Competitor Guidelines

THE
NATIONAL NOSEWORK
ASSOCIATION

The National Nosework Association

www.TheNationalNoseworkAssociation.co.uk

CONTENTS

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL NOSEWORK ASSOCIATION? **4**

Membership 5

ODOUR RECOGNITION TESTS **7**

About 7

What is an ORT? 8

ORT Layouts 11

Odour Recognition Test Rules 12

REQUIREMENTS **16**

STAGE BY STAGE **19**

TRIAL ETIQUETTE **21**

ACCUMULATING POINTS **23**

LEAGUE TABLES **24**

SCORING **25**

Team Confidence 26

Area Coverage 28

Indication 30

Synergy Awards 32

Faults 33

FOUNDATION STAGE 35

Foundation Stage 38

PRE-ENTRY STAGE 39

Pre-Entry Stage 42

ENTRY STAGE 44

Entry Stage 48

ENHANCED STAGE 50

Enhanced Stage 53

EXCELLENT STAGE 55

Excellent Stage 58

ELITE STAGE 60

Elite Stage 64

SPIRIT STAGE 66

Spirit Stage 69

SUPREME STAGE 70

Supreme Stage 73

FOCUS TRIALS 74

TITLE CHALLENGE.....72

RULES 76

ODOUR PREPARATION 82

DISTRACTION ODOURS..... 83

GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....84

What is The National Nosework Association?

Founded by Jo Crosby-Deakin and Nikki Thorpe, The National Nosework Association (NNA) aims to provide handlers and their dogs with an opportunity to compete in the amazing sport of nosework in different and challenging environments.

Jo and Nikki have been involved in nosework training and sports for many years, studying with any and all in the business. They are like minded in their pursuit of knowledge and wanting to share that with their clients so that they get the best from their nosework journey.

We want to bring you so much!

Different challenges to enhance your skills.

Varied venues to keep the fun for you and your dog.

A route of progression that is both fun and challenging.

We want The NNA to be more than just a trial, we want it to be a training plan for the teams.

IT'S NOT JUST A TRIAL, IT'S A TRAINING PLAN

MEMBERSHIP

You may apply for membership of The NNA at any time.

Handlers will pay an annual membership.

You will also need to register your dog once they are ready to trial and this is a one-off registration that will then run for the duration of your dog's competition career.

If you own and compete with multiple dogs as many of us now do, you will receive a **free** trial logbook if you register 3 or more at once.

Trial logbooks are available from The NNA at £15 plus postage and packaging.

ODOUR RECOGNITION TESTS

ODOUR RECOGNITION TESTS

ABOUT

Odour Recognition Tests (ORTs) are offered at club level and the team must pass the test and have been awarded a pass certificate with a unique reference to enter their first trial.

There are no prerequisites for a team to enter an ORT and handlers don't need to be a member of the NNA.

A handler may enter both Foundation and Pre-Entry ORTs at a single assessment session; however, from Entry up, may only enter 1 ORT stage at an assessment session.

A handler may enter multiple dogs at the same test.

WHAT IS AN ORT?

An Odour Recognition Test (ORT) is designed to demonstrate that the dog has a clear understanding of the target odour. The dog must confidently recognise, locate and correctly identify the target odour whilst systematically searching a defined set of items.

As an ORT is a test of odour recognition, false calls are not permitted. A false call will mean the run was a fail.

An ORT is meant to show that the dog understands the odour it is looking for and being tasked to search a specific set of items.

For the handler it will test their body movements, their line management, and correct pace setting to keep their dog in the search pattern.

The test is carried out using pattern line ups of multiple target items. These may either be single items or line up tracks. The items should be suitable for an indication and not a search.

No bags or suitcases.

The NNA are looking for the dogs to work the line up on line and in a systematic pattern without too much interference from the handler and show a clear and non-damaging indication when they reach the target odour.

The handler should be able to competently manage their dog and their line during the search. The line should be fed in and out smoothly and at no time should the line be allowed to trail on the floor or interfere with the placement of the target items.

An ORT test may be conducted indoors or outdoors.

In outdoor areas level ground is essential and the test should be set up in an area with minimum distractions.

Target items should be laid out in the pattern allocated for the test as indicated in the above tables.

The items should be set apart with a maximum space of about 20cm. All items need to be checked by the dog from beginning to end, even after the last find has been made.

The selected target items should reflect the size of the smallest dog entered at the test. The smallest dog entered should be able to indicate from the floor and not have to put paws on an item to indicate.

Any safe target item is acceptable from shoes and boxes to football marker cones and plant pots provided the size of the smallest dog is taken into consideration.

The items should not be so large that the dog would need to check all around the item before clearing and moving on as they would with a suitcase or large box.

For all tests with the exception of Foundation and Pre-Entry the target odour will be Napier Gun Oil and this should be prepared either 1 drop per carrier item and left to soak or 1 drop in a shell to be used during that search.

Foundation and Pre-Entry tests may be conducted on Kong, clove, or gun oil. Kong should be approximately 1cm x 1cm. Clove soaks should be prepared with 10-12 whole dried cloves in a glass jar filled two-thirds full of carrier items and left for 24 hours before use.

Carrier items may be any item no smaller than the end of an ear bud and no larger than a cotton wool ball or 3cm x 3cm piece of absorbent cloth. Carrier items may be items such as wooden pegs, foam/felt pieces, cigarette filter tips, cotton swabs, 5cm length of string or wool, etc.

This list is not exhaustive and provided the item is absorbent and within the size limits anything is acceptable.

Blanks and empty shells should be kept entirely separate from the soaks and gun oil carriers. They should be handled with clean hands and laid out in the search area before making any contact with the target odours to avoid cross-contamination.

For Kong teams, distractions may be nitrile gloves, pieces of plastic storage containers, or pieces of plastic dog toys that contain human scent, etc.

If the venue allows and if the host so chooses, a practice line may be available with 1 hide and no distractions. This will be at the host's discretion and may not be available at all tests.

Level	Foundation (FN)	Pre-Entry (PY)	Entry (EY)	Enhanced (ED)
Target Odour	Kong Clove Gun Oil	Kong Clove Gun Oil	Gun Oil	Gun Oil
# of Hides	1	1	1	2
# of Runs	3	3	3	3
# of Containers	8	12	18	25
Distractions	Odour specific blanks or shells	Odour specific Blanks or Shells	Blanks Shells	Blanks, Shells Distraction odours
# of Distractions	1	1	3	5
Pass Mark	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
Layout				

Level	Excellent (ET)	Elite (EE)	Spirit (ST)	Supreme (SE)
Target Odour	Gun Oil	Gun Oil	Gun Oil	Gun Oil
# of Hides	3	4 May inc buried hides	Unknown. May inc blank run, buried hides	Unknown. Double Blind. May inc blank run, buried or water hides
# of Runs	3	3	3	3
# of Containers	30	36	40	40
Distractions	Anything inc inaccessible food	Anything inc inaccessible food	Anything inc inaccessible food	Anything inc inaccessible food
# of Distractions	5	5	Varied	Varied
Pass Mark	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
Layout				

ODOUR RECOGNITION TEST RULES

Only the ORT assessor and the handler and dog team under test are allowed in the test area.

A false call will result in a failed run.

The test will consist of 3 runs and the team must get 2 out of 3 runs correct to pass.

The 3 runs will not be consecutive; a running order will be drawn up for each of the 3 runs to ensure the dogs are all working the odour at varying stages.

This test should be conducted on a line no longer than 5m and the handler should be able to competently manage their dog and their line during the search.

The line should be fed in and out smoothly and at no time should the line be allowed to trail on the floor or interfere with the placement of the target items. This would be a failed run.

The dog may be rewarded at the find once the ORT assessor has confirmed that it is correct.

The reward may be food provided it is carefully delivered. If food is dropped by the handler, that would be a failed run; however, should the dog drop the food after taking it that is beyond the handler's control and cannot be penalised.

Toy rewards are also acceptable if the target items are not disturbed.

Handlers should move forward at a steady pace and are **not** allowed to back track if the dog has, in their opinion, missed a target item.

If the handler is pausing to encourage the dog to come back to them and search backwards then the ORT assessor should issue a warning to keep moving forwards with the dog.

Should the dog choose to go back to an item before they have reached the last one, then the handler **must** stand still and allow the line out if they believe the dog to be in odour.

If the dog makes a 'find' then the handler may move back to reward. If the dog moves on or fails to make a 'find', the handler may, from their static position, re-task and continue the search.

Once the find has been called then the dog must check the remaining target items in the pattern.

Handlers should not verbally or by the use of hand signals task the dog to every item.

Handlers are permitted to re-task provided the dog is actively searching in a systematic way.

If the dog is moving on and off the ORT target items in a hunt for odour instead of following the ORT line up and the handler is having to stop and re-task the dog repeatedly then this would be considered excessive tasking and the dog not searching systematically.

It is the ORT assessors' role to determine in the situation where more than 3 re-tasks have been given whether the dog is clear on the task or is just hunting for odour.

The ORT assessor should advise the handler before the test that 3 re-tasks are permitted, but that if after a 4th re-task the dog is still not searching systematically, in the ORT assessors' opinion, that will be a fail.

The handler should indicate to the ORT assessor when the dog is indicating in the manner that they have described when starting the run.

Biting or digging at the target items will result in the run being stopped and counted as a fail. The NNA definitions of a damaging indication are:

Biting at the item and leaving a visible mark.
Digging would be more than 2 touches with a paw.
Pushing the target item across the floor without a final indication.

