



Home Office



National Protective  
Security Authority

# National Canine Training and Accreditation Scheme – Private Security Industry (NCTAS-P) Explosives Detection Dog Standard Search Module

March 2021

This document is intended to set out the requirements private sector Explosives Detection Dog Teams must meet in order to become (and remain) accredited under the National Canine Training & Accreditation Scheme – Private Security Industry (NCTAS-P). By making it available, neither the National Police Chiefs' Council nor any part of HM Government accept any liability or responsibility (except in respect of death or personal injury) for any errors or omissions or damage, expense, liability, loss, claim or proceedings arising from any reliance placed on the contents of this document or the performance of an Explosives Detection Dog Team so accredited, however arising whether in contract, tort (including negligence), equity or otherwise.



© Crown copyright 2021

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [nctasp@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:nctasp@homeoffice.gov.uk)

# Contents

Introduction	6
1.1 Overview of EDD teams and their uses	7
1.2 Explosives Detection Dog - Standard search module - Overview	8
2 Selection of standard EDD team handlers and dogs	11
2.1 Information for prospective EDD handlers	11
2.2 Selection of EDD Handlers	11
2.3 Selection of EDD	11
2.4 Selection of EDD Instructors	12
3 Explosives training kits	13
3.1 Introduction	13
3.2 General	13
3.3 HM Government EDD Training Kits	15
3.4 Generalisation	16
3.5 Use of “Soaks” for continuation training	16
4 Safe and effective use of training samples for EDD training	17
4.1 Planning and conducting training sessions involving explosives training samples	17
4.2 Understanding and Controlling Contamination	20
5 Training Concepts – Explosives Detection	21
5.1 Purpose of training – learning outcomes	21
5.2 Assessors for NCTAS-P accreditation	21
5.3 Handlers	21
5.4 EDD	22
5.5 Length of course	22
5.6 Initial Training course	23
6 Safe System of Search	24
6.1 Introduction	24

7	Operational Deployment, including responding to finds	25
7.1	Operational deployment of NCTAS-P Accredited EDD Teams	25
7.2	Considerations for organisations and sites deploying EDD Teams	26
7.3	Actions for EDD Handlers in the event of an indication, interest or other cause for concern	27
8	Accreditation requirements and assessment criteria	29
8.1	Initial accreditation	29
8.2	Requirements prior to accreditation	29
8.3	Accreditation criteria	30
8.4	Indication and interest	31
8.5	Substances	32
8.6	Scent recognition assessment – Stand-based Odour ID (OID) and carousel	32
8.7	Core Module – Accreditation Criteria - Conventional searches	33
8.8	The accreditation record	35
8.9	Annual accreditation	35
8.10	Failure to Accredit	35
8.11	Quality assurance (QA) compliance checks	36
9	Continuation Training	37
9.1	Frequency of training	37
9.2	Continuation training – scent recognition (Odour ID or Carousel)	37
9.3	Continuation training – conventional searches	38
9.4	Blank searches	39
9.5	National Canine Training Exercises	39
10	Training Records	40
10.1	Section 1: Canine Details	47
10.2	Section 2: Annual Training Cover Sheet - Mandatory	54
10.3	Section 3: Training Record	55
10.4	Section 4: Operational Finds	58
10.5	Section 5: History of EDD	59
10.6	Section 6: Incidents	60

11	Glossary	61
12	Annexes	63
12.1	Annex 1: List of topics provided in the Canine Training Guidance Notes.	63
12.2	Annex 2: Training Kit Usage Form –	64

# Introduction

After several years of planning and preparation, the National Police Chief's Council has mandated that all police Explosives Detection Dog (EDD) teams will be trained and accredited to the National Canine Training and Accreditation Scheme (NCTAS) from 1 January 2020.

Counter Terrorism Policing's Step Change Programme, initiated in response to the terrorist attacks in 2017, recognised the important role the private security industry plays in protecting a wide variety of important sites, venues and events. One strand of Step Change involved engaging with a selection of representatives from Explosives Detection Dog service providers. It noted the lack of a Government and police recognised accreditation scheme, and the benefits such a scheme would provide, particularly regarding assurance of individual EDD teams' capabilities, facilitating greater take-up of such services.

To that end, it was agreed that a version of NCTAS should be developed for accrediting private sector EDD teams (NCTAS-P) to a standard comparable to NCTAS and recognised and accepted by government, police and end-users. Furthermore, it was agreed that wherever possible relevant information should be made available to support the UK's private sector develop and maintain its EDD capability.

Note that NCTAS and NCTAS-P are currently limited in scope to Explosives Detection Dog capability.

This document aims to provide private sector entities with details of the accreditation requirements for EDD teams under NCTAS-P, together with guidance to assist with team selection, training and accreditation.<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the NPCC's version of NCTAS can contain sensitive information as its distribution is confined within police and government, this version is intended for public release, with sensitive details therefore necessarily omitted. For consistency, however, the structure broadly mirrors that of NCTAS and the performance required of an EDD team to pass accreditation is identical.

Much of the information needed to effectively train EDD teams is provided as Guidance Notes (<https://www.npsa.gov.uk/canine-detection-guidance-notes>). Where

---

<sup>1</sup> NCTAS-P may be used in conjunction with British Standards Institution (BSI) 8517-2:2016 Security Dogs Part 2: Code of practice for the use of detection dogs.

specific Guidance Notes relate directly to content within this document, they are referenced and a link provided. A full list of Guidance Notes at date of NCTAS-P's publication can be found in Annex 1, though new titles are published periodically.

## 1.1 Overview of EDD teams and their uses

EDD teams are an important tool in detecting explosives threats, thereby preventing potential acts of terrorism and preventing harm or loss of life. When suitably trained and accredited, EDD teams provide a relatively rapid and accurate means of searching in a safe and systematic manner for explosives threats.

EDD teams comprise a specially trained dog and handler. As every dog is unique, it is important that their handler fully understands their temperament and ways of working; to that end it is essential that the handler and dog are accredited as a team and only work as an accredited team. The role of the handler is to:

- direct the dog to search, ensuring it works systematically, efficiently and effectively, covering the entire search area,
- combine observation of the behaviour of the dog (indication/interest), with an assessment of the situation to make an informed judgement on whether a threat is present.

While an EDD may be used to assess items that are out of place or otherwise of potential concern, they should not be used to confirm the presence of a suspected Improvised Explosive Device (IED); as soon as an item is suspected of being an IED, the site's emergency protocols should be implemented.

EDD teams are a valuable asset for any explosives search operation due to their:

- Speed of search
- Versatility for work in varied environments
- Real-time and precise location of hidden targets
- Non-disruptive search technique
- Ability to detect and indicate the presence of a wide range of target explosives

They may be deployed to work in:

- Defensive scenarios, e.g.
  - to check for hidden explosives prior to a VIP visit or particular event;

- to conduct routine searches of and/or at an important or vulnerable site.

They can be deployed to search within many environments:

- Inside and outside of buildings and temporary structures
- In urban and rural areas and on routes
- Around and inside vehicles (for example at vehicle entrances / checkpoints); vehicle types may include (but are not limited to):
  - Cars
  - Vans
  - Lorries – flat-bed, curtain-sided, solid sided
  - Buses and coaches
- Cargo and deliveries
  - Ranging from small courier deliveries, through boxes and pallets to shipping containers.
- People and/or their possessions.

All standard EDD teams are assessed regularly on their ability to find a wide range of explosives target odours; however, like any detection tool it is recommended that they should be used in conjunction with other measures as part of a layered approach to security.

## 1.2 Explosives Detection Dog - Standard search module - Overview

The chapters contained within this EDD Standard Search Module set out the criteria for accrediting an EDD team under NCTAS-P as well as providing guidance on selection and training. It closely reflects the structure and content of NCTAS (as used within police and Government bodies) and is underpinned by a wealth of scientific research and experience of UK Government EDD instructors.

### Chapter 2: Selection of standard EDD team handler and dogs

This chapter offers guidance for the selection of both EDD and EDD handler prior to conducting the initial training course.



## **Chapter 3: Explosives training kits**

This chapter outlines the criteria and mechanisms for accessing HM Government endorsed EDD Training Kits that will be used for EDD Team Accreditation under NCTAS-P. It also sets out how other threat-relevant and safe-to-handle explosives may be used in training, the importance of quantitative and qualitative generalisation, and the potential use of “Soaks” for continuation training.

This information is not included in this published document and is available on application

## **Chapter 4: Safe and effective use of training samples for EDD training**

This chapter outlines key elements for correct handling of training samples:

- Contamination control - This outlines the importance of minimising contamination (both of the training samples and the search environment) in order to ensure effective EDD training. It also covers control measures for contamination when using the training kits.
- Health and safety - This chapter outlines safe handling of the explosive training samples, including what to do if the sample becomes damaged or visually contaminated. This section also details what to do if a dog ingests a training sample.

