

■ W A R D O G A C A D E M Y ■



WDA

K9 DETECTION SUPPORT SPECIALIST

K D S S

STUDENT TEXTBOOK

*Complete Reference Manual for the
KDSS Certification Program*

EDITION
2026

MODULES
10

VOLUME
I

K9 Detection Support Specialist (KDSS) Student Textbook

Complete Reference Manual for the KDSS Certification Program

Edition 2026 · Volume I

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Published by:

War Dog Academy

A division of McNamara Enterprises

wardogacademy.com

Training facility:

The Ranch TX · Dilley, Texas

Certification Program:

K9 Detection Support Specialist (KDSS)

Prerequisite credential to the WDA EDD Handler Certification

DISCLAIMER

This textbook is a professional training resource. The information contained herein reflects current best practices in the K9 detection support field as of the publication date. Training protocols, legal frameworks, and operational standards evolve over time. Students and practitioners are responsible for remaining current with applicable laws, agency policies, and veterinary standards in their operational jurisdictions. Nothing in this textbook should be interpreted as veterinary advice, legal advice, or a substitute for hands-on training under a qualified instructor.

Medical content in this textbook (Module 7 in particular) is intended for first-response recognition and handler-directed support only. The KDSS is not a veterinary medical provider. All medical decisions for a working dog must be made by the handler, a licensed veterinarian, or a qualified veterinary technician under veterinary supervision.

PREFACE

From the War Dog Academy training staff.

The K9 Detection Support Specialist certification exists because of a gap we kept seeing in the field. Over years of running Explosives Detection Dog (EDD) programs for law enforcement agencies, federal contractors, energy-sector clients, and port authorities, we watched the same pattern repeat: outstanding handler-dog teams were being set up to fail by the operational environment around them.

The handler was trying to run the dog, manage the crowd, keep the radio, document the search, watch for hazards, and talk to the supervisor — all at once. Something always suffered. Usually it was the dog. The handler's attention would slip for a three-second pause to respond to a radio call, and in those three seconds the dog would work right past a hide the handler would have caught.

The military has known this for decades. A K9 team in a tactical environment has a handler on the dog and a full fire team around them managing everything else. Law enforcement and private sector EDD work has not historically been staffed the same way. We built this course to close that gap.

A properly trained KDSS doesn't handle the dog. A KDSS isn't a junior handler. A KDSS is the operational partner who makes it possible for the handler to focus on the one thing that matters during an active search: the dog. When a KDSS is running point on environmental control, crowd management, communications, documentation, and welfare monitoring, the handler's cognitive bandwidth is freed up for the subtle observations that catch real threats before they become real incidents.

This textbook teaches you that role. It doesn't teach you to be a handler — that's a separate course, and we offer it. This book teaches you to be the professional support operator that every competent handler wishes they had on every deployment.

Read it carefully. Return to it often. The material inside is not theoretical — every protocol, every rule, every story was built from field experience, and every one of them exists because someone learned it the hard way so you don't have to.

*War Dog Academy
The Ranch TX · Dilley, Texas
2026*

HOW TO USE THIS TEXTBOOK

This textbook is organized into ten modules, each building on the one before it. The modules follow a deliberate progression: you will first learn what an EDD team is and what the KDSS does inside that team; then you will learn how to read the dog you'll be supporting; then you will learn how scent and explosives work; then you will learn the operational mechanics of live deployments; and finally you will learn the medical, kennel, timing, and deployment-readiness skills that separate a competent KDSS from a great one.

Module Structure

Every module contains the same elements:

- **Module Overview** — learning objectives, reading length, and quiz passing score
- **Lessons** — the core instructional content, broken into numbered sections
- **Callouts** — set-off boxes that highlight the most important concepts, warnings, and rules
- **Module Summary** — the key takeaways, compressed
- **Study Questions** — at the end of each module, questions to test your understanding before you take the official quiz on the online course platform

Callout Box Guide

Throughout the textbook you will see four types of callout boxes. Learn to recognize them:

KEY CONCEPT

Core concepts that define how to think about the role. These are the ideas that hold the whole discipline together. Expect them on your certification exam.

△ IMPORTANT

Critical safety information. Read these carefully. Many of these rules exist because violating them has injured or killed handlers, dogs, or civilians in the past.

✦ REMEMBER

Important points to memorize and internalize. Often these are rules you will apply dozens of times a deployment without thinking.

i NOTE

Supplemental context that deepens your understanding. Not essential for passing the exam, but useful for operating well in the field.

Study Approach

We recommend the following study approach for each module:

1. Read the module overview and learning objectives first, so you know what you're being asked to learn
2. Read the lessons straight through without stopping — get the shape of the material
3. Re-read each lesson carefully, making notes on the callout boxes and tables
4. Review the module summary and test yourself on the key points
5. Complete the end-of-module study questions in this textbook
6. Take the official quiz on the online course platform

Module quizzes require 70% to pass. You may retake a failed quiz once with a randomized question order. Passing all ten module quizzes earns your KDSS certification.

The Appendices

At the back of this textbook you will find three appendices that should travel with you into the field:

- **Appendix A** — KDSS Field Reference Card (the printable one-page card)
- **Appendix B** — Deployment Documentation Template
- **Appendix C** — Glossary of Terms

The Field Reference Card is designed to be printed, laminated, and kept in your kit. It consolidates the most operationally critical information from this textbook into a form you can consult during a live deployment.

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PART ONE

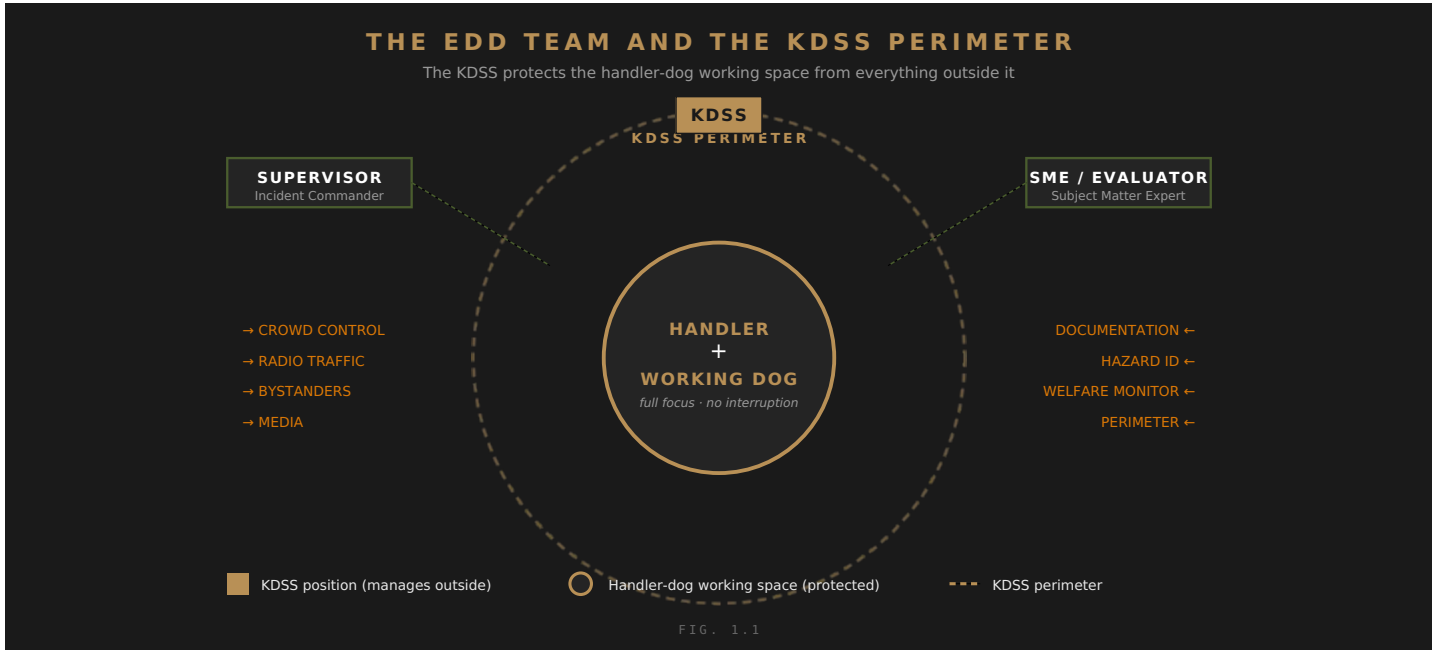
FOUNDATIONS

MODULES 1 – 6

Part One establishes the conceptual and operational foundation for the KDSS role. These six modules cover who you are on the team, what you are watching, how scent and explosives work, how live operations run, the legal framework that governs your work, and where this certification leads next.

MODULE 1 — THE EDD TEAM

Roles, Responsibilities & Team Dynamics



MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 45–60 minutes of reading + 10-question quiz **Passing score:** 7 out of 10 (70%) **Prerequisite:** None — this is the foundation module

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Define an EDD team and explain the role of each member
 2. Articulate why the KDSS role is operationally critical
 3. Identify the four standard roles in a professional EDD deployment
 4. List the core responsibilities of a KDSS
 5. Describe how the KDSS role adapts to different operational environments

LESSON 1.1 — WHAT IS AN EDD TEAM?

An Explosives Detection Dog (EDD) team consists of a trained canine and a certified handler working together to detect explosive odors in operational environments. The team functions as a single unit — the handler directs the search while the dog uses its extraordinary olfactory capability to identify target odors that no human or machine can match for speed and reliability in field conditions.

A third component — often overlooked but operationally critical — is the support role. In professional EDD deployments, handlers rarely operate completely alone. They work within a larger operational framework that includes personnel responsible for environment control, crowd management, communication, documentation, and scene security. This is the **K9 Detection Support Specialist** role.

KEY CONCEPT

An EDD team is a handler-dog partnership. The KDSS supports the team by managing the operational environment so the handler can focus entirely on the dog.

LESSON 1.2 — WHY THE SUPPORT ROLE MATTERS

A handler running a vehicle search, building sweep, or event security deployment cannot simultaneously manage the dog, read the environment, control bystanders, communicate with supervisors, and document search activity. In high-stakes operational environments, attempting to do all of these things simultaneously compromises the quality of the search and creates safety risks for the handler, dog, and public.

The KDSS removes these competing demands by taking ownership of everything outside the handler-dog working space. When a KDSS is operating effectively, the handler's entire cognitive focus is on the dog — which is exactly where it needs to be.

The Difference a KDSS Makes

WITHOUT KDSS SUPPORT	WITH KDSS SUPPORT
Handler manages crowd AND searches	KDSS manages crowd, handler focuses on dog
Radio communications interrupt search	KDSS handles all radio traffic during search
Documentation done after, from memory	KDSS documents in real time
Perimeter unsecured during search	KDSS maintains perimeter integrity
Handler misses subtle dog signals	Handler's full attention on dog behavior
Alert called late or missed entirely	Handler catches alert faster — better outcomes

LESSON 1.3 — THE FOUR ROLES IN AN EDD DEPLOYMENT

Professional EDD deployments — particularly in law enforcement, military, and government contractor environments — typically involve four distinct roles:

Role 1: The Handler

Certified EDD handler responsible for directing the dog through the search area, reading the dog's behavior, calling alerts, and making all search decisions. The handler's focus must be exclusively on the dog during active search.

Role 2: The K9 Detection Support Specialist (KDSS)

Trained support personnel responsible for environment control, crowd management, communications, documentation, and scene security. This is the role you are training for. The KDSS is the handler's operational partner on the ground.

Role 3: The Team Supervisor / Incident Commander

The supervisory authority overseeing the deployment. May be a law enforcement supervisor, military officer, or private sector operations manager. The KDSS communicates with the supervisor so the handler does not have to interrupt the search.

Role 4: The Subject Matter Expert (SME) / Evaluator

In training environments or certification evaluations, an SME observes the team's performance. In operational environments, this may be a federal agent, contracting officer representative, or senior trainer. The KDSS may interface with the SME on documentation and search records.

LESSON 1.4 — KDSS CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

The KDSS certification covers proficiency in all of the following responsibility areas. You will be tested on each in your certification examination:

- Pre-search environment assessment and hazard identification
- Establishing and maintaining search perimeters
- Crowd control and bystander management during active search
- Radio communications — reporting search status, relaying handler information
- Real-time documentation of search activity
- Chain of custody awareness for search areas and evidence
- Post-search documentation and after-action reporting
- Handler safety monitoring — environmental and physical hazards
- K9 welfare monitoring — heat, stress indicators, water, recovery
- Alert protocol support — what to do when the dog alerts
- Emergency response — what to do if a live device is suspected

△ IMPORTANT

The KDSS does NOT handle the dog, touch the dog, give the dog commands, or interfere with the handler-dog working relationship under any circumstances. Your role is to manage everything OUTSIDE the handler-dog space.

LESSON 1.5 — KDSS IN DIFFERENT OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

The KDSS role looks different depending on the deployment environment. Understanding these differences is essential to performing effectively in any context:

Vehicle Search

- **Primary responsibilities:** Perimeter control, traffic management, documentation of vehicles searched
- **Key challenges:** Moving vehicles, public interaction, maintaining clear working space

Building Search

- **Primary responsibilities:** Floor-by-floor clearance support, stairwell security, occupant management
- **Key challenges:** Multiple entry points, elevator management, coordinating with building staff

Event / Venue Security

- **Primary responsibilities:** Crowd control, staging search from public view, communication with event security
- **Key challenges:** High foot traffic, media presence, time pressure

Open Area / Perimeter

- **Primary responsibilities:** Sector boundary marking, wind observation reporting, terrain hazard identification
- **Key challenges:** Large area coverage, environmental exposure, sector coordination

Luggage / Cargo

- **Primary responsibilities:** Item organization, chain of custody documentation, staging and re-staging
- **Key challenges:** Volume of items, maintaining organized search array

Government / Federal Facility

- **Primary responsibilities:** Credential management, classified area protocols, federal chain of command
- **Key challenges:** Strict access controls, heightened documentation requirements

✦ REMEMBER

Regardless of environment, your mission never changes: protect the handler-dog working space, manage everything outside it, and document what happens.

MODULE 1 SUMMARY

1. The EDD team is a **handler-dog partnership**, supported by the KDSS
2. The KDSS takes ownership of **everything outside the handler-dog working space**
3. Professional deployments involve **four roles**: Handler, KDSS, Supervisor, SME/Evaluator
4. The KDSS **never touches or commands the dog** without explicit handler permission
5. The core mission is the same in every environment: **protect the working space, manage the outside, document everything**

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. What is the primary role of the K9 Detection Support Specialist (KDSS) during an active search?
 - A. To handle the dog when the primary handler needs assistance
 - B. To manage everything outside the handler-dog working space
 - C. To identify the explosive compound when an alert occurs
 - D. To make search decisions when the environment changes
2. Which of the following is an automatic disqualifying action for a KDSS during a deployment?
 - A. Reporting an environmental hazard to the handler
 - B. Handling radio communications on behalf of the team
 - C. Approaching and touching the working dog without permission
 - D. Documenting search start time before the search begins
3. During a vehicle search, a bystander begins walking toward the search area. What should the KDSS do?
 - A. Call out to the handler to stop the search immediately
 - B. Physically intercept and redirect the bystander without disrupting the search
 - C. Allow the bystander to pass since it will not affect the dog
 - D. Use the radio to report the bystander to the supervisor
4. How many core roles are typically present in a professional EDD deployment?
 - A. Two — handler and dog
 - B. Three — handler, dog, and supervisor
 - C. Four — handler, KDSS, team supervisor, and SME/evaluator
 - D. Five — handler, two KDSS, supervisor, and evaluator
5. Who is responsible for handling all external radio communications during an active search?
 - A. The handler, between search areas
 - B. The team supervisor
 - C. The KDSS
 - D. The evaluator or SME
6. In which environment does the KDSS primarily manage floor-by-floor clearance and occupant management?
 - A. Open area search
 - B. Vehicle search
 - C. Luggage screening
 - D. Building search

7. What is the SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT KDSS rule regarding the working dog?

- A. Always maintain visual contact with the dog
- B. Never touch, command, or interfere with the dog without handler permission
- C. Stay within 10 feet of the dog at all times
- D. Report all dog behavior observations immediately via radio

8. What advantage does having a KDSS provide that most directly improves detection accuracy?

- A. The KDSS provides a second opinion on whether an alert is valid
- B. The KDSS frees the handler to focus entirely on reading the dog
- C. The KDSS can direct the dog toward more likely hide locations
- D. The KDSS documents finds in real time which improves legal standing

9. A supervisor calls on the radio during an active vehicle search asking for a status update. What should the KDSS do?

- A. Signal the handler to pause and take the radio call
- B. Respond on behalf of the team without interrupting the handler
- C. Not respond until the search is complete
- D. Hand the radio to the handler

10. Which KDSS responsibility occurs BEFORE the dog enters the search area?

- A. Alert documentation
- B. Post-search after-action report
- C. Pre-search site assessment and hazard identification
- D. Radio communications with supervisor

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 2 — CANINE BEHAVIOR & COMMUNICATION

Reading Dogs, Stress Signals & Drive Theory

MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 60–75 minutes of reading + 10-question quiz **Passing score:** 7 out of 10 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 1 passed

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain why KDSS personnel must understand canine behavior without handling dogs
2. Identify and describe the five working dog drives
3. Recognize normal working behavior, pre-alert behavior, and stress indicators
4. Apply working dog welfare monitoring standards in field conditions
5. Respond appropriately to defensive or stressed canine behavior

LESSON 2.1 — WHY KDSS MUST UNDERSTAND CANINE BEHAVIOR

You will not be training dogs. You will not be handling dogs. But you will be watching a dog work in real time, often closer to the handler-dog team than anyone else on scene. Understanding what you are watching is not optional — it is what separates a KDSS professional from a bystander with a radio.

A KDSS who can recognize when a dog is stressed, when a dog is in drive, when a dog is flagging fatigue, or when a dog is showing pre-alert behavior is a force multiplier for the handler. You may observe something the handler — who is managing the lead, the pace, and the search pattern — does not catch in the moment.

KEY CONCEPT

You don't need to train dogs to read dogs. Understanding basic canine behavior makes you a better support specialist and a better future handler.

LESSON 2.2 — WORKING DOG DRIVE THEORY

Working dogs are selected and trained based on their natural behavioral drives — innate motivational systems that govern how a dog interacts with its environment. Understanding drive theory helps you understand why a working dog behaves differently from a pet dog and what you might observe during a search.

The Five Drives

Prey Drive The instinct to chase, catch, and possess. In detection work, this is what motivates the dog to hunt for a target odor — the dog treats the hide as prey to be found. A dog with strong prey drive works persistently and with intensity.

Hunt Drive The desire to search and seek. Closely related to prey drive but focused on the searching behavior itself rather than the possession of the item. Hunt drive keeps a dog working through a complex environment even when the hide is not immediately obvious.

Play Drive The desire to engage in play — particularly with a toy or with the handler. Many detection dogs are rewarded with a ball or tug toy rather than food because their play drive is so high it is the most powerful reward available.

