



IFRI/NFSTC Detector Dog Team Certification Program *Independent Scientific Validation of Canine Detection Teams*

A joint project of the International Forensic Science Research Institute (IFRI) at Florida International University (FIU) and the National Forensic Science Technology Center (NFSTC)

OVERVIEW

Starting in 1998, IFRI/NFSTC Detector Dog Team Certification program working with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) Contraband Interdiction Program and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and other partners established the first Statewide K-9 trainer and detection team certification program with independent scientific validation. The program is intended to provide recommended scientific standards of practice for trainers and organizations and to make available an additional layer of credentials for detection teams. The ongoing goal of this program is to continue to advance scientifically sound detection K-9 validation programs which are internationally recognized and which improve contraband interdiction from local enforcement to courtroom defensibility.

Annually, more than 100 detection teams from dozens of different agencies across the State of Florida including all of the FHP's narcotic and explosive detection teams have been certified through this program. In addition, teams have been certified in other States as well as internationally including Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The program includes all types of detection canines including arson, currency, drugs, explosives, persons, pests and weapons and since 1998 has been offered free of charge to agencies via grants and public service.

IFRI & NFSTC hosted the 2nd National Detector Dog Conference (NDDC) from May 22-25, 2001 in North Miami Beach, Florida which brought together more than 30 invited speakers and 110 participants from dozens of different agencies and various countries. IFRI & NFSTC also hosted the 3rd NDDC from May 19-23, 2003 with the theme of "The Expanding Role of Detection Canines in Homeland Security". This meeting brought together over 40 invited speakers and 130 attendees including many of the world's leading experts in the field of detector dogs including scientists, handlers, trainers and administrators. Draft best practices for detector dog teams have been developed and refined and will be published in the near future.

PARTIES

FIU is a public research I University located in Miami, Florida. IFRI was the first academic Forensic Center approved by the State in 1997 to serve law enforcement efforts in the application of scientific principles to the administration of justice. FIU houses some of the State's premier forensic science programs including undergraduate programs since 1978 and the first State approved graduate program in Forensic Science starting in 1998. The NFSTC is a Florida not-for-profit corporation located in Largo, Florida. The NFSTC was established by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) in 1995 and has, as its mission, the development of several initiatives aimed at servicing various segments of the forensic science community.

Contact: K9 Program Coordinator, International Forensic Research Institute, FIU, CP304, University Park, Miami, FL 33199. www.ifri.fiu.edu. Tel: 305-348-6211. Fax: 305-348-3772

IFRI/NFSTC CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

IFRI/NFSTC certification is evidence that the trainer and/or detection team has satisfactorily met and passed all applicable standards. The IFRI/NFSTC certification is valid for one year from the date of issuance and non-transferable. To be eligible for re-certification, the trainer's agency must have a written policy mandating the keeping of training records by the detector dog team.

IFRI/NFSTC Minimum Certified Detector Dog Trainer Requirements shall include:

- A minimum of five (5) years experience as a detection canine trainer.
- A minimum of 200 hours of formalized training by recognized detection canine trainers.
- Completion of a 40 hour IFRI/NFSTC Trainer Certification Course (or approved equivalent) including instruction by a recognized detection canine trainer(s), law enforcement, legal and scientific experts in the area of detection canines.
- Supplying the IFRI/NFSTC with standardized detector dog school certification guidelines relevant to the trainers agency approved by an external IFRI/NFSTC review panel of at least two (2) individuals from outside the trainer's agency.
- Successful training of detector dog team(s) using the approved guidelines as determined by a review team of at least two approved individuals from outside the trainer's agency.
- Separate guidelines should be developed and separate detection teams trained for each class of odors such as Accelerants, Cadavers, Currency, Explosives, Hidden persons, Narcotics, etc.
- Multiple specific odors, varying amounts of target odors, and varying conditions should be incorporated into the trainer's course and testing protocols.
- Training/judging with members of local, national or international detector dog organizations is recommended.
- Occasional videotaping of training sessions is recommended for trainer/handler critiquing. Archiving of videotapes is not recommended.