Handlers may call interest in an item if they see the behaviour change but with no firm indication. This will be taken as an alert call and the ORT official will advise the handler whether the interest call is correct or incorrect at that time.

The ORT assessor will determine whether the run is a pass or a fail.

A handler cannot call interest retrospectively once they have got to the end of the linear search.

If the dog urinates or defecates on the ORT target items this would be a fail.

TRIAL STAGES

REQUIREMENTS

NNA trials are open to dogs of all breeds, individually registered with The NNA and who have achieved the ORT pass for the stage they are entering.

There are 2 access points for your NNA journey - Foundation stage or Entry stage and it is your choice. If you start at Foundation you will need to work through Pre-Entry as well before moving on.

Teams must work through the stages in order and must have passed the relevant ORT by the day of the trial.

There is no upper age limit provided the dog is fit enough to compete.

Handlers are welcome from 13 years of age although an adult must keep sight of a junior handler during the searches and at the trial. The junior handler should be able to control the dog both on and off line without physical assistance from an adult. The accompanying adult should in no way interfere with the handler or the dog during the search. The accompanying adult is not allowed to compete at the same trial with the same dog or a different one.

Dogs need to be a minimum of 9 months old to enter Foundation and Pre-Entry stage trials and a minimum of 1 year old to enter Entry stage trials.

Dogs should be fit and well when competing and show no signs of discomfort or pain. Dogs with bandages, stitches, or visible wounds or are not eligible to compete. Dogs with physical challenges such as amputees or deaf/blind dogs are eligible to compete provided they show no signs of stress or undue discomfort.

Dogs are not allowed to wear belly bands whilst competing unless for a medical exception.

Bitches in season are not eligible for competition. As a rule this 21 days from the start of the season.

A correctly fitted harness, flat collar, or soft martingale collar are acceptable and a line of no more than 5m. No slip leads, choke chains, half-checks, prong collars, or flexi leads are permitted.

Rewards may be used within the search areas, but careful consideration should be given to the type. Faults will apply for handlers dropping food in a search area or disturbing the area with a toy reward.

Indication is defined as a clear and readable final response at odour with no undue interference with the hides.

The NNA definitions of a damaging indication are:

Biting at the item and leaving a visible mark.
Digging would be more than 2 touches with a paw.
Pushing a target item across the floor without a final indication.

Calling the alert may be done either with a verbal acknowledgement from the handler such as 'alert' or 'find' or a physical acknowledgement such as an arm in the air. The handler should ensure that their chosen acknowledgement is clear and that the judge can identify it.

The judge will provide the scented items for the trial and these may be any absorbent material no smaller than the end of a cotton bud and no larger than a 3cm x 3cm square of any absorbent material. For Foundation and Pre-Entry stage trials conducted on Kong, the Kong should be approximately 1cm x 1cm.

Owners or handlers enter the dogs at the trial at their own risk and agree to assume responsibility for any damage caused by the dogs.

Dogs will compete in a variety of environment set ups at each stage and these will be known as 'elements'.

The elements in each of the 10 stages (Foundation, Pre-Entry, Entry, Enhanced, Excellent, Elite, Spirit, Supreme, Stellar & Sovereign) will have increasing difficulty factors such as the size of the search area, the number of hides and whether that number is known or unknown, and height levels for the hides themselves.

The NNA and its representatives will take every care when selecting search areas but as these areas may be varied and held in outdoor locations and venues such as woodlands or farms, the handlers take responsibility for their own care and that of their dogs.

Dogs may only be entered at a trial for which they have qualified, unless entering not for competition (NFC).

Many of the searches will be conducted outdoors and handlers should be prepared for all potential weather conditions. Trials will go ahead rain or shine provided the conditions are not hazardous, e.g., lightning, high winds, flooding.

When a handler calls an area ‘clear’ and is working their dog off line, they should attach the line at the same time.

STAGE BY STAGE

Foundation and Pre-Entry are starting points for teams wanting to gain more experience and skills before moving to Entry. These are not compulsory stages and have their own league tables. You decide where you want to start but once you do start then you move through the stages from that point.

At each of the stages – Foundation, Pre-Entry, Entry, Enhanced, Excellent, Elite, Spirit, Supreme, Stellar & Sovereign – there are different search elements within and you will gain a badge each time you qualify an element at a trial.

From Foundation stage to Elite stage, you must qualify **all search elements** at least twice within a stage before you can 'stage up'. From Spirit to Sovereign stage, at least 4 Area badges are required to stage up.

Each qualifying badge earns points in the associated league tables and these are calculated and added by The NNA from the score sheets submitted by the trials official at the end of each trial.

We want to encourage you to test your team skills at different venues and to have different trial experiences within the stages rather than just look at staging up. The trial venues will be varied and the set ups different at each although the requirements will remain the same. You may trial in a car park or a field, your vehicle set up could be a bus museum or a farm, the challenges are endless.

There will also be Focus trials which will be just 1 element with 2 runs at each trial. Focus trials will allow you to achieve additional points, practice an element which challenges you and your dog, and train in various locations to hone your skills. These will also get you closer to your Skill Awards.

Teams can work towards a Skill Award at **every** element within the stage. To achieve this, you will require 3 qualifiers at that element for your Skill Award. You can, if you wish, continue in a stage until you have your Skill Award in every element which will add additional points to the scores taken into account for the league tables.

For Spirit, Supreme, Stellar & Sovereign stages, a Skill Award can be applied for after 3 Area badges or 3 Selection badges have been obtained. A second Area Skill Award can be applied for once a further 3 Area badges have been obtained. Teams will require 4 Area badges to move to the next stage and 6 Area badges to gain both Skill Awards for Area searches.

It is the handler's responsibility to keep a record of the trials they have attended and the dates and locations they have qualified an element. Once you have the required 3 badges you submit a Skill Award Request Form on the website (www.thenationalnoseworkassociation.co.uk) for the element or elements you wish to claim.

Skill Awards can be claimed individually or as a full set but once you achieve the last badge for a stage then you must claim the Skill Awards and associated points within 4 weeks or by 31st December in the qualifying year.

If you don't claim them within the time scale, you may still claim your awards, but you won't be allocated the points.

Once you have all Skill Awards at that stage then you must stage up. The trials are designed to challenge and improve your skills, and we want you to keep growing in confidence that you and your dog are ready.

We also have the much sought after Synergy Award. For every element within a trial, the judge may present a Synergy Award. This is to acknowledge teamwork and fluidity of the search. This is not an encouraging award or a well done for a disaster award! It is reserved for teams that have blown a judge away. Judges do not need to award this as a matter of course so if one is handed out then it is because that search did something for the judge. Synergy Awards will be recorded separately in a standalone league.

TRIAL ETIQUETTE

Handlers should check in with the trials official upon arrival and make them aware of any additional needs of dog or handler.

The judge and trials official will give a briefing of the searches for the day, the areas, and any rule changes.

Up to and including Excellent stage, there will be a group walk-through of the search areas to define start lines and boundaries if the size of the search area permits, if the search area is confined then a viewing from the start line is acceptable.

From Elite stage, the search areas will be unseen and a short brief will be given to teams at the start line. Teams may ask questions whilst searching for clarification of an area.

Obvious hazards will be removed where possible and if not possible, handlers will be made aware and caution cones will be in place.

Up to and including Excellent stage, handlers will be informed of the total time for each search area at the briefing and when they enter the search area.

Up to and including Enhanced stage, handlers will also be informed of the number of hides in each area.

A running order may be posted and handlers will be advised where this may be viewed, if applicable.

Hides will not be placed in the start cones or any caution cones.

Where possible a white dog will be used but this may not be the case at all trials.

There will be no minimum distance between hide placements.

Searches should not be discussed by anyone in detail until such time as the searches have all finished. Handlers may disclose whether they did well or not but that should be the extent of the discussion.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

If the search is determined as ‘on-line’, the dog should be on a line of no more than 5m and that line should not interfere with any items in the search area.

A handler may choose to work all search areas on line.

The time does not stop between finds, only at the end of the search area when the handler gives the ‘all clear’ call.

ACCUMULATING POINTS

	Foundation Pre-Entry	Entry	Enhanced	Excellent Elite Spirit Supreme
Qualifying an element	2	2	3	6
Consistency points	5	5	5	10
(Qualifying all elements at a trial)				
Winner	6	6	6	6
Reserve	3	3	3	3
Skill Award	4	4	5	10

LEAGUE TABLES

Points will be added to the league tables and sectioned in:

- Foundation and Pre-Entry
- Entry to Elite
- Spirit to Sovereign
- Junior Handler
- Breed classification (Hound, Working, Terrier, Gundog, Pastoral, Utility, Toy, Cross/AVNSC).

Synergy Awards will be recorded separately.

Every dog registered must work their way through the stages.

If a new handler takes over working the dog, they may not move back to a stage that the dog has already achieved, they must continue to work at the stage the dog has achieved.

Skill Awards

Teams can work towards a Skill Award at every element within the stage. To achieve this, you will require 3 qualifiers at that element for your Skill Award. You can, if you wish, continue in a stage until you have your Skill Award in every element which will add additional points to the scores taken into account for the league tables.

For Spirit, Supreme, Stellar & Sovereign stages, a Skill Award can be applied for after 3 Area badges or 3 Selection badges have been obtained. A second Area Skill Award can be applied for once a further 3 Area badges have been obtained. Teams will require 4 Area badges to move to the next stage and 6 Area badges to gain both Skill Awards for Area searches.

