



# **International Rescue Dog Organisation**

## **Guidelines for the International Testing Standards for Rescue Dogs (IPO-R 2025)**

The guidelines are an addendum of the IRO International Testing Standards for Rescue Dog Tests (IPO-R) and are published as such. The statements are binding.

The guidelines have been prepared by the Department for Training and Judges in conjunction with the IRO Judges at the Judges' Meeting held in November 2025.

|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
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## **General Abbreviations**

|       |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| RH    | Rescue Dog                           |
| RHT   | Rescue Dog Team                      |
| PR    | Rescue Dog Judge                     |
| HF    | Dog Handler                          |
| Hd    | Dog                                  |
| Pkt   | Points                               |
| VP    | Victim                               |
| HZ    | Voice Command                        |
| SZ    | Hand Signal                          |
| PO    | Testing Standards                    |
| PL    | Test Organising Officer              |
| LRRef | Spokesperson for Training and Judges |

## **GENERAL**

In case of different information about allowed commands (either only AC or combined AC/VC) the version that is made by the DH should be accepted.

### **2.2 Animal Welfare**

Paw protection (boots) and goggles are permitted during search work.  
The decision and risk rest exclusively with the DH.  
Injured dogs are excluded.

### **Permitted aids**

Whistle: If the whistle is used, switching between AC and whistle for the same command is not allowed and can lead to a warning. Before starting work, it must be announced which commands will be given with the whistle. The commands should be short.

## **2.6 Warning / Termination / Disqualification**

### **2.6.2 Termination**

Procedure: Points earned remain valid.

Mandatory deduction: –61 points Phase A (Nosework) / –31 points.

Phase B (UO/G).

Minimum score 1 point.

Scenarios WITHOUT deduction

Time limit reached or end of the area reached – finish of the work (F,MT).

## Tracking

If the dog loses the trail and the Judge stops the work the evaluation ends. Points are awarded for work shown. This is NOT an “Abb”.

## **OBEDIENCE/DEXTERITY**

### **Behavior Between Exercises**

Dog must remain calm and under control. Short verbal praise allowed (no touching/playing). DH proceeds to next start with dog off-leash (free heeling).

### **3.3.4 Reporting in and Social Behavior**

Leash Position: Left hand, leash approx. 1m long, hanging naturally. No tension.

#### **3.3.10 Retrieve on the flat**

Execution: The DH goes to the article with the dog; the dog is not on leash. It is allowed either to pick up walking with the dog and to take the article or to stop while picking up the article. In this case the dog has to take GS. Using the article for motivation is forbidden.

#### **3.3.11 Directability at distance**

As the wording in the rules is not 100% clear, it is allowed either to give one AC/VC for both jumping up and staying on each table or to give two separate AC/VC for jumping up and for staying on the table.

If the dog does not approach the correct table after max. 3 AC/VC the PR decides about sending the dog to the next table.

#### **3.3.12 Laydown under distraction**

V – Level / the dog has to be on leash when going to the laydown and leash is to be put off there in GS.

B – Level / the recommended distance is approx. 40 m; if at the site there is a hiding place available which is slightly nearer or slightly further away, this can nonetheless be used.

### **3.3.13 Tunnel with tube**

If after leaving the tunnel the dog takes a position so that it is in front of the end line of the soft part of the obstacle (beside the tunnel), this devalues accordingly.

### **3.3.15. Unstable Plank**

The scoring for the unstable plank follows the rules for the fixed wooden bridge (3.3.14):

Jumping off in the first half: 0 points.

Jumping off in the second half: Rated as 'insufficient' (m).

### **3.3.17 Swing**

Independently whether the swing is limited or not – it must remain the same for all participants in the test.

### **3.3.20 Distance swim**

V - Level – the dog can either be picked up out of the stationary boat and be put into the water or the dog can jump – in both cases 1 command (AC and/or VC) is allowed.

### **3.3.21 Retrieve out of the water**

Based on the circumstances and the depth of the water it is not a mistake if the object is thrown more than 10 m (up to approx. 15 m).

