



## Search & Rescue Dog Association of Alberta

SARDA was founded in 1989 and the membership is very proud of the fact that we were the first officially documented SAR dog group in Alberta, that we were instrumental in developing the SAR dog standards for the province along with others, and that we have been successfully training and deploying dog/handler teams throughout our 30-year history.

We are registered with the Alberta Companies Branch (1989) and we are a registered charity with Revenue Canada (1991). We engage in various forms of fund raising to support our training and for expenses relating to our participating in searches.

We typically work for Edmonton Police Service and also for the RCMP, and municipal fire departments. During our history we have participated in over 250 searches. Our teams are trained to locate missing persons and/or evidence, and we have added capability in human remains detection, both on land and in water. We are also active in training dogs for disaster work.

Our teams progress in training under our training director's instruction. We provide all the instruction needed regarding search work; obedience and agility training are done on your own and we do provide guidance. Periodically we have guest trainers come in for added education. We train each Sunday morning, all year and in various locations, usually in the Edmonton area. We do occasionally meet outside the city.

We evaluate all dogs that are new to our program and we are looking for basic aptitude; this is nothing you can train the dog for. For instance, your dog must possess a very high 'toy drive' which means he/she is totally crazy about their toy.

We request a \$100 donation for the evaluation and will provide a tax receipt. If your dog passes our evaluation and you wish to join our organization, \$50 will go toward your first year's membership fee.

Once a member, you will have a limited time to progress which we consider to be more than adequate to complete your training. We have two evaluation levels a team must successfully move through in order to gain Active team membership. Depending on the age of your dog when you join us (we do not accept dogs older than one year), you will be expected to complete obedience and agility training plus article search training with your dog within six months. If you start with a baby puppy, you will have one year to complete your first level evaluation.

There are also many mandatory basic courses the handler must complete in the areas of - first aid, SAR Basics, map and compass, scent/search theory and so on. Most of these courses are held in house by our own instructors.

All new members must also be trained as a Field Tech. Field Techs are support personnel who back up our dog teams in the field. Upon recommendation by the Training Director, some Field Techs may also become our boat operators for our water search dogs. The Field Tech training and certification are mandatory and must be completed within 14 months of joining.

Once on our Active Team, the expectation is that you will attend all searches that you possibly can, and that you will maintain your training week to week with us.

SAR Dog training is extremely time consuming and we do not hesitate to tell people that is a major commitment and that it will require a tremendous amount of time with your dog and away from your family. Once on the Active Team, you may need to leave work on short notice and you may need to miss family occasions due to searches. SAR Dog work is not for everyone.

### **Candidate Application Check list**

**All boxes must be checked off in order to be considered for SARDAA membership.**

**All candidates must:**

- be a minimum of 21 years of age
- be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant
- be in good physical condition.
- commit to volunteer his/her time in aid of the Lost Person
- have an appreciation of the outdoors
- have necessary all-season clothing and gear for the outdoors
- have a vehicle
- commit to the weekly team training
- commit to the training as a Field Tech inclusive of becoming proficient with search strategies and use of equipment
- commit to an interview process with SARDAA Preceptor
- commit to donating time towards fundraising, public relations and/or team administrative tasks
- commit to undergoing a six-month probationary term review by a senior SARDAA Member
- commit to being an active participant and team player
- commit to following instructions from the SARDAA Training Director or Trainer designates as well as the SARDAA leadership team.

**Dog handler candidates must also:**

- commit to allowing their dog to be evaluated for aptitude by the SARDAA Training Director or designate
- commit to the daily schedule of training dogs.

SARDAA team members work for the potential survivor; ego and personal objectives have no place in search and rescue generally, nor in our organization specifically.

## Potential Dog Candidate

The dog that is selected for SAR work must have an excellent temperament, and have a strong desire to perform this type of training. The stresses of SAR work demand dogs have a stable temperament and strong drives.

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The canine candidate:

- must be less than one year of age
- must have all required health vaccinations or titer certificates
- must have good physical structure
- must be within the range of size from 45 cm to 69 cm in height and between 22 and 41 kg in weight
- must successfully pass the pre-evaluation test with a promising grade
  - must show no aggression or fear towards people
  - must be sociable acceptable of other dogs
  - must be able to play in strange environments with strange people and dogs
  - must be engaged in toy play or tug with strangers
  - must be able to hunt for their toy reward
- must come from the working, herding and sporting groups. Mixed breeds are also known to work well
- must not be a female currently used or is going to be used for breeding
- must be spayed or neutered by 30 months of age
- must not have done Schutzhund/IGP/IPO/French Ring Sport-style bite work, or general protection work.

The SARDAA Training Director will make the final determination as to the dog's potential. The pre-evaluation assesses the dog's level of sociability and its drives. The objective is to screen applicants with the view of accepting only those dogs that exhibit the aptitudes expected and are well suited to the work. Prior training for the evaluation is not necessary.