## **Chapter 5: Training concepts – explosives detection**

This chapter provides guidance on initial training of EDDs, including suggested course lengths, indications, introduction to scent and search as well as the competencies that the EDD must be able to demonstrate. This chapter also details key considerations for instructors when conducting scent training.

## **Chapter 6: Safe system of search**

This chapter outlines principles EDD teams are expected to use to conduct safe, systematic searches. EDD teams will be assessed on their ability to conduct safe, systematic searches as outlined in this chapter at accreditation.

## **Chapter 7: Operational deployment, including responding to finds**

This chapter provides information regarding the operational deployment of EDD Teams accredited under NCTAS-P, including information for EDD handlers regarding the correct actions upon encountering an operational find.

## **Chapter 8: Accreditation requirements and assessment criteria**

All EDD teams working under NCTAS-P must be accredited using this Accreditation Assessment. This chapter sets the criteria and standards required for accreditation. This includes the odour recognition assessment, handler competencies, canine competencies and safe system of search.

## **Chapter 9: Continuation training**

This chapter provides guidance on continuation training undertaken between initial accreditation and re-accreditation. This includes fundamental training concepts as well as counter terrorist training and the value of attendance at Home Office approved Canine Training Exercises (CTE).

## **Chapter 10: Training records**

This chapter provides template documents that can be used to record the information that must be provided to the assessor at accreditation and every subsequent re-accreditation. With the exception of the Annual Training Record Cover Sheet, the use of these specific forms is not mandatory, but all companies must ensure that the relevant information is recorded and kept up to date and is accessible upon the request of the assessor at accreditation / re-accreditation, and at any time as required for audit / compliance purposes. This information includes: canine details, training records, operational finds, veterinary information, movements/transfers, kennel and welfare information, bites and incidents. These records may be stored either on paper or electronically; as they may contain sensitive information, reasonable steps must be taken to protect them from unauthorised access, deletion, amendments and additions.

## **Glossary**

List of terms and definitions used throughout the EDD module of NCTAS-P.

## **Annex**

Contains documents referenced throughout the NCTAS-P EDD module.

## 2 Selection of standard EDD team handlers and dogs

### 2.1 Information for prospective EDD handlers

Searching for explosives is a highly skilled task and potential handlers must be made aware of the challenging nature of the role and the risks associated with searching for explosives.

All personnel involved in the training and handling of dogs must adhere to the Animal Welfare Act 2006, Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 or Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 and are accountable in law, as stated in The Protection of Animals Act 1911, and no dog should ever be subjected to any cruelty during training, operational work or whilst in their care. Further information about what this means in practice can be found in the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.2 Selection of EDD Handlers

Whilst it is desirable that an individual has prior dog handling experience, this is not essential. Personal attributes suggesting suitability for EDD handling include:

- Being search orientated, i.e. is observant, systematic, and has an enquiring mind.
- Being self-motivated, conscientious and able to work unsupervised.
- Demonstrating awareness of risks and capable of working safely and effectively in potentially dangerous / stressful situations.

In addition, handlers should maintain and be able to demonstrate:

- Up-to-date knowledge and experience of explosives health and safety.
- Up-to-date knowledge of animal learning theory and experience of dog handling or training.
- Up-to-date knowledge of animal welfare legislation and good practice.

### 2.3 Selection of EDD

The selection of dogs for explosives search work should be undertaken by a person with the experience and ability to identify attributes such as:

- A search drive and a willingness to work

---

<sup>2</sup> Published by Defra in 2009 and available online at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69390/pb13333-cop-dogs-091204.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69390/pb13333-cop-dogs-091204.pdf)

- A good temperament, bold but not aggressive
- The ability to adapt quickly and effectively to different environments and conditions
- The ability to concentrate and ignore distractions
- Physical fitness and stamina

## 2.4 Selection of EDD Instructors

Under NCTAS (the training and accreditation standards for police and government EDD teams), instructors are required to conduct both training and assessments of EDD teams. In order to be permitted to do so, they must meet certain requirements (with regards to training and experience).

At its launch, the scope of NCTAS-P will be limited to assessing and accrediting private sector EDD Teams. All assessments of private sector EDD team for accreditation under NCTAS-P will be conducted by accredited NCTAS (i.e. police / government) instructors<sup>3</sup>. While that remains the case, NCTAS-P will not mandate standards that private sector instructors must meet, nor assess / accredit such instructors.

Based on experience within police and government, it is recommended that private sector instructors training EDD teams to NCTAS-P should be experienced EDD handlers and competent to deliver training (e.g. a holding a minimum of a Level 3 training qualification). They should also be committed to their own continuing professional development on matters such as animal behaviour and training, terrorist threat and explosives safety.

---

<sup>3</sup> In the medium to long term, it is envisaged that NCTAS-P may be expanded to include provision for accreditation assessments to be undertaken by independent private sector assessors; the assessor role (and criteria for being accredited as a NCTAS-P assessor) would then be formally set out in NCTAS-P.

## 3 Explosives training kits

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces general considerations regarding safe, secure and legally compliant use of explosives training kits for EDD training. In addition, it outlines the criteria and mechanisms for accessing HM Government-approved EDD Training Kits (“Approved Training Kits”, ATKs) that will be used for EDD Team Accreditation under NCTAS-P. It also offers guidance on how other threat-relevant and safe-to-handle explosives may be used for EDD training, the importance of quantitative and qualitative generalisation, the potential use of “Soaks” for continuation training, and safe disposal of training aids and associated waste.

Details of the ATKs are not provided in this openly published document.

### 3.2 General

#### 3.2.1 Legislation

The acquisition, storage, transportation, use and disposal of explosives samples contained within training kits are covered by a variety of legislation. Individuals and organisations responsible for and/or involved in any of these activities as part of their provision of EDD services shall familiarise themselves, and ensure compliance, with relevant legislation.

#### 3.2.2 Explosives safety

Explosives training samples should be sourced as such from reputable suppliers; they should be obtained in clearly labelled packaging approved for their storage and transport, and be provided with instructions for storage, handling and disposal, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), and details of shelf-life. It is recommended that spare packaging is sourced at the same time from the supplier in case the original packaging becomes worn, is damaged or becomes contaminated.

Note that explosives training samples should never be cut or otherwise divided or re-shaped except by competent persons in an appropriately licenced explosives facility.

Explosives training samples normally pose minimal risk of explosion if handled carefully and in accordance with manufacturers’ instructions. In most instances they will comprise secondary explosives which are designed to be insensitive to accidental initiation. Primary explosives – which are inherently sensitive – are unsuitable for use as training materials unless presented in a suitably desensitised

form (with evidence of safety testing), for example small quantities absorbed onto an inert filter paper or mixed with an inert matrix material.

If explosives training samples become contaminated with other materials, for example, grit, earth, sand, dirt, oil, they may become sensitised to stimuli such as heat, friction or impact. Any samples that become contaminated should therefore be carefully packaged, labelled, and safe disposal arranged.

Similarly, any explosives training sample that shows visible signs of deterioration or ageing (for example crumbling, cracking, separation of components) should be carefully packaged, labelled, and safe disposal arranged.

In the unlikely event that an explosives sample shows signs of deterioration or damage posing an immediate risk of harm, then the area should be evacuated and the emergency services should be informed.

In addition to the physical explosion hazard posed by explosives, many are also harmful or toxic to humans and animals. Harm may be caused by ingestion, absorption through the skin, or inhalation of vapour. Routine chemical safety precautions should be taken, including:

- wearing appropriate disposable gloves (BS EN-374-3); these should be changed regularly, including between handling different training samples.
- working in well ventilated spaces
- washing hands after handling explosives and before eating / drinking / smoking
- not eating / drinking / smoking in proximity to explosives
- ensuring that training aids are stored, transported and used such that they cannot be accessed and ingested by dogs.

### 3.2.3 Security of explosives

Explosive samples may be attractive to terrorists and others with criminal intentions; it is therefore essential that all due care is taken to protect against loss or theft during storage, transportation and use of explosives training kits. Appropriate controls should be in place to minimise the risk of losses, including keeping accurate records of holdings, including the issue and return of samples used in each training session (see below).

### 3.2.4 Record keeping

For reasons spanning safety, security and effective use, it is good practice to keep detailed records relating to each training sample, from acquisition through to disposal. Consideration should be given to recording:

- Explosive material
- Description of sample, including appearance, dimensions, weight, and packaging
- Date acquired, source, batch number and expiry date
- For each use at a training session:
  - Date and venue of training
  - Condition and weight of sample on issue
  - Name and signature of person emplacing sample
  - Description of emplacement
  - Condition and weight of sample on return
    - Any action undertaken on return – e.g. disposal or re-packaging
  - Name and signature of person returning sample
- Periodic audit inspection of sample and records, including verification of condition and weight
- Date and means of disposal

## 3.3 HM Government EDD Training Kits

While police and government EDD teams have long been both trained and accredited using HMG ATK, under NCTAS-P the requirement is only for teams to be assessed for accreditation using such kits.

