



## **Performance Scent Dogs, Inc**

P.O. Box 401026

Cambridge, MA 02140

[info@performancescentdogs.com](mailto:info@performancescentdogs.com)

# Table of Contents

Philosophy	3
Eligibility of dogs	4
<i>Reactive Dogs</i>	5
Dog registration	6
<i>Multiple dogs and For Exhibition Only</i>	6
Collars, Leashes and Dog Gear	7
Handler Guidelines	8
<i>During the Search</i>	9
<i>All Clear Signal</i>	10
Code of Conduct	11
Host clubs	12
Spectators	13
Target Odors and Preparation of Hides	13
Target Odor Tests	14
Trials	16
<i>Warm Up Areas</i>	16
<i>Videotaping and Photography</i>	17
<i>Handlers' Briefing</i>	17
<i>Search Areas</i>	18
<i>Search Area Familiarization</i>	18
<i>Repeating a Search</i>	18
<i>Mentors</i>	19
Handlers Alert	19
Classes	20
Class Levels	22
<i>Class Levels Table</i>	25
Scoring	25
<i>Handler and Dog Search Performance</i>	26
<i>Point Deductions</i>	27
<i>Non-qualifying faults</i>	28
Suspensions and Disciplinary Actions	29
Titles	29
<i>Class Divisions</i>	31
Judges	32
Hold Harmless	33

## **Philosophy**

Performance Scent Dogs, Inc. (PSD) believes teaching dogs scent detection is an ideal way to develop better relationships between people and their dogs. PSD gives owners, from those who never thought they could try a dog sport to experienced handlers, the opportunity to compete in a supportive environment and achieve success through teamwork. PSD also encourages responsible pet ownership in the community by providing an enriching dog activity that owners can train and practice anywhere.

Positive training is at the core of all scent work training. Owners learn to read their dogs' sometimes subtle communication about odor and its location. Owners also gain trust in their dog because working with the dog as a teammate is the only way to achieve success.

Trials are open to any breed or mix of dog and suitable for dogs over 10 months old to senior canines. Any dog at any age can learn to be a scent dog. Scent training helps give young or shy dogs a boost of confidence, channel an enthusiastic dog's energy, and give senior dogs or those with decreased mobility a way to keep learning and having fun.

PSD promotes the sport of scent detection to regular pet owners, dog sport enthusiasts, and detection professionals. PSD also supports any group of dog enthusiasts (dog clubs, training centers, or a group of friends) in hosting trials.

**Our goal** is to grow the sport of scent detection for the benefit of dogs and the people that love them.

## *Towards The Future*

PSD expects that our understanding of best practices for training and working with scent dogs will evolve as our understanding of the sport grows and changes. As a result, we anticipate that these rules and regulations will be regularly revised to reflect the current thinking about the sport of scent detection. We strive to create a collaborative atmosphere where input from participants and hosting organizations help create interesting, fun and inclusive trials.

## **Eligibility of Dogs**

Any breed, purpose bred, mixed breed, or dog of unknown breed 10 months or older on the day of the trial or Target Odor Test (TOT) is eligible to enter.

A dog may be entered in no more than six searches and three TOTs in one day.

There are no limitations on physical disabilities of dogs as long as the trial host and judge believe the dog can safely navigate the search area and the search is not detrimental to the well-being of the dog. All dogs are welcome at a TOT, but handlers should check with the trial host for specifics. For example, if a TOT is held in a horse arena with deep sand, some dogs in carts may have trouble navigating the surface. For trials, it is up to the hosting club along with the judge to decide the suitability of each testing area for disabled dogs.

A search may be stopped for any dog the judge determines to be exhibiting undue stress or pain. The opinion of the judge is final for that search area for that day. No refund of fees will be allowed.

If a dog has a medical condition being treated by a veterinarian where the dog appears lame, the handler may get a letter from the veterinarian clearing

the dog to participate on the trial day or dates. The letter must specifically allow participation in a scent detection trial and be submitted to the PSD office at least five business days before the close of the trial. The purpose of this provision is to include dogs with such conditions as mild to moderate arthritis, dogs recovering from surgery, etc., where participation in scent activities helps the dog remain active or helps channel their energy in a safe and enriching way. The dog should not be in marked pain.

Pregnant or lactating females may not participate in a trial. Females in season may participate wearing appropriate britches at all times except in the toileting areas. Females in season will run after the last dog in each search area. Handlers must notify the club as soon as possible so accommodations may be made for toileting areas and run order adjustments.

Dogs with health issues requiring the need for britches should submit a letter from their veterinarian to the PSD office for approval of their entry.

Dogs may bay, bark or otherwise vocalize excitement during a search without penalty.

Dogs must be vaccinated for Rabies or have a veterinarian's exemption and follow any state-issued vaccination requirements.

Wolves, wolf-hybrids, coyotes or coyote-hybrids are not allowed.

