

Information for Volunteer K9 Search and Rescue Hiders

Thanks so much for being willing to hide for our dogs. They do get sick of finding us - we sometimes wonder if they think we are just ridiculous for being so stupid, getting lost several times a week.

Keep in mind, we are asking you to hide in woods away from civilization, alone, in various types of weather. This takes a bit of thought on both our parts.

Here are some things that will make the experience safer and more comfortable for you:

- There will be parking in a gravel or dirt parking lot, or along a road. Please leave shaded areas free for dog vehicles.
- Wear hiking boots, and good socks. Wear LONG pants that you can move in. No capris, clamdiggers, or shorts - the underbrush will tear you up if you don't have long pants on.
- Treat yourself for ticks beforehand, and check thoroughly after the adventure.
- Dress in layers that you can take off or put on as temperatures change.
- A rain poncho is a good idea - you can sit on it (the forest floor is damp by nature) or use it if it starts to rain.
- If you do not have a rain poncho, we suggest a large trash bag with a head hole cut along bottom seam.
- Bring plenty of water, and some snacks (especially if you have issues with blood sugar levels).
- There are no bathrooms - you may want to bring some toilet paper in case you need to relieve yourself in the woods.
- If you have allergies or other medical conditions, bring your meds/epi/etc pen with you, and make one of us aware where we can find the necessary item and under what conditions it should be administered.

Here's what you can expect:

- We'll take you to a point in the woods, and ask you to stay exactly there until we find you. The hike in to your spot may include hills, underbrush, climbing over logs or under obstructions. Basecamp will know exactly where you are, we won't lose you - but the handler will NOT know anything about your position except a search area of typically 20 or more acres.
- We'll give you a radio, and bring your charged phone as well - sometimes radio comms don't work well. If we ask you something by radio or phone, answer ONLY WHAT WE ASKED - usually a yes or no. Don't offer ANY other information, as you can easily "give away" your location and the exercise is defeated.
- After you are "placed", the handler back at basecamp will wait about 15 minutes for your scent to travel across the area. We are often running several tasks at the same time, so it may take longer for the handler team to start. It can take some time to find you once the dog team does start the task. Be prepared to sit in your location for up to three hours, though at the

time of the training the handler should be able to give you a more accurate estimate for the time that task will take.

- You will hear the dog's bell...the dog may or may not go past you, come right back, come back later, etc. When you hear the bell, cover yourself with the camo (if we've given you some).
- When the dog finds you the first time, DO NOTHING. The dog may whimper, kiss you, jump on you, lay on you, all kinds of drama. Wait for them to leave you and then stay put; it's not over yet.
- The handler will have given you instructions before you left basecamp on whether or not to tell them on the radio that the dog has made a find. Again, you shouldn't tell the handler anything, or give any clue or more information about where you are or what the dog has done than specifically what the handler asks you. MOST OF THE TIME we don't want you to tell us anything until the search problem is over, because in a real search the lost person may not be able to give us such help.
- The dog will then run back to the handler, let the human know you are found, and lead the handler to you. At this point, we ask you to take part in the "party" - dog gets tons of praise, gets to play with toy, etc.
- If you are willing, we may hide you more than once. Our whole training session can last up to 8 hours, but you are not expected to stay for the entire thing. We get it. Not everyone likes to tramp around all day or into the night. We appreciate any time you give us; just let us know when we start the training, or better yet ahead of time, if you have time constraints so we can plan around them.

In this era of COVID, we won't give you a hug for your help, but know we are very grateful for being a "subject" for us. Our dogs need your help, and anyone who helps our dogs learn and maintain their skills is a great help to us as well.