Pack Drive The desire to be with and work for the handler as part of a social unit. Pack drive is what creates the strong handler-dog bond essential to reliable detection work.

Defense Drive The protective instinct. Working dogs in patrol roles use defense drive. Detection dogs should have manageable defense drive — enough for confidence in novel environments, but not so high that the dog becomes reactive or aggressive.


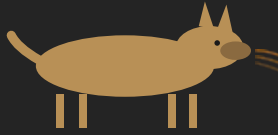

What You Should Observe

A KDSS observing a detection dog should expect to see **high prey and hunt drive** — a dog that is actively, persistently, and enthusiastically searching. A dog that appears disinterested, distracted, or reluctant may be stressed, fatigued, or working in a drive-depleted state. This is information the handler needs.

LESSON 2.3 — READING CANINE BODY LANGUAGE

Dogs communicate continuously through their body language. As a KDSS, you are positioned to observe the dog and report observations to the handler when relevant. The following guide covers the most important body language signals you will encounter.

READING THE WORKING DOG

NORMAL WORKING	PRE-ALERT	STRESS INDICATORS
 <p style="text-align: center; color: #d4af37; margin: 5px 0;">SIGNS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Head at or below shoulderActive air samplingFluid, purposeful movementSteady, rhythmic breathingPeriodic handler check-ins <p style="text-align: center; color: #d4af37; margin: 5px 0;">ACTION:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Continue monitoring</p>	 <p style="text-align: center; color: #d4af37; margin: 5px 0;">SIGNS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Sudden head carriage changeIncreased respiratory rateSlowing or stoppingTail stiffens or increasesDecreased handler response <p style="text-align: center; color: #d4af37; margin: 5px 0;">ACTION:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Observe only — never call</p>	 <p style="text-align: center; color: #d4af37; margin: 5px 0;">SIGNS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Excessive panting (not heat)Repeated lip licking, yawningWhale eye (whites showing)Tucked tail, low postureAvoidance / refusing entry <p style="text-align: center; color: #d4af37; margin: 5px 0;">ACTION:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Inform handler at break</p>

Normal Working Behavior

- Head carried at or slightly below shoulder level — actively sampling air
- Tail position varies by breed and individual — note the dog's baseline and watch for changes
- Fluid, purposeful movement through the search area
- Periodic pauses to investigate specific areas — air sampling or odor sourcing
- Eye contact with handler — checking in — normal and healthy
- Consistent pace matching the handler's direction

Pre-Alert Behavior

Pre-alert behaviors are the subtle changes that signal the dog has detected target odor and is beginning to work toward the source. These are the signals the handler is watching for. A KDSS who recognizes these can help confirm observations if the handler asks:

- Sudden change in head carriage — head snaps up or down sharply
- Increased respiratory rate — faster sniffing
- Slowing of pace or stopping — dog is working the odor cone
- Change in tail movement — often increases or stiffens
- Body orientation toward a specific area or object
- Decreased responsiveness to handler — dog is focused on odor

KEY CONCEPT

Pre-alert behavior is the transition between normal searching and a committed alert. It is subtle. It takes experience to read. Observing it is valuable — but never call a pre-alert yourself. Only the handler calls alerts.

Stress Indicators

Stress in working dogs reduces detection accuracy and can lead to false alerts, missed finds, and behavioral shutdown. As a KDSS, if you observe these signals, make a quiet note and inform the handler at an appropriate break:

- Excessive panting unrelated to physical exertion or heat
- Yawning repeatedly during active work
- Lip licking or tongue flicking in novel contexts
- Whale eye — showing whites of eyes
- Tucked tail combined with low body posture
- Refusing to enter a space or repeatedly leaving an area
- Excessive sniffing of the ground (displacement behavior)
- Seeking handler contact repeatedly and not resuming search
- Shaking off as if wet when not wet — stress release behavior

△ IMPORTANT

If a dog shows multiple stress indicators simultaneously or shows sudden behavioral shutdown — lying down and refusing to work — this is a welfare concern. Do not pressure the dog. Quietly inform the handler.

LESSON 2.4 — WORKING DOG WELFARE: KDSS RESPONSIBILITIES

The KDSS is responsible for monitoring working dog welfare during deployments, particularly in extended operations. This is not the handler's job alone — when a handler is focused on a search, they may not notice environmental conditions that are affecting the dog.

Heat Management

Working dogs in Texas and Gulf Coast environments face serious heat risk. A dog in high drive may work through heat stress without showing obvious signs until it is dangerous. Monitor ambient temperature, surface temperature, and the dog's respiratory rate. Ensure water access is available at all search breaks.

Rest and Recovery

Working dogs have a peak performance window of approximately **20–30 minutes of intense detection work** before performance degrades. Monitor session length and flag fatigue signs to the handler.

Paw and Foot Care

Hot asphalt, rough terrain, and debris can injure paws during extended searches. If you observe a dog favoring a limb or lifting a paw repeatedly, report it to the handler.

Post-Search Care

After a search, ensure the dog has access to shade, water, and a cool-down period before returning to its vehicle or kennel.

MODULE 2 SUMMARY

1. KDSS professionals must **read dogs** without handling them
2. Detection dogs operate primarily on **prey drive and hunt drive**
3. **Pre-alert behavior** signals the transition to a committed alert — observe, but never call
4. **Stress indicators** reduce detection accuracy — report to the handler at appropriate breaks
5. **Peak performance window is 20–30 minutes** — welfare monitoring is a core KDSS duty
6. If a dog shows **defensive behavior**, freeze, avoid eye contact, and slowly increase distance

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. Which drive is most directly responsible for a detection dog's persistent searching behavior?
 - A. Defense drive
 - B. Pack drive
 - C. Hunt drive
 - D. Play drive
2. A detection dog suddenly changes its head carriage, begins sniffing more rapidly, and slows its pace near a vehicle's rear bumper. This is MOST likely:
 - A. A stress response to an unfamiliar environment
 - B. Pre-alert behavior indicating detection of target odor
 - C. Normal working behavior during any vehicle search
 - D. A sign the dog needs a water break
3. You observe a working dog yawning repeatedly, licking its lips, and refusing to re-enter a stairwell. This MOST likely indicates:
 - A. The dog has found a hide in the stairwell and is alerting passively
 - B. The dog is in high prey drive and pursuing odor
 - C. Stress — the dog is experiencing environmental pressure
 - D. The dog needs its reward toy
4. What is the approximate peak performance window for intense detection work before a dog's accuracy begins to degrade?
 - A. 5–10 minutes
 - B. 20–30 minutes
 - C. 45–60 minutes
 - D. 90–120 minutes
5. A working dog shows 'whale eye' — the whites of its eyes are visible — and has a low, tucked tail. The appropriate KDSS response is:
 - A. Immediately inform the handler via radio
 - B. Approach the dog to offer comfort
 - C. Note the time and behavior, inform the handler at the next appropriate break
 - D. End the search immediately

6. Which reward type is most common in high-drive detection dogs?

- A. Food treats delivered from a pouch
- B. Verbal praise from the handler
- C. A toy or tug object because play drive is the highest-value motivator
- D. Physical affection from the handler

7. During an outdoor summer search in Texas, you notice the working dog is panting heavily and has slowed significantly after 15 minutes. The ambient temperature is 98°F. What do you do?

- A. Continue monitoring — 15 minutes is within the normal performance window
- B. Immediately stop the search yourself and remove the dog from the environment
- C. Observe and inform the handler — this is a welfare concern requiring attention
- D. Give the dog water without informing the handler

8. What is the correct KDSS behavior when an unfamiliar working dog shows defensive behavior toward you?

- A. Stand your ground and avoid showing fear
- B. Freeze, avoid eye contact, and calmly increase distance
- C. Speak calmly to the dog to reassure it
- D. Alert the handler via radio immediately

9. Which behavior is a sign that a dog is in normal, engaged working mode?

- A. Refusing to enter a search area
- B. Repeatedly seeking handler contact
- C. Fluid, purposeful movement with active air sampling
- D. Excessive ground sniffing as a displacement behavior

10. Why should a KDSS never make independent decisions about whether a dog's alert is valid?

- A. Only the handler has the training to interpret the dog's alert behavior
- B. The KDSS is not legally authorized to call alerts
- C. The KDSS position is usually too far away to see the alert
- D. All of the above

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 3 — EXPLOSIVE ODOR SCIENCE

How Dogs Detect · Scent Theory · Target Compounds

MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 60 minutes of reading + 10-question quiz **Passing score:** 7 out of 10 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 2 passed

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Describe the biological basis for canine detection capability
 2. Explain how scent moves through an environment (cone, pooling, thermal effects, residual odor)
 3. Identify the four major explosive compound families EDD teams detect
 4. Apply KDSS alert protocols specific to each compound family
 5. Position personnel and bystanders to preserve search integrity

LESSON 3.1 — THE CANINE NOSE: AN OVERVIEW

The dog's ability to detect explosive odors is not magic — it is biology. Understanding the basic science of canine olfaction helps the KDSS understand why the handler makes certain search decisions, why a dog might alert in an unexpected location, and how environmental conditions affect search effectiveness.

The Numbers

- **Humans:** approximately 6 million olfactory receptor neurons
- **Dogs:** approximately 300 million olfactory receptor neurons — roughly **50 times more**
- The portion of the dog's brain dedicated to analyzing scent is proportionally **40 times larger** than the equivalent human brain region
- Dogs can detect some explosive compounds at concentrations measured in **parts per trillion** — equivalent to detecting a single drop of a substance diluted in 20 Olympic swimming pools

KEY CONCEPT

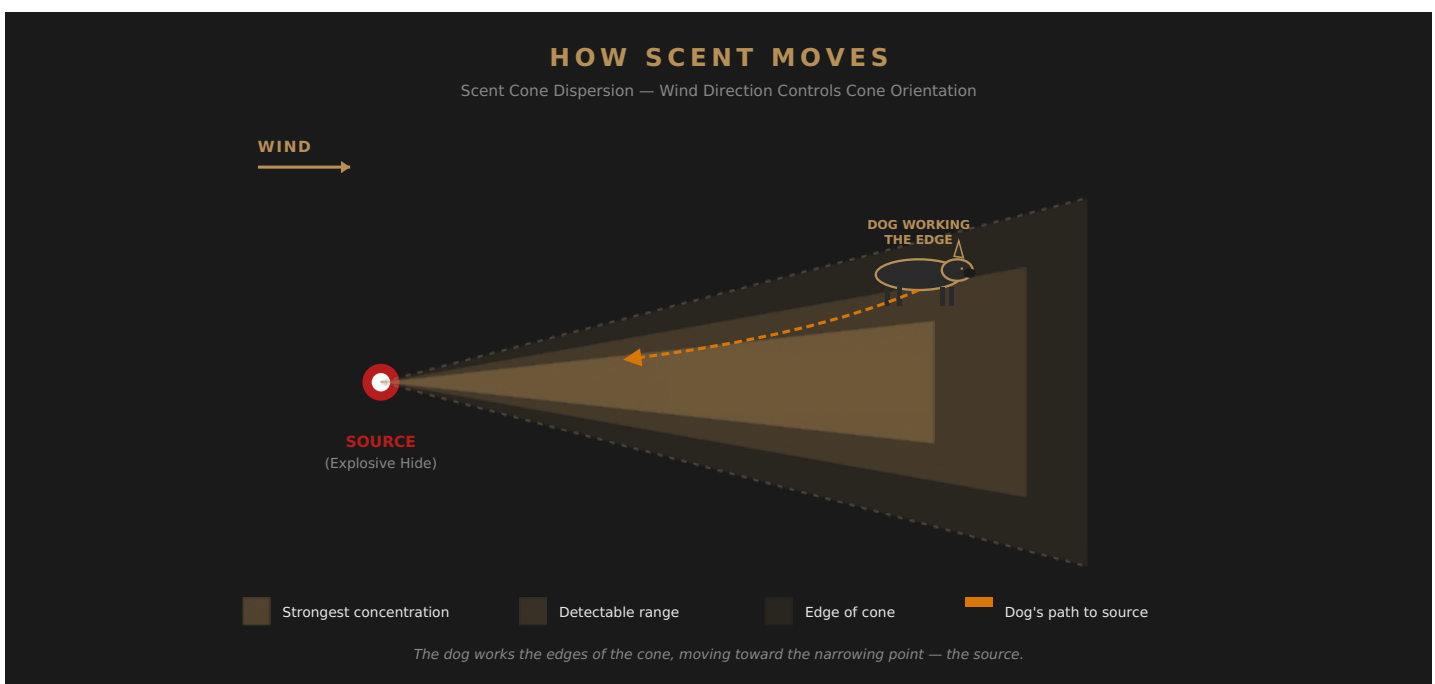
Dogs detect odor at concentrations far below any human or machine capability in field conditions. The KDSS role is to protect the conditions that allow this extraordinary capability to operate effectively.

LESSON 3.2 — HOW SCENT MOVES: WHAT THE KDSS NEEDS TO KNOW

As a KDSS, you are responsible for the environment around the search. Understanding how scent moves through that environment helps you make better decisions about where to stand, where to keep bystanders, and what environmental conditions to report to the handler.

Scent Cone

Odor emanating from a source disperses in a cone shape — widening as it moves away from the source. Wind direction determines cone orientation. A dog will typically work the edges of the cone, moving toward its point of origin. This is why a dog may alert away from the actual hide location — it is sourcing the cone.



Scent Pooling

Odor collects in areas of still air — low spots, corners, enclosed spaces, dead air zones. A dog may alert strongly in a pooling area even when the actual source is elsewhere. This is normal and expected, **not a false alert**.

Thermal Effects

Heat causes scent to rise. Cold surfaces pull scent down. A vehicle searched in morning cold presents different scent dynamics than the same vehicle searched at midday. The KDSS should be aware of time-of-day effects on search complexity.

Wind and Human Contamination

Bystanders standing downwind of a search area can disrupt the scent picture and contaminate areas the dog has not yet searched. This is one of the primary reasons the KDSS must control crowd positioning — **scent contamination from humans affects search accuracy**.

Residual Odor

Explosive materials leave odor traces on surfaces they have contacted, even after the material itself is removed. A dog may alert on a surface that previously contained an explosive — this is **not necessarily a false alert**. The KDSS must understand this so they can explain it appropriately to supervisors.

LESSON 3.3 — TARGET COMPOUND FAMILIES: OVERVIEW FOR KDSS

The KDSS is not responsible for explosive compound technical knowledge at the level of a handler or trainer. However, a basic understanding of the compound families EDD teams are trained to detect provides important context for your support role — particularly regarding safety protocols when an alert occurs.

Peroxide-Based

- **Examples:** TATP, HMTD
- **KDSS relevance:** Highly sensitive to friction and heat. If the dog alerts — evacuate immediately, do not touch anything.

Inorganic Oxidizer

- **Examples:** ANFO, Black Powder, Smokeless Powder
- **KDSS relevance:** Common in pipe bombs. Alert protocol — secure area, no radio transmissions within 300 feet.

Nitroamine

- **Examples:** RDX, C-4, PETN, Semtex
- **KDSS relevance:** Military grade. Alert protocol — treat as highest threat level. Call for EOD immediately.

Nitroaromatic

- **Examples:** TNT, DNT
- **KDSS relevance:** Common military ordnance. Do not approach. Secure 300-foot perimeter.

△ IMPORTANT

The KDSS is NEVER responsible for identifying compounds, touching suspicious items, or making threat assessments. Your role on an alert is: stop, secure the area, protect people, and support the handler's decision-making.

MODULE 3 SUMMARY

1. Dogs have approximately **50 times more olfactory receptors** than humans
2. Scent disperses in a **cone shape** determined by wind direction
3. Scent **pools** in still-air areas — alerts in these zones are legitimate, not false
4. **Residual odor** means a dog can correctly alert on a surface where explosives were previously stored
5. The four compound families are **Peroxide-Based, Inorganic Oxidizer, Nitroamine, and Nitroaromatic**
6. KDSS personnel **never identify compounds, touch items, or make threat assessments**

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

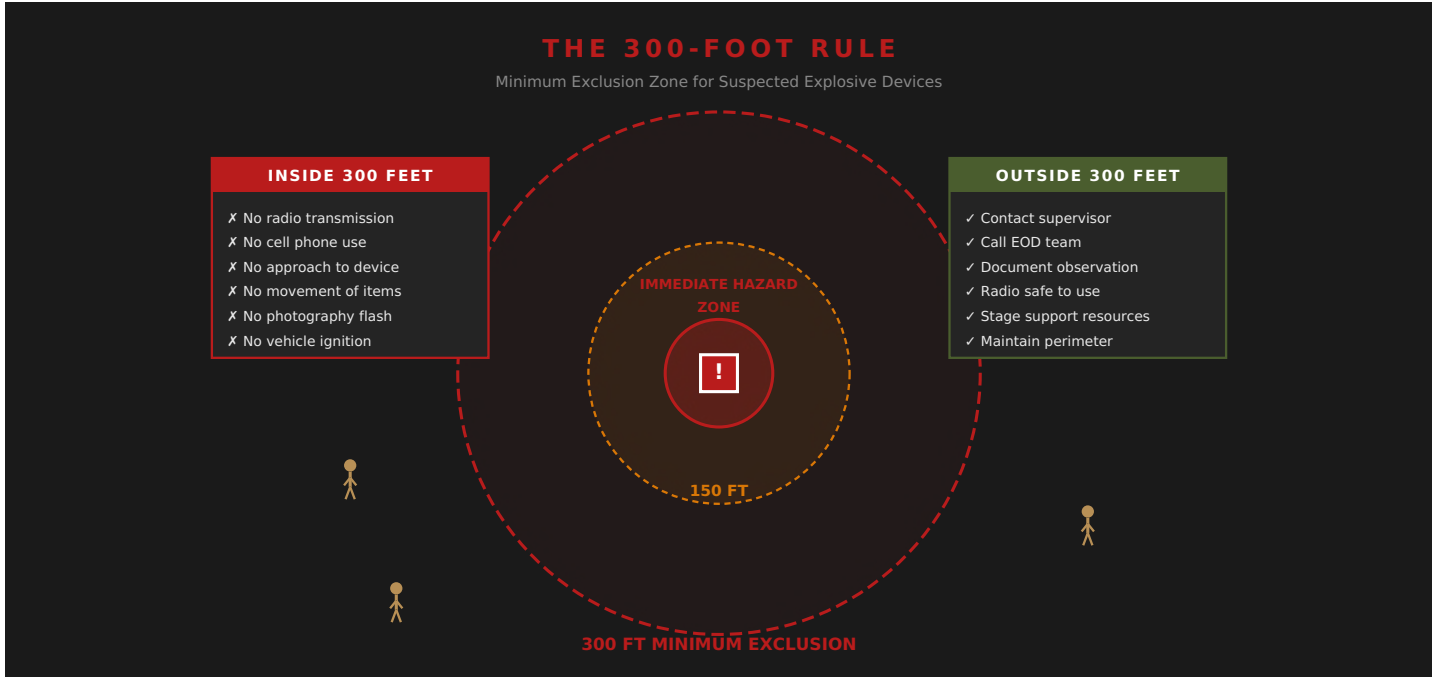
1. Approximately how many olfactory receptor neurons does a dog have compared to a human?
 - A. 3 times more
 - B. 10 times more
 - C. 50 times more
 - D. The same number, differently organized
2. A dog alerts strongly at the corner of a room, but when EOD searches the corner, they find nothing. The most likely explanation is:

