



Criminology Section - 2013

A181 Enhancing Canine Performance Through Improved Training Materials and Adoption of International Best Practices (SWGDOG and ICODD)

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand how improved training materials and 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 the Scientific Working Group on Dogs and Orthogonal Detector Guidelines (SWGDOG) and accreditation through ICODD are improving the consistency and performance of deployed detector dog teams and their optimized combination with emerging electronic detectors.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing the results of the latest studies identifying and quantifying odorants used by certified law enforcement and military detection canines and the development of odor mimics for use as field calibrants. A variety of factors can influence the measured performance of canine teams including the source of training materials, the containment system used, how the training materials are presented to detection teams, and how the teams were trained and maintained. The presentation will also describe the implementation of best practices developed by SWGDOG through the formation of ICODD. SWGDOG best practices have 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 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 a minimum of six months to complete including a two-month period of public comments. The 10 SWGDOG subcommittees are as follows: (1) unification of terminology; (2) general guidelines for training, certification, maintenance, and documentation; (3) selection of serviceable dogs and replacement systems; (4) kenneling, keeping, and health care; (5) selection and training of handlers and instructors; (6) procedures on presenting evidence in court; (7) research and technology; (8) substance dogs: agriculture, arson, drugs, explosives, human remains, contraband, pest, currency, and firearms; (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, and live people in avalanche; and, (10) outreach and education.

The success of SWGDOG is dependent on the 55 SWGDOG members as well as the numerous external members within the working dog community who take the time to provide detailed commentary during the public comment stages. To date, there are *thirty-nine* approved guidelines within 436 pages of resources. SWGDOG is a catalyst in prioritizing research and development in both canine and orthogonal detector areas, in direct support of local law enforcement activities. The current success of SWGDOG is being manifested by a shift of some national canine organizations to adopt the approved SWGDOG best practice guidelines. Furthermore, the documents prepared thus far by SWGDOG members have been used to support the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive -19 (HSPD-19), Combating Terrorist Use of Explosives within the United States.

Detector Dogs, Best Practices, SWGDOG