Skill Awards can be claimed individually or as a full set but once you achieve the last badge for a stage then you must claim the Skill Awards and associated points within 4 weeks or by 31st December in the qualifying year.

SCORING

Judges will be looking at the following areas:

- Team confidence
- Area coverage
- Indication

Judges will be looking at the fluidity of a search, the connection that dog and handler have, and how clearly they understand each other.

10 points will be available for each area that the judges will be looking at: Team confidence, Area coverage, and Indication.

10 points will be awarded for each find in each search element and all must be found to pass that element.

Our aim is that the searches are a learning platform as well as a competition and the feedback received should help each team improve and learn something about how they handled that search on that day.

The winner and reserve at each trial will be the teams that have cleared the most finds across the elements with the highest judge's score. If there is a tied score, faults and false calls are considered. In the event of a tie for winner or reserve after taking account of faults and false calls, all teams tied on the same points will receive a medal.

TEAM CONFIDENCE

Nosework is all about teamwork. It's about how the dog and handler work together, how they understand each other, and how they can read each other.

Handlers can add undue pressure to a dog when searching and they should be aware of this, too many re-tasks, too much line pressure, too little help — all add pressure to the dog.

Our judges will be looking for the teams that work together, help each other, and have fun doing it, and you will gain up to 10 points for your skills at reading each other and moving with understanding and knowledge of your dog.

1 Not getting along

No teamwork observed during the search.

2 Still too soon

The handler and dog are finding it difficult to engage as a team.

3 Glimpses of what they will become

The dog and handler may have brief moments of team cohesion.

4 Starting to get it

The team are showing that at times they are beginning to gel.

5 On the right road

The team are at the turning point of understanding.

6 Emerging

The team are starting to understand each other, although there are times that the dog is not responding to the handler or the handler isn't stepping in to assist and guide when they should.

7 Good effort

The dog and handler team cover the area but with obvious moments of confusion or inaction.

8 Great teamwork

The judge can see the confidence dropping in either the dog or the handler as they cover the area. Uncertainty in how and when to assist.

9 Excellent partnership

There may have been a missed beat or some frustration in the dog. A re-task too many or too few. Something just out of sync.

10 Perfect unison

Dog and handler working exceptionally as a team. Dog working in a positive and confident fashion. Handler managing the search, allowing the dog to work independently where required but dog responding to tasking when asked. A mutual understanding apparent when working with handler supporting the dog where needed.

Handler recognising dog in odour.

The dog and handler work in perfect unison, smoothly covering the search area.

AREA COVERAGE

How a team works a search area says a lot about their understanding of each other, it is a skill in itself to cover an area without the dog bouncing from one space to the next and it may all be affected by handler movement and direction.

Area coverage should be a series of well thought out steps and movements and not just the dog stumbling across the finds whilst doing laps of the space.

Your skills in this gentle dance through a search area will gain you up to 10 points as you demonstrate clearing space, moving smoothly, and understanding when your dog is in odour and when they are not.

1 Not getting along

The dog is bouncing from one space to another, no search pattern is apparent, and the handler is just hoping the dog stumbles across odour. No interaction from the handler.

2 Still too soon

The dog is moving around the area with no guidance from the handler. The handler is offering almost no input.

The dog loses focus, and it is clear they are no longer hunting for odour.

3 Glimpses of what they will become

The dog is pinging from one space to another with the handler following.

No tasking or over tasking.

The dog is doing their best to find the odour but without help from the handler the dog may be losing focus.

4 Starting to get it

Moments of the search show how the team will grow and progress, but those moments are few.

The handler is following the dog from one space to the next with no clear idea of how best to work the area for the dog. They attempt to bring the dog under some sort of control to work the area in a more methodical way.

5 On the right road

The team show a good understanding of how to cover a large area but once the search starts confusion for both dog and handler follows.

6 Emerging confidence

The team starts well but the dog pings off and the handler loses confidence and focus, unsure of how to bring their plan back together and move forward. Areas may be covered more than necessary or not at all.

7 Good effort

The team work well covering the area for the most part, maybe a good start but pressure added when a find isn't made early, or the dog pings off and the handler follows without thought meaning they miss areas. They may well come back to these areas being aware after the fact that they have been missed.

8 Great teamwork

The team have worked well but there are areas that have been missed or over-worked. For example, the handler stands still too long and holds the dog in a space or moves off too quickly meaning the dog cuts the corner or misses an area.

9 Excellent partnership

The team approach the area methodically and move well together, there may be an area that is not worked as well as it could have been due to handler pressure pushing or pulling the dog out of a space.

10 Perfect unison

The team showing smooth coverage of the area, obvious pattern and moving with confidence, structure, and ease. Trusting their dog to discount areas without over working whilst ensuring the dog has been set up with the best chance of success due to area planning.

INDICATION

A trained final response takes time and effort to train. In a search it means the handler knows exactly what the dog is telling them and are able to make a call and stop frustration building.

It shows clear understanding on both ends of the line.

The indication may be, for example, a sit and stare, a nose to target, or a gentle paw and should be consistent through the searches.

A clear and well executed indication that the handler understands, and the dog communicates well will gain up to 10 points. The handler must call a find to be able to gain points for indication.

1 Not getting along

Dog does not remain at odour in any way, handler getting almost zero information when making the call.

2 Still too soon

Dog knocks the odour but will not indicate but the handler makes a call.

3 Glimpses of what they will be

Slightest glimmer of an indication but no meaningful information leaving the handler to make the decision on where the find is located.

4 Starting to get it

Briefest of interest, no commitment to source, does not return.

5 On the right road

Briefest of interest in the area. Dog moves off quickly but may return showing more interest.

6 Emerging confidence

The indication is fleeting, and the dog leaves the handler uncertain about making the call.

Dog's immediate indication of odour is hard digging/mouthing/frantic licking.

7 Good effort

The indication is inconclusive; dog shows strong interest but does not settle at source.

High arousal and invasive digging/mouthing/licking.

8 Great teamwork

The dog gives a partial indication, looks off waiting for further information from the handler before giving commitment.

Further paw touch/mouthing/licking escalating in energy.

9 Excellent partnership

Clear and confident indication with a confident call from the handler but coming out of an indication before released by the handler.

Single paw touch or light mouthing/lick.

10 Perfect unison

Dog working as much to source as possible. Dog confident and committed to odour. Clear indication that the handler can read without having to ask for confirmation from the dog and the dog stays at source whilst the handler makes the call and waits to have it confirmed.

Dog behaving in a non-destructive fashion around the odour.

SYNERGY AWARDS

Synergy Awards may be given at the judge's discretion for a search that shows exceptional teamwork and may be issued whether the team pass the element or not.

The Synergy Award is not a compensation for not winning, it is to mark an achievement of teamwork and connection. The awards should only be issued when the judge watches a search that really epitomises understanding on both ends of the line.

They may not have been the winning team and their next search may have been shocking but for that moment when the judge watched them, they were a true team, the fluid connection between dog and handler, poetry to watch.

A Synergy Award may be given for any search to any team, but these should be reserved for those moments when the judge sees no disconnection between dog and handler.

Synergy Awards should be logged on the trial results log and will be displayed separately from the main league tables on the NNA website. Synergy Awards do not earn points.

FAULTS

Rewarding in the area is permitted; however, if the reward, be that food or a toy, is dropped on the floor by the handler within the search area that will result in a **two-point fault deduction**.

If food is dropped, the handler must ensure that it has all been removed before moving on.

Each incident of urination or defecation within a search area incurs a **five-point fault deduction.**

If an incident occurs, searching must pause while it is dealt with. The search clock will continue to run. Competitors are responsible for clearing up after their dog unless the Judge or Trials Official asks them not to. The team must not resume searching until the Judge confirms that they may continue.

Following an incident, competitors are expected to take reasonable steps to prevent further toileting or marking within the search area.

On the third incident within the same search, the Judge will stop the search. The team will receive no finds or points for that search, but the 10 fault deduction will still be documented and taken off the team's overall score.

The handler may choose to stop their search after the first or second incident and retain the points they have accrued to that point minus any fault deductions.

Where toileting could cause significant damage to the venue or risk to the hiring availability for the Trials Official, the Trials Official may designate an individual search area or all search areas at a venue as **Protected Search Areas**.

The designation must be stated in the trial information **when bookings open** and cannot be added afterwards. Competitors must also be told which search areas are protected before undertaking them.

In a Protected Search Area, the first incident of urination or defecation will stop the search immediately. The team will retain points earned up to that point, subject to the five-point fault deduction.

Our judges will be looking for a fluid search and a dog that is committed to the game, if they are off peeing and pooping everywhere are they really committed? Are they stressed?

Harsh handling is not something The NNA will accept. Although we appreciate some dogs can pull and lunge excitedly at the start of a search, ongoing line corrections will mean the search is ended.

Points deductions

Dropping food or a toy – 2 points
Dog urinating in the area – 5 points
Dog defecating in the area – 5 points

FOUNDATION STAGE

This is one of the access points to competition and is for new teams embarking on their competitive nosework journey.

The Foundation stage consists of 3 elements – Interior, Exterior, and Selection and may be on Kong, clove, or gun oil.

Teams need to have membership of The NNA and have completed the relevant Foundation stage ORT for the odour they are competing on.