- A. The dog made a false alert
 - B. Scent pooling in the dead air corner — the source is elsewhere
 - C. The dog was stressed and confused
 - D. The KDSS contaminated the area before the search
3. Why must bystanders always be positioned UPWIND of a search area?
- A. To prevent them from interfering with the handler
 - B. For their personal safety in case of an alert
 - C. Human scent downwind contaminates unsearched areas and disrupts the scent picture
 - D. It is a legal requirement in all jurisdictions
4. TATP (Triacetone Triperoxide) is classified as which compound family?
- A. Inorganic oxidizer
 - B. Nitroamine
 - C. Peroxide-based
 - D. Nitroaromatic
5. What is the KDSS protocol regarding radio use within 300 feet of a suspected explosive device?
- A. Use a dedicated encrypted frequency only
 - B. No radio transmissions within 300 feet
 - C. Radio is permitted as long as it is on low power
 - D. Only the KDSS may use the radio, not the handler
6. A vehicle is searched at 7 AM when the temperature is 55°F. The same vehicle would present different scent dynamics at 2 PM when it is 95°F because:
- A. Hot surfaces push scent upward, changing the search pattern
 - B. The dog works less effectively in heat
 - C. The handler's technique changes in heat
 - D. There is no meaningful difference in scent dynamics due to temperature
7. What does 'residual odor' mean in the context of EDD deployments?
- A. Odor left by bystanders that interferes with the search
 - B. Odor traces remaining on surfaces after explosive material has been removed
 - C. The baseline odor of the environment before the search begins
 - D. The dog's body odor that can confuse the search
8. Which compound family is associated with military ordnance including C-4 and Semtex?
- A. Inorganic oxidizer
 - B. Peroxide-based
 - C. Nitroamine (RDX/PETN)
 - D. Nitroaromatic (TNT)
9. Why should a KDSS never handle explosive training aids?
- A. Training aids are too heavy for KDSS personnel
 - B. Handling training aids could contaminate the KDSS and disrupt future searches
 - C. Training aids are classified materials
 - D. The handler must verify their weight before placement
10. What is the shape of the odor distribution that emanates from an explosive hide?
- A. A circular field expanding equally in all directions
 - B. A straight line from the source toward the dog
 - C. A cone widening as it moves away from the source
 - D. A vertical column rising from the source

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 4 — THE KDSS IN LIVE OPERATIONS

Environment Control · Communication · Alert Protocol



MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 75–90 minutes of reading + 15-question quiz **Passing score:** 11 out of 15 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 3 passed

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Execute pre-search responsibilities including site assessment and perimeter establishment
 2. Apply the three rules of KDSS positioning during active search
 3. Communicate effectively without disrupting the handler-dog team
 4. Execute the 9-step alert protocol in correct sequence
 5. Distinguish between training alerts and operational alerts

LESSON 4.1 — PRE-SEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES

The KDSS role begins before the dog enters the search area. A thorough pre-search setup by the KDSS directly affects the quality of the search and the safety of the handler-dog team.

Site Assessment

Walk the search area before the dog enters. Identify hazards: broken glass, chemical spills, extreme heat surfaces, aggressive animals, unstable structures. Report all hazards to the handler before the search begins.

Perimeter Establishment

Identify natural and artificial perimeter boundaries. Determine entry/exit points. Ensure bystanders are positioned upwind and outside the search perimeter. Coordinate with additional security personnel if present.

Environmental Conditions Report

Report to the handler: - Wind direction and speed - Ambient temperature - Surface temperature concerns - Any recently disturbed areas - Any chemical odors present (fuel, cleaning products, food) that may compete with target odor

Communications Check

Confirm radio channels and call signs with the handler and supervisor. Ensure you know the exact terminology for reporting a search in progress, search complete, and alert found.

Documentation Setup

Have your documentation materials ready before the search begins. Know the search start time, location identifier, handler name, and dog name/ID.

LESSON 4.2 — DURING THE SEARCH

Your primary responsibilities during an active search are **positioning, communication, and observation**.

The Three Rules of KDSS Positioning

1. **Stay out of the dog's nose path** — never position yourself downwind of an unsearched area
2. **Stay visible to the handler at all times** — they may need to signal you
3. **Stay between the search perimeter and any bystanders** — you are the boundary

Communication During Search

During an active search, communication with the handler should be **minimal and non-disruptive**. Use pre-agreed hand signals where possible rather than verbal communication. Reserve verbal communication for safety-critical information only. All external communications — radio traffic, supervisor check-ins — are handled by the KDSS so the handler is not interrupted.

Communication Decision Reference

SITUATION	KDSS ACTION	COMMUNICATION TYPE
Bystander entering search area	Intercept and redirect immediately	Physical — no radio needed
Radio check-in from supervisor	Respond on behalf of team	Radio — handler not interrupted
Hazard identified mid-search	Hand signal to handler — stop sign	Hand signal — then verbal if needed
Dog welfare concern observed	Note time and behavior — inform at break	Documented — verbal at break
Media/camera approaching	Intercept before they reach search area	Physical intercept — no disruption
Vehicle approaching search zone	Signal handler — halt search if necessary	Hand signal or verbal safety call

LESSON 4.3 — ALERT PROTOCOL: WHAT TO DO WHEN THE DOG ALERTS

An alert is the moment the dog commits to its trained behavior indicating it has located target odor. This is the highest-stakes moment of the deployment. The KDSS must know exactly what to do and what NOT to do.

ALERT PROTOCOL — THE 9 STEPS

Execute in order. No exceptions.

1 STOP

Stop all movement in the immediate area. Do not create air movement.

2 SECURE

Secure the perimeter. No one enters or exits the alert area.

3 DO NOT TOUCH

Do not touch anything near the alert location. Not even to look.

4 NO RADIO

No radio transmissions within 300 feet. RF can trigger devices.

5 MOVE 300FT

Move all personnel to minimum 300 ft distance. Standard IED exclusion zone.

6 SUPPORT

Support the handler. The handler directs next steps — KDSS executes the support.

7 DOCUMENT

Note exact time, location description, handler name, dog behavior observed.

8 CONTACT SUP.

Contact supervisor from a radio position outside the 300-foot exclusion zone.

9 AWAIT EOD

Await EOD / bomb squad if a live device is suspected. They take over.

Treat every alert as real until a qualified EOD technician confirms otherwise.

The 9-Step Alert Protocol

When an alert is called, execute these steps **in this order**:

1. **STOP** all movement in the immediate area — do not create air movement

2. **SECURE** the perimeter — no one enters or exits the alert area
3. **DO NOT TOUCH** anything near the alert location
4. **DO NOT USE RADIO** within 300 feet of the alert (radio frequencies can trigger some devices)
5. **MOVE** all personnel to a safe distance — minimum 300 feet for suspected IED
6. **SUPPORT** the handler — they will direct next steps
7. **DOCUMENT** — note exact time of alert call, location description, handler name, dog behavior
8. **CONTACT** supervisor — use a radio position outside the 300-foot exclusion zone
9. **AWAIT** EOD/bomb squad if a live device is suspected

△ IMPORTANT

NEVER approach an alert location to look at what the dog found. NEVER touch a suspected item. NEVER assume it is a false alert until a qualified explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician has cleared it.

Training Alert vs Operational Alert

In training environments, alerts are on known training aids — safe, certified pseudoscents or live materials under ATF control. The alert protocol in training is less restrictive. However, the KDSS should always treat training alerts as real to build correct muscle memory. The day you assume an alert is training when it is not could be catastrophic.

✦ REMEMBER

Treat every alert as real until a qualified authority confirms otherwise. This is not paranoia — it is the professional standard.

MODULE 4 SUMMARY

1. **Pre-search site assessment** sets up the entire deployment for success
2. The **three positioning rules** are: out of the nose path, visible to the handler, between the perimeter and bystanders
3. **Hand signals** are preferred over verbal communication during active search
4. The **9-step alert protocol** begins with STOP and ends with AWAIT EOD
5. **300 feet** is the minimum exclusion zone AND the radio silence distance
6. **Treat every alert as real** — always

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. What are the three rules of KDSS positioning during an active search?
 - A. Stay close to the handler, stay visible, stay quiet
 - B. Stay out of the dog's nose path, stay visible to the handler, stay between the perimeter and public
 - C. Stay upwind, stay behind the dog, stay on the radio
 - D. Stay 10 feet from the dog, stay in the vehicle, stay off the radio
2. During an active vehicle search, a TV news camera crew approaches the search area. The correct KDSS action is:
 - A. Inform the handler via radio so they can pause the search
 - B. Physically intercept the crew before they reach the search area without disrupting the search
 - C. Allow them to approach as freedom of the press applies to public areas
 - D. Call the supervisor for instructions before taking action
3. In what sequence should the 9-step alert protocol be executed? What is Step 1?
 - A. Contact supervisor immediately
 - B. Stop all movement in the immediate area
 - C. Evacuate all personnel
 - D. Document alert time and location
4. A handler calls an alert on a vehicle. What is the MINIMUM safe distance for all non-essential personnel from a suspected IED?
 - A. 50 feet
 - B. 100 feet
 - C. 200 feet
 - D. 300 feet
5. During a pre-search environmental conditions report to the handler, what information should the KDSS include?
 - A. Handler's certification number and deployment date
 - B. Wind direction, ambient temperature, surface temperature concerns, and any competing odors
 - C. The names and badge numbers of all bystanders in the area
 - D. The make and model of all vehicles in the search area
6. The handler is conducting a building search and needs to communicate with you. During an active search, what is the PREFERRED communication method?

- A. Verbal — speak clearly and loudly
- B. Radio on a dedicated channel
- C. Pre-agreed hand signals
- D. Text message

7. After a search is complete with no alert, the KDSS documentation should include:

- A. Just the start and end times — negative searches require minimal documentation
- B. All required fields including areas searched, environmental conditions, result, and KDSS signature
- C. Handler's personal notes and observations only
- D. Documentation is only required when an alert occurs

8. During a search, you notice a chemical smell you cannot identify near a building entrance the dog has not yet searched. You should:

- A. Proceed into the area to investigate the source
- B. Mark the area and allow the dog to search it — that's what the dog is for
- C. Do not proceed — report the unusual chemical odor to the handler and supervisor immediately
- D. Use your nose to determine if it smells like a known explosive compound

9. What information must the KDSS document in real time when an alert is called?

- A. The compound the dog detected
- B. Exact time of alert call, location description, handler name, and dog behavior observed
- C. The handler's badge number and certification status
- D. The name of every person within 300 feet of the alert location

10. Why is radio communication prohibited within 300 feet of a suspected device?

- A. Radio communications interfere with EOD equipment
- B. Radio frequencies can potentially trigger certain explosive devices
- C. It is a legal requirement under federal explosive ordinance law
- D. To maintain communications security during an incident

11. During a luggage screening operation at a transportation facility, what is the KDSS's primary documentation responsibility?

- A. Photographing each bag before and after the dog searches it
- B. Maintaining chain of custody awareness and documenting search results per item array
- C. Recording each passenger's identification information
- D. Logging the dog's find rate for each screening session

12. An after-action report differs from a deployment documentation form because:

- A. After-action reports only document alerts, not negative searches
- B. After-action reports summarize findings, observations, and lessons learned across the entire deployment
- C. After-action reports are completed by the supervisor, not the KDSS
- D. After-action reports are not required for routine deployments

13. In an open area search, the KDSS observes that wind has shifted 180 degrees during the search. What is the correct action?

- A. Continue the search — wind shift is normal and the dog adjusts automatically
- B. Report the wind shift to the handler immediately as it affects search strategy
- C. Stop the search and begin again from the starting point
- D. Document the wind shift for the after-action report only

14. What is the KDSS's role after a handler calls 'search complete, no alert'?

- A. Immediately clear the perimeter and resume normal operations
- B. Complete documentation, stand down the perimeter in sequence, debrief with handler
- C. Wait for supervisor confirmation before doing anything
- D. The KDSS has no specific post-search responsibilities

15. During a pre-search walk-through, the KDSS finds broken glass in the vehicle search area. What should happen next?

- A. The KDSS clears the hazard themselves to save time
- B. The KDSS reports the hazard to the handler before the search begins — the handler decides how to proceed
- C. The KDSS marks the area with cones and allows the search to proceed around it
- D. The KDSS begins the search and monitors the dog's paws for injury

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 5 — SAFETY, LEGAL & DOCUMENTATION

Safety Protocols · Legal Framework · Record Keeping

MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 75–90 minutes of reading + 15-question quiz **Passing score:** 11 out of 15 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 4 passed

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Apply personal safety protocols in EDD deployment environments
 2. Explain the key legal cases that govern EDD search authority
 3. Maintain operational security (OPSEC) in public and media contexts
 4. Produce contemporaneous, legally defensible documentation
 5. Complete post-alert documentation that meets evidentiary standards

LESSON 5.1 — PERSONAL SAFETY FOR KDSS PERSONNEL

The KDSS operates in environments that carry real safety risks. Your safety awareness protects you, the handler, the dog, and the public.

Explosive Hazard Awareness

Maintain awareness of the 300-foot minimum exclusion zone protocol for suspected devices. Know the locations of all exits from any building search environment. Never become a casualty by moving toward a suspected device.

Dog Bite Prevention

Working dogs are trained animals with high drive — not pets. - Never approach a working dog without the handler's explicit permission - Never make sudden movements near a working dog - Never reach over or toward a dog you do not know - If a dog shows defensive behavior toward you: **freeze, avoid eye contact, and calmly increase distance**

Traffic and Vehicle Safety

Vehicle search environments involve moving vehicles and distracted drivers. Always wear high-visibility gear in vehicle search environments. Never assume a driver sees you. Establish clear traffic stop protocols before any vehicle search begins.

Heat and Environmental Exposure

Extended outdoor operations in Texas require hydration, sun protection, and heat monitoring. If you are showing heat stress symptoms, you cannot effectively support the team. Monitor your own condition as well as the dog's.

Chemical and Hazmat Awareness

If you detect an unusual chemical odor in a search environment, do not proceed. Report to the handler and supervisor immediately. Some precursor chemicals used in explosive manufacture are toxic.

LESSON 5.2 — LEGAL FRAMEWORK: WHAT THE KDSS MUST KNOW

The KDSS does not need to be a legal expert — but must understand the basic legal framework governing EDD deployments to avoid actions that could compromise the legal admissibility of a search or expose the deploying organization to liability.

Fourth Amendment Basics

The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable searches and seizures. A dog sniff of a vehicle in a public place during a lawful stop **does not constitute a search under Fourth Amendment law** (*Illinois v. Caballes*, 2005). However, the KDSS must never give the impression that a search is occurring without lawful authority in contexts where authority is required.

Curtilage Protection

A dog sniff conducted at the front door of a private residence **IS a Fourth Amendment search requiring a warrant** (*Florida v. Jardines*, 2013). The KDSS must understand that different environments carry different legal requirements.

Your Role and Liability

As a KDSS, your actions on scene can affect the legal admissibility of the search. - Contaminating a search area - Allowing unauthorized persons to enter the search zone - Making public statements about a search

All of these can create legal problems. Maintain confidentiality. Do not discuss searches with anyone not on the team.

Documentation and Chain of Custody

Accurate, contemporaneous documentation is the foundation of legally defensible EDD work. Documentation gaps — even innocent ones — can be exploited in court to challenge a search's validity.

OPSEC — Operational Security

OPSEC means protecting sensitive information about deployments, methods, and results from disclosure. For KDSS personnel this means: - Do not discuss deployments with anyone not on the team - Do not post about searches on social media - Do not reveal operational locations, results, or methods - Refer all media inquiries to the supervising officer or public information officer

LESSON 5.3 — DOCUMENTATION FUNDAMENTALS

The KDSS is the **documentation officer** for the team deployment. Everything you document must be: - **Accurate** - **Contemporaneous** — written at the time it occurs - **Complete**

Courts and auditors both evaluate documentation quality.

What KDSS Must Document on Every Deployment

- Date, location (specific address or GPS coordinates), and facility type
- Search start time and end time
- Handler name and K9 name/ID number
- Weather and environmental conditions — temperature, wind, humidity
- Areas searched — specific description sufficient to recreate the search geography
- Result — negative (no alert), alert location and time, or inconclusive
- Persons present — names of supervising officials if applicable
- Any unusual events — bystander interference, environmental hazards, dog welfare concerns
- Alert details if applicable — exact time, exact location, dog behavior, handler response
- KDSS name and signature

KEY CONCEPT

If it was not documented, it did not happen. This is the professional standard for all law enforcement, military, and government contractor EDD deployments.

Record Retention

Record retention follows the organization’s policy. For law enforcement and contractor EDD deployments, **3–7 years is a common minimum standard**. Always consult your organization’s policy and applicable legal requirements.