It is down to EDD service providers to decide how they wish to train their EDD teams – whether in-house and/or externally – and to what extent this should involve use of the HMG ATK or other threat-relevant training materials sourced commercially.

Options for accessing HMG EDD Training Kits for training include:

- Attending a training course or event hosted by a police force;

- Purchasing HMG EDD Training kits from an approved supplier (subject to eligibility criteria around safety, security and confidentiality being met);
- Attending a training course or event hosted by another EDD service provider or explosives company with access to the HMG ATK.

## 3.4 Generalisation

An essential element of detection dog capability is the ability of the dog to extrapolate beyond the specific samples it is trained on to detect other quantities and types of explosives. To build that capability, it is essential to train on a variety of different types and quantities of materials, and also to vary the level of explosives odour availability and presence of potential distracting odours.

For further details see Guidance Note: How to train your dog to generalise across varying types and sizes of targets.<sup>4</sup>

## 3.5 Use of “Soaks” for continuation training

A soak is a training sample that has been made by exposing an absorbent material (called a soak matrix) next to, but not in direct contact with, a training sample such as an explosive, within a sealed container. The matrix becomes impregnated with the odour of the explosive and can therefore be used on its own as a training aid without the safety, logistical or contamination control issues associated with using actual explosive samples.

It is important to note that soaks may not replicate the full odour of the original explosive sample and are therefore not recommended for initial training or as the main component of continuation training.

Soaks instead provide a convenient means of carrying out continuation training when the use of bulk explosives is impractical (e.g. training in an operational environment). These training aids also provide an opportunity for the dogs to search for a small/different odour plume, making them an effective part of a training aid suite to encourage generalisation.

Further information on the effective preparation and use of soaks can be found in Guidance Note: How to produce and use odour soaks as part of an effective detection dog training programme.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>[https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/53/06/PUB89074\\_Canine\\_Detection\\_How\\_to\\_train\\_your\\_dog\\_to\\_generalise\\_August%202018.pdf](https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/53/06/PUB89074_Canine_Detection_How_to_train_your_dog_to_generalise_August%202018.pdf)

<sup>5</sup><https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/8a/e1/PUB114300%20How%20to%20produce%20and%20use%20odour%20soaks%20V4%20-%20Copy.pdf>



## 4 Safe and effective use of training samples for EDD training

Whilst Chapter 3 covers general considerations regarding the sourcing and use of explosives training aids, this chapter covers their safe and effective use in EDD training.

This chapter comprises two sections:

- Planning and conducting training sessions involving explosives training samples (4.1)
- Understanding and controlling contamination (4.2)

All companies and individuals involved in organising or attending EDD training sessions should ensure that they have appropriate risk assessments in place covering all reasonably foreseeable eventualities.

### 4.1 Planning and conducting training sessions involving explosives training samples

#### 4.1.1 Use of all training samples during training

Safety is paramount so all potential hazards must be considered and the correct safety procedures followed to minimise risk. Anyone involved with, or likely to be affected by, training should be informed, but this must be on a need to know basis (i.e. that canine training is being conducted in an area and so access to unauthorised personnel, including staff, is limited. Those not directly involved in the training do not need to know that explosives are being used or the location of the training sample).

Safety considerations include:

- In areas where public access cannot be prevented, the training hides should be monitored or manned always to ensure members of the public do not encounter the samples.
- It is important to consider whether other staff members (e.g. cleaners, contractors) need to be aware of the situation and whether they are permitted in the training area, in addition to users and management.
- Weather forecasts should be checked before training and if a thunderstorm warning is in place then explosives should not be used. If a thunderstorm warning (or unexpected thunderstorm) occurs whilst training is underway then

the session must be stopped, all samples returned to their packaging and containers before being placed back inside a secure vehicle/building.

- Consider safety and security risks associated with, for example, an unconnected emergency evacuation.

If training in wet weather, ensure all explosives are protected from the rain in their concealment. Ammunition tins and other packaging should be kept closed and stored in a dry area to avoid water getting inside.

- When emplacing substances, be aware of animals that may be in the vicinity. This can include livestock such as bulls in fields and birds of the corvid family (ravens, crows etc.) that have been known to steal explosive training samples.
- Instructors must never place explosive samples in hot areas as the heat may melt the substance. These areas can include, but are not limited to:
  - Radiators or waterpipes
  - Car engines (wait for the engine, brake drums, exhausts and anywhere else that may have become heated to cool before emplacing hide)
  - On top of electrical items that exude heat (like refrigerators)

Likewise, instructors must never place training substances in areas that may give off sparks, such as lightening conductors, electric motors or fuse boxes.

- Instructors must clean up after searches and leave an area/building/vehicle in the condition it was before training occurred. It should not be noticeable that it has been used as an explosive training facility.
- Ammunition tins (labelled with 1.1D hazard label) must never be left out in the area when training off site, even if it contains no explosives at that time. It should be stored within the locked vehicle or a secure room that only authorised training staff have access to.
- No smoking is permitted by anyone at any time near explosives (<20 metres), including when they are stored inside their ammunition tins or boxes.
- No eating is permitted near explosives at any time (<20 metres) as all training substances can be toxic (including trace contamination not visible to the human eye (see Section 4.2)). Wash hands before and after eating, and before and after handling the training substances to reduce the likelihood of contaminating the training substances and prevent toxicity.

- Ensure always that the training substances will never be crushed (by vehicles, lifts/elevators, foot etc.) during training. Some substances provided in the training kits can be detonated by crushing or impact.
- When a search is laid out, instructors should draw a map or make a note of the exact location of hides to aid collection of the samples after the search is complete. One person must be delegated to retrieve the samples. That person must be identified at the start of training; never assume someone else has the responsibility.

Once targets are retrieved following use, a second nominated person must confirm that all targets are present.

#### 4.1.2 Toxicity of training kits

Training samples may be potentially toxic to both human and canine, therefore direct contact with the training samples must be prevented at all times. It is possible to create a hide whereby the EDD can access the odour of the training sample without accessing the sample itself.

##### 4.1.2.1 Canine consumption of training sample

If ingestion does occur (or is suspected to have occurred), the following steps must be undertaken:

- Take the EDD immediately to the nearest veterinarian.
- En-route to the veterinarian, ask a colleague to call ahead to allow the vet time to prepare for the EDD team's arrival.
- Provide information to the veterinarian on the amount and type of substance and the EDD's behaviour and/or reactions since ingestion.

## 4.2 Understanding and Controlling Contamination

Poor practices when storing, handling or using explosives training samples have the potential to result in contamination of the training sample and/or working environment. This can easily have an adverse effect on a dog's detection capability, and potentially also impact safety by increasing the sensitivity of the training sample to accidental initiation.

It is therefore essential that instructors and handlers have a sound understanding of contamination, its potential impact on training and operational capability, its causes and how to prevent it.

For further information see Guidance Note: Why and how to control contamination<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>[https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/c1/24/PUB89664\\_Why\\_and\\_how\\_to\\_control\\_contamination\\_March18.pdf](https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/c1/24/PUB89664_Why_and_how_to_control_contamination_March18.pdf)

# 5 Training Concepts – Explosives Detection

## 5.1 Purpose of training – learning outcomes

This Chapter provides guidance on training of explosives detection dog and handler teams. Whilst the overall requirement is that each EDD team should successfully pass assessment for NCTAS-P accreditation, it is not appropriate to mandate any particular approach to training, not least as every EDD team will have different strengths, weaknesses and approaches to learning.

Training should be designed to ensure that each EDD team – comprising a handler and a dog – has the knowledge, skills, understanding and experience to carry out explosives detection searches safely and effectively in a broad range of realistic and relevant operational environments and scenarios.

All training should be conducted in a manner that promotes positive reinforcement, ensuring an effective and ethical outcome for the EDD and handler in all the required search activities.

## 5.2 Assessors for NCTAS-P accreditation

All initial accreditation under NCTAS-P will be conducted by a UK police or government EDD instructor who is independent of the EDD team being assessed.

Note: In the medium term, it is envisaged that NCTAS-P may be extended to include accreditation of assessors from within the private sector and provision for them to conduct NCTAS-P accreditation of EDD teams

## 5.3 Handlers

To achieve and retain accreditation, handlers will be able to:

- Demonstrate they are able to handle a dog effectively whilst searching.
  - Demonstrate they have control of their dog both on and off lead by use of voice and gestures.
- Demonstrate safe, systematic search in a variety of realistic and relevant operational environments and scenarios.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the capabilities and limitations of EDD Teams accredited under NCTAS-P.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate responses when a dog indicates or shows interest.
- Demonstrate an understanding of safety considerations when working with and handling explosives, as well as an understanding of contamination and how to minimise the risk of this occurring.
- Demonstrate an understanding of canine behaviour and training, including a basic understanding of Learning Theory.

