



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

**PUASAR018A Select and maintain canines  
to be part of a canine search team for  
USAR incidents**

Release: 2

## **PUASAR018A Select and maintain canines to be part of a canine search team for USAR incidents**

### **Modification History**

<b>Release</b>	<b>TP Version</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2	PUA12 V1	Layout adjusted.
1	PUA00 V8.1	First release in TGA.

### **Unit Descriptor**

This unit covers the competency required to select canines to be part of a canine search team for urban search and rescue (USAR) incidents, to maintain the health and welfare of canines, to provide daily care to canines and to plan search and rescue training for search canines. No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

### **Application of the Unit**

This unit applies to canine search specialists responsible for developing a canine search team for USAR incidents.

A canine search team consists of one disaster search canine and one canine search specialist.

### **Licensing/Regulatory Information**

Not applicable.

### **Pre-Requisites**

Not applicable.

### **Employability Skills Information**

This unit contains employability skills.

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements describe the essential outcomes of a Unit of Competency.

Performance Criteria describe the required performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where ***bold italicised*** text is used, further information is detailed in the Range Statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the Evidence Guide.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1. Assess canines for USAR work	<p>1.1 <b>Criteria</b> for canines to work in a USAR environment are determined.</p> <p>1.2 Canines are observed and assessed in relation to determined criteria.</p> <p>1.3 Canines assessed as meeting determined criteria are selected to be part of canine search team.</p>
2. Maintain search canine health	<p>2.1 <b>Basic symptoms of ill health</b> or injury in search canines are identified.</p> <p>2.2 <b>Local authorities</b> who can be consulted about the establishment or maintenance of search canine health are identified.</p> <p>2.3 <b>Program of health maintenance</b> to prevent common illnesses or parasites is implemented.</p> <p>2.4 <b>Treatment program</b> for ill or injured search canine is followed as required.</p> <p>2.5 Basic first aid for ill or injured search canines is administered.</p> <p>2.6 Basic first aid kit suitable for treating injured search canines is maintained.</p>
3. Manage search canine hygiene and welfare	<p>3.1 Living environment, training areas and search canine transportation are maintained according to animal health and welfare requirements, standards and regulations.</p> <p>3.2 Health, welfare and fitness of search canines is maintained for USAR operational and environmental conditions.</p> <p>3.3 Healthy diet is maintained for search canines based upon individual animal's requirements.</p> <p>3.4 Need to retire a search canine is assessed and recommended in accordance with <b>specialist advice</b> and/or animal health and welfare standards.</p>
4. Maintain records of search canine health and welfare	<p>4.1 Vaccination and other preventative <b>health records</b> for search canine are established and maintained accordance with the Australian Urban Search&amp;Rescue Canine Capability Best Practice Guideline.</p> <p>4.2 Health, treatment and injury records for search canines are established and maintained.</p> <p>4.3 Decisions to retire search canines are recorded.</p> <p>4.4 <b>Organisational policies and procedures</b> for recording and reporting incidents that result in injuries to search canines are followed.</p>
5. Develop and implement	<p>5.1 <b>Training needs</b> of canine search team are identified</p>

**ELEMENT**

**a training plan**

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- and assessed.
- 5.2 *Training plan* that addresses the needs, strengths, weakness of the canine search team is developed.
- 5.3 Training plan is reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect the changing needs of canine search team.
- 5.4 Training equipment is maintained.
- 5.5 Progress of canine search team is recorded and reported on.

## Required Skills and Knowledge

This describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level, required for this unit.

### Required Skills

- administer preventative or curative medicines and treatments to canines
- apply basic first aid techniques to canines
- collect, analyse and organise information to produce records and reports required by the organisation and animal welfare authorities
- interpret the actions and indications given by a canine
- maintain living environment, training areas and canines to the required standard of hygiene
- monitor diet and exercise regimes to maintain the health and welfare of canines
- recognise basic symptoms of ill health and injury in canines
- solve problems to deal with safety risks
- work independently and in teams to manage the hygiene and welfare of canines

### Required Knowledge

- anatomy and signs of health/ill health and injury of canines
- animal health and welfare requirements and regulations affecting working canines
- Australian Urban Search&Rescue Canine Capability Best Practice Guideline
- basic first aid techniques that can be used to treat injured canines
- canine anatomy
- canine developmental stages
- canine grooming requirements
- capabilities of canines working within a USAR environment
- common illnesses, diseases, parasites and other causes of ill-health or injury affecting working canines
- dietary and exercise requirements of working canines
- location of veterinarians and other authorities who can assist in the maintenance of the health and welfare of canines
- organisational policies and procedures regarding the health and welfare of canines within the organisation where applicable
- physiology of canines
- preventative measures for controlling illnesses and parasites that can affect canines
- procedures for acquiring canines
- psychology and behaviour of canines
- records and reports required by state, territory and local authorities, the organisation and animal welfare authorities
- restricted canine breeds
- typical characteristics and temperaments of various breeds of canines that are suited to working within the USAR environment
- work environment in which canines could be deployed and emergencies that could arise within those environments



## Evidence Guide

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the Performance Criteria, Required Skills and Knowledge, the Range Statement and the Assessment Guidelines for this Training Package.

