



International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation

Guideline IRO Team Competition

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1. Introduction to the Team Competition

1.1. Application

The application to hold an IRO Team Competition is to be forwarded to the Spokesperson for Training and Judges, via the IRO Office. The deadline for submission is the 30th June in the year prior to the year of execution.

It has to be noted that for each country only one IRO Team Competition per year will be assigned and therefore the IRO member organisations of the respective country shall discuss beforehand which organisation shall apply.

A Team Competition will only be rated as an IRO event if a minimum of ten teams - each consisting of three dog handlers and three dogs - from at least four IRO member organisations participate.

In order to hold an IRO Team Competition, there must be a minimum of ten teams fulfilling the requirements for participation. Should the number of ten participating teams not be reached by the application deadline, the IRO Team Competition will be cancelled as an IRO event for the distribution of sponsor money and the IRO bears no costs for it.

1.2. General Information

It is particularly intended to promote cohesion between the team members based on mission like scenarios in various scent disciplines. Knowledge of the performance capability of the team members, the corresponding ideal use and smooth cooperation based on trust should be an important element of the competition. The attempt therefore was to keep the rules as flexible as possible, in order to allow a broad scope for independent initiative and decisions in solving the individual tasks.

The IRO Team Competition is based on the work of a search dog team at an international USAR mission with the goal to find as many survivors as possible at different work sites of various sizes and difficulty levels.

The IRO Team Competition will be executed on a scenario basis, including but not limited to searches, human and veterinary first aid, a roping exercise, INSARAG Methodology and a night march.

The task of the teams is to guide and direct the search dogs in order to solve the presented tactical situation by performing individual tasks that are required of a rescue dog without thus determining mission readiness. The search dog handlers must demonstrate team work with the search dog. He has to read him, motivate him and support him carefully. The team has to demonstrate, that it can act in a tactically correct fashion in, on or at the work site. If a dangerous situation was to prohibit the dog handler to enter the work site, it is the responsibility of the dog handler to recognize the situation and adjust his tactical plan.

The IRO Team Competition has to be carried out in at least two different disciplines of scent work (e.g. tracking, area, rubble search) and can include additional subjects. A maximum of five searches should be carried out – area and rubble search should be prioritised to tracking search. One search may be carried out during the hours of darkness. The number of hidden persons should always be between ten and fourteen. A maximum of three additional subjects should be tested within the Team Competition.

Each team (consisting of three dog handlers and three dogs) has to work at all work sites. The decision how many dogs/dog handlers are used at each work site can be decided by the team. Dogs in heat are not allowed to participate at the IRO Team Competition.

2. Administration

The administration consists of:

- Classifiers
- Competition Manager

2.1. Nomination

The initial inquiry to the classifiers is conducted by the IRO Office. The organising NRO will be informed after confirmation from the classifiers and after that the NRO is responsible for all further contact in a timely manner. (e.g. information about accommodation, program and timetable, sketch/map of search area).

The assignment of classifiers for the individual disciplines is done by the Spokesperson for Training and Judges. The organising NRO will be informed thereof by the IRO Office.

For each Team Competition a maximum of five classifiers will be assigned, who will be chosen out of the pool of MRT Classifiers and IRO Judges. An increase of this amount of classifiers is not possible and it is also not possible to increase the amount with NRO own or external classifiers. One of these five classifiers will be appointed as Senior Classifier by the Training Department, who will sign the final result list together with the Competition Manager and will also be co-responsible for any administrative/organisational tasks on site that may arise.

2.2. Expense Reports

Expense reports for the classifiers are available from the IRO Office. They are to be requested and will have to be sent back to the IRO Office including all needed data.

2.3. Travelling Costs

The least expensive but reasonable way has to be chosen for travelling. The IRO Office supports and advises the classifier in his travel planning. The IRO covers the following costs: the travel costs in accordance with the vouchers (train, flight) or compensation of € 0.50 for each kilometre, as well as daily fees of € 100,- per day and the costs for accommodation including breakfast. The organising NRO books a room with en suite bathroom in an average price- and comfort category. As far as possible, the costs for room and breakfast should be taken over by the classifier on-site and claim these costs with the expense report to the IRO Office.

2.4. Local Transportation

The organiser is responsible for transportation of the classifiers during the event.

2.5. Report of Classifiers

The assigned classifiers have to write a report and send it back to the IRO Office immediately after the event. The report form will be provided by the IRO Office.

3. Planning and Execution

3.1. Invitation

The invitation must be sent to the IRO Office at least two months prior to the event. After being cleared by the IRO Office, the invitation can be sent to all IRO Member Organisations and in copy to the IRO Office at the same time.

The current members list can be requested from the IRO Office at any time.

The invitation must include the place and date of the event, the possible disciplines and additional subjects, a contact and registration address, the registration deadline and the registration fee.

The amount of the registration fee is set by the organiser - but it is stated not to exceed € 50 per team (excl. provisions and accommodation).