- Demonstrate an ability to work effectively under pressure.

## 5.4 EDD

The EDD will be able to:

- Be physically fit, demonstrate search drive, focus and stamina.
- Demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a variety of conditions and locations.
- Demonstrate the ability to detect the odour of explosives for which it has been trained, including in searches with different levels of odour availability. Give a safe indication, with no contact or interference with the target, on all odours for which it has been trained.
- Reliably ignore non-target odours during searches.
- Reliably ignore other distractions during searches.
- Respond appropriately to handler commands when working both on and off the lead/harness.

## 5.5 Length of course

Course duration can be varied to meet the needs of the EDD team and local operational requirements. Listed below are indicative lengths of courses for handlers and dogs with various levels of experience.

It is, however, recognised that individual handlers and EDDs learn at different rates so if it can be demonstrated that the EDD team has reached the accreditation standard, and are considered to be operationally competent, then the course can be completed earlier. Equally courses may need to be extended in the event of handler or dog illness or injury, unforeseen absence, or due to a slower rate of learning.

Level of EDD team	Duration
Novice handler with no EDD experience	8 – 10 weeks
Experienced EDD handler & novice dog	6 weeks
Experienced EDD handler & any EDD having previously worked with an instructor within a structured training environment	4 weeks
Experienced EDD handler and re-allocated EDD	3 weeks

## 5.6 Initial Training course

There should be no more than four EDD teams per instructor, which should maximise the amount of high-quality contact time between the instructor and EDD teams. Methods of training an EDD team will vary from instructor to instructor, and between organisations. The methods and techniques used to achieve the standards required to successfully accredit are at the discretion of the instructor.

# 6 Safe System of Search

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the principle of systematic movement within a search area to ensure safety within several different environments that an EDD team may be required to search.

It is beyond the scope of the manual to cover all variations of the types of searches that a handler may be required to complete. The defined tactical deployments in the context of systematic search are buildings, vehicles, routes, and areas. EDD teams are required to dynamically assess the search as per their initial and continuation training.

Each individual building, vehicle, route, and area search will have unique challenges associated with it, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. The overriding consideration and fundamental principles which this chapter will cover is the ability to conduct a safe and systematic search.

During the search phase of an operational or training deployment, it is the responsibility of each individual EDD team to dynamically assess risk. This is especially important within live search environments where the environment itself can change constantly, posing potential hazards, e.g. closed doors being opened, open hatches exposing a potential drop, vehicles moving within a search area. This information is not included in this published document and is available on application.



# 7 Operational Deployment, including responding to finds

## 7.1 Operational deployment of NCTAS-P Accredited EDD Teams

NCTAS-P accredited EDD handlers are required to have and maintain an up-to-date awareness and understanding of:

- How to safely, systematically and effectively conduct an EDD search of buildings, areas, routes, vehicles and other items (e.g. pallets)
- Advances in animal learning theory and other practices relevant to the effective and efficient training and deployment of EDDs

If working at night, consideration must be given to any additional risks this poses and appropriate mitigations implemented. In particular, areas to be searched must be sufficiently well-lit to enable the dog and handler to search safely and effectively.

The role of the handler is to work safely with their EDD as a team to detect potential explosives threats, leveraging and complementing the dog's odour detection abilities. This requires the handler to:

- be clear about the scope and context (including risk profile and any local hazards) for each tasking / deployment they undertake, seeking clarification and / or communicating the limitations of the EDD team's capability as required
- understand local emergency response procedures at each site they deploy to
- proactively read the environment they are required to search, continuously assessing risks to their and their dog's safety; planning and ensuring a safe, systematic and effective search; and being vigilant for anything unusual, out of the ordinary, or otherwise potentially causing concern
- work, watch and read the EDD to ensure it is searching effectively and given every opportunity to locate the presence of explosives
- monitor the EDD's performance and behaviour, allowing rest breaks when necessary
- take account of ambient conditions that may affect the dog's ability to search effectively – e.g. temperature, wind direction
- understand and implement an appropriate response in the event that their dog indicates or shows interest, or the handler otherwise suspects the presence of an explosives threat. Note that the escalation procedure may vary from site to site;
- understand local first aid arrangements for people and ensure appropriate emergency local veterinary provision is available

On completion of a search in which the EDD has not indicated the presence of explosives and no other causes for concern are identified by the handler, this fact should be reported as objectively as possible to the tasking authority (e.g. site

security manager). The handler should be clear as to the extent (and limitations) of the search conducted. The handler should avoid using misleading statements such as “The area is clear”.

## 7.2 Considerations for organisations and sites deploying EDD Teams

It is a duty of NCTAS-P accredited EDD handlers to ensure that security managers they are tasked by understand the scope and limitations of searches that they and their EDD are able to undertake. EDD handlers must also understand local procedures for reporting and managing security incidents and ensure that these adequately take account of the role and needs of the EDD team.

Those responsible for security of a site or building should have appropriate procedures in place for reporting and managing security incidents. At locations where private sector EDD teams are deployed, such procedures must detail the steps to be taken when a dog indicates the presence of explosives, or the handler otherwise suspects the presence of explosives (for example if the dog shows unusual interest or the handler observes something of concern).

Note that an indication (or display of interest) by an EDD does not necessarily mean that an explosives threat is present. It might, for example, result from the dog smelling something benign with an odour similar to trained ones, or smelling cross-contamination associated with the legitimate use of explosives (e.g. by military personnel, or quarrying or demolition contractors).

In most circumstances action will need to be taken either to confirm the presence of a threat or resolve, to the satisfaction of the site security management, that there is no cause for concern. Deployment of a second EDD team is not recommended as part of the confirmation / resolution process as doing so will not address the above limitations regarding similar and contaminant odours.

The confirmation / resolution process could involve:

- Assessment of any other information that may be relevant, e.g. whether the search is routine, or in response to specific concerns or information; whether any unusual activity has been observed or reported; when the area was last searched and who has had access since
- Visual or manual inspection of the area/item by the handler
- Visual or manual inspection of the area/item by other security personnel

If the site security management is satisfied that the indication (or display of interest) was not due to the presence of a threat then no further immediate action is required. If however, the presence of suspected explosive material, a suspected device or other potential threat is confirmed, or cannot be ruled out, then the following actions should be taken immediately.

Actions to take in the event of finding a suspected threat item or material

#### Clear the area

- Clear the immediate area and any adjacent rooms, including rooms immediately above and below
- Prevent others from approaching or accessing the cleared areas

#### Notify police

- Provide police with as much detail as possible, including precise location, description, context. Use the Five Ws:
  - What - What has been found? (description / sketch if safe to do so)
  - Where - Where is it? Identify features to assist police.
  - Why - Why is it suspicious?
  - When - Exact time when found.
  - Who - Who found it?
- Ensure all individuals (including the dog handler) who were involved in finding the threat item remain available to provide police with an account of their observations and actions. To ensure the accuracy of their account is preserved, encourage witnesses to record their observations in writing and discourage them from discussing the incident or their observations with others prior to the arrival of the police.
- Follow any instructions given to you by the police and await their arrival/response.

Communicate with staff, visitors and the public to ensure nobody enters the cleared area.

## 7.3 Actions for EDD Handlers in the event of an indication, interest or other cause for concern

The Four Cs – Actions to take at the scene of a suspected explosive, explosive device or other threat item

- Confirm
  - Without taking any risks, clarify as best you can why you believe there to be a suspicious item present; consider HOT Principles for identifying suspicious items:
    - Hidden – has effort been made to hide the item?
    - Obviously Suspicious – e.g. presence of components typical of an IED?
    - Typical – is the item out of place?
  - Do not touch any suspected threat item
- Clear
  - If you believe you are in immediate danger, remove yourself, your dog and any other people present from the vicinity of the find
  - Follow any instructions provided by the control room / security management
- Communicate

- Communicate with the control room / security management, providing a clear, simple summary of what has been found, where it is located, and why it is of concern
- Check
  - Check that there are no obvious secondary devices or other hazards, including in area(s) that you and others move to

Following an incident, it is the handler's responsibility to continue to provide appropriate support as requested by the site's security management, and to remain on duty until dismissed by the site's security management or the police.

## 8 Accreditation requirements and assessment criteria

For an EDD Team to be deemed to hold a valid NCTAS-P Accreditation, it must have successfully completed NCTAS-P assessment within the last 12 months, maintain competence, and otherwise comply with the requirements set out in this document.

A new EDD Team must undertake Initial Training (Chapter 5) and then complete Initial Accreditation (Section 8.1).

Once accredited, an EDD team must at all times maintain performance to the accredited standard, conducting Continuation Training (as detailed in Chapter 9) and other training activity as necessary to achieve that. Each team must be re-accredited annually (Annual Accreditation, Section 8.9).