Dogs may be worked on or off line for Interior and Exterior although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed in the briefing beforehand.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

One false call is permitted per search element, if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

Handlers may reward the dog in the search area with food or a toy provided the handler does not drop the food or toy on the floor.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to the hide. Being surface hides, the dogs should be able to get their nose on.

Interior search

The Interior search will be 2 minutes at a venue where doors can be closed to create an enclosed area. There will be 1 hide in the space and this will be a surface hide within reach (defined as with all 4 feet on the floor) of the smallest dog competing.

There may be 1 distraction in the search area in the form of an odour specific blank such as a piece of sock, a q-tip, or a clean shell.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hide and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication, and the handler to notify the judge of the find either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Exterior search

The Exterior search will be 2 minutes in an outside area which may be the perimeter of a building or an open space with objects within.

As with the interior there will be 1 surface hide within reach of the smallest dog and may be 1 odour specific blank or clean shell.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hide and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication, and the handler to notify the judge of the find either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Selection test

The Selection test is a line up search that may be boxes, tubs, shoes, plant pots, or pipes. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

There will be 6 items laid out in a pattern that the judge can clearly see, and the dogs must be worked on a line.

Teams have 1 minute to complete the line up.

There will be a hide in 1 of the items.

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure; but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

Interior search

Definition of interior – any area/areas inside where doors can be closed.

- 1 hide
- 2-minute search time
- Odour specific blank/clean shell
- Surface hide (within reach of smallest dog)
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Exterior search

Definition of exterior – any outside area/areas/perimeters.

- 1 hide
- 2-minute search time
- Odour specific blank/clean shell
- Surface hide (within reach of smallest dog)
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Selection test

Definition of items – tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 6 items
- 1 hide
- 1 minute search time
- Dogs to be worked on a line
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area.
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched

NOTE – The trials official and judge may require handlers to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

PRE-ENTRY STAGE

This is our second stage and contains an additional hide in each of the Interior and Exterior search elements and an additional element with Vehicles being added for the first time.

Teams need to have membership of The NNA, have qualified at Foundation stage, and have achieved their Pre-Entry ORT to take part. Pre-Entry is the last stage that teams may compete on Kong or clove and the trials will be odour specific as with Foundation.

Dogs may be worked on or off line for Interior, Exterior, and Vehicles although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed in the briefing beforehand.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

One false call is permitted per search element; if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

Handlers may reward the dog in the search area with food or a toy provided the handler does not drop the food or toy on the floor.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to the hide. Being surface hides, the dogs should be able to get their nose on.

Interior search

The Interior search will be 3 minutes at a venue where doors can be closed to create an enclosed area. There will be 2 hides in the space and these will be surface hides within reach with all 4 feet on the floor of the smallest dog competing.

There may be distractions in the search area in the form of odour specific blanks such as pieces of sock or q-tips, or clean shells.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hides and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication and the handler to notify the judge of the finds either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Exterior search

The Exterior search will be 3 minutes in an outside area which may be the perimeter of a building or an open space with objects within.

As with the interior there will be 2 surface hides within reach of the smallest dog and may be odour specific blanks or clean shells.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hides and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication and the handler to notify the judge of the finds either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Vehicles

Vehicles are anything that has wheels so could be cars, vans, quad bikes, or trailers.

The teams will be looking for 2 hides in this 3-minute search which will be surface hides within reach of the smallest dog.

The hides will be placed only on the exterior of the vehicle, the dogs should not have to climb in or on the vehicle to locate the hides.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hides and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication and the handler to notify the judge of the finds either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Selection test

The Selection test is a line up search that may be boxes, tubs, shoes, plant pots, or pipes. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

There will be 8 items laid out in a pattern that the judge can clearly see, and the dogs must be worked on a line. The line should not drag on the floor or interfere with the items within the test in any way.

Teams have 1.5 minutes to complete the line up.

There will be a hide in 1 of the items and there will be a blank carrier or clean shell in 1 of the other items as a distraction for the dogs to work past.

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure; but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

Interior search

Definition of interior – any area/areas inside where doors can be closed.

- 2 hides
- 3-minute search time
- Surface hides (within reach of smallest dog)
- Blank/clean shell
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Exterior search

Definition of exterior – any outside area/areas/perimeters.

- 2 hides
- 3-minute search time
- Surface hides (within reach of smallest dog)
- Blank/clean shell
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Vehicle search

Definition of vehicles – any cars/vans/tractors/trailers/quad bikes etc.

- 2 hides
- 2 vehicles
- 3-minute search time
- Hides may be on the exterior of any vehicle
- Surface hides (within reach of smallest dog)
- Blank/clean shell
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Selection test

Definition of items - tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 8 items
- 1 hide
- Dogs to be worked on a line
- 1.5 minutes search time

- Blank/clean shell
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area.
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched

NOTE – The trials official and judge may require handlers to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

ENTRY STAGE

Entry is another access point for trialling but choose wisely, once you have taken part in an Entry stage trial, you cannot go back to Foundation if you find it too difficult. You may however compete NFC at Entry if the trials official has available spaces.

Teams starting at Entry need to have membership of the NNA and to have achieved their Entry stage ORT to take part.

Teams that started at Foundation and have progressed through to this stage need to have membership of The NNA, have qualified at Pre-Entry stage, and have achieved their Entry stage ORT to take part.

Dogs may be worked on or off line for Interior, Exterior, or Vehicles although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed in the briefing beforehand.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

All searches are carried out using Napier Gun Oil and the hides will still be placed within reach of the smallest dog with all 4 feet on the floor.

One false call is permitted per search element; if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

Handlers may reward the dog in the search area with food or a toy provided the handler does not drop the food or toy on the floor.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to the hide. Being surface hides, the dogs should be able to get their nose on.

Interior search

The interior search will be 5 minutes at a venue where doors can be closed to create an enclosed area. There will be 3 hides in the space and these will be surface hides within reach of the smallest dog competing.

There may be a maximum of 3 distractions in the search area in the form of blanks such as pieces of sock or q-tips, or clean shells.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hides and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication and the handler to notify the judge of the find either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Exterior search

The Exterior search will be 5 minutes in an outside area which may be the perimeter of a building or an open space with objects within.

As with the interior there will be 3 surface hides within reach of the smallest dog and may be blanks or clean shells.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hides and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication and the handler to notify the judge of the find either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Vehicles

Vehicles are anything that has wheels so could be cars, vans, quad bikes, or trailers.

The teams will be looking for 3 hides in this 5-minute search which will be surface hides within reach of the smallest dog.

The hides will be placed only on the exterior of the vehicle, the dogs should not have to climb in or on the vehicle to locate the hides.

There may be blanks or clean shells.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams are expected to locate the hides and the dog to offer a clear and readable, non-damaging indication and the handler to notify the judge of the find either verbally or by raising their arm.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Selection test

The Selection test is a line up search that may be boxes, tubs, shoes, plant pots, or pipes. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

There will be 10 items laid out in a pattern that the judge can clearly see, and the dogs must be worked on a line.

The line should not drag on the floor or interfere with the items within the test in any way.

Teams have 1.5 minutes to complete the line up.

There will be 2 hides in the items a maximum of 2 of the items will contain a blank or clean shell as a distraction for the dogs to work past.

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure; but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

Interior search

Definition of interior – any area/areas inside where doors can be closed.

- 3 hides
- 5-minute search time
- Surface hides (within reach of smallest dog)
- Blanks/clean shells (maximum 3)
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Exterior search

Definition of exterior – any outside area/areas/perimeters.

- 3 hides
- 5-minute search time
- Surface hides (within reach of smallest dog)
- Blanks/clean shells (maximum 3)
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Vehicle search

Definition of vehicles – any cars/vans/tractors/trailers/quad bikes etc.

- 3 hides
- 3 vehicles
- 5-minute search time
- Hides may be on the exterior of any vehicle
- Surface hides (within reach of smallest dog)
- Blanks/clean shells (maximum 3)
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Selection test

Definition of items - tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 10 items
- 2 hides
- Dogs to be worked on a line

- 1.5 minutes search time
- Blanks/clean shells (maximum 2)
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area.
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched

NOTE – The trials official and judge may require handlers to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

ENHANCED STAGE

To compete at Enhanced stage, teams need to have membership of The NNA, have qualified at Entry stage, and have achieved their Enhanced stage ORT.

At Enhanced stage we are moving to 10 minute searches for Interior and Exterior. Either of these may include vehicles but vehicles are no longer a separate element.

The hide placement is now full stretch of the smallest dog with its rear feet on the floor. The indication may be a stretch or a sit and stare once the dog has sourced the hide.

Dogs may be worked on or off line for Interior and Exterior although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed in the briefing beforehand.

There will be up to 5 hides in a search area and the judge will advise how many during the area walk-through. The hides will now be deeper and may include inaccessible hides in cupboards or drawers.

Distractions may now not only be carriers and blank shells but may include non-food items and empty food wrappers.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

One false call is permitted per search element, if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

Handlers may reward the dog in the search area with food or a toy provided the handler does not drop the food or toy on the floor.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to source.

Interior search

The Interior search is any area with a covered roof and doors that can be closed to create an enclosed space. The area may include vehicles to be searched.