Evaluation - Putting the object down (by the dog) to shake itself devalues the exercise by one grade – as long as the dog picks up the object again immediately after shaking.

### **3.3.23 Mounting and riding on a surfboard**

A - Level: The specified direction in which the surfboard has to be moved should be parallel to the shore.

B – Level: The specified direction can go in any direction; the handler stands at the starting point.

### **3.3.24 Directability at distance (W)**

Level A + B – in both levels DH should take GS with his off-leash D at the starting point.

### **3.4 Nosework F V, T, FL, MT**

The exercise officially begins in the Basic Position. At the moment of introducing the dog, the handler needs to prepare it for the search. Since motivated dogs are essential for rescue work, the exact position in this phase is flexible—all positions are acceptable as long as the dog is prepared and motivated. Handlers may use contact or aids before the start, but once the search is underway, the dog must work independently.

After an alert, the DH may perform the full start procedure (including contact and aids) as at the initial start, but not during an ongoing search.

Scoring reflects the level of independence: more support equals fewer points.

#### **3.4.4 Alert**

Rubble Search (T)

The assessment of the alert begins with the dog's approach, followed by its focus on the victim, any instances of leaving the find, penetrating behaviour, barking, retrieving, or independent pointing.

It is up to the handler to decide whether to lead the dog 2-3 meters away and lay it down after indicating, or whether the dog remains calmly beside him while he makes contact with the victim.

The judge must prepare the rubble site in a way that most time gives the handler the opportunity to see where the dog is located.

#### **3.4.4.2 Bringsel Work**

Return Path: Indirect or long routes are not considered mistakes. The dog often returns to the handler (HF) using the same path it took to find the victim; this does not have to be the shortest route. The handler is permitted to use one additional verbal command to help the dog locate them. However, the dog must retrieve and deliver the "bringsel" independently, without further assistance from the handler.

#### **3.4.4.6 ALERT EXERCISE (F-FL-T-L)**

##### **Change of drive (F-FL-T-L)**

Main thing to be taken care of is that the obedience parts in this exercise do not have higher value than the behaviour of the dog during the alert itself. Slight touches of the VP by the dog when the dog moves into the hiding place may not lead automatically to the qualification „unsatisfactory“. Main point for evaluation has to be the behavior of the dog, which may not be aggressive in any way.

Barking too close to the face of the figurant is considered harassment and leads to a deduction.

To finish the alert max 3 commands are allowed ("Stop/Quiet", "Heel") and acceptable. More than 3 commands are valued as mistake.

Repeating of commands is not allowed.

#### **3.4.4.6 Alert Exercise RH – FL A, B and RH – F V**

Definition of "Immediate Proximity": The Dog Handler (DH) is considered to be in the immediate vicinity only when they are positioned at least beside the dog's tail. The DH must not stand behind the dog during the pickup or recall. Very close means near the dog at tail height, not at a distance of 2–3 metres.

#### **4 TRACKING - Starting A, B**

The FHL should put down the ID minimum 10 m from the baseline.

#### **5.1 FL V PreTest**

The description of execution has been missing since the 2019 rules and is also missing in the current version. The execution should be similar to that described in RH-FL A.

#### **8 Mantrailing**

Evaluation of odor differentiation

The alert of the person is to be evaluated as described in Chapter 3. If the dog indicates the wrong person, the team receives no points.

## **8.2 MT/A**

Wrong Alert (Visual): If dog alerts a wrong person = Visual false alert (Scored under "Maintaining Trail", Max rating: Satisfactory, approx. -15 to -17 pts).

Not a -40 pts False Alert.

## **9 Water**

### **9.1 & 9.1.1 Retrieving a line starting from the shore**

This exercise is based on the previous testing rules and there has been a misinterpretation. There is only one change = the dog does not carry the rope from handler to the surfer but from surfer to handler. The rest remains the same = the dog hands the end of the rope to the handler and the handler pulls the surfer to the shore. In the meantime, the dog freely waits to be put into GP at the end of the exercise.

### **9.2 & 9.2.1 & 9.2.3 Bringing a rescue device starting from the shore, distance 25 m**

As it is nosework, repeated commands are not mistakes.