, and support personnel and be willing/able to tell the SAR Coordinator of the incident that these resources cannot / will not be utilized due to the hazards; and
8. The Member must have the ability to recognize when any resource is working in an inefficient or unsafe manner and take appropriate action; and
9. The Member must have the ability to formulate a complete search plan and then carry it out based upon the information being given.

Proficiency in all of the above areas should be in the form of written documentation to include written/oral testing by the Training Officer or other approved, "Formal Evaluator(s)". "Mock Searches" / Field exercises designed to evaluate the skills of the members shall also be utilized. The Training Officer shall conduct written reviews after these exercises documenting the skill demonstrated by the Member.