There will be up to 5 hides in the area and the judge will confirm the number during the walk-through. The hides may well be deeper than the surface hides of previous stages and may contain inaccessible hides due to containment in a cupboard, drawer, box, or similar.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

Distractions may be a maximum of 3 and may be blanks, carriers, clean shells, or non-food items such as empty food wrappers, nitrile gloves, washing powder, soap, or dog bedding or toys (but not tennis balls or Kongs).

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Handlers should call the area 'clear' to stop the clock when the final hide has been found.

Exterior search

The Exterior search may be any area and may include vehicles to be searched within the area.

There will be up to 5 hides in the area and the judge will confirm the number during the walk-through. The hides may well be deeper than the surface hides of previous stages and may contain inaccessible hides due to containment in a cupboard, drawer, box, or similar.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

Distractions may be a maximum of 3 and may be blanks, carriers, clean shells, or non-food items such as empty food wrappers, nitrile gloves, washing powder, soap, or dog bedding or toys (but not tennis balls or Kongs).

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Handlers should call the area 'clear' to stop the clock when the final hide has been found.

Selection test

The Selection test will be 20 items laid out in any pattern that the judge chooses provided they can clearly see the dogs and handlers. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

Dogs must be worked on a line of no longer than 5m.

There will be 3 hides in the items.

Distractions will be a maximum of 3 and may be blanks, carriers, or clean shells, or non-food items such as empty food wrappers, nitrile gloves, washing powder, soap, or dog bedding or toys (but not tennis balls or Kongs).

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure; but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

Interior search

Definition of interior – any area/areas inside where doors can be closed. May include vehicles.

- Up to 5 hides (known number)
- 10 minute search time
- Distractions (maximum of 3) – carriers/blanks/non-food items/empty food wrappers
- Height of hides will be roughly full stretch of the smallest dog's nose height
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment e.g., in a cupboard
- Included vehicles may be anything from cars to combine harvesters
- Boot areas or edge of boot area may be accessible to search/trailer may be open to search, car doors may be open for dogs to search the openings
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Exterior search

Definition of exterior – any outside area/areas/perimeters/open or closed vehicles.

- Up to 5 hides (known number)
- 10 minute search time
- Distractions (maximum of 3) - carriers/blanks/non-food items/empty food wrappers
- Height of hides will be roughly full stretch of the smallest dog's nose height.
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment, e.g., in a cupboard
- Included vehicles may be anything from cars to combine harvesters
- Boot areas or edge of boot area may be accessible to search/trailer may be open to search, car doors may be open for dogs to search the openings
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Selection test

Definition of items - tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 20 items
- 3 hides
- Dogs must be worked on a line
- 3 minute search time

- Distractions (maximum of 3) – carriers/blanks/non-food items/empty food wrappers
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched

NOTE – The trials official and judge may require handlers to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

EXCELLENT STAGE

To compete at Excellent stage, teams need to have membership of The NNA, have qualified at Enhanced stage, and have achieved their Excellent stage ORT.

Excellent stage will be an unknown number of hides in Interior, Exterior, and Selection test.

Distractions may include inaccessible food items and tennis balls may now be included. Examples of appropriate distractions are:

- Nitrile gloves
- Washing powder
- Soap
- Tea or coffee
- Dog bedding
- Dog fur from a grooming brush
- Food distractions (must be inaccessible to all dogs)
- Dog toys – no Kong
- Tennis balls cannot be used as an added distraction until Excellent stage and must be inaccessible for the dogs. (Added tennis balls will have familiar human odour and dog odour on them)

Dogs may be worked on or off line for Interior and Exterior although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed in the briefing beforehand.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The teams may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Handlers must call the area 'clear' to stop the clock when they believe all finds have been made.

Hides may be inaccessible due to containment or height and these must be out of reach of all dogs competing. Other hides may remain inaccessible for smaller dogs competing but the judge will give thought to how they may access these hides so they are not constantly working inaccessible hides.

One false call is permitted per search element, if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

Handlers may reward the dog with food or a toy in the search area provided the handler does not drop the food or toy on the floor.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to source.

Interior search

The Interior search area may be any area with a covered roof and a door that can be closed to section the area. Vehicles may be included and these may be open for the boot or interior to be searched.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search

Some areas within the search may be blank but an element will contain no less than 1 hide.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

The handler must call 'clear' when they believe the last find has been made to stop the clock.

There may be a maximum of 3 distractions in an area and these may include inaccessible food.

Exterior search

The Exterior search can be any area outside and may include vehicles. The vehicles may be open for the boot or interior to be searched.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

Some areas within the search may be blank but an element will contain no less than 1 hide.

Handlers may ask for a time call to see how long they have used/left. They may convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

The handler must call 'clear' when they believe the last find has been made to stop the clock.

There may be a maximum of 3 distractions in an area and these may include inaccessible food.

Selection test

The Selection test will be 20 items laid out in any pattern that the judge chooses provided they can clearly see the dogs and handlers. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

Dogs must be worked on a line of no longer than 5m.

There will be an unknown number of hides in the items but a minimum of 1.

Distractions will be a maximum of 3 and may be anything including blanks, carriers, or clean shells, or non-food items such as empty food wrappers, nitrile gloves, washing powder, soap, dog bedding or toys, or inaccessible food. No Kongs.

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure; but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

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Interior search

Definition of interior – any area/areas inside where doors can be closed.

- Unknown number – minimum of 1 but no maximum
- 10 minute search time
- Blank areas
- Distractions (maximum of 3) – anything **except** Kong
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment or height, irrespective of the dog's height
- Included vehicles may be anything from cars to combine harvesters
- Boot areas or edge of boot area may be accessible to search; trailer may be open to search; car doors may be open for dogs to search the interior
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Exterior search

Definition of exterior – any outside area/areas/perimeters/open or closed vehicles.

- Unknown number – minimum of 1 but no maximum
- 10 minute search time
- Blank areas
- Distractions (maximum of 3) – anything **except** Kong
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment or height, irrespective of the dog's height
- Included vehicles may be anything from cars to combine harvesters
- Boot areas or edge of boot area may be accessible to search; trailer may be open to search; car doors may be open for dogs to search the interior
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Selection test

Definition of items - tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 20 items
- Unknown number – minimum 1 no maximum
- 3 minute search time
- Dogs to be worked on a line
- Distractions (maximum of 3) – anything **except** Kong
- 1 false call permissible

- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched

NOTE – The trials official and judge may require handlers to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

ELITE STAGE

To compete at Elite stage, teams need to have membership of The NNA, have qualified at Excellent stage, and have achieved their Elite stage ORT.

There will be an unknown number of hides in Interior, Exterior, and Selection.

The search areas will be unseen and may be a combination of smaller areas or one large area. Vehicles may be included in the search areas. There will be no walk-through before the teams start to search.

Dogs may be worked on or off line for Interior and Exterior although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed beforehand.

Handlers will not be advised of the total time they have to search but it will be a maximum of 15 minutes per search area.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

No time call will be given.

A handler must call an area 'clear' to alert the judge to their readiness to move on.

Once an area has been called clear, any find that may subsequently be made in that area will not count.

If a dog is pulled into another area and makes a find this will count towards their overall total and provided the handler has not called the previous area clear, they may continue in the previous area.

Distractions may be anything including inaccessible food items but no Kong.

Hides may be inaccessible due to containment or height and high hides must be inaccessible to the tallest dog in the trial.

Hides may be in the ground and covered by gravel or soil, etc. but the odour should be easily identified by the dogs.

One false call is permitted per search element, if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to source.

The clock may or may not stop when teams are moving between search areas and this will be at the judge's discretion.

Interior search

An Interior search may be any combination of rooms with a roof and doors that close and may include vehicles to be searched.

There will be an unknown number of areas with an unknown number of hides and an unknown overall search time.

There will be no walk-through of areas before the search starts.

Some of these areas may be blank but there will be a minimum of 1 hide across the search.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The handler must call 'clear' to move to the next search area or complete the search.

Once an area has been called 'clear' the team cannot return to the area and any finds made in that area after the call will not count.

Vehicles may be included in the search areas and teams may have to search the interior and the exterior of the vehicle excluding the engine bay. The doors may or may not be open so handlers will need to ask the judge if they need to open them.

The judge's brief at the entry point for each search area will be concise so as not to waste time, e.g., clear the space, search the vehicles, search the floor. Handlers may ask simple questions to clarify whilst searching.

The hides may be inaccessible due to height or containment and these must be out of reach of all dogs competing.

A handler may ask to convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Exterior search

An Exterior search may be any combination of outside areas and may include vehicles to be searched.

There will be an unknown number of areas with an unknown number of hides and an unknown overall search time.

There will be no walk-through of areas before the search starts.

Some areas may be blank but there will be a minimum of 1 hide across the search.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

The handler must call 'clear' to move to the next search area or complete the search.

Once an area has been called 'clear' a team cannot return to the area and any finds made in that area after the call will not count.

Vehicles may be included in the search areas and teams may have to search the interior and the exterior of the vehicle excluding the engine bay. The doors may or may not be open so teams will need to ask the judge if they need to open them.

The judge's brief at the entry point for each search area will be concise so as not to waste time, e.g., clear the space, search the vehicles, search the floor. Handlers may ask simple questions to clarify whilst searching.

The hides may be inaccessible due to height or containment and these must be out of reach of all dogs competing or in the ground covered by gravel, shingle, pebbles, or soil.

A handler may ask to convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Selection test

The Selection test will be 20 items laid out in any pattern that the judge chooses provided they can clearly see the dogs and handlers. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

Dogs must be worked on a line of no longer than 5m.