### *A Note About Reactive Dogs*

Dogs who have mild space issues with other dogs or humans are welcome to participate since only one dog is in the search area at a time. Scent work is a great activity for reactive dogs but not all dogs can successfully navigate the additional, and sometimes unpredictable, stressors present at a trial. Dogs must be able to potentially wait in an area with other dogs and be in other situations where they are within 4 to 8 feet of other dogs and people. Some

trial sites may be more suitable than others for individual dogs and their needs. Please check with the trial secretary for the particulars of each trial site. There is a distinction between reactive and aggressive dogs. Dogs who are aggressive to people or other dogs are not permitted at PSD trials.

Competitors are encouraged to place a red bandana conspicuously on dogs with space issues to help others remember to ask before touching and to keep their dog's attention while a red bandana dog walks by.

### **Dog Registration**

All dogs entering a sanctioned PSD trial must be registered with PSD and have a registration number. Registrations may be made online instantly at [www.PerformanceScentDogs.com](http://www.PerformanceScentDogs.com) or by mail to the PSD office. Dog registrations incur a one-time fee, good for the life of the dog. No physical card or book is needed.

Dogs participating in PSD matches, sniff thrus, or mock trials do not have to be registered with PSD.

Only owners are allowed to enter their dog in a trial. The owner then can informally appoint another person at any time to handle the dog in any class, if desired.

### ***Multiple dogs and For Exhibition Only***

Multiple dogs may be handled by the same person during a TOT. A handler may participate in only one qualifying search per class unless the host offers split classes allowing multiple dog entries. Split classes are offered at the host's discretion and if a host has enough room to hold two similar searches for a single class. When classes are split, half of the handlers will search one area and the other half will search a different area with similar, but not

identical, scent challenges. This allows handlers with two dogs the opportunity to compete in both searches. Also, more volunteers will be available to work each half. Each split will have separate timing and awards. Dogs may not enter both splits.

### *For Exhibition Only*

Handlers may enter one or more dogs, per the host club's discretion and as stated on the trial entry, as For Exhibition Only (FEO). FEO dogs cannot qualify. The handler may ask the judge where the hide is located before the search. Dogs pre-entered as FEO may not later change to a regular qualifying search.

At any time during a search, a handler may turn the search into a For Exhibition Only (FEO) run by asking the judge to point out the hide. This is done for teams that need a little more assistance in the trial environment or with the hide presented as the hide will be known.

If a dog does not pass a TOT held the same day as a trial, the dog may still play! Any pre-entered search or day of entry will be as an FEO. This is to help Novice teams who may do better as they both acclimate to the trial setting.

### **Collars, Leashes and Dog Gear**

No electronic or scent spraying collars are allowed to be worn on the grounds of a trial. Dogs may be in prong or pinch collars unless the hosting club specifies otherwise on the entry form. If prong or pinch collars are allowed on the grounds, they may be worn, but not used, during a search.

Head collars are allowed to be worn on the grounds of a trial but not during a search. Dogs may be on a flat or martingale collar or in a harness at any time. Nothing should be attached to the collar, harness, or leash that would interfere or disturb a search area.

Tags are not allowed on a collar during a search. Tags are allowed on a harness but placed in a way so they are unobtrusive and cannot disturb the search area.

Leashes must not substantially interfere with the test area.

Dogs may not wear recording devices in a search area.

Dogs may have any accessory i.e. barrettes, hair ties, bandanas, jackets or booties as long as they do not hinder the dog's movement or interfere with the search area.

All dogs must be on leash at all times except in designated off-leash areas if allowed at the trial site. The leash must be held by a person and not tied to an object. Dogs may also be contained in a crate, secure x-pen, or vehicle. The handler should ensure their dog is not unduly barking or charging other dogs or people. Trial personnel may ask a handler to cover or move their set-up, crate, or car if the dog is barking excessively. At certain trial locations, if a dog is disturbing the trial site or neighbors and cannot be redirected from excessively vocalizing, competitors may be dismissed from the trial. No refund of fees will be allowed for dismissal from the trial.

### **Handler Guidelines**

Handlers must be nine years of age or older to handle a dog at a PSD trial. Any handler under the age of 16 must have a parent or appointed guardian on site at the trial. All handlers must demonstrate that they are in control of their dog at all times.

When on trial grounds, handlers are expected to conduct themselves at all times to reflect well on the sport of scent detection. No harsh verbal or



physical corrections to dogs are allowed on the grounds at any time. Handlers are also expected to respect volunteers, judges, the public, the trial site as well as fellow competitors and their dogs.

Dogs should be kept at least six feet from unknown dogs when practical. Handlers must never allow their dog to approach an unknown dog. However, PSD allows two or more dogs that are compatible to be in any area together as long as all handlers involved expressly agree and actively supervise their dogs. Care should be taken at all times that handlers remain alert to their dog's behavior.

### *Handlers: During the Search*

Handlers may talk to, cue, encourage, or use any body gesture with their dogs while searching, except for pointing or gesturing directly at the hide location. Handlers may not cue their dog to alert without the dog exhibiting a change of behavior that is obvious to the judge indicating that the dog is working odor.

Handlers may carry food and toys with them at all times. The handler must take special care not to drop food or use any food that might leave crumbs or otherwise contaminate the search area. If food or toys contaminate a search area, the team may lose points or incur a non-qualifying score.