One assessor may assess up to four EDD teams as a group. EDD Teams shall be assessed at a location(s) specified by the assessor.

To allow each EDD suitable breaks and rest periods, assessment should normally take place over two days. At the assessor's discretion and where justified by mitigating circumstances (e.g. illness), an extended assessment period of up to two weeks is permitted. EDD teams must not be deployed operationally during assessment.

### 8.1 Initial accreditation

All initial accreditation will be conducted by an independent EDD Assessor listed on the NCTAS Assessor National Register. Where an EDD team has been trained by a police force, that team cannot be assessed by the same police force for their accreditation.

Government and/or Counter Terrorism Policing personnel may also be present for quality assurance purposes.

### 8.2 Requirements prior to accreditation

Prior to accepting an EDD team for accreditation, the handler must provide evidence (Chapter 10) to the assessor that they have successfully completed training on the required number of substances and search locations and completed an appropriate number of training hours. EDD teams conducting initial accreditation must have completed this requirement during their initial training. EDD teams conducting annual accreditation must have completed these searches within the year since their previous accreditation.

## 8.3 Accreditation criteria

The following criteria (8.3.1. and 8.3.2.) will be used to evidence the competency of both handler and EDD<sup>7</sup>. The criteria describe the minimum standards that must be demonstrated by the EDD team to be deemed competent to conduct operational deployments and receive an accreditation certificate.

Note: Handlers and EDDs are accredited as a team and must work operationally as that team. It is not permissible for one handler to use a different EDD under the same accreditation, even if that EDD has received its accreditation with another handler. Where a handler has two EDDs, each handler and EDD pairing is treated as a separate team which must comply with NCTAS-P training and accreditation requirements. Under NCTAS-P, no handler may be a member of more than two accredited EDD teams at any time; and no dog may be a member of more than one accredited EDD team at any time.

Both handler competencies (see Section 8.3.1) and EDD competencies (see Section 8.3.2) are assessed during the accreditation. Both handler and EDD must meet the required standard in all competency areas in order to pass accreditation.

### 8.3.1 Handler competencies

A handler must be able to demonstrate the following:

1. The ability to practically demonstrate the application of theoretical knowledge.
2. A sound understanding of the extent and limitations of the EDD team's capabilities.
3. The ability to gather required information to identify the scope and depth of a search.
4. The ability to plan and complete a safe systematic search.
5. The ability to identify dangers and / or potential problems, both during planning and as the search progresses, and safely and effectively adapt the search accordingly.
6. That they are physically fit and mobile enough to complete accreditation and work operationally.
7. The ability to identify any issue limiting the effectiveness of their EDD and respond to the situation appropriately.
8. That they have sufficient control of the EDD before, during, and after the search in a representative selection of operating environments to ensure safe

---

<sup>7</sup> Handlers with more than one EDD will receive a unique accreditation certificate for each EDD

and effective working, including recovering the reward in a safe, appropriate and humane manner.

9. That they can accurately interpret their EDD's change in behaviour associated with interest or indication on a target.
10. A basic but sound understanding regarding the contents of training kits, safe handling of training samples and contamination prevention.
11. The correct use of procedures for "action on a find".

### 8.3.2 EDD competencies

A handler must be able to demonstrate their EDD's:

1. Responsiveness and control to handler vocal and/or visual commands both on and off lead
2. Motivation and enthusiasm
3. Stamina and condition sufficient to complete a 40-minute search
4. Ability to disregard human and animal disturbance during a search without becoming unduly distracted
5. Ability and confidence to work in a variety of environments
6. Ability to physically negotiate obstacles and features of the operational environment
7. Ability to safely indicate the presence of explosives in a variety of operational hides.

## 8.4 Indication and interest

An EDD's indication exists to alert the handler to the hide location of a trained target odour. An EDD's indication can be a sit, a down, a stand and stare or similar provided that it is non-intrusive, and that the handler is able to recognise the distinct change in behaviour and interpret as necessary. Once an indication has been made, under no circumstances shall the EDD touch or interfere with the hide location. This should be achieved through early training of the EDD.

Example: An EDD nudges a soft bag while trying to source an odour, but then gives a sit indication and no longer touches the bag - this is acceptable.

An EDD that interferes with a hide must automatically fail the accreditation and re-train.

Example: The EDD nudges a soft bag while trying to source an odour, and then gives a sit indication, but continues to nudge the bag intermittently during its indication – this is not acceptable.

EDD teams must be able to demonstrate that the EDD can be called away from any location where they have given an indication. During accreditation, EDD handlers must demonstrate their EDD's ability to be called away from at least one hide with no reward at source. Once this has been demonstrated, the EDD will be permitted to repeat the hide in order to receive its reward at source if necessary, by the handler.

EDD handlers must also be prepared for the EDD to show 'interest' in a hide and be able to recognise such a change in behaviour and act appropriately. An EDD may, for example, show interest when it encounters an odour similar to, but different from, one it has been trained on, in which case an explosive may be present. However, during accreditation 'interest' will not be scored unless the handler recognises the change in behaviour and declares it as a hide.

Example: Where an EDD shows heightened interest in an area, causing the handler to believe a target substance is present, the handler may declare it as a hide. Where the handler declares a hide in the absence of a full indication by the EDD, this will count as a find or false alarm for accreditation purposes. If the handler fails to notice or ignores the change in behaviour by the EDD (and the target substance is present), this will count as a miss for accreditation purposes.

## 8.5 Substances

Only HMG ATK will be used for NCTAS-P accreditation of EDD teams. This information is made available to companies that have been granted access by the NCTAS-P authority.

The EDD's ability to detect all substances from the ATK will be assessed during accreditation. NCTAS-P assessors have instructions on which samples are to be presented in the stand-based odour ID assessment and during a conventional search.

## 8.6 Scent recognition assessment – Stand-based Odour ID (OID) and carousel

The scent recognition assessment establishes whether an EDD can correctly detect the odours of the substances in the ATK. It has been developed to exclusively assess odour recognition; it is not intended to assess the EDD's ability to search. For further information on the Odour ID Process, see guidance notes Canine Odour Discrimination Test, Canine Odour Discrimination Test Setup Tool - User instructions, Canine Odour Discrimination Test Setup Tool and software tool<sup>8</sup>. At the handler's discretion, the scent recognition assessment protocols can be conducted on stands placed in a straight line along the floor, or in a carousel with stands in a circular pattern.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.npsa.gov.uk/canine-detection-guidance-notes>



The assessor will use a standard software tool to generate a unique run configuration for each EDD Team. Different EDD teams must never be allocated the same run configuration or complete the same run(s) as another EDD team.

An EDD team should not complete all runs in one continuous assessment without suitable breaks. It is anticipated that completing the Odour ID assessment will take approximately one hour in total (excluding breaks) per EDD team.

Assessors may alternate the assessment of two or more EDD teams; this provides natural breaks for each team while also ensuring that the assessor's time is used efficiently.

Note: As each EDD team will be assessed according to a uniquely generated run configuration the order in which teams are assessed should not confer any benefit or disbenefit to individual teams.

At the assessor's discretion, the odour ID assessment may be run over two consecutive days.

## 8.7 Core Module – Accreditation Criteria - Conventional searches

An EDD team must complete four conventional searches as part of their assessment for accreditation; each search may include more than one of the specified substances, and all of the substances must be included at least once across the searches undertaken by each EDD team.

All samples used must be from HMG ATK.

All searches must be conducted in accordance with the EDD team's safe system of search.

### 8.7.1 Core Module Disciplines

All EDD teams must show competence at safely, effectively and efficiently completing searches in the following disciplines:

- Route – rural, semi-rural, and urban
- Area – rural, semi-rural, and urban
- Building – occupied and empty
- Vehicle/transport

### 8.7.2 Hide types

Hides with differing degrees of difficulty must be used during the conventional assessment.

The EDD handler must not be made aware of what type of hide (format, and substance or interferent), nor how many, are placed out on each search. Upon the completion of the assessment the handler may be informed.

During assessment, care must be taken to segregate EDD teams so that handlers who have completed a search cannot provide information on hide locations, etc, to handlers yet to complete that task.

Searches may be linked, e.g. a route search leading to a building, at the assessor's discretion.

All search areas must be operationally relevant, and at least three must be 'live'/frequently used search areas (to reduce the likelihood that EDD teams may be relying on disturbance alone to locate hides).

### 8.7.3 Interferents and environmental disturbance

Every search conducted during NCTAS-P assessment must include a minimum of two interferent items / odours placed out by the assessor and a minimum of six items / areas that the assessor touches or disturbs (without emplacing a target sample or interferent item). The assessor must record the interferents used for each search in the EDD Team Accreditation Record.

It is therefore recommended that EDD teams regularly encounter a wide variety of interferents during training.

### 8.7.4 False Alarms

False alarms are when an EDD indicates on a substance or item that is not part of their training kit.