There will be an unknown number of hides in the items but a minimum of 1.

Some of the hides may be buried in soil, gravel, or shingle within the search items.

Distractions may be anything including inaccessible food items but no Kong.

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

Interior search

Definition of interior – any area/areas inside where doors can be closed. May include vehicles.

- Unknown number – minimum of 1 but no maximum
- Unseen search areas
- Maximum 15 minute search time
- Blank areas
- No return to previously cleared search areas
- Distractions – anything **except** Kong
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment or height (irrespective of the dog's height) or buried
- Vehicles may be included in the search area and may be accessible to search both interior and exterior excluding the engine bay
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area.

Exterior search

Definition of exterior – any outside area/areas/perimeters/open or closed vehicles.

- Unknown number – minimum of 1 but no maximum
- Unseen search areas
- Maximum 15 minute search time
- Blank areas
- No return to previously cleared areas
- Distractions – anything **except** Kong
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment or height (irrespective of the dog's height) or buried
- Vehicles may be included in the search area and may be accessible to search both interior and exterior excluding the engine bay
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area.

Selection test

Definition of items - tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 20 items
- Unknown number – minimum of 1 and no maximum
- May include buried hides.
- 3 minute search time
- Dogs to be worked on a line
- Distractions – anything **except** Kong
- 1 false call permissible
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched.

NOTE – The trials official and judge may require handlers to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

SPIRIT STAGE

To compete at Spirit stage, teams need to have membership of The NNA, have qualified at Elite stage, and have achieved their Spirit stage ORT.

Area Searches

There will be an unknown number of hides in each search area and Selection.

From Spirit stage, the search areas are no longer an Interior and an Exterior. A search area may be an inside space, an outside space, or a combination of the 2, and may contain vehicles. The inside and outside spaces may each be a single space or may comprise several separate zones.

There will be 2 Area searches, and each will have an unknown number of hides and an unknown overall search time.

The search areas will be unseen and may be a combination of smaller spaces or one large space. There will be no walk-through before the teams start to search.

Some zones may be blank but there will be a minimum of 1 hide across the search.

Handlers will not be advised of the total time they have to search but it will be a maximum of 15 minutes per search area.

Dogs may be worked on or off line for the Area searches although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed beforehand.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

No time call will be given.

Ground searches may form all or part of a search.

Vehicles may be included in the search areas and teams may have to search the interior and the exterior of the vehicle excluding the engine bay. The doors may or may not be open so teams will need to ask the judge if they need to open them.

The hides may be inaccessible due to height or containment or in the ground covered by gravel, shingle, pebbles, or soil and high hides must be inaccessible to the tallest dog in the trial.

One false call is permitted per search element, if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

False calls are no longer permitted at this stage for Selection Tests.

A handler must call a zone 'clear' to alert the judge to their readiness to move on.

Once a zone has been called 'clear' any find that may subsequently be made in that zone will not count.

If a dog is pulled into another zone and makes a find then this will count towards their overall total and provided the handler has not called the previous zone clear, they may continue in the previous zone.

The judge's brief at the entry point for each search zone will be concise – clear the space, search the vehicles, search the floor – to not waste time. Teams may ask simple questions to clarify whilst searching.

Distractions may be anything including inaccessible food items but no Kong.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to source.

The clock may or may not stop when teams are moving between search zones and spaces and this will be at the judge's discretion.

A handler may ask to convert to training at any point if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Selection test

The Selection test will be 20 items laid out in any pattern that the judge chooses provided they can clearly see the dogs and handlers. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

Dogs must be worked on a line of no longer than 5m.

There will be an unknown number of hides in the items but a minimum of 1.

Some of the hides may be buried in soil, gravel, or shingle within the search items.

Distractions may be anything including inaccessible food items but no Kong.

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

There are NO False calls permitted at this stage.

Areas 1 and 2

Search areas will not be defined as Interior or Exterior but may be a combination of both inside and outside spaces for 2 searches of a maximum of 15 minutes each.

- Unknown number – minimum 1 and no maximum
- Unseen search areas
- Blank zones
- No returning to previously cleared zones
- Distractions – anything **except** Kong
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment, height, or buried
- Vehicles may be included in the search area and include interior and exterior but excludes the engine bay
- Ground searches may form all or part of a search
- 1 false call permitted
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Selection test

Definition of items - tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 20 items
- Unknown number – minimum of 1 and no maximum
- May include buried hides
- Dogs to be worked on a line
- Distractions – anything **except** Kong
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched
- **No false calls permitted**

NOTE – Your trials official and judge may require you to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

SUPREME STAGE

To compete at Supreme stage, teams need to have membership of The NNA, have qualified at Spirit stage, and have achieved their Supreme stage ORT.

Area Searches

There will be an unknown number of hides in each search area and Selection.

At Supreme stage, a search area may be an inside space, an outside space, or a combination of the 2, and may contain vehicles. The inside and outside spaces may each be a single space, or may comprise several separate zones.

There will be 2 area searches and each will have an unknown number of hides and an unknown overall search time.

The search areas will be unseen and may be a combination of smaller spaces or one large space. There will be no walk-through before the teams start to search.

Some zones may be blank but there will be a minimum of 1 hide across the search.

One of the areas will be worked **double blind** with the judge making notes of where calls are made. Once all teams have completed the search, the judge that set the search will confirm the finds or false calls made by each team and advise each handler accordingly.

Ground searches may form all or part of a search.

Vehicles may be included in the search areas and teams may have to search the interior and the exterior of the vehicle excluding the engine bay. The doors may or may not be open so teams will need to ask the judge if they need to open them.

The hides may be inaccessible due to height or containment or in the ground covered by gravel, shingle, pebbles, or soil and high hides must be inaccessible to the tallest dog in the trial.

Hides may be placed with distractions.

Handlers will not be advised of the total time they have to search but it will be a maximum of 15 minutes per search area.

Dogs may be worked on or off line for the Area searches although some venues may require dogs to be on line during a search element and this will be discussed beforehand.

Handlers are not permitted to move anything within the search area without the judge's permission, although handlers may touch items to encourage the dogs to search.

No time call will be given.

One false call is permitted per search element, if a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search element and no scores will be awarded.

False calls are no longer permitted at this stage for Selection Tests.

The handler must call a zone 'clear' to move to alert the judge to their readiness to move on.

Once a zone has been called 'clear' any find that may subsequently be made in that zone will not count. If a dog is pulled into another zone and makes a find then this will count towards their overall total and provided the handler has not called the previous zone clear, they may continue in the previous zone.

The judge's brief at the entry point for each search zone will be concise – clear the space, search the vehicles, search the floor – to not waste time. Teams may ask simple questions to clarify whilst searching.

Distractions may be anything including inaccessible food items but no Kong.

If a handler is given a 'not quite' call from the judge when working to the hide it means that the dog isn't quite close enough to source.

The clock may or may not stop when teams are moving between search zones and spaces and this will be at the judge's discretion.

Handlers may ask to convert to training at any point (other than in the double blind search) if they feel that it would be more beneficial for them or even end the search early if they find it too stressful.

Selection test

The Selection test will be 20 items laid out in any pattern that the judge chooses provided they can clearly see the dogs and handlers. Selection test items should be spaced no less than 30cm apart.

Dogs must be worked on a line of no longer than 5m.
There will be an unknown number of hides in the items but a minimum of 1.

Some of the hides may be buried in soil, gravel, or shingle within the search items.

Distractions may be anything including inaccessible food items but no Kong.

The dog needs to give a clear and readable indication that the handler needs to alert the judge to during the search. The handler may not call a find after the search has ended.

Handlers are not permitted to task to each item or to stand still at each item.

Handlers must not task back by movement or body pressure but if a dog chooses to go back without any tasking by the handler and indicates, the handler may alert the judge.

The search ends once the dog has passed the last item.

There are NO False calls permitted at this stage.

Areas 1 and 2

Search areas will not be defined as Interior or Exterior but may be a combination of both inside and outside spaces for 2 searches of a maximum of 15 minutes each.

One of the areas will be worked **double blind** with the judge making note of where calls are made but finds or false calls will not be confirmed until the search is over.

- Unknown number – minimum 1 and no maximum
- Unseen area and seen area for double blind
- Blank zones
- No returning to previously cleared zones
- Distractions – anything **except** Kong
- Odours may be inaccessible due to containment, height, or buried and may be placed with distractions
- Vehicles may be included in the search area and include interior and exterior but excludes the engine bay
- Ground searches may form all or part of a search.
- 1 false call permitted
- Dogs may be rewarded in the search area

Selection Test – 3 minutes

Definition of items - tubs/boxes/shoes/plant pots/pipes/scent boxes/a combination of items.

- 20 items
- Unknown number – minimum of 1 and no maximum
- May contain buried hides
- Dogs to be worked on a line
- Distractions – anything **except** Kong
- Items may be laid out in any pattern provided it is clear to the judge which items have been searched
- **No false calls permitted**

NOTE – Your trials official and judge may require you to work some or all the searches on line. If an element is deemed on-line then this is compulsory. This may vary from venue to venue.

FOCUS TRIALS

Focus Trials may be offered by Trial Officials where a venue is particularly well suited to a specific search element. They provide teams with the opportunity to concentrate on that element and work towards achieving the relevant Element Badge without needing to enter or complete a full trial.