MODULE 5 SUMMARY

1. **300 feet** is the minimum safe distance from a suspected device
2. *Illinois v. Caballes* (2005): vehicle sniff during a lawful stop is **not** a Fourth Amendment search
3. *Florida v. Jardines* (2013): front-door sniff of a residence **is** a Fourth Amendment search requiring a warrant
4. **OPSEC**: refer media to the PIO, do not post about deployments, maintain confidentiality
5. Documentation must be **contemporaneous** — written at the time of the event
6. **“If it was not documented, it did not happen”**
7. Record retention is typically **3–7 years minimum**

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

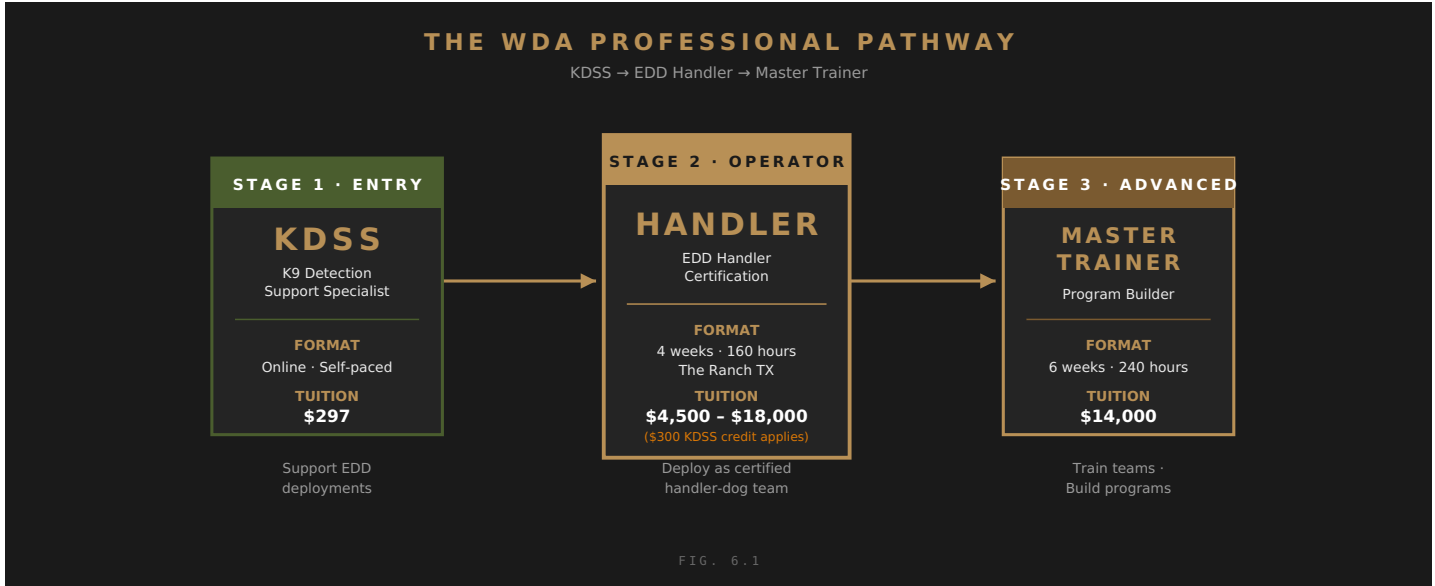
1. Under the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Illinois v. Caballes* (2005), a dog sniff of a vehicle during a lawful traffic stop:
 - A. Requires a search warrant
 - B. Requires the driver’s consent
 - C. Does not constitute a Fourth Amendment search
 - D. Requires probable cause before the dog can approach
2. Under *Florida v. Jardines* (2013), conducting a dog sniff at the front door of a private residence:
 - A. Is permissible without a warrant as a routine investigation
 - B. Is a Fourth Amendment search that requires a warrant
 - C. Is permissible only if the handler remains on public property
 - D. Is governed by state law only, not the Fourth Amendment
3. What is the minimum response when a member of the media asks you about an active EDD deployment you were involved in?
 - A. Provide the search result only — alert or no alert
 - B. Refer them to the supervising officer or agency public information officer
 - C. Provide a general description of the area searched but no specific results
 - D. Decline all comment and remove yourself from the conversation
4. What does ‘contemporaneous documentation’ mean?

- A. Documentation completed within 24 hours of the deployment
 - B. Documentation written at the time the event occurs — not reconstructed later
 - C. Documentation submitted to a supervisor within one week
 - D. Documentation that is consistent with all team members' accounts
5. You are approached by an unknown working dog that shows teeth and a stiff, forward posture. The correct response is:
- A. Stand your ground, speak firmly to establish authority
 - B. Back away quickly to create distance
 - C. Freeze, avoid eye contact, and calmly and slowly increase distance
 - D. Call out to the handler to control the dog
6. Which of the following KDSS actions could potentially compromise the legal admissibility of an EDD search?
- A. Completing documentation at the end of the search day rather than in real time
 - B. Allowing a bystander to enter the search perimeter during the active search
 - C. Discussing the search results on social media that evening
 - D. All of the above
7. If you detect an unusual chemical odor while conducting a pre-search walk-through of a building, you should:
- A. Open windows to ventilate the area before the dog enters
 - B. Report the odor to the handler and supervisor immediately without entering further
 - C. Identify the odor source before reporting to avoid alarming the handler unnecessarily
 - D. Allow the dog to enter — detection dogs are trained for chemical hazards
8. How long should KDSS deployment records be retained?
- A. 30 days
 - B. 1 year
 - C. Per the organization's record retention policy — typically 3–7 years minimum for law enforcement
 - D. Until the specific case is closed
9. During a vehicle search in a parking lot in August, you notice the dog is panting heavily after 10 minutes and the asphalt surface is extremely hot. You should:
- A. Continue monitoring but do not interrupt the search
 - B. Provide the dog water immediately without informing the handler
 - C. Inform the handler of the heat and surface conditions as a welfare concern
 - D. Suggest to bystanders that the handler should stop the search
10. What is OPSEC and why does it apply to KDSS personnel?
- A. Operational security — protecting information about deployments, methods, and results from disclosure
 - B. Operational standard — the minimum performance criteria for KDSS certification
 - C. Official security — the federal clearance level required for EDD deployments
 - D. Organizational security — the insurance requirement for K9 operations
11. A documentation form has a field for 'result.' In a search where no alert occurred, the correct entry is:
- A. Leave blank — only alerts require documentation
 - B. 'Negative' or 'No alert — search complete'
 - C. 'Unknown — no confirmation obtained'
 - D. 'N/A'
12. In a building search, a tenant approaches you and demands to know why the dog is searching the building. The correct response is:
- A. Explain that this is a routine safety check
 - B. Provide the specific reason for the search if you know it
 - C. Refer them to the supervising officer and maintain operational confidentiality
 - D. Ask them to leave the building immediately
13. Which of the following must be included in KDSS post-alert documentation?
- A. Compound identification — what type of explosive was found
 - B. Exact time of alert, location, handler name, dog name, behavior observed, and EOD response
 - C. Handler's personal assessment of threat level
 - D. KDSS determination of whether the alert was genuine
14. Wearing high-visibility gear during a vehicle search environment is a KDSS requirement because:
- A. It identifies the KDSS as having authority over the search area
 - B. It makes the KDSS easier for the handler to locate during the search
 - C. It provides safety visibility to vehicle operators who may not see personnel on foot
 - D. It is a federal contractor requirement for all outdoor operations
15. Why is it important to document the NAMES of supervising officials on a deployment form?
- A. To ensure they receive a copy of the after-action report
 - B. To establish chain of command for billing purposes
 - C. To provide a verifiable witness chain if the search record is challenged in legal proceedings
 - D. It is not necessary — supervisor information is optional on most forms

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 6 — PATHWAYS TO HANDLER CERTIFICATION

What Comes Next · WDA EDD Handler Course Overview



MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 45–60 minutes of reading + 10-question quiz **Passing score:** 7 out of 10 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 5 passed

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Articulate what the KDSS certification credentials you to do
 2. Assess whether you are ready for Handler Certification
 3. Describe the WDA EDD Handler Course structure and standards
 4. Understand the Track A / Track B enrollment options
 5. Identify the professional pathway from KDSS through Master Trainer

LESSON 6.1 — WHAT YOU HAVE EARNED

Completing the War Dog Academy KDSS Certification means you have demonstrated foundational knowledge of: - EDD team operations - Canine behavior - Explosive odor science - Operational support protocols - Safety and legal framework - Documentation standards

This is a **professional credential** recognized by War Dog Academy and valid for use on resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and professional training records.

More importantly — **you now know whether this field is for you.** The KDSS course was designed to give you honest, real exposure to what EDD work looks like before you invest in a full handler certification. The question now is: do you want to be in the support role, or do you want to be the handler?

KDSS GRADUATES WHO ENROLL IN THE WDA EDD HANDLER COURSE RECEIVE A \$300 CREDIT TOWARD THEIR TUITION

— your KDSS investment applies directly to your handler certification.

LESSON 6.2 — IS HANDLER CERTIFICATION RIGHT FOR YOU?

Signs You Are Ready for Handler Certification

- ✓ You found yourself watching the dog more than managing the environment during study
- ✓ You want to understand detection at the source — not just support it
- ✓ You have or are acquiring a dog with working dog drive
- ✓ You are in law enforcement, military, or private security and want to advance your K9 capability
- ✓ You want to access government contracts, port security, energy sector, or international programs
- ✓ You are a veteran looking for a career that leverages your military experience

LESSON 6.3 — THE WDA EDD HANDLER CERTIFICATION COURSE

Course at a Glance

DETAIL	SPECIFICATION
Duration	4 Weeks / 160 Hours
Location	The Ranch TX, Dilley, Texas (1 hour south of San Antonio)
Class Size	Maximum 8 Handler-Dog Teams
Format	70% Practical Field / 30% Classroom
Track A — You Bring Your Dog	From \$4,500 per handler-dog team
Track B — WDA Supplies Your Dog	From \$18,000 (course + certified working dog)
Certification Standard	SWGDOG-Aligned / DHS-Compatible
Evaluation	Four-Phase Blind Certification Evaluation — 90% Find Rate Required
Documentation	Court-Admissible Training Records from Day 1
KDSS Credit	\$300 toward tuition for KDSS graduates

What the Handler Course Covers

Week 1 — Foundation & Odor Theory Legal framework, canine olfactory science, explosive compound families, ATF regulatory compliance, and initial odor imprinting on target compounds.

Week 2 — Imprinting & Primary Detection Complete odor imprinting across all required compounds, alert behavior development, handler mechanics fundamentals, and blind box search evaluation.

Week 3 — Advanced Search Techniques Vehicle search, building and room search, open area search, luggage and package search, distraction proofing, and odor discrimination.

Week 4 — Operational Readiness & Certification Scenario-based training across all environments, stress inoculation, comprehensive written examination, and four-phase blind certification evaluation.

About The Ranch TX

WDA's training facility is a 300+ acre tactical training campus located in Dilley, Texas — approximately one hour south of San Antonio. The facility includes: - 20 K9 kennel spaces - BATF-approved storage - Classroom facilities - Vehicle search environments - A 175,000 sq ft urban training area - Open terrain for scenario-based training

LESSON 6.4 — BEYOND HANDLER: THE MASTER TRAINER PATH

For professionals who want to **build and run EDD programs** — not just operate within them — WDA offers the Master Trainer Certification Course. This 6-week, 240-hour advanced credential authorizes graduates to:

- Train and certify handler-dog teams
- Write government proposals
- Build full EDD programs
- Manage canine procurement pipelines

The **KDSS** → **Handler** → **Master Trainer** pathway is the complete WDA professional track.

The Professional Pathway

LEVEL	CERTIFICATION	WHAT YOU CAN DO	COST
Entry	KDSS	Support EDD team deployments professionally	\$297 online
Operator	EDD Handler	Deploy as certified handler-dog team	\$4,500 - \$18,000
Advanced	Master Trainer	Train teams, build programs, win contracts	\$14,000

Action Items

1. Visit **wardogacademy.com** to view the full EDD Handler Course curriculum
2. Contact WDA to discuss your background, your dog (if you have one), and your goals
3. Ask about current cohort dates — class sizes are limited to 8 teams maximum
4. **Mention your KDSS certification** to receive your \$300 tuition credit
5. If you do not have a dog, ask about **Track B** — WDA sources and supplies the dog

Current Market Context

Several global and national trends are driving unprecedented demand for certified EDD professionals: - **Port security** — redirection of global energy flows to US Gulf ports - **Energy infrastructure** — Gulf of America energy hub development - **International contractor programs** — Monroe Doctrine revival driving US security presence in Latin America

These forces are creating real, paying career opportunities for trained EDD professionals — especially those with government contract-ready credentials.

MODULE 6 SUMMARY

1. Your KDSS credential is **recognized, documented, and valid** as a professional certification
2. KDSS graduates get **\$300 off** the WDA Handler Course
3. The Handler Course is **4 weeks / 160 hours** at The Ranch TX — max 8 teams per cohort
4. **90% find rate** is required for Handler certification — a legally defensible standard
5. **Track A** brings your own dog (\$4,500+); **Track B** includes a sourced working dog (\$18,000)
6. The full pathway is **KDSS → Handler → Master Trainer**
7. Current market demand is strongest in **port security, energy infrastructure, and Latin American contractor programs**

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. What tuition credit does a KDSS graduate receive when enrolling in the WDA EDD Handler Certification Course?

- A. \$100
- B. \$200
- C. \$300
- D. \$500

2. In the WDA Handler Course Track B, what does the tuition include beyond training?

- A. Lodging and meals at The Ranch TX
- B. A certified working dog sourced, assessed, and delivered by WDA
- C. A one-year mentorship with a Master Trainer
- D. Government contract placement assistance

3. What is the maximum class size for the WDA EDD Handler Certification Course?

- A. 4 teams
- B. 6 teams
- C. 8 teams
- D. 12 teams

4. What percentage of the WDA Handler Course is dedicated to practical field work?

- A. 30%
- B. 50%
- C. 60%
- D. 70%

5. The WDA Master Trainer Certification authorizes graduates to do which of the following?

- A. Handle dogs in law enforcement operations without a handler certification
- B. Train and certify handler-dog teams and build full EDD programs
- C. Import explosive training aids without an ATF license
- D. Submit government proposals on behalf of any agency

6. Where does the WDA Handler Course take place?

- A. War Dog Academy headquarters in Houston
- B. The Ranch TX — a 300-acre tactical training facility in Dilley, Texas
- C. An online virtual environment with practical field days
- D. Location varies — WDA travels to the student's agency

7. Which of the following represents the correct order of the WDA professional certification pathway?

- A. Master Trainer → Handler → KDSS
- B. Handler → KDSS → Master Trainer
- C. KDSS → Handler → Master Trainer
- D. KDSS → Master Trainer → Handler

8. What find rate must a handler-dog team achieve to pass the WDA Handler Course final certification evaluation?

- A. 70%
- B. 80%
- C. 85%
- D. 90%

9. A student who has 6 years of experience as a law enforcement K9 handler with patrol and narcotics detection certification is considering the WDA Handler Course. Which track is most appropriate?

- A. Track A — they bring their existing patrol dog and cross-train to EDD
- B. Track B — WDA should always supply the dog for experienced handlers
- C. They should skip the handler course and go directly to Master Trainer
- D. They must complete KDSS first regardless of prior experience

10. The current geopolitical environment — including the Strait of Hormuz crisis, Gulf of America energy hub development, and Monroe Doctrine revival — creates demand for EDD professionals primarily in which sectors?

- A. Academic research and university programs
- B. Port security, energy infrastructure, and Latin American contractor programs
- C. Domestic pet industry and service dog organizations
- D. Technology and cybersecurity sectors

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

PART TWO

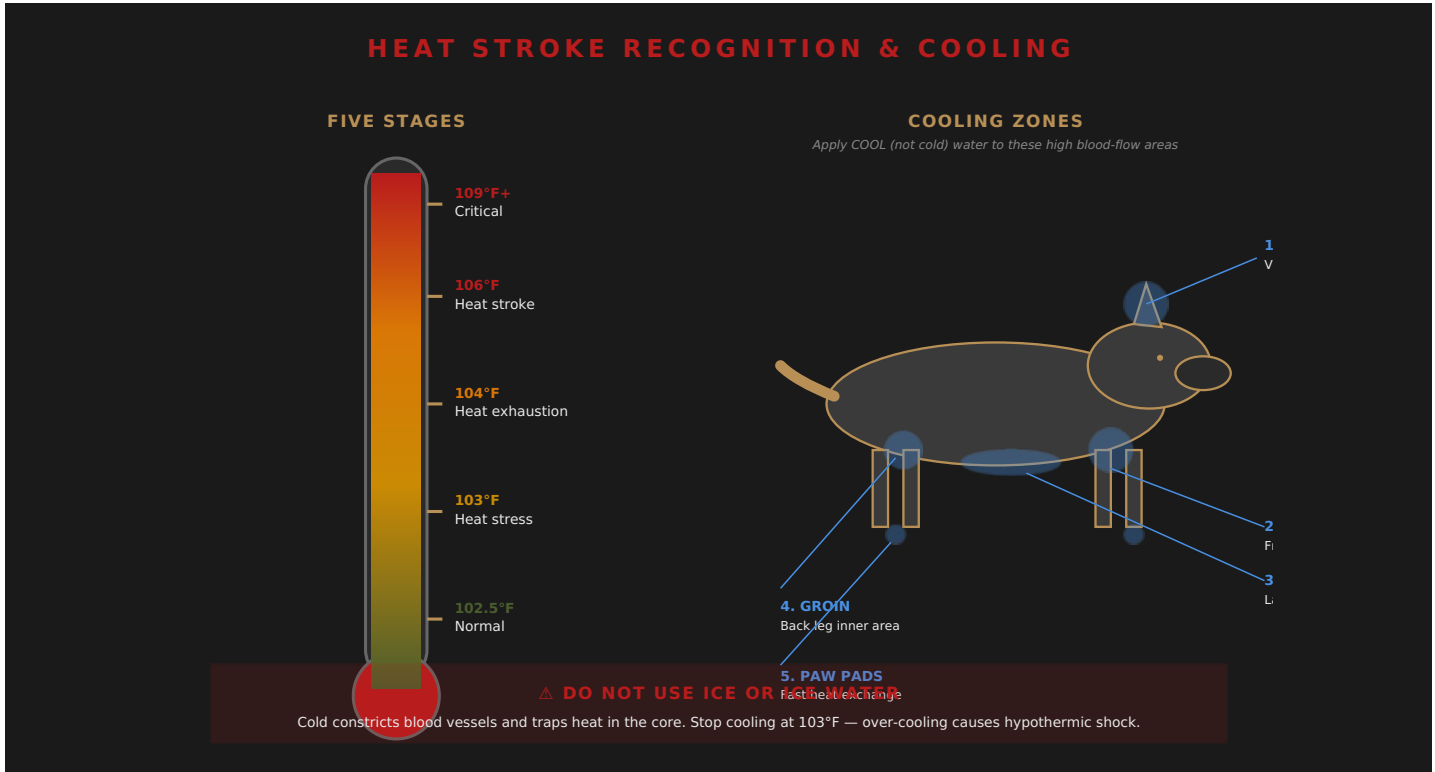
OPERATIONAL PRACTICE

MODULES 7 – 10

Part Two covers the hands-on operational knowledge that separates a competent KDSS from a great one: medical emergency recognition, kennel operations and working dog conduct, work-rest cycle management, and deployment readiness. The material in these modules is where KDSS professionals earn their reputation in the field.