3.2. Requirements for participants

The dog handler has to own a valid passport and has to be vaccinated in accordance with the entry requirements of the organising country. Search work requires a certain level of physical ability in order to accomplish the assigned tasks in challenging terrain, for both the search dog and the dog handler.

Suitable PE (Personal Equipment) and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment, helmet, mission jacket, mission pants, safety boots, gloves, lighting) are required.

3.3. Registration Deadline

The registration deadline is to be set four weeks prior to the event. Late entries will only be accepted if they can be placed without any difficulty and no change in the roster of classifiers is required. They are to be discussed with the Training Department.

Within five days after the registration deadline, the amount and names of the teams - including the names of the handlers and dogs - is to be sent to the IRO Office.

3.4. Eligibility and Registration of Participants

The acceptance of the teams is done by allocation rounds. The order of teams is done according to the registration entry. In the first round, each organisation will be given a place, if possible. When places are still available, these will be given to organisations according to ranking of the registration entry.

Teams from IRO-NRO's, who are counted towards the disbursement for sponsor money, have priority over other teams regarding approval to participate at the event.

Dogs on which a participation ban has been imposed by the IRO Executive Board at the request of the IRO Spokesperson for Training and Judges, may not participate in any IRO Team Competition for the duration of the ban. The list of these dogs is to be obtained by the event organiser from the IRO Office at the registration deadline.

3.5. Confirmation of Participation

A confirmation of participation is to be sent to the teams or their respective NRO's within three days after the registration deadline and should include travel routes.

3.6. Participants at the Base of Operations (BoO)

Accommodation can be organised as a Base of Operation (BoO). If a BoO is organised respectively utilised by the participants the following has to be considered:

A BoO Manager is in charge of all BoO related tasks and duties. His orders have to be followed. The provision and BoO accommodation remains the sole responsibility of each participant. Each participant will be assigned a site where to set up camp by the BoO Manager. Motor aggregates, such as generators, brought by individual participants shall be set up at a sufficient distance from the next tent (noise abatement).

3.7. Schedule

The duration of an IRO Team Competition must not exceed two days. The end of the event on the last day has to be scheduled for 4 p.m. at the latest. The dates listed in the invitation are to be adhered to; an extension or reduction thereof is only possible when important and adequate reasons are explained and after permission by the Training Department. It has to be taken into regard that the classifiers shall not work more than 9 hours per day.

The organising NRO is responsible for establishing the schedule. The schedule has to be sent to the IRO Office until five days after the registration deadline at the latest.

3.8. Score Sheets

The classifiers will be provided IRO Score Sheets and the Senior Classifier a final result list by the IRO Office.

3.9. Organisation of the Competition

The Competition Manager is responsible for the organisational part of the Team Competition. He settles and monitors all necessary tasks during the preparation and the execution of the event. He is available at any time for the classifiers during the competition.

The NRO is responsible to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and adequate work sites are available. It is responsible for providing transportation and all meals, at and away from the work sites for members of the test administration. A sufficient number of hiding persons has to be provided.

During the search, distractions should occur in at least two locations. The following distractions may be used:

- Noise: I.E. industrial noises, chainsaw, air hammer, aggregate, generator or similar. Recordings of such noises can also be used.
- Food, clothes, various types of garbage: These items shall not be reachable by the dog. However, they should be placed in such a way as to allow the Classifiers to clearly determine whether the dog is indicating the objects or a victim.
- For rubble search persons lingering in the search area alone or in groups. The Senior Classifier, with the Competition Manager, shall decide prior to the beginning of the Team Competition, if the lingering persons must vacate the rubble, should they be told to do so by the dog handler.

The team may ask questions (in English or German) to the Classifier before deciding on a strategic mission plan. Those who do not speak either of these languages will be permitted to bring a translator.

The dog handler must share his plan with the Classifiers and then execute the mission plan. The time needed to solve the tactical situation is part of the search time.

3.10. Veterinary Emergencies

The organising NRO must announce a veterinary clinic on site, available for veterinary emergencies occurring during the IRO Team Competition. The IRO shall be responsible for the costs of dogs hospitalised to the stipulated clinic by the veterinarian on duty. In all other cases costs for veterinary care remains the responsibility of the dog handler.

Where a dog requires hospitalisation, the Senior Classifier must be notified as soon as possible.

A detailed accident report from the search dog handler and the Classifier of the work site must be duly completed and has to be sent to the IRO office. Details such as the location where the accident took place, the time, first aid treatment received shall be included.

4. Evaluation

4.1. General Information

Each team at each work site will be assessed by one classifier.

For each search work a maximum of 30 minutes will be available - this includes time for briefing and de-briefing. The respective tactical specifications for each work site have to be determined and prepared in form of written scenario descriptions by the organiser and have to be implemented for all teams by the classifier.

In order for a team to complete the IRO Team Competition successfully, 70 % of the possible total points have to be gained and 70 % of the hiding persons have to be found. The result decision shall be final.