Focus trials will be offered for Foundation to Supreme stage and will include 2 searches for 1 element of 1 stage only. Focus trials will be standalone and the search set ups will reflect whether they are aimed at Foundation, Pre-Entry, Entry, Enhanced, Excellent, Elite, Spirit or Supreme stages.

Focus trials will not be offered for Selection tests.

Although a trials official may offer 2 separate Focus trials at a venue (interior and exterior for example) a competitor may only enter a single Focus trial (2 searches)on that day.

There will be no winner or reserve medals awarded at Focus trials, but Synergy Awards may be given.

A team may not enter a Focus trial for an element if they have already achieved their Element Skill Award for that element, other than as NFC with the permission of the trials official.

A team that achieves their Element Skill Award after the first search of a focus trial may complete the second search and all points accumulated at the trial will be included in the league tables.

The same rules apply to searches as they would in a full trial and should a competitor deliberately ignore the rules then the Judge may stop the search.

TITLE CHALLENGE

The National Nosework Association are proud to bring you the NNA Titles.

These prestigious challenges are specifically designed for teams that have advanced beyond the Excellent stage, offering an exciting opportunity to earn official recognition through post-nominal titles. Eligible teams will automatically receive an invitation upon completing all the required Skill Awards for their current stage.

Entry to the Title Challenges is via ballot, and interested teams must register their wish to participate as soon as dates are announced.

Each Title Challenge closely mirrors its respective stage but introduces unique variations in the search areas. Unlike standard trials up to Elite stage, these challenges might include 2 interiors, 2 exteriors, or a combination of both—decided on the day. Each challenge is thoughtfully crafted to rigorously test and highlight a team's expertise and proficiency at their current stage.

To earn the official Title Certificate, a unique Title number, inclusion on the prestigious Title Challenge board, and the right to use post-nominal letters, teams must successfully locate at least 90% of the hidden finds in 1 of the 2 search areas and achieve an overall team score of at least 90%.

Additionally, to maintain the highest standards of fairness and accuracy, Title Challenges will be judged by two specially appointed NNA judges.

Eligibility criteria:

- Teams must hold a current NNA membership.
- Teams must have successfully earned all Skill Awards required for the respective Title Challenge stage.

RULES

NNA trials are open to dogs of all breeds, individually registered with The NNA and who have achieved the ORT pass for the stage they are entering.

Foundation and Pre-Entry stages are not a requirement for access to Entry stage. If a team starts at Foundation then they must complete Pre-Entry before advancing to Entry.

Teams must work through the stages from Entry to Sovereign and must have passed the relevant ORT by the day of the trial.

There is no upper age limit provided the dog is fit enough to compete.

Handlers are welcome from 13 years of age although an adult must keep sight of a junior handler both during the searches and at the trial. The junior handler should be able to control the dog both on and off line without physical assistance from an adult. The accompanying adult should in no way interfere with the handler or the dog during the search. The accompanying adult is not allowed to compete at the same trial with the same dog or a different one.

Dogs need to be a minimum of 9 months of age to enter Foundation and Pre-Entry stage trials and 1 year and over to enter Entry stage trials.

If a new handler takes over working a dog, they may not move back to an entry point (Foundation or Entry) – they must work at the stage the dog has achieved.

Once a dog with any handler has achieved 3 passes at each element then the dog must move to the next stage regardless of which handler has achieved the passes.

Dogs should be fit and well when competing and show no signs of discomfort or pain. Dogs with bandages, stitches, or visible wounds are not eligible to compete. Dogs with physical challenges such as amputees or deaf/blind dogs are eligible to compete provided they show no signs of stress or undue discomfort.

Dogs are not allowed to wear belly bands whilst competing.

Harsh handling is not something The NNA will accept. Although we appreciate some dogs may pull and lunge excitedly at the start of a search, ongoing line corrections will mean the search is ended.

The use of pinch collars, electric/shock collars, prong collars, pet corrector sprays or any other punitive training aids is not permitted at any NNA trial or event. This prohibition applies to all persons and dogs present at the event, including competitors, Trials Officials, judges, volunteers and visitors, and applies throughout the entire event day, including breaks and periods when an individual is not actively competing or officiating.

The prohibition applies throughout the trial venue and associated areas, including search areas, waiting areas and car parks. Personal training carried out at the venue during breaks remains subject to this rule.

Competitors are not permitted to place hides anywhere other than on their own vehicles at any venue. If found doing so the trials official reserves the right to ask the competitor to leave and/or refuse entry at future trials hosted by them.

Bitches in season are not eligible for competition. As a rule this 21 days from the start of the season.

Filming of searches is at the discretion of both the judge and the venue. Competitors wishing to film their search must ask permission from the judge, and permission may be refused or conditions placed on filming where required.

Where permission is given, recordings should be for the competitor's own personal and training use and should not be shared in their entirety on social media. Judges may request that they are not included in the recording.

Recordings containing a judge's feedback should not be shared publicly.

Permission to film does not give permission to film other competitors, their searches, or other people attending the trial, including in parking and waiting areas.

When the team arrive at the search area, they may take a moment to settle their dogs or themselves before starting the search but may be prompted by the judge if this is felt to be excessive.

The scribe (or judge if there is no scribe) will tell the handler when their time starts and when it finishes. Handlers are permitted to ask for a time call whilst searching up to and including Excellent stage but no alerts will be given.

Handlers may time their own searches but the decision of the judge or scribe on when the time starts and finishes is final.

Handlers may carry their dog's rewards with them and deliver these in the search area, but care must be taken not to contaminate the area with food or disrupt it with toys used as rewards. Doing so will result in faults where the contamination is the fault of the handler.

If an element is determined as 'on-line' by the trials official and judge at a trial then **all** teams **must** work on a line of no more than 5m or forfeit that element.

The venues will be many and varied so instructions will be given at each trial for any restrictions on access, specific toileting areas for the dogs, smoking restrictions, etc.

Handlers must clean up after their dogs at all venues and at some venues may even need to take the waste home with them for disposal.

When not searching dogs must be kept on line at all times. Some venues may have off-line areas, others may not. Please respect the venue and the host's hard work in securing it.

Competitors should expect to crate or keep their dogs in a safe space in their vehicle with proper ventilation between searches. Dogs should otherwise not be left unattended.

It is the handler's responsibility to ensure the safety of their dog whilst competing and waiting.

Only a judge from The NNA list is eligible to judge a trial.

The judge is responsible for designing the search areas to reflect the skill level of the stage. The judge should design a search that is challenging for the competitors but not unachievable.

More than 1 judge may be at a trial although the judges are not permitted to move between assigned elements throughout the day.

If a judge is changed for a trial, then the trials official should where possible notify The NNA and competitors of the change in advance of the trial.

A trials official may choose whether to offer a full trial or a Focus trial, but the type of trial (and the element for a Focus trial) must be clearly stated on the listing, entry forms, and any other advertising.

Trials officials should consider providing water stations for the dogs in each search area where appropriate. The handler may break at any time for their dog to take water but the clock will not stop.

Confirmation of the alert is the judge's responsibility and acknowledgement should be given as 'correct', 'not quite', or 'false call' (other than for the double blind search at Supreme stage, when the judge will simply acknowledge and record the alert).

The judge may ask a handler where they are making the call. The handler should point to or describe exactly where they are calling but may not touch the area or re-task the dog to indicate.

The judge's decision is final as to whether the call is correct.

A call that is just too far off from the hide and deemed by the judge to be 'not quite' will result in marks being deducted from the team confidence score but teams should continue to try and work to an acceptable closeness depending on the stage at which they are competing.

One false call is permitted at each element of each stage from Foundation to Elite. If a second false call is made in the same search element that is the end of that search and no points will be awarded for that element for finds or judge's scores.

It is the judge's responsibility to assess faults for handling, although the trials official may make a call for a dropped reward or contamination of the search area.

A judge may allow a team to repeat all or part of a search area if, in the judge's opinion, the team have encountered an extraordinary situation that was beyond the handler's control.

Search areas may be any shape, but the size will be determined by the stage being held.

Outdoor search areas should be clearly marked with cones, marker flags, plastic temporary fencing, or tape.

Dogs may cross the search area boundaries provided the dog is still searching.

Up to Excellent stage, active search areas (where the hides have been laid out) must be separate so as not to cause confusion to the dog working in a nearby area. Separation must be a minimum distance of 10m, physical and/or visual barriers such as temporary fencing or tape.

Search areas will not be in view of the parking/waiting areas for competitors.

Hides may never be placed on boundary markers or temporary fencing; however, boundary walls or permanent fencing may be included in a search.

The hide should be in the same place for each competitor at a trial and should be in situ for 10 minutes (surface hides) or 20 minutes (deep hides) before the search commences.

Should a hide need to be relocated within a search area during a trial it should be moved to a location of similar challenge and left for the required time before the searches recommence.
Dogs must enter and exit the search area on line regardless of whether it is an off-line search.

For each search area there will be a start marker/line that the team must both cross. The timer will begin when the dog's nose crosses the line.

The handler will need to declare the defined area that they are searching 'clear' at all stages and this will signify to the judge/scribe/trials official to stop the timer.

It is the handler's responsibility to keep a mental note of the finds they have made in a search area. The judge is not required to confirm the number of hides found.

Should the handler decide to end a search early as their dog is not working for whatever reason then points will be awarded for the finds made and the judge's scores will still be included. The time will be shown as the time the search is stopped.

Dogs will not be permitted to go to missed finds once the clock has stopped and the search ended.