Toys with squeakers or that make a sound are not allowed. Food rewards must be delivered next to or off the hide to prevent possible contamination of the hide or search area.

Toys may be used to reward but must be held by the handler at all times with the handler taking care not to let the toy touch the hide. The toy must be presented in such way to prevent the dog from disturbing anything in the search area. Rewards may not be tossed or thrown at any time.

Handlers may talk to, praise, feed, play, or touch their dogs at any time before, during, and after the search.

Handlers may not use clickers during a search. Handlers may not wear videotaping devices or cameras.

Handlers may not touch or move any item in a search area without receiving permission from the judge. If a dog moves an item, the handler shall not touch it but allow the ring crew to reset the item.

Some searches will be performed outdoors in natural terrain or in older buildings or barns that may present difficulties for handlers or dogs with mobility limitations. The host club will provide a summary of the search areas on the premium to help identify these issues. It will be up to the handler to decide to enter the search class and no refunds will be given if the handler chooses not to participate.

Handlers entered in a class at a trial may watch the class after they have finished their search. At no time shall handlers watch or be within earshot of their active search class before they have finished their search. PSD extends this opportunity to handlers as an invaluable educational opportunity to observe other teams search. Handlers should use extreme caution and be sure to not make any comment, sign or signal that could be interpreted as aiding another competitor or discussing hide placements.

### ***All Clear Signal***

It's exciting to finish a search area but competitors may only indicate whether or not they qualified with a thumbs up or down. Once every dog has searched an area, the judge will notify competitors that the Search is complete with an "All Clear" signal. After All Clear is called, everyone is free to talk about search specifics.

Help everyone by reminding fellow competitors to wait for the All Clear signal before making any comments about the search area or their searching experience. While it seems ludicrous that any dog owner would knowingly cheat to earn a ribbon, PSD reminds handlers that seemingly innocuous comments may give an unfair advantage to another competitor or, on the other hand, give a handler that has yet to search a false expectation that results in a non-qualifying score.

PSD enforces a zero tolerance policy for outside assistance, whether intentional or not. Watching a dog work to the source of scent and being unsure the handler recognizes the change of behavior can be anxiety-producing to watch. Spectators must remain neutral in order to not provide clues to the handler. Anyone—handlers, spectators, volunteers, or trial personnel—taking part in discussing, signaling or in any other way indicating hide placement or total numbers of hides will be immediately dismissed from the trial, will potentially lose all qualifying scores earned that day and will receive a warning from PSD. Two warnings result in a one-year ban. Three warnings result in lifetime expulsion.

## **Code of Conduct**

All handlers, by entering a PSD trial or TOT, have pledged to abide by the Code of Conduct.

- Respect the sport, compete fairly, and uphold the rules and policies of PSD.
- Accept the judge's decisions with grace.
- Comply with requests and directions from trial personnel, judges, and volunteers courteously.
- Respect all search locations, parking areas, and surrounding neighborhoods.

- Clean up after your dog at trial locations and hotels.
- Strive to compete in an atmosphere of respect.
- Put the wellbeing of your dog and your fellow competitors' dog above all else.
- After participating in a search, never discuss anything about it except a thumbs up or down to indicate individual success, until every competitor has completed that search and the judge has called All Clear.

The sport of scent detection relies on competitors following this Code of Conduct.

### **Host Clubs**

Holding a scent dog trial is a lot of work but very fun! The equipment list is minimal and, especially at the Novice and Advanced level, trials may be held in compact spaces. With flexibility to choose which classes to hold, some trials may be all outside or inside. PSD will work with a club to make a trial happen.

Any group, training center, or individual may host a trial. PSD does not license or endorse any individual group or club. You don't have to be a formal group with a president, etc. You do have to host at least one or two sanctioned PSD Matches. Please download an application on the PSD website.

PSD requires that any search area or object used in a trial not be exposed to scent/odor for seven days prior to the beginning of the trial. Whenever possible, areas and objects will not be exposed to scent/odor for at least two weeks prior to the start of a trial.

## **Spectators**

Spectators, whether friends, training partners, instructors or the general public are welcome to watch PSD trials when practical. Not every search area or trial site may have enough space to accommodate all who would like to view a search.

The area should be unmistakably marked so no spectator can accidentally wander into a search area. Spectators are not allowed within 10 feet of a search area unless behind a barricade like a half wall. They may be asked to keep back farther depending on the location or at the request of the judge or host club.

Spectators must be reasonably quiet and not distract or interact with the dog being tested. Spectators may be asked to wait to enter or to leave a test area by the judge or trial personnel.

Dogs may be in a spectator area provided the dog is quiet and, if not contained in a crate, at least 30 feet away from the sightlines of a search perimeter. Judges or trial personnel may ask the handler to move their dogs at anytime.

## **Target Odors and Preparation of Hides**

Three essential oil odors are the target odors used in PSD trials and TOTs.