MODULE 7 — K9 MEDICAL EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Recognition, Response & First-Response Protocols



MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 75–90 minutes of reading + 15-question quiz **Passing score:** 11 out of 15 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 6 passed

△ CRITICAL DISCLAIMER

This module teaches the KDSS how to **recognize** medical emergencies in working dogs and provide **first-response assistance** until the handler can take over or veterinary care is reached. The KDSS is **not** a veterinarian and **never** makes medical decisions for the dog. Your role is:

1. **Recognize** the emergency
2. **Alert** the handler immediately
3. **Support** the handler's response
4. **Transport or stabilize** as directed
5. **Document** everything

Medication administration, injections, and surgical intervention are **never** KDSS responsibilities.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Recognize the signs of heat stroke and initiate cooling protocols
 2. Identify bloat/GDV symptoms and respond appropriately
 3. Recognize and respond to seizures, shock, and trauma
 4. Apply basic canine first aid under handler direction
 5. Support canine evacuation to veterinary care

LESSON 7.1 — HEAT STROKE: THE #1 KILLER OF WORKING DOGS

Heat stroke is the most common preventable cause of working dog death. In Texas and Gulf Coast environments, heat stroke risk is present from March through October. A working dog in high drive will push through heat stress and continue working until it collapses. **You and the handler are the dog's only defense.**

Risk Factors

- Ambient temperature above 80°F with any exertion
- Ambient temperature above 70°F with humidity above 70%
- Direct sun exposure during search
- Hot surfaces (asphalt can exceed 140°F when air is 90°F)
- Heavy coat breeds (Belgian Malinois, German Shepherds, Labradors) — most EDD dogs
- Short-muzzled breeds — higher baseline risk
- Dogs recently transported in a warm vehicle before deployment
- Dogs that have been working more than 20–30 minutes in heat

The Five Stages of Heat Stress

STAGE	BODY TEMP	SIGNS	KDSS ACTION
Normal	100.5–102.5°F	Normal panting, responsive	Continue monitoring
Heat Stress	103–104°F	Heavy panting, slowing pace, seeking shade	Inform handler — break needed
Heat Exhaustion	104–106°F	Excessive panting, bright red tongue, thick saliva, weakness	Stop work immediately, begin cooling
Heat Stroke	106–109°F	Disoriented, staggering, vomiting, collapsing	EMERGENCY — cooling + vet
Critical	>109°F	Seizures, unconsciousness, bloody diarrhea	LIFE-THREATENING — vet immediately

Warning Signs You Must Know

- Tongue becomes **bright red or purple** (not pink)
- **Thick, ropery saliva** instead of watery drool
- **Dull, glazed eyes** that stop tracking
- Panting becomes **frantic** rather than rhythmic
- Dog stops responding to handler commands
- **Stumbling, wide-stance standing, or collapsing**
- **Vomiting** during or immediately after work
- Gums become **dark red, purple, or gray** instead of pink

The Cooling Protocol (Handler-Directed)

If the handler directs you to assist with cooling:

1. **Move the dog to shade immediately** — never cool in direct sun
2. **Apply cool (NOT cold) water** to: belly, groin, armpits, paw pads, and ear flaps — these are the high blood-flow areas
3. **DO NOT** use ice or ice water — this constricts blood vessels and can trap heat in the core
4. **DO NOT** cover with wet towels — they trap heat; continuously re-wet the dog instead
5. **Create airflow** — fan the dog or position in front of a vehicle A/C vent
6. **Offer small amounts of cool water** — never force water; an unconscious dog can aspirate
7. **Stop cooling when body temp reaches 103°F** — over-cooling causes hypothermic shock
8. **Transport to veterinary care** — even a dog that “recovers” needs vet evaluation; heat stroke causes internal organ damage that may not appear for 24–48 hours

△ IMPORTANT

A dog that has experienced heat stroke has a **significantly elevated risk of future heat stroke for the rest of its career**. Any heat event must be documented and reported to the handler’s chain of command.

Prevention (Your Job)

- Monitor surface temperature — if you can’t hold your hand on the asphalt for 7 seconds, it’s too hot for paws
- Ensure water access at every break
- Enforce the **20–30 minute work/rest cycle** in heat (more on this in Module 9)
- Report environmental changes immediately (rising temperature, sun angle change, shade loss)

LESSON 7.2 — BLOAT (GDV): THE SILENT KILLER

Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus (GDV) — commonly called “bloat” — is a rapidly fatal condition where the stomach fills with gas and twists on itself, cutting off blood supply. In large working breeds, bloat can kill a healthy dog in **under two hours**. Every KDSS must recognize the signs.

Dogs at Highest Risk

- Deep-chested breeds: German Shepherds, Great Danes, Dobermans, Weimaraners, Standard Poodles
- Belgian Malinois and Dutch Shepherds (moderate risk — common EDD breeds)
- Older dogs (>5 years)
- Dogs who eat quickly from raised bowls
- Dogs who exercise vigorously within 1 hour of eating or drinking heavily

The Hydration-Exercise Rule

This is one of the most important things a KDSS can know:

△ CRITICAL RULE

Do not allow a dog to drink large quantities of water within 30 minutes BEFORE or 60 minutes AFTER vigorous exercise. A dog that gulps a full bowl of water after a hard search run is at immediate bloat risk.

What to do instead: - Offer **small amounts** of water (1/4 to 1/2 cup) frequently during breaks - Allow the dog to rest and breathing rate to return to near-normal before free water access - Never let a working dog “tank up” from a full bowl after exertion - Cold water in small amounts is fine; large volumes of very cold water are worse

Signs of Bloat

Recognize ANY of these and escalate IMMEDIATELY:

- **Distended abdomen** — belly visibly larger or tight like a drum
- **Unproductive retching** — dog tries to vomit but nothing comes up (this is the hallmark sign)
- Excessive drooling
- Restlessness, pacing, unable to lie down comfortably
- Standing with elbows out, hunched posture
- Pale or white gums
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Collapse

KDSS Response to Suspected Bloat

1. **Alert the handler immediately** — this is a radio-worthy interrupt
2. **Do not give water or food** — this makes it worse
3. **Do not press on the abdomen**
4. **Begin preparing transport** — get the vehicle ready, know the route to the emergency vet
5. **Document time of first symptom onset** — the vet will ask
6. **Support handler in getting dog to vet** — every minute matters

Emergency vet contact info should be in your pre-search briefing. If it is not, ask for it before every deployment.

LESSON 7.3 — SEIZURES

Working dogs can develop seizures from heat, toxin exposure, head trauma, or underlying epilepsy. Most seizures last 1–3 minutes.

What a Seizure Looks Like

- Sudden collapse or stiffening
- Paddling of legs, jerking movements
- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Glazed or fixed stare
- Drooling, jaw chomping
- Unresponsive to voice or touch

KDSS Response During a Seizure

1. **Do not touch the dog** — a seizing dog may bite without awareness
2. **Clear the area** — move objects the dog could strike
3. **Note the start time** — the handler and vet need this
4. **Keep bystanders away** — seizures are distressing to witness; do not allow photos or video
5. **Do not put anything in the dog’s mouth** — the “swallowing the tongue” myth is false and dangerous
6. **Observe and document** — what body parts moved, how long, any post-seizure behavior
7. **Alert the handler** — if the handler is not the one holding the dog

After the Seizure (Post-Ictal Phase)

The dog may be disoriented, blind, or anxious for 15 minutes to several hours afterward. Do not approach. Let the handler manage recovery. Any seizure requires veterinary evaluation.

⚠️ IMPORTANT

A seizure lasting more than 5 minutes, or multiple seizures within 24 hours, is a **status epilepticus** emergency. This is life-threatening and requires immediate vet care.

LESSON 7.4 — WOUNDS, BLEEDING & TRAUMA

Working dogs encounter sharp debris, hot surfaces, broken glass, aggressive people, and occasionally other dogs. Minor injuries are common; serious injuries require immediate response.

Paw Injuries (Most Common)

Signs: Limping, licking a paw, leaving blood traces, reluctance to weight-bear.

Response: - Stop the search immediately - Inform handler - Do not force the dog to continue - Minor cuts: clean with saline or water, let handler apply bandage - Deep lacerations, embedded debris, or heavy bleeding: vet

Controlling Heavy Bleeding

If the handler directs you to assist:

1. **Apply direct pressure** with clean gauze or cloth — do not lift to peek at the wound
2. **Elevate** the injury above heart level if possible
3. **Do not apply a tourniquet** unless directed by a vet or handler — improper tourniquets cause limb loss
4. **Pack and pressure** for at least 5 minutes before checking
5. **Transport** to vet if bleeding continues or is heavy

Penetrating Wounds

- **Do not remove** embedded objects (glass, metal, arrows, sticks) — removal can cause fatal bleeding
- **Stabilize** the object with padding around it
- **Transport immediately** to vet

Broken Bones

Signs: severe pain, unwillingness to bear weight, visible deformity, swelling.

- Do not attempt to splint
- Minimize movement
- Muzzle if handler directs (dogs in pain bite even their own handlers)
- Transport on a flat surface (board, blanket stretcher)

LESSON 7.5 — SHOCK

Shock is a body-wide failure of circulation. Any serious injury, heat stroke, or bloat can cause it. Untreated shock kills.

Signs of Shock

- Pale, white, or bluish gums (normal is pink)
- Capillary refill time greater than 2 seconds — press a finger on the gum; the white spot should pink up within 2 seconds
- Weak, rapid pulse
- Cold extremities (ears, paws)
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Weakness, collapse, unresponsiveness
- Lowered body temperature

KDSS Response

1. Alert handler immediately
2. Keep the dog **warm** — cover with a blanket, do not overheat
3. Keep the dog **still** — movement worsens shock
4. Do not offer water or food
5. **Transport to vet immediately** — shock is a vet emergency, not a first-aid situation

LESSON 7.6 — TOXIN EXPOSURE

Working dogs searching environments may encounter:

- **Chemical spills** (cleaning products, solvents, fuel)
- **Explosive precursor chemicals** (many are toxic)
- **Rodenticides** in buildings
- **Human drugs** (methamphetamine, fentanyl residue)
- **Antifreeze** in vehicle search environments

Signs of Toxin Exposure

- Drooling or foaming at the mouth
- Vomiting or diarrhea (especially bloody)
- Stumbling, weakness, tremors
- Dilated pupils
- Difficulty breathing
- Seizures or collapse

KDSS Response

1. **Remove the dog from the exposure area** (handler-directed — do not touch the dog yourself unless directed)
2. If chemical is on the coat: rinse with **copious water** — do not scrub
3. **Do not induce vomiting** unless a vet specifically directs it — some toxins cause more damage coming back up
4. **Identify the substance if safely possible** — photograph the container from a distance; note the label
5. **Transport immediately** to vet with substance information
6. Call **ASPCA Animal Poison Control: 888-426-4435** (24/7, there may be a consultation fee) if vet contact is delayed

LESSON 7.7 — THE KDSS K9 FIRST AID KIT

Every KDSS should carry a K9 first aid kit or know where the handler’s kit is located. Basic contents:

Wound care: - Sterile gauze pads (various sizes) - Rolled gauze / vet wrap (self-adhering, non-sticking) - Saline solution - Hemostatic gauze (QuickClot K9 or similar) - Medical tape

Cooling: - Instant cold packs (for KDSS human use, not direct canine use) - Spray bottle for cool water - Small absorbent towels

Tools: - Digital rectal thermometer (canine-specific) - Water-based lubricant for thermometer - Canine muzzle (cloth or basket, sized for the dog) - Trauma shears (bandage scissors) - Tweezers or hemostats (for tick/debris removal) - Penlight

Medications — handler’s responsibility, not KDSS: - Benadryl (dosed by handler) - Styptic powder - Any prescription medications specific to the dog

Documentation: - Dog’s medical record card (allergies, conditions, medications) - Emergency vet contact card - Handler’s emergency contact

MODULE 7 SUMMARY

1. **Heat stroke** kills fast — cooling starts when body temp hits 104°F, targets 103°F, vet always
2. **Bloat (GDV)** kills in under 2 hours — watch for distended belly and unproductive retching
3. **No large water drinks within 30 min before / 60 min after hard exercise** — bloat prevention
4. **During a seizure:** do not touch, time it, clear the area, document
5. **Shock** shows as pale gums and slow capillary refill — warm, still, vet
6. **Penetrating objects stay in the wound** until vet removal
7. **ASPCA Poison Control:** 888-426-4435
8. The KDSS **recognizes and supports** — never makes medical decisions

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. At what body temperature does a working dog enter the “heat stroke” stage requiring immediate emergency intervention?

- A. 102°F
- B. 104°F
- C. 106°F
- D. 108°F

2. A handler-directed cooling response for a dog with heat stroke should use:

- A. Ice packs and ice water for fastest cooling
- B. Cool (not cold) water applied to belly, groin, paw pads, and ear flaps
- C. A cold bath with full immersion
- D. Wet towels tightly wrapped around the dog

3. The hallmark sign of bloat (GDV) that should trigger immediate emergency action is:

- A. Mild drooling after a meal
- B. A distended abdomen combined with unproductive retching
- C. Brief panting after exercise
- D. A single episode of vomiting water

4. To reduce bloat risk in a working dog, large water intake should be avoided:

- A. Only before exercise
- B. Only after exercise
- C. Within 30 minutes before and 60 minutes after vigorous exercise
- D. Never — hydration is always priority

5. During a seizure, the correct KDSS action is to:
- A. Hold the dog steady to prevent injury
 - B. Place an object in the dog's mouth to prevent tongue swallowing
 - C. Clear the area of hazards, note the start time, and do not touch the dog
 - D. Pick the dog up and rush to the vet immediately
6. Gums that are pale, white, or bluish instead of pink most likely indicate:
- A. Normal variation in healthy dogs
 - B. Recent meal consumption
 - C. Shock, poor circulation, or serious medical emergency
 - D. Dental disease requiring routine attention
7. A working dog steps on broken glass during a search and has a piece of glass visibly embedded in the paw pad with moderate bleeding. The correct KDSS response is:
- A. Pull the glass out and apply pressure
 - B. Leave the glass in place, stabilize with padding around it, and transport to vet
 - C. Push the glass deeper to stop the bleeding
 - D. Wait to see if the bleeding stops on its own
8. Surface temperature can exceed 140°F on asphalt when air temperature is only 90°F. The common KDSS check for paw safety is:
- A. If the handler says it's fine, it's fine
 - B. If you cannot hold the back of your hand on the surface for 7 seconds, it is too hot for paws
 - C. Temperature doesn't matter if the dog is in drive
 - D. Surface temperature is always safe below 100°F air temperature
9. Which of the following is NOT a sign of heat exhaustion in a working dog?
- A. Bright red or purple tongue
 - B. Thick, ropey saliva
 - C. Calm, steady breathing at normal rate
 - D. Slowing pace and seeking shade
10. A dog shows signs of possible toxin exposure (drooling, vomiting, stumbling) after a search in a suspected drug manufacturing site. Besides contacting the handler and preparing for vet transport, which resource can a KDSS use for immediate guidance?
- A. A local fire department non-emergency line
 - B. ASPCA Animal Poison Control at 888-426-4435
 - C. The nearest pet store pharmacy
 - D. An online veterinary forum
11. Regarding fluid intake during a working dog's deployment in hot conditions, the correct KDSS protocol is:
- A. Allow the dog to drink as much as it wants whenever it wants
 - B. Offer small, frequent amounts of cool water at breaks — never large volumes after hard exertion
 - C. Withhold water entirely to keep the dog in drive
 - D. Only provide water through the handler, never at KDSS discretion
12. A working dog has a deep laceration on its leg that is bleeding heavily. The handler directs you to assist. What should you do?
- A. Apply a tourniquet immediately to prevent blood loss
 - B. Lift the bandage every 30 seconds to check if bleeding stopped
 - C. Apply direct pressure with clean gauze for at least 5 minutes before checking
 - D. Rinse the wound with hydrogen peroxide
13. Following a heat stroke event that appears resolved at the scene, the correct protocol is to:
- A. Return to work if the dog seems recovered after 30 minutes
 - B. Send the dog home to rest for the day
 - C. Transport to vet regardless of apparent recovery — heat stroke causes organ damage that may not appear for 24–48 hours
 - D. Reduce the workload but continue the deployment
14. A seizure that lasts longer than 5 minutes, or multiple seizures within 24 hours, is called:
- A. Idiopathic epilepsy
 - B. Status epilepticus — a life-threatening emergency
 - C. Febrile seizure — common and harmless
 - D. Psychogenic episode
15. The KDSS role in a medical emergency is best described as:
- A. Primary medical decision-maker for the working dog
 - B. Administering medications as needed
 - C. Recognition, handler alert, handler-directed support, documentation, and transport support
 - D. Performing field surgery when a vet is unavailable

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 8 — KENNEL OPERATIONS & WORKING DOG CONDUCT

Kennel Standards · Handling Protocols · Feeding a Kennel-Aggressive Dog

MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 75–90 minutes of reading + 15-question quiz **Passing score:** 11 out of 15 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 7 passed

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Identify kennel environmental standards for working dogs
 2. Safely approach and work around kenneled working dogs
 3. Feed a kennel-aggressive dog without triggering a bite
 4. Handle working dogs with the professional conduct they require (not as pets)
 5. Maintain kennel hygiene and security

LESSON 8.1 — WHY KENNEL STANDARDS MATTER

A working dog's kennel is its home, its decompression space, and its recovery environment. Poor kennel conditions create stressed, sick, or aggressive dogs — and cost agencies and contractors significant money in vet bills, lost work days, and dog replacement costs (a trained EDD dog represents \$15,000–\$35,000 in investment).

The KDSS is often the person responsible for checking kennel conditions, feeding, watering, and basic care when the handler is not present. In many contractor and agency environments, the KDSS will be the **primary kennel operator** on certain shifts.

KEY CONCEPT

The kennel is where a working dog resets. A bad kennel experience degrades performance for days afterward. Kennel care is not janitorial work — it is operational readiness.

LESSON 8.2 — KENNEL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

Temperature

Working dogs have a narrower safe temperature range than most people realize. Belgian Malinois, German Shepherds, and Labradors — the breeds most common in EDD work — have heavy double coats and tolerate cold much better than heat.

CONDITION	TEMPERATURE	KDSS ACTION
Optimal range	60–75°F	Normal operations
Warm — monitor	75–85°F	Increase airflow, ensure water
Hot — action required	85–90°F	Active cooling (fans, AC), reduce work
Dangerous	90°F+	Mandatory AC, monitor every 30 minutes
Critical heat	95°F+	No dog left unattended, consider relocation
Cold — monitor	40–50°F	Bedding check, draft elimination
Cold — action	32–40°F	Insulated shelter, heat source if indoors
Dangerous cold	Below 32°F	Heated kennel required for most breeds

Humidity

Humidity matters as much as temperature. A dog in 85°F with 80% humidity is in greater heat danger than a dog in 95°F with 30% humidity. In Texas and Gulf Coast environments, monitor humidity alongside temperature.

The 150 Rule: If temperature (°F) + humidity (%) exceeds 150, heat danger is elevated. Above 180, heat danger is severe.

Ventilation

Working kennels require continuous fresh airflow — not just climate control. Stagnant air promotes: - Respiratory infections (kennel cough, pneumonia) - Ammonia buildup from waste (eye irritation, respiratory damage) - Heat pocketing in enclosed spaces - Odor contamination that can affect scent work

Kennel ventilation standards: - **Minimum:** Fresh air exchange every 15 minutes - **Ideal:** Continuous airflow via HVAC or circulation fans - **Outdoor kennels:** Cross-breeze design, not a dead-air box

Flooring

- **Concrete:** Standard, hoseable, durable — must have drainage slope
- **Epoxy-coated concrete:** Easier to clean, less porous
- **Grated/elevated:** Good for waste management, rough on paws if not properly designed
- **Rubber mats:** Good for joint health, must be removable for cleaning

Never: Bare wood (absorbs urine, rots), carpet (impossible to sanitize), gravel or dirt in indoor kennels.

