

# WYOMING



# K-9



# SEARCH & RESCUE

[www.wyomingk9sar.org](http://www.wyomingk9sar.org)



To request Wyoming K-9 search teams  
call our dispatch number:  
(24 hours, 7 days a week)  
**307-739-7175**

K-9 search teams can be a very effective tool to complement search and rescue efforts needed to find lost persons quickly. It is important to remember that the K-9's effectiveness is greatly enhanced if deployed very early during a search.

The purpose of this booklet is to encourage agencies responsible for searches to involve Wyoming K-9 search teams and make best use of their capabilities.



## Requesting Wyoming K-9 Teams

**Call 307-739-7175**  
**(WY K-9 dispatch number)**

And have the following information available for dispatch:

- **Incident Name**
- **Requesting Agency**
- **Requesting Person**
- **Requestor's Role**
- **Contact Person**
- **Phone Number(s)**

Dispatch will notify WY K-9 members of your request. A WY K-9 representative will call you back. To help us prepare for the search, please provide as much detailed information as possible (see form below):

### REQUEST DETAILS

TYPE OF SEARCH		PLS (YES / NO)
LOCATION		
HOW MANY LOST?	HOW LONG AGO?	
OTHER INFO (i.e: Age/Sex/Experience)		
TERRAIN		
CURRENT WEATHER	FORECAST	
MEETING LOCATION	TIME	
NUMBER OF TEAMS REQUESTED	LIMITED (YES / NO)	

### EQUIPMENT/LOGISTICS

OVERNIGHT (YES / NO)	BACKCOUNTRY OVERNIGHT (YES / NO)	
NIGHT SEARCH (YES / NO)		
ACCOMMODATIONS		
FOOD FOR	DAYS	WATER SOURCE (YES / NO)
KNOWN HAZARDS		

## *About Wyoming K-9 SAR*

**Who are we?** Wyoming K-9 Search and Rescue, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded to train search dog teams to assist federal, state or local authorities in emergency, law enforcement and search and rescue situations. All members live in Jackson and surrounding areas and will respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**What do we do?** Dog teams are trained and certified to perform one or more specific tasks. Dogs are able to search for live or dead persons, drowned victims, avalanche victims, or objects that a person handled.

**Where do we do searches?** Wyoming K-9 Search and Rescue dog teams respond to searches in all states. The majority of searches are in or near Teton County and the national parks.

**Why do we use dogs?** Dogs are used for searching because they can use their noses to explore the world in a way that humans cannot. Dogs have a sense of smell that is at least 100,000 times greater than that of humans. A dog team can search the same area faster and more efficiently than 40 human foot searchers, especially in the dark and in situations where victims are not visible.

**What searches can dogs do?** All of the searches are based on the dog's sense of smell. Searches are divided into three categories:

- Searching for a live person
  - Following a scent trail left by a person (Trailing)
  - Finding a person in a large area (Area/Wilderness)
  - Finding a person buried under snow (Avalanche)
- Searching for a dead person (or parts), or searching crime scenes
  - Finding a dead body (Cadaver)
  - Finding small body parts, blood, tissue and bones (Human Remains Detection)
  - Finding a drowning victim (Water)
- Searching for objects that have been touched, dropped, or disposed of by humans (Evidence)

Each Wyoming K-9 Search Team is certified against the "Tri-State Standards of Performance" in one or more K-9 search disciplines. For more information on our standards of performance, visit our website at [www.wyomingk9sar.org](http://www.wyomingk9sar.org).

**When should you request K-9 Search Teams?** All searches. And it is important that a K-9 Search Team is a resource tool that is called and deployed very early in a search incident. Deploying a K-9 team before a lot of other search activities have occurred greatly increases its chances for success.

**How do we cover the cost of the search?** As a non-profit volunteer organization we ask requesting agencies for help in covering our search expenses (mileage and lodging if necessary). In some cases we can absorb some or all of the costs. This should be discussed at the time of the request. Civil air patrol can be requested and used to transport K-9 Search Teams at no cost as long as the lost person is believed to be alive.

## *Deploying Search Dog Teams*

While K-9 teams are traveling to the search staging area, the following important steps should be taken:

- Prepare and segment maps. Please use topographical maps.
- Determine transportation needs for K-9 teams upon their arrival.
- Assign a support person with topographical maps, navigation and communication equipment to each dog team.
- Determine assignments for dog teams by putting air scent dogs in the highest Probability Of Area (POA) and by putting trailing dogs at the Point Last Seen (PLS).
- Prepare briefing for K-9 teams.
- If a PLS is known and a trailing dog is available:
  - Protect and contain the PLS area as much as possible (keep non-essential personnel out of the area).
  - Do not park running vehicles where exhaust fumes will contaminate the PLS and surrounding area.
  - Know who has been in the PLS area and try to make them available to the dog team to allow the dog to eliminate their scents.
  - Gather scent articles making sure to have the person that collected the scent articles available to the dog team to allow the dog to eliminate that person's scent.