- Sweet Birch-Botanical name *Betula lenta*
- Anise Seed-Botanical name *Pimpinella anisum*
- Clove-Botanical name *Syzygium aromaticum*

### *General guidelines for preparation of hides*

Place cotton swabs (like Q-tips™) cut in half (a portion of the middle section may be discarded if desired) in a glass jar with a screw-type lid. For every fifty swab heads, three to five drops of a single essential oil will be added to

the jar. The exact amount is difficult to regulate since dropper sizes can vary. The jar will then be sealed and shaken well to distribute the oil and scent. The prepared swabs must be allowed to “marinate” in the sealed jar for at least 24 hours before a trial but no more than 2 weeks. Pieces of cotton balls or pads may be prepared and used similarly.

Any number of swabs with one or more of the individual target odors may be placed in a container that allows scent to disperse. The target odor container must protect any person, dog, or item from coming into direct contact with the prepared swabs to minimize contaminating a surface with essential oil.

Examples of common target odor containers are small metal slider tins with holes punched into the top, plastic or vinyl tubing, and lip balm containers. Target odor containers may be affixed with magnets, tape, putty, etc., but should be placed in such a way to make it highly unlikely that a dog will accidentally reveal a hide before a handler signals an alert.

Hides will be placed at least 10 minutes before each search. Hides may be placed on an object, like a metal chair, or in a container, like a cardboard box, and the object moved during a class. Dogs should be prepared to work through lingering odor.

### **Target Odor Test (TOT)**

In order to be eligible to compete in a PSD trial, a dog must successfully pass a TOT or have passed a similar test in another scent work organization. The TOT is a pass or try again test. A TOT demonstrates a dog recognizes odor and has some change of behavior the handler can read. These tests will be conducted indoors in an area without many distractions and no purposeful distractions. A row of twelve, two rows of six, or three rows of four identical metal or plastic chairs will be placed at least 30 inches apart and four feet from any wall. The target odor container will be placed no more than 20” high out of view of the dog and handler on one chair. Identical target odor

containers, that have never been exposed to odor, should be placed in the same position on the other 11 chairs if the container can be viewed by a handler.

Each dog will have three minutes to search the area in any manner, on-leash. Handlers may talk to and touch their dogs and use any physical motion to cue their dog to search. Handlers may not touch or move the chairs. The dog may visit with the judge or any person in the search area without penalty. The dog must indicate the chair containing the odor in a clear way, showing a distinct change of behavior at the correct chair. Dogs will not be penalized for an overly enthusiastic indication if they disturb or move the chair as long as the dog does not reveal the hide before the handler signals an alert. Dogs will not be penalized for leaving the correct chair once they have indicated it to their handler.

When the handler believes their dog has indicated the correct chair, she/he must say “Alert” clearly and unmistakably and/or raise one hand above their head. The judge will answer “Yes” or “No.” The dog only must show a clear change of behavior indicating the correct chair and not necessarily be as close to source as possible. The handler then may reward their dog with a toy or food being certain not to drop any food or disturb the chairs or search area.

The judge may move the chair with the odor, and not the odor container itself, between any dog’s run during the test. Handlers should be prepared for their dogs to encounter lingering odor.

All three target odor tests will be offered at each TOT. Each test will run consecutively. Owners may choose to enter any or all tests. TOT’s may also be entered as an FEO. This is a good option for handlers who would like a “warm-up” run in a trial setting for their dogs.

If a dog has passed a similar test in another scent organization, the owner should e-mail or mail a copy of the certificate or other evidence stating the dog has passed an odor test to the PSD office. The dog will be exempt from the TOT requirement in the specific odor tested.

## **Trials**

Since trial sites will vary due to physical location, weather, lines of sight, number of competitors, etc., clubs have flexibility in hosting and running a trial. A club may hold a trial offering less than all five searches. It may offer any of the five classes singly or a combination of other searches, in order to accommodate smaller search areas or half-day trials. Classes may be run in any order. Host organizations may or may not designate breaks between searches. PSD recommends host organizations not schedule more than two back to back searches, especially at the Novice level. It is up to the host club and judge how many searches, if any, may run back to back.

### *Warm Up Areas*

At a TOT, a warm-up area with three to five blank boxes and a target scent box for the odor being tested will be available. The area will be well away from any search area to minimize competing odors. Prior to the start of the next odor tested, the previous target box will be removed and replaced with the current odor being tested.

During a trial, the warm-up area will be primarily for Novice competitors. Birch will be the only target odor present.

Priority for use is given to the next dog on deck. Competitors may not use personal target odors anywhere at a trial.



### *Videotaping and photography*

Handlers may designate someone to videotape/photograph their search if the judge permits the search area open to spectators. The person videotaping must stand with spectators and may be asked to stay in a designated spot while the search is taking place. The video may not be viewed or shared until after the All Clear for that search is called. Video/photos then may be shared in any manner the handler would like, including social media, except if the host club prohibits such sharing. Some search sites may prohibit videotaping/photos and this will be stated on the trial entry.

### *Handlers' Briefing*

The host club will hold a short handlers' briefing at the start of the trial to explain any special rules for the trial site and to go over the general schedule of the day. After the handlers' briefing, the judge will be available to answer specific questions. However, it is the competitor's responsibility to read and understand the rules and regulations of PSD trials before the trial begins.