Kennel Size

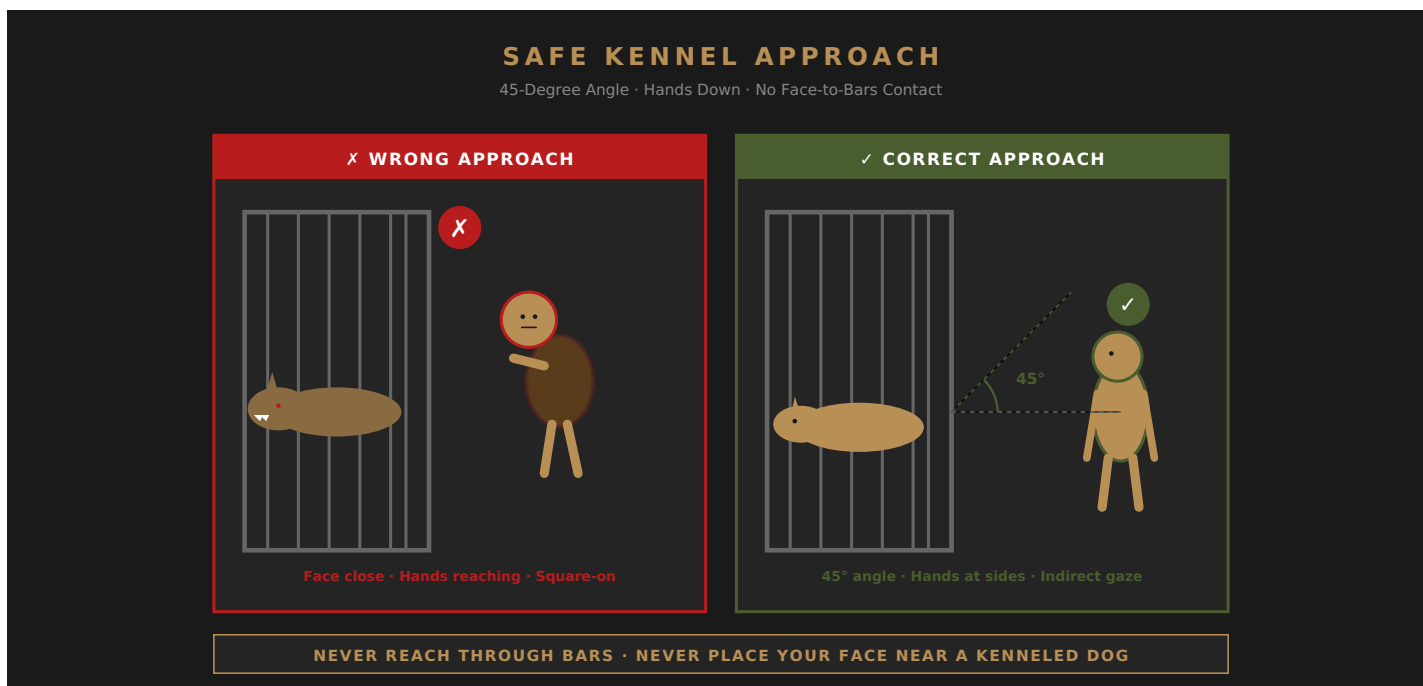
Minimum per-dog size for a working dog kennel (most agencies exceed these): - **Interior run:** 4 ft x 10 ft minimum, 6 ft height - **Attached outdoor run:** 4 ft x 12 ft minimum - **Turnout area access:** Daily — not optional

Lighting

- **Natural light access** is strongly preferred — affects circadian rhythm and behavior
- **Artificial lighting:** 12-hour light/dark cycle
- Never leave bright lights on overnight — disrupts rest
- Never keep dogs in darkness — causes depression-like symptoms and increased aggression

LESSON 8.3 — APPROACHING A KENNELED WORKING DOG

This is where KDSS personnel get bitten most often. Kennel space is a dog's territory, and many working dogs are defensive in their kennel even when they are not defensive elsewhere.



The Rules of Kennel Approach

1. **Announce yourself** — dogs startled in kennels bite faster
2. **Walk, don't run** — running along a kennel line triggers defense drive
3. **Never reach through bars or chain-link** — a dog can grab a finger in less than a second
4. **Never put your face close to kennel bars** — facial bites are career-ending
5. **Never stare directly at a kenneled dog** — direct eye contact is a challenge in canine language
6. **Stand at a 45-degree angle** to the kennel front, not square-on
7. **Keep hands at your sides or in pockets** — no quick movements toward the kennel
8. **Never "test" a dog by reaching your hand near** — the only thing this tests is your reaction time when bitten

If a Dog Charges the Kennel Door

Some working dogs charge the front of the kennel when anyone approaches. This is normal for certain dogs — it does not mean the dog will bite once you enter. But it does mean:

- **Do not flinch or run** — retreating reinforces the behavior
- **Do not yell** — this raises the dog's arousal further
- **Do not open the kennel** until the dog settles or the handler is present
- **Back away calmly** if you are unsure

Which Dogs Are Safe for KDSS to Handle?

Default answer: none, unless the handler has specifically trained you on that specific dog.

Handler-approved KDSS tasks typically include: - Leash-walking the dog to/from a specific area - Feeding and watering - Basic kennel cleaning with the dog inside

Handler-approved KDSS tasks rarely include: - Bathing, grooming - Veterinary-style handling - Introducing the dog to unfamiliar people - Exercise beyond leash-walking

△ IMPORTANT

If you have not been explicitly cleared by the handler to handle a specific dog, **do not handle that dog.** “I thought it would be fine” is how people end up in the ER and how working dogs end up euthanized for biting civilians.

LESSON 8.4 — FEEDING A KENNEL-AGGRESSIVE DOG

Food aggression and kennel aggression are common in working dogs. These are **not** behavior problems — they are often selected-for traits in dogs chosen for protection and high-drive work. The KDSS must know how to feed a dog that will bite you for reaching into its kennel.

Understanding the Why

Food aggression comes from three places: 1. **Genetic resource-guarding** — common in working lines 2. **Historical competition** — dogs that had to fight for food as pups 3. **Kennel territoriality** — the dog sees the kennel as its den

You will not “cure” this as a KDSS. Your job is to feed safely without triggering or reinforcing it.

The Safe Feeding Protocols

There are three accepted methods. The handler determines which one applies to each dog. Never improvise.

Method 1: Pass-Through Feeding (Most Common)

Used when the dog is kennel-aggressive but not outright dangerous.

1. Approach calmly, do not make eye contact
2. Open the pass-through port (a small hinged door at the base of the kennel)
3. Place the food bowl through the port, slide it in
4. Close the port
5. Step back 6 feet before the dog begins eating
6. Wait for the dog to finish before approaching to retrieve the bowl
7. Remove bowl only after the dog has moved away from it

Never put your hand through the main kennel door to deliver food.

Method 2: Two-Compartment Feeding

Used when the kennel has a divider door between an indoor and outdoor section.

1. Shift the dog to one compartment using the verbal command trained by the handler
2. Close the slide door between compartments
3. Place food in the empty compartment
4. Open the slide to release the dog to the food
5. Reverse the process to retrieve the bowl

This is the safest method and is preferred by professional kennels.

Method 3: Hand-Feed Only by Handler

Used when the dog is too aggressive for safe KDSS feeding, or the handler is building the bond.

1. KDSS prepares the food and delivers to the handler
2. Handler feeds the dog directly
3. KDSS does not approach the kennel during feeding

Signs of Food Aggression

- Stiff posture at the sight of food
- Hard, fixed eye contact with anyone near the food
- Low growl — even a low rumble is a serious warning
- Lip lift, tooth display
- Rapid, hunched eating posture
- Body positioned between you and the food bowl

Any of these signs means: step back, do not engage, inform the handler.

The One Rule That Prevents Most Kennel Feeding Bites

△ CRITICAL RULE

Never put your hand in a kennel with a dog and food at the same time. Feed through a port, shift to a separate compartment, or have the handler do it. There is no safe way to reach past a food-aggressive dog to place a bowl.

When to Pick Up the Bowl

- Wait until the dog has **completely finished eating and walked away** from the bowl
- Ideally, wait for the dog to be in the opposite side of the kennel or in the outdoor run
- Use the same pass-through or compartment system as feeding
- If in doubt, leave the bowl for the next cleaning cycle and note it for the handler

LESSON 8.5 — WATER PROVISION AT THE KENNEL

Unlike food, water is generally **not** a resource-guarded item for most working dogs. However, kennel water requires specific protocols:

- **Fresh water at all times** — change daily minimum, twice daily in heat
- **Automatic waterers** are preferred (lixit systems) — reduce spillage and contamination
- **Bucket-style waterers** must be checked twice daily
- **Do not over-fill** after a working shift — remember the bloat risk from Module 7; the dog should drink small amounts frequently
- **Water must be cool, not hot** — check in summer; black rubber buckets in sunlight can reach scalding temperatures
- **Water bowls go in through the same pass-through system as food** for aggressive dogs

When a Dog Just Returned from Work

If a dog has just finished a search or training session: - Provide **limited water** initially — 1/2 to 1 cup - Wait 10–15 minutes - Provide another 1/2 to 1 cup - Allow free access only after breathing has returned to near-resting

This is bloat prevention and is a core KDSS responsibility.

LESSON 8.6 — WORKING DOG CONDUCT: HOW TO BE AROUND THEM

This section covers the professional conduct expected of a KDSS around working dogs — in the kennel, in transit, in the field, and at events.

The Core Principle

KEY CONCEPT

A working dog is not a pet. It is a trained, high-drive animal whose job performance depends on its handler-dog bond and its focus. Every interaction you have with a working dog either supports or damages that bond.

Things You Do NOT Do With a Working Dog

- **Do not pet it without handler permission** — even if the dog approaches you
- **Do not feed it treats** from your person or pocket
- **Do not speak to it in a high, baby-talk voice** — undermines handler authority
- **Do not give it commands** — confusing the dog, and most handlers use customized or foreign-language commands
- **Do not put your face near its face** — this is how people get facial bites
- **Do not hug it, wrestle it, or roughhouse with it**
- **Do not allow children or civilians to approach it**
- **Do not take photos or selfies with it** without handler and OPSEC approval
- **Do not post about it on social media**
- **Do not allow other dogs (including your own) near it**
- **Do not reach over its head to pet** — over-the-head reaches are threatening
- **Do not pat it on top of the head** — side-of-neck is acceptable when approved
- **Do not lift it** unless handler-directed for medical reasons

Things You DO Do With a Working Dog

- **Let the dog approach you first** when in the same space, and remain neutral
- **Keep your voice calm and flat** when speaking near the dog
- **Move deliberately and predictably** — no sudden movements
- **Respect the handler's instructions absolutely** — even if they seem overcautious
- **Ask before every interaction** — “Can I pet her?” / “Is it okay if I move past him?”
- **Position yourself to the side**, not directly in front of the dog
- **Break eye contact** if the dog stares at you
- **Report any behavioral changes you notice** to the handler

Why This Matters Operationally

A working dog that has been petted, treated, and baby-talked by five different people in a morning is a working dog whose focus and drive are compromised for the search that afternoon. The dog may: - Seek social attention instead of focusing on odor - Become confused about command sources - Develop food-seeking behavior toward bystanders - Lower its threshold for approach (safety risk for handler and public)

Your professional conduct is part of the dog's operational readiness.

LESSON 8.7 — KENNEL HYGIENE & CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Daily Cleaning Requirements

- **Waste removal:** At least twice daily, more often in heat
- **Water change:** Daily minimum, twice in heat
- **Food bowl wash:** After every meal
- **Spot cleaning:** As needed throughout the day

Deep Cleaning (Weekly)

- Full kennel flush with kennel-safe disinfectant (quaternary ammonium or dilute bleach — 1:32)
- Bedding washing or replacement
- Drain cleaning
- Visual inspection of kennel hardware (latches, hinges, structural integrity)

What NOT to Use

- **Phenol-based cleaners (Pine-Sol original)** — toxic to dogs
- **Essential oils in any concentration** — many are toxic to dogs, especially tea tree, eucalyptus, citrus
- **Ammonia-based cleaners** — similar smell to urine, can cause dogs to over-mark
- **Aerosol sprays near the dog** — respiratory irritation

KDSS Safety During Cleaning

- **Shift the dog out of the kennel** before deep cleaning — never clean around a dog
- **Wear PPE** — gloves, enclosed shoes, eye protection for chemical use
- **Ventilate** the space after chemical use before returning the dog
- **Document** cleaning completion on the kennel log

LESSON 8.8 — TRANSPORT KENNEL PROTOCOLS

Transport kennels (in vehicles) have specific requirements:

Vehicle Kennel Requirements

- **Climate control** — never leave a dog in a vehicle without functioning AC/heat
- **Temperature monitoring** — remote thermometer with alert
- **Secure mounting** — kennels bolted or strapped; never loose in a vehicle
- **Ventilation** — cross-breeze capability when stationary
- **Water access** during transport — spill-proof bowls only

The Hot Vehicle Rule

△ CRITICAL RULE

A dog in a parked vehicle on a 75°F day can reach 100°F inside within 10 minutes, even with windows cracked. Never leave a working dog in a vehicle without active climate control and monitoring. This is the most common cause of on-duty K9 death.

Transport Break Requirements

- **Every 4 hours maximum** during long transport — walk, water, bathroom
- **Every 2 hours** in temperatures above 85°F
- **Do not transport** a dog that has just eaten — bloat risk in vehicle motion

MODULE 8 SUMMARY

1. **Kennel temperature sweet spot: 60–75°F** — and the 150 Rule applies in humidity
2. **Never put your face or fingers near kennel bars** — this is how KDSS personnel get bitten
3. **Feed kennel-aggressive dogs via pass-through or two-compartment shift** — never by reaching in
4. **Never have your hand in the kennel with the dog AND food at the same time**
5. **Working dogs are not pets** — no petting, treating, talking-to, or face-to-face contact without handler permission
6. **The 150 Rule, the 7-second asphalt test, and the 1-cup-at-a-time hydration rule** are your three field checks
7. **A parked vehicle on a 75°F day hits 100°F in 10 minutes** — never leave a dog unattended without climate control

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. What is the optimal ambient temperature range for a working dog kennel?
 - A. 40–60°F
 - B. 60–75°F
 - C. 75–90°F
 - D. 90–100°F
2. Under the “150 Rule” for heat safety, heat danger is elevated when:
 - A. Temperature alone exceeds 150°F (impossible in Earth conditions)
 - B. Temperature (°F) plus humidity (%) exceeds 150
 - C. The dog has worked for 150 minutes straight
 - D. Temperature exceeds 150°F inside a vehicle
3. When approaching a kenneled working dog, which action is MOST likely to result in a bite?
 - A. Announcing yourself verbally before approaching
 - B. Putting your face close to the kennel bars
 - C. Standing at a 45-degree angle to the kennel front
 - D. Keeping your hands at your sides
4. Which dogs can a KDSS handle (leash-walk, feed, clean around) without handler permission?
 - A. Any dog the KDSS has been introduced to
 - B. Any dog that appears friendly
 - C. None — only dogs the handler has specifically cleared you to work with
 - D. Any dog that responds to basic commands
5. The safest feeding method for a kennel-aggressive working dog is:
 - A. Reaching through the kennel door quickly
 - B. Two-compartment shift — move dog to one side, close slide, place food in empty side, open slide
 - C. Hand-feeding to build trust
 - D. Open the door and push the bowl inside
6. The critical rule that prevents most kennel feeding bites is:
 - A. Always feed a dog at the same time each day
 - B. Never put your hand in a kennel with a dog and food at the same time
 - C. Always wear gloves when feeding
 - D. Feed only the dogs you know personally
7. A working dog has just completed an intense 25-minute search. What is the correct water protocol?
 - A. Full bowl of cold water immediately to rehydrate
 - B. 1/2 to 1 cup initially, wait 10–15 minutes, another 1/2 to 1 cup, free access only after breathing returns to near-resting
 - C. Withhold water entirely for 30 minutes
 - D. Let the dog drink as much as it wants
8. Which cleaning product is TOXIC to working dogs and should never be used in kennels?
 - A. Phenol-based cleaners like Pine-Sol original
 - B. Quaternary ammonium disinfectants
 - C. Dilute bleach (1:32)
 - D. Plain water
9. Which of the following is acceptable KDSS conduct around an unfamiliar working dog?
 - A. Offering a treat from your pocket to make friends
 - B. Putting your face close to get a good look
 - C. Patting it on top of the head as a greeting
 - D. Keeping your voice calm and flat, moving deliberately, asking the handler before any interaction
10. A dog left in a parked vehicle on a 75°F day with windows cracked can reach what internal temperature in 10 minutes?
 - A. 78°F
 - B. 85°F
 - C. 100°F
 - D. No significant change from outside
11. During kennel cleaning, what should happen to the dog?
 - A. Remain in the kennel while you clean around it
 - B. Be shifted out of the kennel — never clean around a dog
 - C. Held on a leash by the KDSS during cleaning
 - D. Placed in another dog’s kennel temporarily
12. A working dog in its kennel shows stiff posture at the sight of food, hard eye contact, and a low growl. The correct response is:

- A. Step back, do not engage, inform the handler
- B. Firmly correct the dog verbally
- C. Reach in quickly to place the food and leave
- D. Wait it out — the dog will settle if you stay calm

13. Why does improper KDSS conduct (petting, treating, baby-talk) degrade working dog performance?

- A. It makes the dog tired before searches
- B. The dog seeks social attention instead of focusing on odor, gets confused on command sources, lowers approach threshold with strangers
- C. It increases the dog's weight
- D. It makes the dog less aggressive

14. The minimum ventilation standard for an indoor working dog kennel is:

- A. Opening the door once a day
- B. Fresh air exchange every 15 minutes, ideally continuous via HVAC or circulation fans
- C. Windows open during daylight hours
- D. Ventilation is only required during deep cleaning

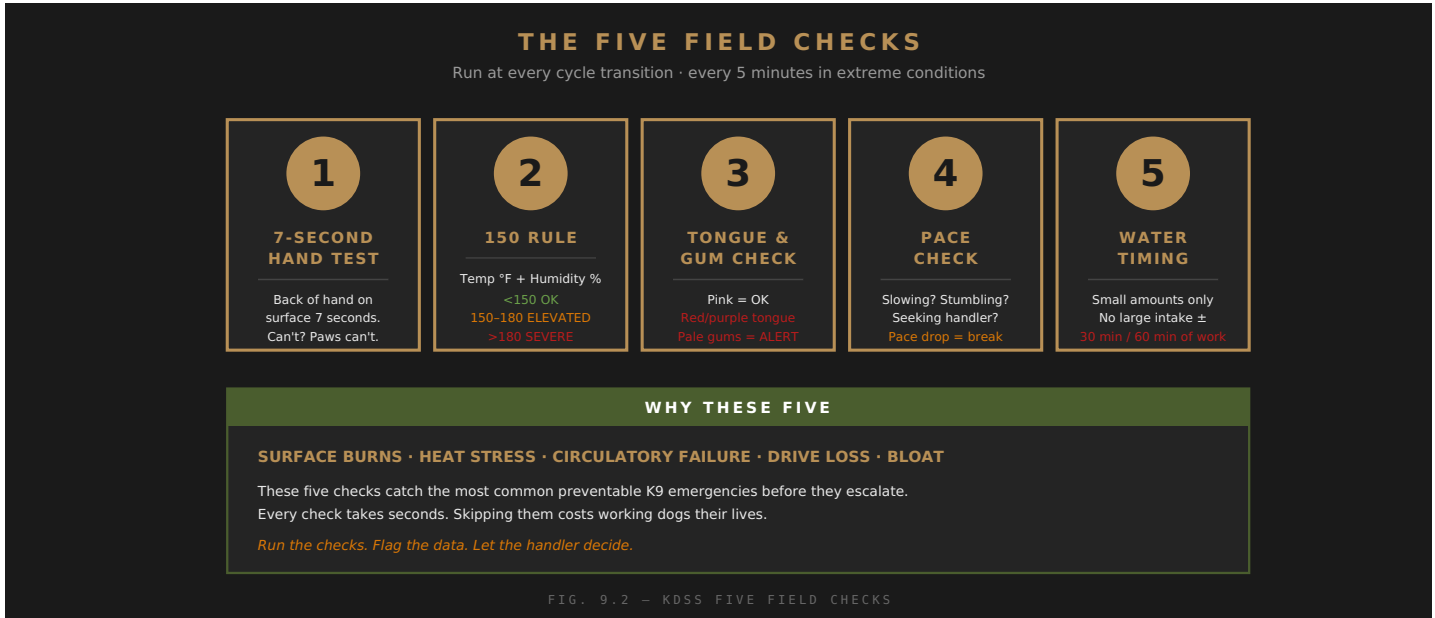
15. A working dog just returned from a 30-minute search in 92°F heat. What should the KDSS NOT do?