An EDD is permitted a total of two false alarms during the conventional search element of accreditation. Three or more false alarms during the conventional searches will result in the EDD team failing accreditation.

### 8.7.5 Safe system of search

EDD teams will be assessed on their ability to search safely and systematically (see Chapter 6: Safe system of search), the assessor will determine the EDD team's competency using a 'safe/non-safe' scoring system.

### 8.7.6 Rotation of teams

When assessing multiple EDD teams, the assessor shall ensure that the EDD team search order is rotated so no one team repeatedly conducts a search first or last in the group.

### 8.7.7 Instructions to the EDD team

Prior to conducting the conventional searches, the assessor will brief the handler on the scenario of the search, for example:

'Please work with your EDD to search this area/route/building as a VIP will be visiting later today. There are no reports of specific threats or risks'.

No information will be provided on the number or type of hides.

## 8.8 The accreditation record

The assessor will complete the EDD Team Accreditation Record as they carry out the assessment of the team. On completion, the handler and assessor shall both sign the form, declaring it an accurate record of the assessment. The assessor will retain the original and issue the handler a copy.

An annual accreditation licence / certificate, summarising the EDD team's details, assessment and expiry date, shall also be issued.

## 8.9 Annual accreditation

Accreditation lasts for one year. The expiry date is printed on the pass certificate.

Re-accreditation can be completed up to a month (minus a day) before it runs out to keep the same renewal date.

Example: If an EDD team's accreditation runs out on 15 May, the earliest they may be re-accredited to keep the same renewal date for next year is 16 April.

Re-accreditation can be completed earlier, but the re-accreditation renewal date for the following year will be one year from the re-accreditation date.

To be re-accredited, an EDD team must successfully complete the NCTAS-P assessment to the standard in place at the time. In addition:

- That EDD team must have been deployed on at least four operational searches within the 12-month period.
- The handler must be able to demonstrate (e.g. by using the Chapter 10: Training Records example template) that they have completed the appropriate training on all substances within the kit in the required number of search scenarios across the year.

Re-accreditation must be carried out by an assessor that is independent to the recent training (within the past month) of that EDD team. The assessor must be an approved NCTAS Assessor certified to accredit EDD teams.

If a handler has been absent from work for over 90 days (e.g. sickness, parental leave), the accreditation would be the same as that of a new EDD and handler.

## 8.10 Failure to Accredit

Any failure of the EDD team in any aspect of the assessment, or failure to provide the relevant evidence in their training record, shall invoke the following procedure:

- The assessor will provide a written statement outlining the reasons for failure. This must be brought by the handler when they attend re-accreditation assessment.

- Any remaining period of validity of the EDD Team's licence shall be forfeited, and the Team shall not be permitted to work operationally under NCTAS-P.
- The EDD team will be afforded one opportunity to re-accredit within 60 calendar days; the full cost of re-assessment shall be payable. This re-accreditation should normally be done by the assessor who withheld/withdrew the teams' licence unless there are compelling reasons as to why they are unavailable. It is the responsibility of the EDD team and its managers to present the team for re-accreditation having addressed all the recorded reasons for the previous failure.
- Any EDD team failing the re-accreditation within the 60 days will remain withdrawn from operational duties. The EDD/handler may subsequently be re-teamed with a different handler/EDD if deemed appropriate by their organisation.

If a team is recognised as failing to maintain standards necessary for accreditation at any time between annual assessments, it is the responsibility of the instructor or supervisor to withdraw the EDD team's licence to operate under NCTAS-P. In these circumstances, all details must be recorded and the same procedure for re-accreditation (as above) must be followed. Minor performance issues that do not compromise an EDD team's overall performance should be addressed promptly through training.

## 8.11 Quality assurance (QA) compliance checks

The Government is working to put in place an independent Quality Assurance Body to ensure the standards set out in NCTAS-P are upheld, particularly focusing on the consistent accreditation of EDD Teams by assessors. In the interim assurance checks may be made by government officials and police instructors.

The QA body may conduct compliance checks on a proportion of accreditations to ensure that the standards set out in NCTAS-P are met. Assessors must ensure that all dates and locations of accreditations are provided to the QA Body as soon as they are confirmed and no less than two weeks in advance to enable compliance checks to be planned and carried out. The QA body will provide a report to the assessor summarising their observations following any compliance check that they undertake.

The QA body may also, at its discretion, conduct compliance checks on any EDD team's records at any time following accreditation, including checking that the EDD team has completed the necessary continuation training as outlined in Chapter 9: Continuation Training. The EDD team (or its management) shall provide access to the records as reasonably requested by the QA body.

## 9 Continuation Training

Following initial accreditation, EDD teams must receive a minimum of 100 hours continuation training per year (i.e. between annual accreditation assessments), spread across the year.

The purpose of continuation training is:

- to maintain at all times the EDD team's ability to work to the NCTAS-P standard;
- to enable the EDD team to pass the annual re-accreditation assessment, including searching safely and effectively taking account of latest developments in canine behaviour and training, and the threat, and maintaining the EDD's ability to recognise target odours.

All EDD team continuation training should be supervised by a competent individual.

Continuation training must:

- be suitably challenging;
- be aligned with NCTAS-P accreditation standards;
- comprise an appropriate mix of sessions conducted at training locations and operationally relevant environments;
- seek to address in a timely and effective manner any (e.g. canine behavioural) issues identified during training sessions or operational deployments;
- be accurately recorded on an on-going basis in the EDD team's training records, which must be available for inspection at any time by the Quality Assurance (QA) Body.

Example training record templates are available in Chapter 10.

### 9.1 Frequency of training

For maximum effectiveness, continuation training should be conducted often and spread throughout the year. The duration and format of sessions is at the discretion of the EDD team's management provided the requirements specified in NCTAS-P are met.

As a minimum, each EDD Team should undertake one continuation training session each month and must undertake one (and at least 3 hours) at least every 60 days. No more than 8 hours of training may be conducted in a single day.

### 9.2 Continuation training – scent recognition (Odour ID or Carousel)

Throughout the year, regular short scent recognition training sessions must be conducted to maintain and demonstrate the EDD's ability to recognise target odours and differentiate them from other interferent odours.

Whilst the majority of such continuation training activity is at the discretion of the EDD team's management, each EDD team must, within the 12 months between accreditation assessments complete, as a minimum, the equivalent of the full scent recognition assessment under assessment conditions. This must be recorded in the Annual Training Cover Sheet and Training Record.

During scent recognition continuation training:

- Handlers should be blind to the location of the target<sup>9</sup>.
- Interferents must be used.
- Where provided in specific training kits, blank items (filters, flasks, etc) also must be used.

When planning scent recognition continuation training, Instructors must ensure a suitable balance between regularly exposing the EDD to all the substances in the training kits and focusing effort on substances known to be challenging – either generally or to that EDD.

### 9.3 Continuation training – conventional searches

Throughout the year, each EDD team must train on all substances listed in NCTAS-P, in all relevant operational scenarios including those that may be in accreditation. EDD teams must use the Annual Training Cover Sheet (Chapter 10) to ensure that the EDD team has completed searches on all substances within the different search scenarios. This record must be produced at re-accreditation.

Real, 'live' venues should, wherever possible, be used for continuation training. This allows EDDs to experience searching in a live environment with members of the public and staff members present while the location is open.

Suitable venues may, for example, include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Shopping centres
- Sports stadiums and venues
- Arenas
- Cinemas and theatres
- Museums and other visitor attractions
- Sports / leisure centres
- Supermarkets
- National infrastructure sites

---

<sup>9</sup> At the trainer's discretion, handlers may know the location of the hide in the OID test, for example with the introduction of a new odour or remedial work on a challenging substance. However, it should not be a standard method of training. See Guidance Note [https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/7c/1a/PUB104178\\_Why\\_you\\_should\\_train\\_and\\_test\\_detection\\_dogs\\_double-blind\\_March18.pdf](https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/7c/1a/PUB104178_Why_you_should_train_and_test_detection_dogs_double-blind_March18.pdf)

- Warehouses
- Office buildings
- Covered or external spaces outside, or on the approach to, any of the above venues
- Car parks (multi-story and outdoors).

Refer to 'Chapter 4: Safe and effective use of training samples for EDD training' outlining protocols for using training samples in public areas.

## 9.4 Blank searches

As almost all operational searches will in reality be conducted without a positive find, it is essential that training searches must reflect this to ensure that EDD teams are able to search effectively for long periods of time despite not encountering a positive find. More information on why this happens and suggested mitigation is provided in the Guidance Note Maintaining the operational performance of detection dogs<sup>10</sup>.

## 9.5 National Canine Training Exercises

Government EDD Teams attend Canine Training Exercises (CTEs), typically at least once every two years. These exercises are intended to enable government EDD teams to:

- Train on larger quantities of explosives not normally available during routine training
- Experience explosives and other substances not provided in the ATK but potentially still pertinent to the homeland threat
- Receive updates on best practice
- Experience training with teams and instructors from other organisations
- Receive remedial training where necessary.

