

Thinking about becoming a SAR K9 handler?

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 the following website: www.sarcontacts.org. 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 – 2 years, and must continue for the entire operational life of the dog.

NASAR Training:

NASAR offers a variety of training for search and rescue personnel. Most of the training is personnel related, such as Introduction to Search and Rescue, Fundamentals of Search and Rescue and Managing the Lost Person Incident. These courses will help a handler understand and work within a search scene, and will help with other skills necessary to a handler, such as navigation and planning.

NASAR does not currently offer training courses specifically for training a search and rescue canine. NASAR does offer personnel and canine sessions as part of its yearly conference. Information on the upcoming conference can be found elsewhere on this site.

NASAR Certification(s):

NASAR offers a variety of certifications for both search and rescue personnel and search and rescue dog handlers. An example of personnel certifications include NASAR’s SARTECH (I, II, and III) program. NASAR also offers certifications for dog handlers in its K9 SARTECH (II, III) program, it’s K9 HRD (land, water) program, its K9 DISASTER program and it’s soon to be implemented K9 AVALANCHE program. The NASAR site has a list of currently scheduled evaluations. For more information on K9 certifications, please contact the Eastern or Western Field Projects Coordinators.

Additional websites for information:

www.sarbc.org
www.csar.org
www.nocds.org
www.fema.gov

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