The host organization will post the schedule and running order, along with a map, if needed, prominently. If a handler arrives after the briefing has started, the handler may be asked to wait in his or her car or in another area until the briefing has concluded to prevent him/her from accidentally viewing a search area. The host club will generally give five to ten minutes after the end of the handler's briefing until the first dog is required to be on-the-line and ready to search. It is the handler's responsibility to be ready to search when they are called in the running order. A judge does not have to wait for a competitor and may take the next team prepared to search. If the competitor is running multiple dogs, the trial secretary will arrange the running order to minimize conflicts. A late competitor will not lose their opportunity to run unless they are more than one minute late to report to the gate for the last search of the class.

### *Search Areas*

Each search area will be clearly and unmistakably marked or delineated with tape, cones, fencing or any other way to make the perimeter of the search area clear to even a distracted first-time competitor. Time will start when any part of the dog passes over any part of the search area regardless of whether the handler has signalled the dog to start. The judge may clearly mark an area where dogs are required to start. Both dog and handler are permitted to step outside the search perimeter in order for the dog to work back to odor.

Dogs must be on leash to and from each search class. The judge may designate a search or portion of a search appropriate to perform off-leash at the handler's discretion. If a handler chooses to work a search off-leash, the dog shall be kept on leash until being signalled by the judge or appropriate volunteer. Off-leash dogs will be required to be leashed at the end of the search before departing the search class. At no time will a dog be required to work off-leash.

### *Search Area Familiarization*

In general, there is no search area familiarization prior to the start of a search. Host organizations may use their discretion and offer a familiarization for Novice and Advanced classes in extenuating circumstances. There is no search area familiarization allowed for Excellent level classes. A search area may be within view of competitors before a search begins but competitors are not allowed within the search area.

### *Repeating a Search*

A judge may, but is not required to, allow a competitor to repeat a search if some extremely unusual or unexpected event occurred during the dog's search that unfairly affected the dog's performance. This decision will be solely up to the judge's discretion.

## *Mentors*

Host clubs are encouraged to have volunteers designated as Mentors to help competitors with general questions or concerns. Mentors are not responsible for knowledge of specific rules but can help with site logistics and general information.

## **Handler's Alert**

When the handler believes the dog is at source, the handler shall clearly communicate to the judge by 1.) saying "Alert" in a loud and unmistakable way and/or 2.) raising one arm over their head. Dogs may, but are not required to, exhibit a trained formal alert such as a sit or down to indicate odor. The judge must determine that the dog has exhibited a change of behavior indicating that the dog 1.) recognized the target odor was available to be sourced and 2.) made a decision as to where the hide is located. A handler may not "take back" an alert once it is signalled, so handlers should be certain when they signal that their dog has made a decision on hide location. The judge will say "Yes" to indicate a correct find, "No" to indicate an incorrect find, or ask the handler to point to or describe the location of the source of odor without touching it. The competitor may not re-cue a dog to locate the hide after the Judge has asked for clarification of the hide's location.

The dog must show the judge it is working the odor and has found the odor's location. The dog must show some change of behavior for the handler's alert to be valid. The dog must be, or have been, on source, or as close to source as the dog can access, for the judge to accept it. The judge will accept an alert only if the dog's behavior indicates it has made a decision as to where the hide is located, the handler has confirmed the alert verbally or with a hand signal and the handler can describe or point to the precise location of the hide. In the case of an inaccessible hide, the judge may consider a wider latitude of correct responses.

In a TOT and at the Novice and Advanced level, if the handler incorrectly calls an alert or the dog times out, the judge will tell the handler where the hide is located so the handler can reinforce the dog close to source. The dog will be given approximately 20 seconds to source the odor before the judge will ask the team to leave the search area. No provision will be made for the dog to be reinforced after receiving a non-qualifying fault at any level above Advanced.

At the Excellent level, handlers will be required to announce “Clear” or “Finished” when they believe an area contains no hides or they have found all the hides. Time will stop as soon as the handler makes a finish call and can not be re-started. Competitors may choose to practice a finish call at the Novice and Advanced levels, but once it is stated, time will stop.

## **Classes**

PSD offers five search classes: Buildings, Exteriors, Containers, Distance and Speed. There are three levels of competition: Novice, Advanced and Excellent.

Buildings may be any space enclosed on four sides with a roof. A room in a building, a section of a dog training arena, a restroom, or portion of a closed horse barn are possible locations. Hides may be placed in, under, or on any object or part of the building. The challenge of a building search is the way scent is affected by negative or positive air pressure in a space and the natural distractions present or added to the space.

Exteriors may be any space open to the outdoors. The search area may be covered and have walls but there must be a way to open up the space substantially to allow air currents to flow through. For example, a barn with large sliding doors that can be opened, an outdoor parking garage, or a large tented area not completely enclosed on four sides are all allowable exterior

sites, in addition to any area fully outside. The purpose of exteriors is to test the dog's scenting ability faced with wind currents and different natural distractions. Hides may be placed in a parking lot, grassy area, or basketball court, etc., on any natural or man-made object.