The NNA accepts entries NFC but it is the decision of the trials official as to when these are offered. Membership is not required for NFC competitors, but no scores will be given. Entrants must alert the trials official when they enter that they wish to run NFC.

A team may convert to a training run during a search or before a search begins by alerting the judge of their decision. No points will be awarded for finds or judge's scores.

If the team decides before their search that they wish to convert to training, they should have a brief discussion with the judge of what they want the outcome of the search to be.

If a team converts to training during a search, the judge will step in and assist. No additional time will be allowed before or after the search has finished and no points will be accrued.

If a judge feels that a dog is not searching, and it would be more beneficial to convert to training during a search then this will be offered.

If a judge feels that a dog is unduly stressed and continuing to search is detrimental then the judge has the right to stop the search.

The Selection test should be conducted on a line no longer than 5m and the handler should be able to competently manage their dog and their line during the search. The line should be fed in and out smoothly and at no time should the line be allowed to trail on the floor or interfere with the placement of the target items.

The dog may be rewarded at the find once the judge has confirmed that it is correct.

For a Selection test, the handlers should move forward at a steady pace and the handlers are not permitted to back track if the dog has, in their opinion, missed a target item. The dog may move back if they have winded the odour provided they are not being influenced by the handler in any way and they have not passed the last item in the Selection test.

During a Selection test, handlers should not verbally or by the use of hand signals task the dog to every item. Handlers are permitted to re-task provided the dog is actively searching in a systematic way.

ODOUR PREPARATION

For all stages with the exception of Foundation and Pre-Entry the target odour will be Napier Gun Oil and this should be prepared either 1 drop per carrier item and left to soak or 1 drop in a shell to be used during that search.

Foundation and Pre-Entry tests may be conducted on Kong, clove, or gun oil. Kong should be approximately 1cm x 1cm. Clove soaks should be prepared with 10-12 whole dried cloves in a glass jar filled two-thirds full of carrier items and left for 24 hours before use.

Carrier items may be any item no smaller than the end of an ear bud and no larger than a cotton wool ball or 3cm x 3cm piece of absorbent cloth. Carrier items may be items such as wooden pegs, foam/felt pieces, cigarette filter tips, cotton swabs, 5cm length of string or wool, etc. This list is not exhaustive and provided the item is absorbent and within the size limits anything is acceptable.

For inaccessible hides, it may be appropriate to use more than 1 scented carrier item to ensure that the find is achievable for the dog.

Blanks and empty shells should be kept entirely separate from the soaks and gun oil carriers and should be handled with clean hands and laid out in the search area before making any contact with the target odours to avoid cross-contamination.

For Kong teams, distractions may be nitrile gloves, pieces of plastic storage containers, or pieces of plastic dog toys that contain human scent, etc.

DISTRACTION ODOURS

Most venues already have lots of environmental distractions but adding something out of the ordinary adds another challenge. Added distractions may be varied but should pose no risk to the dogs.

Distractions need to be stage appropriate as per the stage descriptions.

Some examples are:

- Empty food wrappers
- Nitrile gloves
- Washing powder
- Soap
- Tea or coffee
- Dog bedding
- Dog fur from a grooming brush
- Food distractions (must be inaccessible to all dogs)
- Dog toys – no Kong at any stage
- Tennis balls cannot be used as an added distraction until Excellent stage and must be inaccessible for the dogs. (Added tennis balls will have familiar human odour and dog odour on them)

Note that some venues may have tennis balls laying around and bits of food that are trapped and not visible to the trials official. These are not considered added distractions.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Area coverage – Score awarded by a judge when observing a team work a trial element

Ageing – The amount of time between placing a hide and when dogs begin searching

Alert – The response handlers offer in reaction to their dog's indication. The handler may use a verbal alert and/or may raise their arm while their dog is indicating at source to let the judge know the dog has found the location

Blank area – An area that contain no hides

Blank – A carrier item such as a piece of sock with no target odour

Blind – A type of search where the handler doesn't know the location of the target odour, since it was hidden by somebody else

Buried hide – Odour covered by shingle, grass, or some other organic material

Carrier - The material that the odour is on, e.g., sock, cotton bud, velcro, wood etc.

Clear – When a handler determines that their dog has finished searching an area they must call 'clear' to communicate that to the judge and stop the timer's clock

Competitor – A person taking part in an NNA trial stage

Convert to training – A team may convert to training within any search (other than a double blind search at Supreme stage) if they feel they would benefit from guidance and will forfeit any scores for the element

Correct – The term used by the judge to confirm that a dog has correctly located the hide when an alert is called by a handler when their dog has indicated

Correction – Punishing a dog, e.g., using excessive line corrections or jerks, or shouting, which may be faulted by the judge as unsporting behaviour or dismissed if the treatment of the dog is overly harsh

Damaging indication – Biting, digging, or pushing a target item without a final indication

Deductions – The points taken from the competitors' scores for faults such as dropping food, or the dog urinating or defecating in the area

Deep hide – No part of the hide is accessible to the dog

Distraction – An intentionally placed item within a search area. Permitted distractions are specified for each stage, but must never be Kong or clove.

Double blind search – NNA Definition The competitor will call their finds to the judge but the judge will not confirm whether it is correct until the end of the search.

Elements – The types of searches included within a trial, e.g., Area, Interior, Exterior, Vehicle, or Selection

Enhanced – The 4th stage of NNA trials

Entry – The 3rd stage of NNA trials

Elite – The 6th stage of NNA trials

Excellent – The 5th stage of NNA trials

Exterior – A trial element which is an outside area

False call – The handler calls an alert when there is no odour present, but the dog has indicated, or when the room has odour present, but the dog indicates in the wrong location

Faults – Actions by the handler or dog that result in a points deduction, e.g., the handler dropping the reward in the area, or the dog urinating or defecating in the area

Focus trials – A specific trial element judged by an NNA judge comprising 2 searches for a single element at a single stage for which scores and badges are given. Offered for Interior and Exterior at stages from Foundation to Excellent stages and Vehicles at Pre-Entry and Entry stages. Badges, league points, and Synergy Awards may be gained but no winner or reserve medals

Foundation – The 1st stage of NNA trials

Full stretch – Where the dog is standing on its hind legs and front feet and neck are extended

Fringe – The dog indicates when it is close to the target odour, but not at source

Handler – The person working the dog in a search

Hide – The target odour on a carrier (soak) or gun oil drop directly in a shell

High hide - A hide that is placed out of reach of the stretch of the tallest dog

Inaccessible – A hide that the dog cannot get to the source due to containment, depth, or reach

Indication – (i) A clear and readable final response at odour or (ii) A score judges award to teams during a trial search element when the dog makes a find, and the handler calls the alert

Interior – Trial element which should have a roof, 3 solid walls, and a door that closes

Judge – The person responsible for setting and scoring the hides in a search

Junior handler – A participant aged 13 - 18 years who participates in NNA trials

Kong – Red Kong or Frisbee

League tables – Points gained by competing teams

Locked up hide - A hide contained within a closed cupboard, drawer, box or similar, or behind a closed door or item where the source is not at the surface

Not for competition (NFC) – A team entered in a trial stage who is either not eligible for the stage or chooses not to participate competitively. NNA membership is not required

Not quite – The term used by the judge to indicate that the team has not quite worked to source

Nose height – The nose height of a dog with all 4 paws on the ground

NNA – Abbreviation of The National Nosework Association

On-line search – A search during which the dog must be worked on a line of no more than 5m

Odour recognition test (ORT) – A line up test which must be passed for a team to compete in The NNA trials

Reach of the dog - The dog can access the hide with all 4 paws on the floor

Scribe – An assistant to the judge who keeps records for the judge at trials

Selection test – An element of all trial stages where the teams search items in a linear layout

Shell – A receptacle that a soak can be put in and hidden within a search area

Skill Awards – Available to teams who apply when their dog has achieved 3 element badges in the same element at a trial stage

Soak - Another term for carrier

Source – The precise location of highest concentration of target odour. For example, if the dog is searching a vehicle where odour is hidden behind the number plate, the source is the exact position on the number plate where it is located, within 2-6 inches, e.g., behind the letter X

Spirit - The 7th stage of NNA trials

Stage – This refers to the different trial challenges – Foundation, Pre-Entry, Entry, Enhanced, Excellent, Elite, Spirit, and Supreme

Stretch of the dog – The distance a dog can reach with its nose with its 2 front paws off the floor

Supreme - The 8th stage of NNA trials

Surface hide – A part of the scented article is accessible to the dog

Synergy Award – Available at all trial stages and at focus trials. Awarded to teams who have shown exceptional connection

Target odour – NNA target odours are Kong, clove, and Napier Gun Oil at Foundation and Pre-Entry, and Napier Gun Oil only for the following stages and are the specific odours the dog is trained to recognise and indicate on

Team confidence – Score awarded by judges for a team's connection during a search element

Titles – Awarded to teams who have won Title Challenges at advanced stages

Title Challenge – Ballot entry trial for invited teams who have gained all their skill awards from Excellent stage upwards

Trained final response – When a scent dog shows that it has found target odour with a consistent behaviour such as sitting, lying down, freezing like a statue, barking, etc.

Trials official - Recognised representative of The NNA responsible for hosting trials under The NNA rules and guidelines

Vehicles – In relation to NNA trials these may be anything suitable and safe with wheels that the dogs can search

White dog – An experienced dog used to check a trial area before competitions begin to ensure there is odour where there should be