### **Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit**

Assessment must confirm the ability to:

- constantly observe and monitor search canines in relation to their continued ability to work in a USAR environment
- provide recommendations on the health and welfare of search canines deployed in USAR incidents

### **Consistency in performance**

Competency should be demonstrated over time under a range of conditions that would be expected in the workplace.

### **Context of and specific resources for assessment**

#### **Context of assessment**

Competency should be assessed in the workplace and/or in a simulated workplace environment.

#### **Specific resources for assessment**

Access is required to:

- Australian Urban Search&Rescue Canine Capability Best Practice Guideline
- canines training to work in a USAR environment
- search canines
- legislation, policy, procedures and guidelines relating to the health and welfare of canines

### **Method of assessment**

In a public safety environment assessment is usually conducted via direct observation in a training environment or in the workplace via subject matter supervision and/or mentoring, which is typically recorded in a competency workbook.

Assessment is completed using appropriately qualified assessors who select the most appropriate method of assessment according to the workplace environment.

Assessment may occur in an operational environment or in an industry-approved simulated work environment.

Forms of assessment that are typically used include:

- direct observation
- interviewing the candidate
- journals and workplace documentation
- third party reports from supervisors
- written or oral questions





## Range Statement

The Range Statement relates to the Unit of Competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. ***Bold italicised*** wording in the Performance Criteria is detailed below.

<b><i>Criteria</i></b> must include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• desired characteristics</li><li>• desired habits</li><li>• desired physical attributes</li><li>• individual traits</li></ul>
<b><i>Desired characteristics</i></b> should include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• adapting readily to new situations, canine search specialists and environment</li><li>• being alert and positively watchful of surroundings</li><li>• being bold and willing to accept new challenges with confidence</li><li>• being responsive to petting and praise from strangers in a non-aggressive manner</li><li>• being sociable</li><li>• demonstrating an even temperament</li><li>• exhibiting high levels of inquisitiveness</li><li>• having a high level of self-confidence</li><li>• having strong prey or play drive</li><li>• possessing high intelligence</li><li>• responding to other canines in a non-aggressive manner</li><li>• showing a strong desire to explore the environment and odours</li></ul>
<b><i>Desired physical attributes</i></b> should include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bright, clear eyes with pink surrounding membranes</li><li>• body suitably structured to work in a USAR environment</li><li>• clear of any parasitic infestations that cannot be treated</li><li>• ears that are clean and without foul odour or discharge</li><li>• feet that have all toes, solid whole pads and no overlong claws</li><li>• healthy, shiny coat with no bare patches etc.</li><li>• limbs/hips without signs of arthritis or dysplasia in the joints</li><li>• mouth containing pink gums, complete set of white teeth and no foul odour</li><li>• producing stools that are firm and moist, not sloppy</li><li>• wet nose without discolouration, scales or discharge</li></ul>
<b><i>Basic symptoms of ill health</i></b> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• aggression</li></ul>

- dry nose
- dull eyes
- excessive barking
- excessive drinking
- excessive drooling
- frothing at mouth
- kennel cough
- lameness
- lethargy
- signs of pain
- stress/anxiety/depression

- Local authorities** may include:
- animal welfare associations
  - local government authorities
  - local veterinarians
  - Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- Program of health maintenance** must include:
- Daily health checks including:
    - general demeanour
    - main body parts
    - maintaining hygienic environment
    - nose, eyes, ears, mouth, teeth, skin/coat, genitals/orifices, mucous membranes, feet/limbs/nails
    - obvious injury
    - passing of urine/faeces
    - posture and gait
    - presence of fleas or ticks
    - specific individual canine requirements
    - state of body coat and body condition
  - annual veterinary checks
- Treatment program** can vary according to:
- cause of the symptoms, illness or injury
  - dosage matched to weight of canine
  - methods to be administered (e.g. in food, pill popper, applied to back of neck, injections, canine chew etc.)
  - physical form of the treatment to be administered (e.g. tablet, liquids, wash, decontamination etc.)
  - symptoms exhibited by the canine
- Specialist advice** may include:
- canine trainers
  - jurisdictional canine focal points
  - veterinarians
- Health records** must include:
- incident responses
  - organisational and state/territory or local authority, animal welfare legislative requirements
  - treatment programs for preventative or curative health regimes
  - vaccinations
- Organisational policies and procedures** may include:
- Australian Urban Search & Rescue Canine Capability Best Practice Guideline
  - enabling legislation
  - national and regional policies and procedures
  - organisational policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health and welfare of canines

**Training needs** may include:

- within the organisation
- organisation's approach to environmental management and sustainability
- procedural guides, standard operating procedures, work instructions
- workplace health and safety acts, regulations and guidelines
- ability of canine search specialist to identify and respond to indicators
- access to situations where search canine can be deployed for USAR work
- age of canine
- behavioural drives influencing the canine
- degree of bonding between canine and canine search specialist
- characteristics exhibited by the canine
- experience, commitment and knowledge of canine search specialist
- frequency of training
- health and welfare status of canine
- length of time required by canine to acquire new skills
- level of canine enthusiasm for detecting live human scent
- level of training/experience
- temperament of canine

**Training plan** must include:

- consideration of environmental factors
- planned set of exercises to:
  - develop and enhance canine response and control capabilities
  - maintain health and safety during work
  - maintain canine motivation
- outline of the strategies and timeline for the progressive development of the canine search team

## Unit Sector(s)

Not applicable.