- A. Move the dog to a shaded, ventilated area
- B. Offer a small amount of cool water
- C. Allow the dog to drink freely from a full bowl of cold water
- D. Monitor breathing rate until it returns to near-resting

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 9 — WORK/REST CYCLES & FIELD TIMING TOOLS

Cycle Management · Timing Protocols · The Field Reference Card



MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 45–60 minutes of reading + 10-question quiz **Passing score:** 7 out of 10 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 8 passed

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Apply the standard working dog work/rest cycle baseline
 2. Adjust cycles for heat, humidity, and environmental complexity
 3. Use silent timing protocols without disrupting the dog
 4. Run the Five Field Checks at every cycle transition
 5. Produce a printable KDSS field reference card for live deployments

LESSON 9.1 — WHY WORK/REST CYCLES MATTER

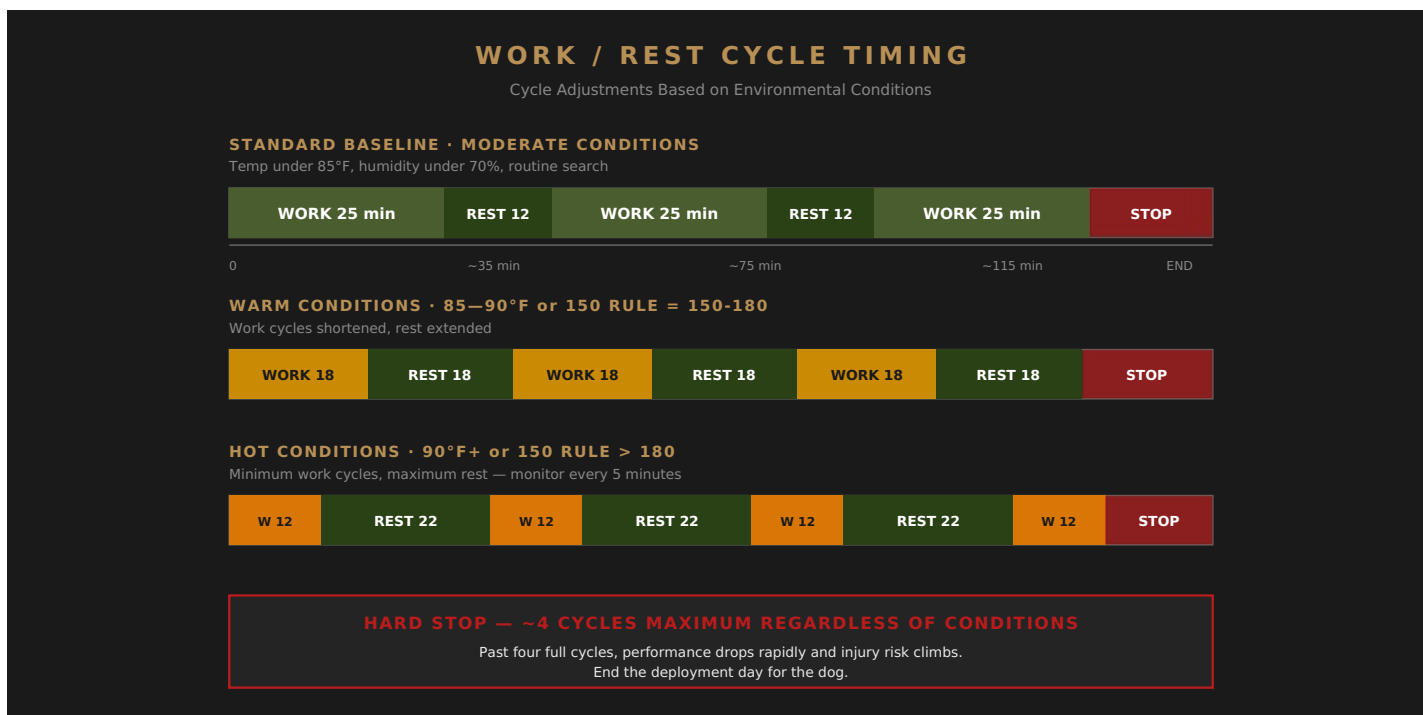
From Module 2, you learned that working dogs have a **20–30 minute peak performance window**. Beyond this, drive drops, accuracy drops, and fatigue injuries become more likely.

The KDSS role is to track time, flag cycle transitions to the handler, and document durations for after-action reporting. Environmental factors shorten the window further:

- **Heat and humidity** (the 150 Rule from Module 8)
- **Cold** below 40°F for extended periods
- **Difficult terrain** (rubble, elevation changes, rough surfaces)
- **Complex or contaminated scent pictures** (multiple competing odors)
- **High-stakes operational stress** (raid support, active-incident response)

The handler makes all decisions about when to continue, break, or end a deployment. **The KDSS provides the time and condition data the handler uses to make those decisions.**

Standard Baseline



Moderate conditions, healthy dog, routine search:

- **Work:** 20–30 minutes of active detection
- **Rest:** 10–15 minutes in shade, water offered, no work
- **Cycle repeats** up to 3–4 times per deployment day
- **Hard stop** after approximately 4 cycles — dog done for the day regardless of conditions

Adjustments for Environmental Conditions

As conditions worsen, shorten work time and lengthen rest time:

CONDITION	WORK CYCLE	REST CYCLE
Moderate (baseline)	20–30 min	10–15 min
Warm (85–90°F)	15–20 min	15–20 min
Hot (90°F+)	10–15 min	20+ min
Humidity over 70%	Reduce work by 25%	Extend rest by 25%
Complex scent environment	Reduce work by 25%	Extend rest by 25%
Multi-environment transitions	Mandatory short break between environments	—

Stack the adjustments. A search in 92°F heat with 80% humidity in a complex warehouse environment compounds all three factors — plan a 10-minute work cycle with a 20+ minute rest.

LESSON 9.3 — KDSS TIMING PROTOCOLS

Start the Timer

Start your timer at the moment the **dog is deployed** — when the handler releases the dog to start searching. Not when you arrived on scene. Not when the pre-search briefing ended. The moment the dog begins working.

Silent Timers Only

△ IMPORTANT

Use a vibrating watch, a phone on silent vibrate, or a digital timer without audible alerts. **Never use audible alarms during a working dog deployment.** Alarms can trigger false alerts, distract the dog, or set off prey drive toward the device.

Timer Thresholds

- **18 minutes** — warning threshold. Inform the handler that the 20-minute mark is approaching.
- **25 minutes** — hard threshold. Actively recommend a rest to the handler. The handler decides.
- **30 minutes** — absolute threshold. Flag as a welfare concern requiring mandatory break. Document the time and conditions.

Rest Timer Start

The rest timer starts when the dog is **actively resting in shade with water offered** — not when active work stops. Walking back to staging is not rest. Cooling-off transit is not rest. True rest is: shade, still, water available, handler calm.

Real-Time Documentation

Document every cycle in real time for the after-action report: - Cycle number (1, 2, 3, 4) - Work start time - Work end time - Rest start time - Rest end time - Environmental conditions at each transition - Dog welfare observations (pace, tongue color, panting rate)

LESSON 9.4 — THE FIVE FIELD CHECKS

A KDSS should mentally run through these five checks at **every cycle transition** and **every 5 minutes during extreme conditions**. Memorize them.

1. The 7-Second Hand Test

Place the back of your hand on the search surface for 7 seconds. If you can't hold it there, the dog's paws can't either. Move the dog off the surface immediately.

2. The 150 Rule

Temperature (°F) plus humidity (%): - **Under 150** — normal operations - **150–180** — elevated risk, shortened cycles - **Over 180** — severe risk, minimum cycles, maximum rest

3. The Tongue and Gum Check

At the next rest, without touching the dog, observe: - **Tongue** should be pink. Bright red or purple signals heat distress. - **Gums** should be pink. Pale, white, or blue gums signal shock or circulation failure. - **Capillary refill** — if the handler checks, the white spot should return to pink in under 2 seconds.

4. The Pace Check

Is the dog moving with purpose, or is it: - Slowing between hides? - Stumbling or weaving? - Repeatedly seeking handler contact for comfort? - Checking in more often than usual?

Pace drop equals drive drop equals time for a break.

5. The Water Timing Check

Remember from Module 7 and Module 8: - Small amounts (1/4 to 1/2 cup) frequently during breaks - **No large intake within 30 minutes before hard work** - **No large intake within 60 minutes after hard work** - Cool water, not cold; never from a black rubber bucket that has been in sun

This is bloat prevention and it kills in under 2 hours.

LESSON 9.5 — THE KDSS FIELD REFERENCE CARD

Every KDSS should carry a printed field reference card during deployments. Print this page, laminate it if possible, and keep it in your kit.

KDSS FIELD REFERENCE CARD

WORK/REST CYCLES

Standard: 20–30 min work / 10–15 min rest
85–90°F: 15–20 min work / 15–20 min rest
90°F+: 10–15 min work / 20+ min rest
Humidity 70%+: reduce work by 25%
Hard stop: after ~4 cycles

THE 150 RULE

Temp °F + Humidity % = Risk
Under 150: OK
150–180: elevated
Over 180: severe

7-SECOND HAND TEST

Can't hold your hand on the surface for 7 seconds?
The dog's paws can't either. Move the dog.

HYDRATION

Small amounts (1/4–1/2 cup) frequently at breaks
NO large intake within 30 min BEFORE hard work
NO large intake within 60 min AFTER hard work
BLOAT KILLS IN UNDER 2 HOURS

300-FOOT RULE

Suspected device: 300 ft exclusion zone
NO radio transmissions within 300 ft

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

ASPCA Poison Control: 888-426-4435
Emergency Vet: _____
Supervisor: _____
EOD: _____

VITAL SIGNS – NORMAL

Body temp: 100.5–102.5°F
Gums: pink, capillary refill under 2 sec
Heart rate: 60–140 bpm (size-dependent)
Respiration: 10–30 breaths/min at rest

HEAT STROKE STAGES

103–104°F: stress – inform handler
104–106°F: exhaustion – stop, cool
106°F+: STROKE – EMERGENCY, VET NOW

BLOAT SIGNS

Distended abdomen + unproductive retching
= EMERGENCY – vet in under 90 minutes

ALERT PROTOCOL (9 STEPS)

1. STOP
2. SECURE perimeter
3. DO NOT touch anything
4. NO RADIO within 300 ft
5. MOVE people 300+ ft away
6. SUPPORT handler
7. DOCUMENT time and observation
8. CONTACT supervisor from safe distance
9. AWAIT EOD

War Dog Academy · KDSS Field Card

MODULE 9 SUMMARY

1. **Baseline cycle: 20–30 minutes work / 10–15 minutes rest.** Adjust shorter for heat, humidity, and complexity.
2. **Hard stop at approximately 4 cycles** — the dog's working day is done regardless of conditions.
3. **Silent timers only** — no audible alarms around working dogs.
4. **Rest timer starts when the dog is actually resting**, not when work stops.
5. **Run the Five Field Checks at every cycle transition:** 7-Second Hand Test, 150 Rule, Tongue/Gum, Pace, Water Timing.
6. **The KDSS tracks and flags. The handler decides.** That is the whole role in one sentence.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. What is the standard work/rest cycle baseline for a working dog in moderate conditions?

- A. 5 min work / 5 min rest
 - B. 20–30 min work / 10–15 min rest
 - C. 60 min work / 10 min rest
 - D. Continuous work until handler calls break
2. At an ambient temperature of 92°F, the adjusted work cycle should be:
- A. Unchanged from baseline
 - B. 10–15 min work / 20+ min rest
 - C. 30 min work / 30 min rest
 - D. No work permitted
3. Why should KDSS timers be silent (vibrating watch or phone on silent) rather than audible alarms?
- A. Audible alarms violate OPSEC
 - B. Audible alarms can trigger or distract the working dog
 - C. Audible alarms drain batteries
 - D. Silent timers are more accurate
4. When does the KDSS rest timer actually start?
- A. When work stops
 - B. When the dog is actively resting in shade with water offered
 - C. When the dog lies down
 - D. When the handler says so
5. The 7-Second Hand Test checks:
- A. Handler reaction time
 - B. How long the KDSS can hold a position
 - C. Whether a search surface is safe for the dog's paws
 - D. Whether the dog is dehydrated
6. Under the 150 Rule, which condition presents SEVERE heat risk?
- A. 60°F temp, 40% humidity (sum 100)
 - B. 75°F temp, 60% humidity (sum 135)
 - C. 85°F temp, 70% humidity (sum 155)
 - D. 95°F temp, 90% humidity (sum 185)
7. Why does the KDSS document every work/rest cycle in real time?
- A. To bill time for contractor invoicing
 - B. To confirm the handler is performing adequately
 - C. For the after-action report and to provide cycle data the handler can use for real-time decisions
 - D. To submit to the veterinarian after deployment
8. A working dog has been deployed for 4 full work/rest cycles in moderate conditions. What should happen next?
- A. Continue if conditions are good
 - B. Rest for 10 more minutes then continue
 - C. Be done working for the day regardless of conditions
 - D. Switch to a different search type
9. Which of the following is NOT one of the “Five Field Checks” a KDSS runs at cycle transitions?
- A. 7-Second Hand Test
 - B. 150 Rule (temp + humidity)
 - C. Tongue and gum check
 - D. Handler certification verification
10. The KDSS's role in work/rest timing is:
- A. To order the handler when to rest
 - B. To work the dog directly through the cycles
 - C. To track time and environmental conditions and flag cycle transitions to the handler, who makes all decisions
 - D. To decide when deployment ends based on the timer

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

MODULE 10 — DEPLOYMENT READINESS & FINAL REVIEW

Pre-Deployment Checklist · Scenario Review · Course Completion

MODULE OVERVIEW

Module length: Approximately 45–60 minutes of reading + 10-question quiz **Passing score:** 7 out of 10 (70%) **Prerequisite:** Module 9 passed **This is the final module. Passing this quiz earns your KDSS Certification.**

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
1. Execute a comprehensive KDSS pre-deployment checklist
 2. Apply course knowledge to realistic operational scenarios
 3. Identify the most critical rules across all 10 modules
 4. Complete your certification and plan next-step career moves

LESSON 10.1 — THE KDSS PRE-DEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

The KDSS pre-deployment checklist is run before every job — whether a routine vehicle search or a major event deployment. Running the full checklist every time creates the muscle memory that keeps you, your handler, and the dog safe.

Personal Readiness

- High-visibility gear ready (vest, reflective clothing if outdoor)
- Hydration prepared (water bottle or hydration pack)
- Weather-appropriate clothing (layers, rain gear, sun protection)
- Radio tested on correct channel
- Documentation materials (clipboard, forms, timer)
- Pen plus backup pen
- Watch or phone timer verified in silent-vibrate mode
- Phone charged
- Eye protection if environment requires it

K9 First Aid Kit

Run the Module 7.7 inventory check:

- Sterile gauze pads (various sizes)
- Vet wrap / rolled gauze (self-adhering)
- Saline solution
- Hemostatic gauze (QuickClot K9 or similar)
- Medical tape
- Cool-water spray bottle
- Small absorbent towels
- Digital rectal thermometer (canine) and lubricant
- Canine muzzle sized for the dog
- Trauma shears
- Tweezers or hemostats
- Penlight
- Dog's medical record card (allergies, conditions, meds)
- Emergency vet contact card
- **ASPCA Animal Poison Control: 888-426-4435** (printed, not just on your phone)

Environmental Intelligence

- Weather forecast reviewed (temp, humidity, wind, precipitation)
- **150 Rule** calculated for the deployment window
- Site layout reviewed
- Hazards identified per pre-search briefing
- Expected deployment duration noted
- Shade and rest area identified

Communications

- Radio channel confirmed with handler and supervisor
- Call signs confirmed
- Hand signals reviewed with handler
- Emergency contact list current and on-person

Documentation

- Deployment form prepared with:
 - Date
 - Location (address or GPS)
 - Facility type
 - Handler name
 - K9 name and ID
 - KDSS name
 - Supervisors present

Vehicle and Transit

- K9 transport kennel climate control verified
- Remote temperature alert active
- Water available during transport
- Kennel secured (bolted or strapped)

Final Check

- Briefing with handler completed
- Emergency vet route confirmed
- EOD contact number confirmed (for live operations)
- All team members have the same operational picture

LESSON 10.2 — SCENARIO REVIEW

Work through each scenario. Apply knowledge from all prior modules. Review your answers against the explanations.

Scenario 1 — Heat Recognition

A working dog has been searching a parking lot for 22 minutes in 94°F heat. You notice its tongue is bright red, saliva has become thick and ropery, and it's stumbling as it turns. What do you do?

Correct action: This is heat exhaustion moving toward heat stroke. Inform the handler immediately — this is a radio-interrupt-worthy observation. The handler will stop the search and initiate the cooling protocol. As KDSS, prepare cool (not cold) water for application to the belly, groin, armpits, paw pads, and ear flaps. Move the dog to shade. Begin documentation of the event.

Modules referenced: 7 (medical), 9 (cycles), 2 (behavior)

Scenario 2 — Unfamiliar Kennel

You've been assigned to feed a dog you've never worked with. The handler is off-site. The kennel has a pass-through port. The dog is standing stiffly at the front of the kennel watching you with hard eye contact. What do you do?