IFRI/NFSTC Detector Dog Team Certification Recommendations:

- Finds may be provided by the IFRI/NFSTC or the requesting agency.
- Pseudo scents must not be used for certification tests.
- For narcotics detection, each find should be less than two years old or authenticated by an approved local, State or Federal lab prior to use in a certification. A purity of 85% or greater is recommended.
- Scented rewards must not be used during the tests.
- Each hide should contain at least one (1) gram or item to be detected with a maximum of 1000 grams for any one test.
- There should be only one find of each type in each designated area.
- At least two different search areas/items should be incorporated into the certification tests such as building, vehicle, luggage, open areas, etc.

- At least one blank search area/item should be incorporated into the certification tests for each different search area/item.
- Distractors should normally not be part of the certification test but should be widely employed in training and results documented in training records.
- All finds should be placed in the search area at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the test.
- Ideally, the search area should be previously swept by the dog(s) to be tested to reduce the potential of contamination interference and to randomize dog odor if multiple dogs are to be tested in the same area.
- Ideally, find(s) should be confirmed with a previously certified team under the supervision of an IFRI/NFSTC certification team prior to testing.
- There should be a minimum of 10 total finds (including blanks) and the team should accurately locate 9 finds out of 10 (90%) or greater for certification.
- Results of the certification tests should be pass or fail rather than judgments of style (see example certification sheet).
- The maximum time to complete an individual search should be less than five minutes but disqualification due to time should be left to the discretion of the master trainer.
- Recommended search areas include the following: Vehicles – at least 3 vehicles including one interior, one exterior and one blank; Building – a minimum of 200 sq. ft. and maximum of 1200 sq. ft. (with furniture) including at least one blank room; Baggage – a minimum of 10 articles and a maximum of 25 articles; Open area – a minimum of 1000 sq. ft. and a maximum of 3000 sq. ft.
- Certification is for the handler and the dog as a team and if the dog changes handlers then a new certification is required.
- The certification team should include at least one individual from outside the trainer's agency and should preferably include at least one trainer and one scientist.
- Documentation of the team's detection proficiency training should be maintained by the certified trainer and available for inspection including the certification documents, training records and a certificate of completion of an approved narcotic detection academy which includes the number of hours the team attended the school.
- A detection team which fails to complete the certification process should wait at least 30 days (and complete additional training) before making another attempt to certify.
- Any complaints or suggestions regarding how the certification was conducted should be sent in writing to the trainer and certification team within two weeks of the completion of the test.
- Determination of the reliability of the detection team should be based primarily on the certification records and secondarily on the regular training records but should not use deployment logs as unconfirmed alerts do not accurately evaluate a detection team's performance (i.e. residual odor can be present or concealment may preclude discovery).

The IFRI/NFSTC Certified Detector Dog Trainer Guidelines scientific review panel includes:

Dr. Jose Almirall, Ph.D., International Forensic Research Institute	_____	_____
	Signature	date
Dr. Kenneth G. Furton, Ph.D., International Forensic Research Institute	_____	_____
	Signature	date
Kevin Lothridge, M.S., National Forensic Science Technology Center	_____	_____
	Signature	date
Dr. Lawrence J. Myers, D.V.M., Ph.D., Auburn University	_____	_____
	Signature	date
Dr. Stefan Rose, M.D., Univ. Medical and Forensic Consultants, Inc.	_____	_____
	Signature	date

Name of trainer submitting guidelines _____

Agency and title of guidelines submitted _____

Submitted training testing guidelines are:

1. Approved with no changes required _____
2. Approved with the following recommendations _____

3. Approved with the following required changes _____

4. Disapproved - resubmit after the following substantive changes have been made _____

5. Failed with resubmission not recommended _____

Certification results for:

Handler's Title and Name (as it will appear on certificate)

Handler's Agency & Address

Phone number

Fax number

K-9's Name

K-9 Breed/I.D. Number

Trainer's Name/Agency

Evaluator Name

Evaluator Signature

Date, Location

Vehicle	Int.	Ext.	Blank	Drug	Weight	Alert	No alert
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Luggage	Item	Drug	Weight	Alert	No alert
1	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Room	Location	Drug	Weight	Alert	No alert
1	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other	Location	Drug	Weight	Alert	No alert
1	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total # finds (incl. blanks) _____ **# hides missed** _____ **Fail** **Pass**

Evaluator's comments/suggestions (use back for more space) _____