

THE THREE LEGALITY PRINCIPLES OF POLICE WORKING DOGS:

All three of these areas have an industry standard:

1. Trained:

Initial training:

The search and rescue K-9 industry standard is **about 208 to 416 hours of basic training**. This is stated in NASAR's web site, "It normally takes a year of training -- at least twice a week -- before a dog/handler team is mission-ready."

Maintenance (on going) training:

The police K-9 industry standard is **a minimum of four hours per week, on average**. This has been determined by the three largest United States canine associations, USPCA (United States Police Canine Association), NAPWDA (North American Police Work Dog Association) and NPCA (National Police Canine Association).

2. Certified:

The police K-9 industry standard is **yearly certification**. This certification may be done in-house or outside the agency.

If the certification is done in-house, then there **must be K-9 team evaluator standards and K-9 team certification standards**. NASAR's SAR K-9 certification standards are posted on their web site. State of California SAR K-9 certification standards are posted on California's OES web site. Evaluator standards are based upon experience and training.

If the certification is done outside the agency, then you certify by that outside standard, such as NASAR. NAPWDA also offers a SAR K-9 certification.

Both training and certification requires a written SAR K-9 standard. Obviously, it is impossible to train or certify, without a standard.

A decertified or uncertified team is never fielded on an actual evidence related search.

3. Reliable:

This is the area where, if the case goes to court, the defense will focus. Reliability is where the K-9 actually alerts to and locates the item(s) he is trained to detect.

The Federal case law states that a dog does not have to be perfect, in order to be reliable. The court just needs to know if the dog finds whatever he is trained to detect, more often than not.

Reliability is initially determined by the dog's alerts or finds in training. As the dog becomes field experienced, then we wean him off the training alerts and onto the

field alerts.

The canine industry standard is for a dog to run in the high 90%'s of reliability. **No dog will ever be 100%**. There will be times where a dog misses a find or alerts to an odor that you may not be able to document as being present. The dog does not have to be perfect, just reliable.

[Documentation](#)

[Return to SAR index](#)

[Return back to the Home Page](#)

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