Attendance at one of these exercises counts towards five hours of continuation training.

NCTAS-P companies will be provided with guidance on the development of NCTAS-P CTEs to achieve many of the same learning objectives by organising and participating in joint training events with other companies.

---

<sup>10</sup>

<https://www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/documents/7f/a3/PUB104771%20Maintaining%20operational%20performance%20of%20detection%20dogs%202019%20V4.pdf>

# 10 Training Records

It is essential that an accurate and up-to-date training record is maintained for each EDD throughout its working life.

This chapter sets out the information that must be recorded in order for an EDD Team to achieve and maintain NCTAS-P accreditation; records will be reviewed as part of the annual accreditation assessment and may also be subject to inspection at other times by the Quality Assurance Body (QAB).

Note that NCTAS-P does not mandate the format in which the information must be recorded. Organisations may therefore use whatever proprietary or open-source, paper-based or electronic format they wish, provided NCTAS-P requirements are met (e.g. regarding the necessary information being recorded, and integrity and security of information). Training records may be integrated with / held within an organisation's wider record keeping systems provided the NCTAS-P requirements are met.

Note: NCTAS-P sets out what records, principally relating to EDD team training, must be kept in order to achieve and maintain accreditation; organisations must satisfy themselves that they are compliant regarding any other record keeping requirements (e.g. relating to staff employment and animal welfare).

Completion of the Annual Training Cover Sheet is mandatory and it must be presented to the assessor at the EDD team's accreditation and re-accreditation, and where requested to the QA body.

Training records must:

- Be kept up to date: all entries should wherever possible be made on the day the training is undertaken and in any case must be made no later than 7 calendar days afterwards.
- Be signed and dated by the instructor (for entries to paper records); electronic records must similarly capture the date and a unique identifier for the person making each entry.
- Be always handled and stored securely, so as to minimise the risk of loss, theft, damage or tampering.
  - Note that EDD Team records may contain security sensitive and commercially sensitive information, as well as sensitive personal information relating to the handler;
  - Any organisation must ensure that it is compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).



- Be presented for scrutiny at accreditation assessments.
- Be available for inspection at any time as requested by the NCTAS-P QA body.
- Accompany the EDD if transferred to a new handler/unit/organisation. Where the EDD is transferred to a new organisation, a copy of the training record up until date of transfer should be also retained for three years.
- Be retained for three years on the death or retirement from service of the EDD.

## Section 1: Canine Details

This section provides the EDD's basic details and general temperament. This should be completed once the EDD has been procured, and once the instructor or handler is familiar with the EDD's temperament.

The details that must be recorded are:

- Organisation
- EDD Name
- Breed
- Sex
- Neutered
- Date of Birth
- Microchip Number
- Microchip location
- Colour
- Details on general temperament
- Date Acquired
- Purchased/ gift from
- EDDs working role
- Post-service decision

Additional information should be provided on how the EDD behaves within each different search environment or specific specialist discipline.

If there is a significant change in the EDD's temperament, or behaviour in specific scenarios, then this section should be updated.

## **Section 2: Annual Training Cover Sheet – mandatory form**

This section must be updated at the end of each training session. Prior to initial accreditation, instructors are required to complete the table to confirm that EDD teams have successfully completed training in all training scenarios with an indication on each training substance.

A new Annual Training Cover Sheet must be started following annual accreditation and updated whenever training is carried out throughout the year. It must be provided to the assessor for review, along with the detailed training records, at the EDD team's re-accreditation.

When completing this table, the date written down for successful completion for a specific training scenario should correspond to a completed 'Training Record' form, as detailed in Section 3.

On the Annual Training Cover Sheet, the details that must be recorded are:

- Handler name
- Handler identifier (e.g. SIA Licence no)
- EDD name
- Microchip number
- Microchip location
- Organisation
- Date current accreditation valid from
- Re-accreditation date
- Date of training for all substances in all scenarios

## Section 3: Conventional Search Training Record

A new record must be completed (typed or handwritten) by the instructor following each training session. The Training Record outlines all relevant factors pertaining to individual training sessions. The search criteria (substance type, concealment type and hide) is to be determined by the instructor.

The details that must be recorded are:

- Handler name
- Handler identifier (e.g. SIA Licence no)
- Confirm Handler identity checked
- Organisation
- EDD name
- EDD microchip number
- Confirm EDD microchip number checked
- Date of training session
- Instructor
- Instructor identifier
- Organisation
- Total contact time
- Training location
- Overview of training session / learning objectives
- Environmental conditions
- Interferents (including blanks) used
- Target substances used (type, quantity, concealment type)
- Soak time of targets
- Hide locations
- EDD response to targets\*

- Safe System of Search technique\*
- Odour recognition of the EDD\*
- Handler's skills\*
- Any issues observed during the training session,
- Any actions and follow-up recommended

The handler should include their comments at the end of the document and both instructor and handler must discuss and agree focus areas for future training sessions.

\*The instructor is expected to provide a few sentences of observations.

## Section 4: Operational Finds

This section must be completed whenever the EDD indicates, or shows interest, during operational deployments, whatever the cause:

- finds of threat items or materials;
- non-threat, but nonetheless correct finds (also known as nuisance alarms) – indication on or interest in a substance that has similar properties to those contained in the ATK. Based on its training, the EDD is correct to indicate on these; it is the context that allows the handler to determine that the find does not constitute a threat;
- false alarms, where there is no evidence that a trained material or similar substance was present.

The details that must be recorded are:

- Date of find
- Location of search
- Operational context
- Indication or Interest by EDD
- Response by handler (including escalation where appropriate)
- Find / Nuisance Alarm / False Alarm
- Substance (if known)

- Method of concealment
- Details of person recording the operational find

## Section 5: History of EDD

This section should be used to record significant changes during the EDD's life, such as change of organisation or handler.

The details that must be recorded are:

- EDD name
- Microchip number
- Organisation
- Description of change
- Reason for change
- Name and signature of relevant authority

Day to day movements as part of normal working routine do not need to be recorded here.

## Section 6: Incidents

All incidents (e.g. EDD bites, aggression, run away) must be recorded.

The details that must be recorded are:

- Date of incident
- Details of incident
- Action taken
- Name and role of person completing the record.



## Example

## 10.1 Section 1: Canine Details

This section provides details of the EDD's basic details, and general temperament. This should be completed once the EDD has been procured, and once the instructor or handler is familiar with the EDD's temperament.

If there is a significant change in the EDD's temperament, or behaviour in specific scenarios, then this section should be updated.

Detail	Response
Organisation	
EDD name	
Breed	
Date of birth	
Microchip number and location	
Colour	
Sex (male/female)	
Neutered (yes/no)	
Date EDD acquired	
Purchase/gift from	
Address	
Cost	
EDD's working role	
Post-service decision (retained by handler/rehomed/died in service/euthanised)	

Further details	
-----------------	--



## Pen Picture:

These records must be reviewed every 6 months, after acquisition of the EDD or updated accordingly if a significant change occurs, or if the EDD is transferred to a new handler/force/organisation.

General temperament (e.g. confident, nervous, fearful, excitable)
Reaction to people (e.g. confident, fearful)
Reaction to other dogs (e.g. confident, fearful)
Reaction to noise (e.g. no issues observed, gun shy)

Distractions (e.g. known to game, fearful of livestock)
Acceptance of transportation (e.g. no issues, initial fear)
Acceptance of restraint and manipulation (e.g. dos not like ears being touched)
Behavioural issues

Obedience – on lead	Comments
Heel	
Sit	
Down	
Come	
Stay	
Leave	
Obedience – off lead	Comments
Heel	
Sit	
Down	
Come	
Stay	
Leave	
Agility	

Search classification specific notes:

Indication (e.g. sit, standing freeze, occasionally paws at hide)
Stand based search (odour ID, carousel)
Buildings
Vehicles
Route search (urban, rural)

Area search (urban, rural)
Cells (if applicable)

## 10.2 Section 2: Annual Training Cover Sheet - Mandatory

Update this section at the end of each training session. When completing this table, the date written down for successful completion for a specific training scenario should correspond to a completed 'Training Record' form, as detailed in Section 3. During accreditation, the assessor may ask to view a selection of these training records to verify the dates detailed on the Annual Training Cover Sheet.

Detail	Response
Handler	
Handler Unique Identifier	
EDD name	
Microchip (location)	
Organisation	
Current licence valid from (date)/new EDD	
Re-licence date (if applicable)	

This table is to be updated throughout the year with the date that the specified training was successfully completed by the EDD team. All non-greyled out boxes must be completed prior to an EDD team being presented for re-accreditation.

