



Criminalistics Section - 2012

A136 SWGDOG and ICODD: Latest Dog and Orthogonal Detector Best Practices and Development of an Accreditation Program

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand how the establishment of best practices for detection teams is improving interdiction efforts and courtroom acceptance of dog alert evidence as well as the importance of creating an accreditation commission, the International Commission on Detector Dogs (ICODD).

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing a better understanding of how SWGDOG best practices and accreditation through ICODD are improving the consistency and performance of deployed detector dog teams and their optimized combination with emerging electronic detectors.

The Scientific Working Group on Dog and Orthogonal Detector Guidelines (SWGDOG) has been developed by a membership of respected scientists, practitioners, and policy makers representing diverse backgrounds. SWGDOG has been cooperatively funded by the NIJ, FBI, DHS, and TWSG with general meetings held biannually since 2005. This project was undertaken as a response to concerns coming from a variety of sectors including law enforcement and homeland security regarding the need to improve the performance, reliability, and courtroom defensibility of detector dog teams and their optimized combination with electronic detection devices.

The approval of each subcommittee best practice document takes six months to complete, including a two month period of public comments. The nine SWGDOG subcommittees and target timetable for posting of the best practice guidelines are as follows: (1) Unification of terminology (Part A - April '06; Part B - October '06; Part C - March '07; Part D - August '07; Part E - March '08; Part F - September '08; Part G - March '09; Part H - Sept. '09; Part I - March '10; Part J - September '10; Part K - March '11); (2) General guidelines for training, certification, maintenance and documentation (April '06) - Publication in FSC October '06; First Revision (September '08); Second Revision (September '09); (3) Selection of serviceable dogs and replacement systems (October '06) Publication in FSC October '08; (4) Kenneling, keeping, and health care (October '06); (5) Selection and training of handlers and instructors (Part A - October '06; Part B - March '10); (6) Procedures on presenting evidence in court (October '06; First Revision Sept. '10); (7) Research and technology (March '07; First Revision September '10); (8) Substance dogs: Agriculture; Arson; Drugs; Explosives; (August '07); Human remains (September '09); Contraband (March '11); Pest (March '11); Currency; Firearms (September '11); (9) Scent dogs: Non-specific Human Scent Wilderness Area Search; Location Checks; Article Search; Scent identification line-ups; Live People in Disaster Environments; Track Trail people based on Last Known Position; Pre-scented Canines Aged Trail; Live People in Avalanche (Part A - March '07; Part B - August '07; Part C - March '08; Part D - September '08; Part E - September '09; Part F - March '10; Part G - September '10; Part H - March '11); and, (10) Outreach & Education: PowerPoint, branding materials approvals (September '10)

The current success of SWGDOG is being manifested by a shift of some national canine organizations to adopt the approved SWGDOG best practice guidelines. The mission of the International Commission on Detector Dogs (www.ICODD.org) is to globally improve the performance of detector dog teams through information sharing and implementation of SWGDOG best practice guidelines through voluntary accreditation of certification bodies. Annual ICODD meetings include open discussions of current, pending, and needed best practice guidelines and provide the mechanism for certifying bodies to apply for accreditation through the Accreditation Council made up of representative commission members.

Detector Dog, Best Practices, SWGDOG