Vehicles may be used for searches in the Distance, Exterior, or if located inside, the Buildings class. Hides will not be placed in the passenger compartment of any vehicle. Dogs will not be penalized for any behavior that would not be penalized on any other object, for example, minor pawing or scratching. Dogs will not be penalized for jumping on a vehicle.

Containers may take place inside or outside. Hides will be placed in any wooden, plastic, or cardboard box at the Novice level. Containers do not have to be square or identical but do have to be covered on all sides and have a way for scent to escape, either through hole(s) or seams. The challenge will increase in upper levels with hides in boxes or other containers such as luggage, bags, or any other container where scent can escape through seams, fabric, or holes. Containers may be placed close together or stacked in any fashion, hung or placed on any natural or man-made object. Distractions, including food and toys, may be planted in the containers in upper levels.

Distance may take place inside or outside. There will be a line or box, designated on the ground by tape, cones or chalk that the handler cannot step on or over. The hide(s) will be placed anywhere past the line, appropriate to the level being tested. The judge will ensure that objects where a dog could get a leash tangled on are not in the search area. However, if a dog does encounter an unusual circumstance where the leash is at risk of being caught up in some way, handlers will not be penalized for dropping the leash. The object in the Distance class is for the handler to send the dog into the search area and for the dog to locate the hide independently or to take direction from the handler at a distance.

Speed may take place inside or outside. There will be three sets of containers placed on the ground. Each set of containers may or may not contain a hide depending on the class level. The times are tight for each level in this class. This class tests the search team's performance under time pressure.

#### *Novice level*

- Three sets of three or four cardboard boxes
- Each set contains 1 hide
- Class time is 45 seconds

#### *Advanced level*

- Three sets of four to six cardboard boxes
- One set will be blank
- Two sets will each contain one hide
- Class time is 45 seconds

#### *Excellent level*

- Any container can be used
- Three sets of four to seven containers
- Unknown number of hides from two to four
- Hides can be placed in any set; this may include more than one hide per set
- Class time is 45-90 seconds

### **Class Levels**

**Novice:** One birch hide in each class placed in an easily sourceable location no more than 18" high. The search area will be no more than 500 square feet. Time will be determined in each class by the judge and be dependent on the particular area and conditions, but will generally be two to three minutes maximum. In the Containers and Speed classes, containers must be at least 12 inches apart from one another. The purpose of the Novice level is to test the dog's recognition of the odor, its source and the dog's ability to communicate its location to the handler.

**Advanced:** Two birch, anise, clove or any combination of the three odors will be placed in each class no more than 24” high. Hides may be more difficult for the dog to source or inaccessible, i.e. behind a closed door, out of reach, etc. Search areas can be up to a 1000 square feet. The judge will notify competitors how many hides are placed in each class. Time will be determined by the judge, but may start at 45 seconds to five minutes maximum. Up to two mild distractors, such as a small amount of a boring food item, one old tennis ball, or a small amount of a household scent may be planted. Competitors are encouraged to announce “Clear” or “Finished” at the end of the search, but a finish call will not be required.

The focus of the Advanced level will be on the dog demonstrating a distinct change of behavior when in odor, the handler’s ability to read their dog’s behavior, and the team’s ability to work more than one hide and odor.

**Excellent:** Any of the three target odors, singly or in any combination will be placed in each class no more than 48” high. Hides may be inaccessible. More difficult distractors may be encountered. The search areas will be anywhere from 100-1,500 square feet. Time will be determined by the judge; up to five minutes maximum. One to four distractors may be planted in the Containers, Buildings or Exterior class. Examples of excellent level distractors include larger amounts of appetizing food items, a few new tennis balls, interesting household or natural scents like wool scraps from a sheared sheep. The number of hides will be unknown in the Buildings and Speed class. Competitors are required to announce “Clear” or “Finish” in each search when they believe they have found every hide and time will stop. If they do not announce “Clear” or “Finish” they will be given maximum course time in an otherwise qualifying search.

The challenge in Excellent will be for the handler to be more involved in reading the changes of behavior in their dog, to ensure the dog works all the areas of the search, and to work complicated scent puzzles as a team.

The height of all hides and size of the search area described in the above classes are approximate and may vary depending on the search area and conditions. At no time will edible planted distractors at any level be accessible by the dog. They will be in a dog-resistant container inside another container.