Substance	Stand based	Building	Vehicle	Building	Area

## Example

## 10.3 Section 3: Training Record

A new sheet must be completed (typed or handwritten) by the instructor following each training session. The Training Record outlines all relevant factors pertaining to individual training sessions. The search criteria (substance type, concealment type and hide) is to be determined by the instructor.

The instructor must observe the system of search technique, the odour recognition of the EDD, the handler's skills and record any issues observed during the search. The handler should include their comments at the end of the document and both instructor and handler must discuss and agree focus areas for future training sessions.

Detail	Response
Date	
Handler	
Handler unique identifier	
Confirm handler ID checked	
EDD name	
Microchip	
Instructor name	
Instructor unique identifier	
Instructor organisation	
Training location	
Environmental conditions	
Specific aims of training (e.g. improve indication, improve search technique)	
Interferents used (specific type and amount)	
Soak time for targets	

Handler standard observed	Competent	Further training required	Instructor comments
Systematic search			
Identify & adapt to dangers			
Fitness			
Control of EDD			
Indication			
EDD recall			
Reward recovery			
Action on a find			
EDD standard observed	Competent	Further training required	Instructor comments
Odour recognition			
Temperament			
Timings			Contact time



Handler comments			
Areas to focus on next training session			
Instructor	Signature	Handler	Signature

Example

## 10.4 Section 4: Operational Finds

This section should be completed for threat related operational finds, non-threat, but correct operational finds (also known as nuisance alarms), and false alarms.

A nuisance alarm is an indication on, or interest in a substance that has similar properties to those contained in the HMG issued ATK. A false alarm is an indication with no evidence that a trained material or similar substance was present.

The collation of data for all operational finds is key in demonstrating the value of the canine explosives detection capability. Reporting of operational false and nuisance alarms also provides vital information for improving EDD capability.

Date	Substance (if known)	Indication or interest	Response by handler	Method of concealment	Search type	Operational false alarms	Name, rank, role and signature
Example	HME mixture	Indication		Plastic container under floorboard	Building – residential area	N/A	Example

In the case of all operational finds, please report to the Home Office

Example

## 10.5 Section 5: History of EDD

This section must be completed when the EDD is transferred to a new handler or organisation, moved on posting, deployed on detached duty, returned to a training centre as a course training/demonstration EDD or rehomed.

Day to day movements as part of normal working routine do not need to be recorded here.

Detail	Response
EDD name	
Microchip	
Organisation	

Description of change	Reason for change	Details (e.g. transfer to other agency, retirement)	Name and signature of relevant authority

Example

## 10.6 Section 6: Incidents

All incidents (e.g. EDD bites, aggression, run away) must be recorded.

Date	Details	Bite to human/dog	Action	Name, rank, role and signature

# 11 Glossary

**Accreditation** – Under NCTAS, accreditation is defined as formal, governmental recognition that an explosives detection dog (EDD) team has completed the appropriate training and assessment as outlined in the EDD section of the NCTAS manual.

**Assessor** – Under NCTAS, an assessor may conduct accreditation assessments for any organisation wishing to accredit under NCTAS standards. Depending on the organisation, an assessor will normally be an EDD instructor or trainer. All assessors will have completed the NCTAS instructor workshop.

**Blank** – A blank is an item (e.g. training sample / container) that does not contain any target substance. An EDD should be trained to ignore blank training samples. E.g. blank filters/empty Tupperware box.

**Compliance Check** – The compliance checks related to NCTAS are visits carried out by a member of the designated Quality Assurance body to ensure that an assessor's accreditation of EDD teams is being conducted according to the specification set out in the manual.

**Concealment** - Concealment describes how a training substance has been hidden, including what additional layers of packaging have been added to either reduce the amount of vapour available to the EDD or to visually disguise the training sample.

**Contact time** - Contact time refers to the instructor-mediated time allocated to teaching, provision of guidance, training of EDD teams and feedback to handlers.

**Contamination** – Contamination is the presence of an unwanted constituent (such as explosive particulates) in the environment or training area. Contamination can also refer to non-target odours present on training samples that may interfere with the EDD's learning of the target odour. Contamination can occur as trace contamination, cross contamination or environmental contamination.

**Continuation Training** – Continuation training refers to training provided to EDD teams throughout the year between accreditations to maintain and develop the EDD's ability to recognise target odours and search effectively.

**Evacuation** – An evacuation is the movement of people from a suspected or known area of risk to a safe area outside. See also Invacuation.

**False Alarm** – A false alarm is an indication with no evidence that a trained material or similar substance was present.

**Handler** – The individual responsible for controlling and tasking the working EDD during both training and operational deployments.

**Incident Control Point (ICP)** - A designated point close to, but a safe distance from, an incident where emergency services personnel will rendezvous and establish control capability before initiating a tactical reaction.

**Instructor** – The individual who is responsible for providing initial and/or continuation training (and accreditation) to EDD handlers and EDDs. An instructor will have

received training to their own agency's standards. An instructor may also be referred to as a trainer.

**Interferents** – An interferent is an item/ substance that is placed into the search area to introduce novel odours and environmental disturbance. Use of interferents helps ensure that the EDD is only using the odour of the target substance when detecting hides. As well as odours/substances typically found within the search environment (such as coffee, paper, diesel), interferents can also consist of packaging associated with the training kit (such as plastic containers, clip seal bags or cotton wool) but do not contain the target substance. It ensures that EDDs are not using training kit packaging odours (or other associated odours) to detect target substances.

Interferents may also be referred to as distractors.

**Nuisance alarm** – A nuisance alarm is a valid indication or interest on a non-threat substance that has similar properties to those contained in the HM Gov. training kits (e.g. cosmetic products containing peroxides).

**Police Search Advisor (PoISA)** - The police search adviser (PoISA) is trained to plan and manage search activity and should be consulted whenever advice is needed, particularly in complex cases and in all major enquiries. Overall responsibility for the management of the investigation is retained by the investigator, however, the PoISA can advise the investigator on the use of appropriate search assets, methods of deployment and specialist and expert assets which might be available outside the police service.

**Quality Assurance (QA)** - Quality Assurance of NCTAS accreditation is carried out by nominated and trained Quality Assurers to ensure that all EDD instructors are training and accrediting handlers in accordance with NCTAS standards and protocols.

**RVP** – A check point or area that is agreed for all involved parties to meet

**Search area** – The area where the EDD team is required to search.

**Trainer** – See instructor.

**Training Kit** – The training kit is the term used to refer to a standardised suite of training substances (both type and amount of training substance) which provides an explosives capability to an EDD team.

**Training Manager/ Supervisor** – An individual who is responsible for the training conducted within an EDD section/ organisation. This may or may not be the same person as the EDD section manager

**Training Sample/substance** – Refers to each individual substance contained within the training kits.

**Vulnerable Area** - General location where an adversary is more likely to mount an attack.

**Vulnerable Point** - Specific location where an adversary is more likely to mount an attack.

# 12 Annexes

## 12.1 Annex 1: List of topics provided in the Canine Training Guidance Notes.

The Guidance Notes provided here are periodically updated and new content added as more notes are developed. These notes are designed to provide an understanding of different factors involved in detection dog training, and the advice provided herein will aid EDD trainers and teams into meeting the standards for NCTAS accreditation.

These notes have been developed through known best practise and the latest scientific understanding of canine training and detection as well as correct explosives handling for EDD training.

Canine Odour Discrimination Test ([PUB89074](#))

Canine Odour Discrimination Test Setup Tool - User instructions ([PUB89154](#))

Canine Odour Discrimination Test Setup Tool ([Zip file](#))

Why and how to control contamination ([PUB89664](#))

Why you should train and test detection dogs 'double-blind' ([PUB104178](#))

Are your training samples giving you the capability you expect? ([PUB104179](#))

How to train your dog to generalise across varying types and sizes of targets ([PUB89074](#))

Using blanks and interferences to ensure effective detection dog training ([PUB111065](#))

Maintaining the operational performance of detection dogs ([PUB104771](#))

Working dog welfare during kennelling ([PUB104181](#))

How to produce and use odour soaks as part of an effective detection dog training programme ([PUB114300](#))

Check this website regularly for new Guidance Notes:

<https://www.npsa.gov.uk/canine-detection-guidance-notes>

## 2.2 Annex 2: Training Kit Usage Form

This form must be completed every time a training sample is used.

Substance (inc. quantity)	Condition of substance prior to training (do not use if not 'Good') <sup>1</sup>	Condition of substances at end of training <sup>1</sup>	Action <sup>2</sup>	Signed by instructor to confirm actions have been taken	Date sample was used for training

1. Condition of substance

Good (no issues) / Broken – Do not use / Damp/wet – Do not use / Crumbling – Do not use / Environmental contamination (sand, grit, plants) – Do not use

2. Actions

None taken / Report and Store (Report to training kits co-ordinator, take out of use until next planned exchange) / Report and return (Report to training kits co-ordinator and arrange immediate return or exchange)