4.2. Evaluation - Work Site

General Evaluation (Team evaluation)

- Tactical approach
- Observation and Safe Operating Procedures, Search Drive/Search Work, Team's Mobility and Fitness, Dog's Directability and Independence at each worksite

Each team can be awarded a maximum of 100 points for the behaviour of the group (tactics, work-sharing, leading, communication, safety / security aspects, alerts, discipline and general behaviour) at each worksite.

4.3. Evaluation - Hiding Persons

- The outlet of scent of a living person has to be alerted in a convincing way through stalling, and/or appropriate digging/pawing and focused barking.
- The search dog has to alert the outlet of human scent at the surface independently, flawlessly, spontaneously and without interference of the search dog handler.

- The way of alerting (barking) has to be clearly identified.
- The alerting behaviour must not be induced by the search dog handler.
- The search dog has to alert every hiding person using repeated barking, as well as focused stalling and / or appropriate scratching the rubble (digging/pawing).
- The search dog handler has to recognize the alert of the search dog and must signalize it to the evaluation team by hand signal. Every alert has to be reported by the dog handler.
- After the alert signal through the search dog handler, the search dog must stall at the alert area and must not (not even occasionally) run off.
- A lot of attention has to be given to the team work of the alerting behaviour between the search dog handler and the search dog.
- It is not a mistake for the search dog handler to allow his dog to work the area, after the dog begins to alert (barking), until he shows a definite digging behaviour or focused barking and then acknowledges the alert by a clear hand signal.
- The search dog handler has to behave correctly, where necessary support the search dog after the alerting – however, without motivating the actual alert behaviour – and read the alert of the search dog based on his behaviour.
- As soon as the search dog handler has signalled the alert to the Classifiers, he may commend and encourage the search dog, as well as strengthen the triggered alert.
- The search dog handler may reward the search dog at the alert site. However, it is the responsibility of the search dog handler to ensure that no food from the reward remains at the alert site.
- After the alert, the search dog handler must call the buried victim in a fashion such as: “Search and Rescue – can you hear me?” in order to motivate the victim to answer.
- All relevant information concerning the find must be reported to the rescue teams/Classifiers.

For each hiding person found, a maximum of 100 points is awarded. A person can only be counted once per team. The search time, if within the given limits, is not evaluated.

For each false alert 30 points are deducted.

4.4. Evaluation - Optional Additional Subjects

For each additional subject a maximum of 100 points can be awarded.

The subjects First Aid Dog, First Aid Human and INSARAG Methodology will be tested by experts theoretically and practically. The participants may use the INSARAG Guidelines.

The roping exercise (passive descent) must be as realistic as possible, and include a subsequent search of no more than five minutes. The use of a crane, a turntable ladder or similar is only allowed when all necessary safety aspects are fulfilled. For carrying out this roping exercise, experts from the Mountain Rescue, High Angle Rescue, Fire Service or similar have to be on site. Suitable rope harnesses for the dog handler and the dog has to be brought by the participant and can alternatively be provided by the organiser. Before the start of the roping exercise the equipment shall be checked by a specialised expert in regard to security-relevant criteria. For the roping exercise, if completed by the whole team, a maximum of 100 points can be awarded. Roping equipment of the dog handler and dog and rope technique are assessed as well. For each dog handler who does not do the roping, 33 points are deducted.

The teams’ physical conditions can be tested in a 10 km march held before a search or between searches. The march may also occur at night.

4.5. Tactical approach

The search dog handler must be able to assess the site through the gathering of all relevant information. The search tactic of the search dog handler for the structured and well-regulated search mission has to be a result from the tactical situation.

The search dog handler has to establish a system work and search structure using the tactical situation. He has to determine the course of motions of the search dog in, atop or at a search object.

The system work requires adequate orientation behaviour of the search dog handler at the assigned work site.

The search dog handler has to sum up the mechanisms of his own assessment at the orientation behaviour:

1. Assessment: What is the situation?
2. Priorities: Where do I have to start?
3. Tactics: How do I proceed?
4. Safety: How do I proceed safely?

5. Results

5.1. Result List

Immediately after the event, a completely filled out result list including a ranking has to be signed by the Competition Manager and the Senior Classifier and has to be forwarded to the IRO Office. The result list must also include a list of all registrations cancelled after the registration deadline and of all teams who registered but did not start.

5.2. Disqualifications

If a team does not show up at a work site or a dog handler inflicts cruelty to a dog, the whole team is immediately disqualified. This will also happen when a dog is aggressive and hurts a hidden person. In case of gross unsportsmanlike behaviour, aggressional behaviour of the dog or cheating in any way can lead to a disqualification through the Senior Classifier.

Disqualifications of dogs / dog handler will have to be reported to the IRO Office with the provided disqualification form.

6. Miscellaneous

If the organiser does not act according to this guideline, it may be a decision of the IRO Spokesperson for Training and Judges, to cancel the event from the list of events, which are used for the distribution of funds from the sponsor money. If the competition will be held nonetheless, the organising NRO has to bear all costs related to the competition