## Class Levels Table

Classes		Buildings	Exteriors	Containers	Distance	Speed
<b>Novice</b>  <b>Birch Only</b>  <b>Approx. 18"</b> <b>high</b>	<b>Hides</b>	1	1	1	1	3 total
	<b>Area (sq. ft.)</b>	100 - 500	250 - 500	max 400	75 - 150	200 - 350
	<b>Distractions</b>	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Time</b>	45 sec-3 min	45 sec-3 min	45 sec-3 min	45 sec-3 min	45 sec. max
	<b>Details</b>			12 - 20 containers	Hide up to 5' from handler	3 sets of 3-4 boxes; each set has 1 hide
<b>Advanced</b>  <b>All three</b> <b>odors</b>  <b>Approx. 24"</b> <b>high</b>	<b>Hides</b>	1 - 2	1 - 2	1 - 2	1	2 total
	<b>Area (sq. ft.)</b>	100 - 500	500 - 1000	max 750	100 - 400	200 - 400
	<b>Distractions</b>	0	0	YES	0	0
	<b>Time</b>	45 sec-5 min	45 sec-5 min	45 sec-5 min	45 sec-5 min	45 sec. max
	<b>Details</b>			12 - 30 containers	Hide up to 10' from handler	3 sets of 4-6 boxes; 2 sets will each contain 1 hide
<b>Excellent</b>  <b>All three</b> <b>odors</b>  <b>Approx. 48"</b> <b>high</b>  <b>Required</b> <b>"Finish" Call</b>	<b>Hides</b>	1 - 4 unknown	1 - 3	1 - 3	1 - 2	2 - 4 unknown
	<b>Area (sq. ft.)</b>	250 - 1000	500 - 1500	max 1000	300 - 600	200 - 500
	<b>Distractions</b>	YES	YES	YES	0	0
	<b>Time</b>	45 sec-5 min	45 sec-5 min	45 sec-5 min	45 sec-5 min	45-90 sec
	<b>Details</b>			12 - 40 containers	Hide up to 15' from handler; if 2 hides, must be in two separate areas	3 sets of 4-7 containers; 2-4 hides placed in any set

## Scoring

Scoring is based on hides found, time and search performance.

In order to qualify, every hide and/or clear area available must be found and announced to the judge within the time allotted and with a qualifying search performance.

The judge will determine the acceptable alert area around the hide location based on a number of variables affecting the hide at the time the search is taking place. Judges are instructed to confirm an alert call if the area indicated would be where the handler would reward the dog for being at source. No formal alert such as a sit or down is ever required.

*Handler and Dog Search Performance*

In addition, performance is judged on handler and dog. Each team will enter the search with a score of 100 points. A perfect search performance, by both handler and dog, will earn the full 100 points. Each level has a minimum score in order to be eligible to qualify.

Point deductions, especially at the Novice and Advanced level, are designed to give teams feedback and recognize great teamwork rather than making it more difficult to qualify. A Novice or Advanced team successfully finding all the hides and not incurring a non-qualifying fault, would be highly unlikely to be disqualified based on point deductions.

Dogs will not be faulted for jumping on any item or object as long as the handler shows the dog is not out of control or the handler gains control of the dog quickly without hesitation and without harsh treatment.

Class level	Points needed to Qualify
Novice	85 points
Advanced	90 points
Excellent	95 points

**Minor 1-5 point deductions include but are not limited to:**

- Contaminating the search area with a toy, food, or by other accidental means, including dropping food in or within 5' of search area.
- Undue delay of starting the dog in the search area.
- Undue delay in leashing the dog and/or leaving the completed search area.
- Interfering with the dog's search performance including poor leash handling and anything the handler does that disrupts the dog's focus on searching.
- Not responding appropriately to dog's Change Of Behavior including not supporting or crowding a dog in odor.
- Unclear or incomplete search plan that interferes with a dog's ability to search.
- Moving an item in the search area without receiving judge's permission.
- Dog leaving a hide before handler calls alert.
- At the Novice level - handler re-cuing the dog to source the hide if the judge asks to clarify the hide location.

**Substantial 5-10 deductions include but are not limited to:**

- Handler or dog accidentally damaging hide or other item in search area.
- Repeatedly cuing a formal alert after dog has indicated hide.
- Significantly contaminating the search area with a toy, food, or by other accidental means, including dropping food in search area.
- Not responding appropriately to dog's Change Of Behavior including not recognizing a significant Change Of Behavior and intentionally or unintentionally pulling a dog off a hide that is showing a strong correct indication.

**Non-qualifying faults include but are not limited to:**

- Handler being unable to point to or describe the location of hide as indicated by their dog if asked the location by the judge.
- Handler re-cuing the dog to source the hide after calling an alert at the Advanced and Excellent level.
- Time for the search expiring before the handler has correctly called each alert or blank area.
- Handler calling an alert without a dog showing an identifiable Change Of Behavior. The dog is not required to show a formal alert but it must indicate a recognition of odor.
- Dog eliminating in or within 5' of the search area.
- Dog leaving off-leash search area and not being able to be recalled in a reasonable time by the handler.
- Dog not passing over a start line if there is one designated by the judge.
- Dogs recklessly out of control of their handler.
- Haphazardly cuing a formal alert after dog has indicated the hide.
- Harsh correction of a dog in the search area including undue verbal corrections or repeated leash pops.
- Harsh treatment of dog including but not limited to hitting, kicking or verbal abuse.
- Handler significantly contaminating a search area by dropping especially sticky or crumbly treats, dropping a large number of treats, using a dirty toy that leaves residue or throwing a toy.
- Handler or dog significantly and recklessly damaging any item or area on the trial grounds.
- Disrespectful arguing or harassing judges, volunteers, competitors, or trial hosts.
- Undue nipping at the handler.

