



National Association for Search & Rescue

BEING A SEARCH DOG HANDLER

Find a team:

Most volunteers join an existing group, who will evaluate the dog and handler, and then help the handler and dog with their search and rescue training. If you are interested in finding a team in the area, we recommend you contact a K9 Evaluator in your state or region to ask about local resources. You can find the listing of the NASAR K9 Evaluators at: <http://www.nasar.org/nasar/instructors.php> This website allows a user to search by state. You can do generic internet searches for your state name and search dog.

Many teams have internet sites which allow you to contact them for more information, as well as give you an overview of what their team requirements may be. You can also try contacting local law enforcement, fire departments or rescue squads to find out if there are local units in your area.

Keep in mind that working a search and rescue dog is a large commitment. Training usually takes 1.5 to 2 years, and must continue for the entire operational life of the dog.

NASAR Certification(s):

NASAR offers a variety of certifications for both search and rescue personnel and search and rescue dog handlers. An example of ground searcher certifications include NASAR's SARTECH (I, II, and III) program. NASAR also offers certifications for dog handlers in its K9 SARTECH program. These certifications meet or exceed the National Incident Management System (NIMS) typing guidelines. Certifications are available in the following disciplines:

- ◆ Area Search
- ◆ Trailing
- ◆ Land Cadaver/Human Remains Detection
- ◆ Water Cadaver/Human Remains Detection
- ◆ Avalanche
- ◆ First Responder Disaster
- ◆ First Responder Disaster Cadaver/Human Remains Detection

The NASAR site has a list of currently scheduled evaluations.

For more information on K9 certifications, finding a K9 partner or training opportunities, please contact the K9 Section Chair at sardogs@nasar.org

What do you need to be a search dog handler?

- ◆ The right K9 partner
- ◆ Time
- ◆ Willingness to learn
- ◆ Understanding family
- ◆ Reliable transportation
- ◆ Physical stamina
- ◆ Mental toughness

Most importantly, dedication to the lost or missing person for whom you will search.

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<http://www.nasar.org>

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...so that others may live