Correct action: Do not feed the dog. Stiff posture and hard eye contact are warning signs of food or kennel aggression. You have not been specifically cleared by the handler to work with this dog. Contact the handler before proceeding. Do not improvise feeding methods — the handler determines which feeding method (pass-through, two-compartment, or handler-only) applies to each dog.

Modules referenced: 8 (kennel ops, feeding aggressive dogs)

Scenario 3 — Cycle Timing

You're 18 minutes into a vehicle search in 88°F temperature and 65% humidity. The dog is still working well. What should your next action be?

Correct action: Inform the handler that the 20-minute mark is approaching and that 88°F + 65% (sum 153) is in elevated heat risk territory per the 150 Rule. The handler decides when to break. You provide the data.

Modules referenced: 9 (cycles), 8 (150 Rule)

Scenario 4 — Suspected Bloat

After a 25-minute outdoor search, the dog drinks heavily from the water bowl you just refilled. Fifteen minutes later, you notice the dog's abdomen looks distended and it's trying to vomit but nothing is coming up. What do you do?

Correct action: This is suspected bloat (GDV). The heavy post-exertion drinking was likely the trigger — a violation of the 30-min-before / 60-min-after water timing rule. Alert the handler immediately. Do not offer food or water. Do not press on the abdomen. Prep the vehicle for immediate transport to the emergency vet. Every minute matters — bloat kills in under 2 hours. Document the time of first symptom onset.

Modules referenced: 7 (medical), 9 (water timing), 8 (hydration at kennel)

Scenario 5 — Seizure With Bystanders

During a building search, the dog shows a sudden pre-alert change, then collapses and begins paddling its legs with bladder loss. Several bystanders start pulling out phones. What do you do?

Correct action: The dog is having a seizure. Do not touch the dog — a seizing dog may bite without awareness. Note the start time. Clear hazards from the immediate area. Direct bystanders away and specifically prevent photos or video (OPSEC and dignity of the dog). Alert the handler. Observe the seizure — which body parts moved, duration, post-seizure state. Document everything. Never put anything in the dog's mouth.

Modules referenced: 7 (medical), 5 (OPSEC), 4 (live operations)

Scenario 6 — Multi-Demand Situation

You are conducting a vehicle search at a traffic stop when a bystander walks up with a phone camera and asks what you're doing. Simultaneously, the supervisor's radio call comes in asking for status. The handler is in the middle of a pre-alert observation on the dog. What is your priority order?

Correct action: 1. **Physically intercept the bystander** and redirect them away from the search area (prevents scent contamination, protects OPSEC, and stops the recording situation). This is silent and does not disrupt the handler. 2. **Respond to the supervisor on the radio** on behalf of the team. The handler does not hear or react to the radio. 3. **The handler remains undisturbed** on the dog during the pre-alert.

The priority is protecting the handler's focus on the dog, especially during a pre-alert observation. You are the filter between the handler-dog working space and everything else.

Modules referenced: 1 (KDSS role), 4 (live operations), 5 (legal/OPSEC)

LESSON 10.3 — THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE KDSS ROLE

Across all 10 modules of this course, seven principles recur because they govern every operational decision you will make.

1. Protect the Handler-Dog Working Space

Everything you do exists to give the handler uninterrupted focus on the dog. The handler reads the dog. The dog reads the odor. You manage everything else.

2. Never Touch, Command, or Interfere With the Dog

Without explicit handler permission, you do not touch, approach, command, feed, treat, or otherwise interact with the working dog. This protects the handler-dog bond and keeps you from being bitten.

3. Treat Every Alert as Real

Until a qualified EOD technician says otherwise, every alert is a real explosive device. Never approach. Never touch. Never assume false. This is the professional standard.

4. If It Wasn't Documented, It Didn't Happen

Contemporaneous, complete, accurate documentation is the foundation of legally defensible EDD work. Write as it happens, not from memory.

5. The 300-Foot Rule

For any suspected device: 300 feet minimum exclusion distance, no radio transmissions within 300 feet, EOD contact made from outside the zone.

6. The Hydration and Heat Rules Prevent the Two Most Common Preventable Deaths

- No large water intake within 30 minutes before or 60 minutes after hard exercise (bloat prevention)
- 7-Second Hand Test, 150 Rule, and cycle management (heat prevention)
- Never leave a dog in a parked vehicle without climate control (vehicle heat kills)

7. You Recognize and Support — You Do Not Decide

Whether it's a medical emergency, a cycle transition, a hazard observation, or an alert — you recognize what is happening, alert the handler, and support the handler's decision. You are a force multiplier for the handler, not a substitute for the handler.

LESSON 10.4 — COMPLETION

You have completed the War Dog Academy KDSS Certification Course. You have demonstrated foundational knowledge across ten modules covering:

- EDD team operations
- Canine behavior and communication
- Explosive odor science
- Live operations and alert protocol
- Safety, legal framework, and documentation
- Pathways to handler certification
- K9 medical emergency assistance
- Kennel operations and working dog conduct
- Work/rest cycles and field timing tools
- Deployment readiness

Upon passing this final quiz, you are certified as a **K9 Detection Support Specialist** and may use the KDSS credential on your resume, LinkedIn, and professional training records.

Your Next Step

KDSS graduates receive a **\$300 credit** toward the War Dog Academy EDD Handler Certification Course. The Handler Course is 4 weeks, 160 hours, at The Ranch TX in Dilley, Texas, with a maximum of 8 handler-dog teams per cohort. Track A (bring your dog) starts at \$4,500. Track B (WDA supplies a certified working dog) is \$18,000.

Visit wardogacademy.com or contact War Dog Academy directly to enroll. Mention your KDSS certification to apply your \$300 credit.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Work through these study questions to test your understanding before taking the official module quiz on the online course platform. The official quiz uses the same format and tests the same material. Answers and explanations are provided in your online course.

1. Before every deployment, the KDSS should verify which of the following?

- A. Only the handler's credentials
- B. Only the radio channel
- C. Only the weather
- D. All pre-deployment checklist items: personal gear, K9 first aid kit, environmental intel, communication, documentation, and vehicle/transit

2. A dog shows bright red tongue, thick ropey saliva, and stumbling after 22 minutes in 94°F heat. This is:

- A. Normal fatigue
- B. Heat exhaustion moving toward heat stroke — inform handler, prepare cooling protocol
- C. Hunger
- D. Pre-alert behavior

3. A dog you have not been cleared to handle shows stiff posture, hard eye contact, and a low growl when you approach its kennel with food. You should:

- A. Push the food in quickly and retreat
- B. Firmly tell the dog “no”
- C. Do not feed the dog — contact the handler before proceeding
- D. Feed through the kennel door while calmly talking to the dog

4. A dog drinks heavily from a full water bowl after a 25-minute search. 15 minutes later, its abdomen looks distended and it is retching unproductively. This is:

- A. Normal post-exercise recovery
- B. Minor indigestion
- C. Suspected bloat (GDV) — emergency vet transport, no food or water, do not press the abdomen
- D. Heat exhaustion

5. During a search, a dog collapses and begins paddling its legs. Bystanders are pulling out phones to record. What is the priority order of actions?

- A. Record the incident yourself for documentation
- B. Do not touch the dog, note start time, clear hazards, keep bystanders away and prevent recording, alert handler
- C. Restrain the dog to prevent injury
- D. Put something in the dog's mouth to prevent tongue swallowing

6. A bystander approaches during an active search while the supervisor calls on radio. The handler is mid pre-alert. Your priority is:

- A. Tell the handler about both situations
- B. Answer the radio first, then deal with the bystander
- C. Intercept the bystander physically, then respond to the supervisor on radio — the handler remains undisturbed on the dog
- D. Pause the search to handle everything sequentially

7. A dog has been working for 3 full work/rest cycles in moderate conditions. Conditions are still good. What should happen next?

- A. Continue through as many cycles as the handler wants
- B. One more cycle maximum — hard stop at approximately 4 cycles regardless of conditions
- C. Switch handlers
- D. Move to a different search area for another full set of cycles

8. Which combination represents the “Five Field Checks” a KDSS runs at cycle transitions?

- A. Temperature, humidity, wind, handler, radio
- B. 7-Second Hand Test, 150 Rule, Tongue/Gum check, Pace check, and Water Timing check
- C. Equipment, documentation, radio, handler, supervisor
- D. Legal, ethical, environmental, medical, operational

9. The most common cause of on-duty working dog death is:

- A. Bite injuries from other dogs
- B. Gunfire
- C. Heat-related death in parked vehicles without climate control
- D. Toxin exposure during searches

10. The KDSS's core mission across all ten modules of this course can be summarized as:

- A. Handling the dog when the handler is unavailable
- B. Making medical decisions for the K9 team
- C. Protecting the handler-dog working space, managing everything outside it, documenting everything, and supporting the handler's decisions
- D. Conducting independent searches alongside the handler

When you are ready, log in to the online course platform and take the official Module quiz. A passing score of 70% is required to unlock the next module.

APPENDICES

FIELD REFERENCES

The appendices that follow are designed to travel with you into the field. Print them. Keep them in your kit. Review them before every deployment.

A P P E N D I C E S

FIELD REFERENCES

The appendices that follow are designed to travel with you into the field. Print them. Keep them in your kit. Review them before every deployment.

APPENDIX A — KDSS FIELD REFERENCE CARD

Print this page, laminate it if possible, and keep it in your kit. These are the rules and thresholds you should have memorized, but the card is there for the moments when memory isn't enough.

KDSS FIELD REFERENCE

WORK / REST CYCLES

Standard: 20-30 work / 10-15 rest
85-90°F: 15-20 work / 15-20 rest
90°F+: 10-15 work / 20+ rest
Humidity 70%+: reduce work by 25%
Hard stop: after ~4 full cycles

THE 150 RULE

Temp °F + Humidity % = Risk
Under 150: OK
150 - 180: elevated
Over 180: severe

7-SECOND HAND TEST

Can't hold your hand on the surface
for 7 seconds? Paws can't either.
Move the dog.

HYDRATION (BLOAT PREVENTION)

Small amounts (1/4 to 1/2 cup) at breaks
NO large intake 30 min BEFORE hard work
NO large intake 60 min AFTER hard work
BLOAT KILLS IN UNDER 2 HOURS

300-FOOT RULE

Suspected device: 300 ft exclusion zone
NO radio transmissions within 300 ft

VITAL SIGNS — NORMAL

Body temp: 100.5 - 102.5°F
Gums: pink, cap refill < 2 sec
Heart rate: 60 - 140 bpm
Respiration: 10 - 30 breaths/min rest

HEAT STROKE STAGES

103-104°F: stress - inform handler
104-106°F: exhaustion - stop, cool
106°F+: STROKE - EMERGENCY, VET NOW

BLOAT SIGNS

Distended abdomen + unproductive retching
= EMERGENCY - vet in under 90 minutes

ALERT PROTOCOL (9 STEPS)

1. STOP all movement
2. SECURE perimeter
3. DO NOT TOUCH anything
4. NO RADIO within 300 ft
5. MOVE people 300+ ft away
6. SUPPORT handler
7. DOCUMENT time and observation
8. CONTACT supervisor from safe distance
9. AWAIT EOD

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

ASPCA Poison Control: 888-426-4435
Emergency Vet: _____
Supervisor: _____
EOD: _____

THE FIVE FIELD CHECKS (at every transition)

1. 7-Second Hand Test
2. 150 Rule
3. Tongue and gum check
4. Pace check
5. Water timing check

APPENDIX B — DEPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION TEMPLATE

Use this template for every deployment. Fill every field. A blank field is a vulnerability in a legal proceeding.

KDSS DEPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION FORM

DEPLOYMENT IDENTIFICATION

- Date: _____
- Time deployment began: _____
- Time deployment ended: _____
- Location (address or GPS): _____
- Facility type: _____
- Deployment reference number: _____

PERSONNEL

- Handler name: _____
- K9 name / ID: _____
- KDSS name: _____
- Supervisor on scene: _____
- Other personnel present: _____

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AT START

- Ambient temperature: _____
- Humidity: _____
- 150 Rule calculation: _____
- Wind direction / speed: _____
- Surface temperature concerns: _____
- Competing odors present: _____
- Other environmental notes: _____

PRE-SEARCH HAZARDS IDENTIFIED

- Hazard 1: _____
- Hazard 2: _____
- Hazard 3: _____
- Action taken: _____

SEARCH LOG

CYCLE	WORK START	WORK END	REST START	REST END	OBSERVATIONS
1					
2					
3					
4					

AREAS SEARCHED

- Area 1: _____
- Area 2: _____
- Area 3: _____
- Area 4: _____

RESULT (circle one)

- Negative — no alert, search complete
- Alert — details below
- Inconclusive — details below

ALERT DETAILS (if applicable)

- Exact time of alert: _____
- Exact location: _____
- Dog behavior observed at alert: _____
- Handler response: _____
- Supervisor contacted at: _____
- EOD response time: _____

- EOD findings: _____

UNUSUAL EVENTS / INCIDENTS

- Bystander interference: _____
- Media presence: _____
- Dog welfare concerns: _____
- Equipment issues: _____
- Other: _____

POST-SEARCH

- Perimeter stood down at: _____
- Handler debrief completed: _____
- Dog cool-down and water verified: _____
- After-action report filed: _____

SIGNATURES

- KDSS signature: _____ Date: _____
- Handler signature: _____ Date: _____
- Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

Retain this document per your organization's record retention policy (typically 3-7 years minimum for law enforcement). Store in a secure location. Do not photograph or transmit electronically except through approved secure channels.

APPENDIX C — GLOSSARY OF TERMS

After-Action Report (AAR) — A comprehensive post-deployment summary that covers what was searched, the results, any observations or incidents, and recommendations for future deployments. More comprehensive than a single-search documentation form.

Alert — The trained behavior a detection dog exhibits when it has located a target odor. Alerts vary by training style: passive alerts (sit, stare, point) or aggressive alerts (pawing, biting at the source, though this is rare in explosives work for obvious reasons). Only the handler calls an alert.

ANFO — Ammonium Nitrate / Fuel Oil. An inorganic oxidizer explosive. Common in pipe bombs and improvised devices.

ATF — Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Federal agency regulating explosive materials, including training aids used by EDD programs.

Bloat (GDV) — Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus. A condition in which a dog's stomach fills with gas and twists on itself, cutting off blood supply. Can kill a healthy dog in under two hours if untreated. Discussed in detail in Module 7.

C-4 — A plastic explosive based on RDX (a nitroamine compound). Military grade. Training aids for C-4 detection are highly regulated.

Capillary Refill Time (CRT) — The time it takes for color to return to gum tissue after pressure is applied. Normal is under 2 seconds. Longer indicates shock or circulatory failure.

Curtilage — The area immediately surrounding and associated with a private residence. Under *Florida v. Jardines* (2013), dog sniffs of curtilage require a warrant. Discussed in Module 5.

Defense Drive — One of the five working dog drives. The protective instinct. Patrol dogs use it; detection dogs should have manageable defense drive.

Dual-Purpose Dog — A working dog trained for both patrol (protection) and detection. Common in law enforcement K9 programs.

EDD — Explosives Detection Dog. A dog trained to detect specific explosive compounds or compound families.

EOD — Explosive Ordnance Disposal. The military or law enforcement specialists who identify, safely handle, and dispose of explosive devices. When a dog alerts on a suspected device, EOD is the team that takes over.

Fourth Amendment — The constitutional protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. Dog-sniff Fourth Amendment law is covered in Module 5, including the key cases *Illinois v. Caballes* (2005) and *Florida v. Jardines* (2013).

GDV — See "Bloat."

HMTD — Hexamethylene Triperoxide Diamine. A peroxide-based explosive. Highly sensitive to friction and heat. Common in improvised explosive devices.

Hunt Drive — One of the five working dog drives. The desire to search and seek. Critical for detection work.

IED — Improvised Explosive Device. A non-military explosive device built from available materials.

KDSS — K9 Detection Support Specialist. The subject of this course.

Lixit — A nipple-style automatic waterer, activated by the dog pressing against it. Standard for professional kennels.

NAICS / SWGDOG — Scientific Working Group on Dog and Orthogonal detector Guidelines. A federal working group that publishes standards for detection dog programs. WDA certifications are SWGDOG-aligned.

Nitroamine — A family of explosive compounds that includes RDX, PETN, and C-4 (plastic explosive containing RDX). Military grade.

Nitroaromatic — A family of explosive compounds that includes TNT and DNT. Common military ordnance.

OPSEC — Operational Security. Protection of sensitive information about deployments, methods, and results from disclosure. Includes not discussing deployments with outsiders, not posting on social media, and referring media inquiries to the supervising officer.

Pack Drive — One of the five working dog drives. The desire to be with and work for the handler as part of a social unit.

Peroxide-Based Explosives — A family including TATP and HMTD. Highly volatile, extremely sensitive to friction and heat.

PETN — Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate. A nitroamine explosive, a component of Semtex.

Play Drive — One of the five working dog drives. The desire to engage in play, particularly with a toy. Most high-drive detection dogs are rewarded with a toy rather than food.

Post-Ictal — The period after a seizure. Dogs may be disoriented, blind, or anxious for minutes to hours. Do not approach; let the handler manage recovery.

Pre-Alert — The subtle behavioral changes a dog shows as it begins to work toward a target odor source. Observing pre-alerts is valuable; calling them is the handler's job only.

Prey Drive — One of the five working dog drives. The instinct to chase, catch, and possess. Motivates detection work by treating the hide as prey.

QuickClot — A brand of hemostatic gauze that accelerates blood clotting on severe wounds. K9-specific versions are available for veterinary first-aid kits.

RDX — Cyclotrimethylenetrinitramine. A nitroamine military explosive, the primary component of C-4.

Residual Odor — Explosive odor remaining on surfaces after the explosive material itself is removed. A dog may legitimately alert on residual odor.

Scent Cone — The cone-shaped distribution of odor as it disperses from a source. Wind direction determines cone orientation.

Scent Pooling — Accumulation of odor in still-air areas (corners, low spots, enclosed spaces). A dog may alert in a pooling area even when the source is elsewhere.

Semtex — A plastic explosive containing RDX and PETN. Military grade.

Status Epilepticus — A seizure lasting more than 5 minutes, or multiple seizures within 24 hours. A life-threatening emergency requiring immediate veterinary care.

TATP — Triacetone Triperoxide. A peroxide-based explosive. Extremely sensitive to friction and heat.

TNT — Trinitrotoluene. A nitroaromatic military explosive.

Working Dog — A dog selected and trained for professional detection, patrol, protection, tracking, or similar operational use. A working dog is not a pet.

CLOSING STATEMENT

You are about to join a small, disciplined community of professionals whose work directly prevents violence and protects lives. The KDSS role exists because the alternative — asking a handler to do everything alone — costs lives. When the work is done well, nothing happens. No one notices. The search is clean, the documentation is complete, the dog goes home healthy, the handler gets to sleep tonight.

That is the standard. That is what this certification exists to produce.

Study carefully. Ask questions. Take the work seriously. The dog you support tomorrow is counting on you to already know this material today.

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K9 Detection Support Specialist (KDSS) Student Textbook · Edition 2026 · Volume I

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