## **Suspensions and Disciplinary Actions**

If a dog bites another dog at a trial, the dog must immediately leave the grounds of the trial. The trial host must submit a letter containing the details to PSD within 7 days of the event. One bite that causes a break in skin is, at minimum, an immediate 12-month suspension. The handler can apply to have the suspension reviewed after six months. If that dog bites again, either a dog or human at a PSD trial, the dog will be immediately and permanently suspended and not allowed to participate in any future PSD events.

If a dog bites a human or makes any contact with teeth to a person or a person's clothing, the dog will be removed from the trial immediately and suspended from PSD events. The handler may apply to have the suspension reviewed after one year. This does not apply to a dog biting its own handler; herding dogs often nip or bite at their handler when excited. Undue nipping at the handler is a non-qualifying fault but does not automatically call for suspension.

## **Titles**

There are five class titles and three level titles. In order to earn a class title, a dog must earn 3 qualifying scores in a single class.

Class	Title Abbreviation
Novice Buildings	SD-NB
Novice Exterior	SD-NE
Novice Containers	SD-NC
Novice Distance	SD-ND
Novice Speed	SD-NS

Class	Title Abbreviation
Advanced Buildings	SD-AB
Advanced Exterior	SD-AE
Advanced Containers	SD-AC
Advanced Distance	SD-AD
Advanced Speed	SD-AS

Class	Title Abbreviation
Excellent Buildings	SD-EB
Excellent Exterior	SD-EE
Excellent Containers	SD-EC
Excellent Distance	SD-ED
Excellent Speed	SD-ES

Every dog must start in Novice (see exceptions below) and earn three qualifying scores, or legs, to earn a title and to be eligible to move up to the next level. Dogs do not have to move up after qualifying three times in any class.

Competitors may move up a level in any search class independent of qualifying in other classes. For example, a dog may have three qualifying legs in Novice Buildings searches but no qualifying legs in Novice Containers searches. The dog may move up to Advanced Buildings while continuing to work on earning legs in Novice Containers. Competitors may also decide to

move back down to a lower level at any time even after qualifying in an Advanced or Excellent level.

Any dog who has titled in NACSW NW3, UKC Nosework Excellent-level or SDDA Excellent may enter a PSD trial at the Advanced level. Retired professional detection dogs may, once they meet the qualifications of a TOT, enter a PSD trial at the Advanced level.

### *Class Divisions*

There are three divisions of competition for each class entered; FEO, Standard and Metallic.

FEO Division - open to any dog eligible for the level tested. Participants cannot qualify but will receive a time for their search. Handlers may pre-enter as FEO or at anytime during the search, turn the run into an FEO.

Standard Division - open to any dog eligible for the level and has not yet earned a title in the class entered. Dogs in the Standard Division will compete for placements against other dogs in the same class and division.

Metallic Division - open to any dog eligible for the level and has earned a title in the class entered. Dogs in the Metallic Division will compete for placements against other dogs in the same class and division regardless of Metallics earned.

Dogs are not required to move up to the next level after they have obtained a class or level title. They may continue to compete in a class indefinitely and earn metallic designations. They may enter different levels and divisions in one trial, but may only enter one class at any level in each trial.

In each class and level, dogs may obtain a metallic designation.

Total qualifications in class:

10=Bronze

20=Silver

30=Gold

Metallics will follow level titles eg. SD-NB Silver; SD-AB Bronze

Dogs earn a level title when all five class titles in one level are earned.

Class level	Title Abbreviation
Five Novice class titles	SDN
Five Advanced class titles	SDA
Five Excellent class titles	SDE

## **Judges**

Judges for each trial must be approved by PSD. The Lead Judge will be responsible for placing hides and the judges for each class will score the competitor's run. In addition, the judge will give a short handlers' briefing prior to the start of each search, or set of searches, reminding competitors of specific rules appropriate to class and level judged, answering questions and announcing the number of hides (if appropriate to the class). Competitors are expected to read and understand the rule book before entering a trial.

Judges or trainers in the following sports may attend a judge's workshop in order to apply to become an approved PSD judge.

- AKC- Tracking
- UKC-Nosework
- NACSW



- SDDA
- Barn Hunt
- Any Search or Ringsports Organization that hosts a scent detection element.

In addition, any professional detection dog trainer or handler is encouraged to attend a judge's workshop.

Others interested in becoming a judge are encouraged to contact PSD.

Judges need to have a deep understanding of scent detection, excellent people skills, the ability to read a wide variety of dogs, a sense of humor, and above all else, a recognition that things might not always go as planned in scent detection. An ability to be flexible and manage time is also very important. PSD welcomes a wide variety of competitors from different backgrounds linked by their love for dogs. Judges must want competitors to succeed while providing challenges appropriate to the level being tested.

### **Hold Harmless**

Anyone registering, entering, handling, volunteering, or attending in any capacity a trial or sanctioned Performance Scent Dogs, Inc. activity do so at their own risk and agree to hold PSD, board members, the hosting club and trial site owners harmless. Anyone registering, entering or handling a dog at a PSD event agree to have read and understood the rulebook and agree to uphold all rules, regulations and the Code of Conduct.