## *Detailed explanations of K-9 Search Disciplines*

Many K-9 teams are specializing in specific search disciplines. It is the responsibility of the designated WY K-9 representative to determine what K-9 resources are best deployed where, when and how.

### **Trailing**

Trailing dogs follow the ground scent of a specific person. To do that, they must have a reliable scent article, an item that has been handled or worn by the lost person. Body fluids or substances can also be used. Trailing dog teams can work efficiently together with man trackers. Trailing dogs are often able to determine the direction of travel and follow a subject's scent trail from the PLS for several miles. However, age, contamination, weather conditions (heavy rain or snow), temperature (solar impact) and time-of-day are important factors to consider. Typically early or late in the day or even at night are the best times to work trails.

Preparations for trailing searches:

- **Preserve and contain the PLS area:**
  - Keep non-essential persons away from that area.
  - Establish time-of-day and weather conditions at the time when the subject was at the PLS.
  - If a subject's vehicle has been located, make sure not to contaminate the interior of the vehicle (sit in it, touch items etc). A vehicle is a primary source for a good scent article.
  - Do not park running vehicles where exhaust fumes saturate the PLS area.
  - Know who has been in the PLS area and make them available to the dog team to allow the dog to eliminate false scents.
- **Collect scent article(s):**
  - Most handlers prefer to collect their own scent article.
  - Person(s) handling scent articles need to be on site when dog team arrives to allow the dog to eliminate false scents.
  - USE a plastic zip-lock bag to contain the article.
  - DO NOT touch the scent article with bare hands or lean over it before placing it in an air tight bag.
  - DO NOT retrieve articles from family clothes hampers.
  - DO NOT rely on family members to bring articles to the search base.

## **Air scenting (Area Search)**

Air scenting dogs follow human scent carried by air currents from a subject. A steady air flow greatly enhances their ability to find a subject from a distance. Air scenting dog teams work in a defined area and systematically grid through that area while taking advantage of the wind. They either find the subject, or report a Probability Of Detection (POD) for cleared areas along with the locations of clues that they may find. The search speed and level of POD is affected by terrain, vegetation, wind, weather and temperature conditions.

Preparations for air scenting searches:

- **Prepare and segment topographical maps.**
  - Establish Probability Of Area (POA) values.
  - Assign dog teams to highest POA segments.
- **Provide a support person for assisting in**
  - Communications
  - Navigation
  - Knowledge of area
- **Provide transportation for air-scent team and support person to their assigned search areas.**

## **Cadaver / Human Remains Detection (HRD)**

Cadaver search dogs follow the scent of a human body, body parts, fluids or bones. Buried body parts can also be detected. A cadaver dog is able to find body parts and bones after many years. Cadaver dog teams work in a defined area and systematically grid through that area while taking advantage of the wind.

In contrast to cadaver searches, an HRD search is focused on much smaller areas, looking for very small sources such as a drop of blood, a tooth, bone splinter or other very small fragments of human remains. HRD dogs are trained not to touch or disturb any finds.

Preparations for cadaver/HRD searches:

- **Define search areas**
- **Contain and protect search areas. Keep non-essential personnel away from these areas**
- **Do not park running vehicles where exhaust fumes will contaminate the areas**

## Water

A water K-9 team attempts to determine the location of a drowned subject in a pond, lake or river. The subject's scent is carried to the surface as it travels according to water temperature, water depth and water currents. The search dog will alert when finding the scent. Dogs usually work from a boat but can also work from shore. Water currents and wind are significant factors in the ability to pin-point the area for divers to search.

Preparations for water searches:

- **Request certified rescue divers**
- **Map of water body**
- **Boat for K-9 search team**
  - Boat deck should be as low to the water surface as possible with an unrestricted area (in front) for the K-9 to work
  - Ideal boats are Zodiac, Bass with electric motor

## Evidence

Evidence items are articles that have been handled and dropped or discarded by a human. They can be very small or large. Evidence search dogs are directed to grid a defined area systematically, taking advantage of the wind, and alert when they detect an article.

Preparations for evidence searches:

- **Define search areas**
- **Contain and protect search areas. Keep non-essential personnel away from these areas**
- **Do not park running vehicles where exhaust fumes will contaminate the areas**

## Avalanche

Avalanche dogs are looking for human scent from a subject buried by an avalanche (under several feet of snow). They also find clues such as articles of clothing, ski poles. The location of those clues may be used to narrow the search area. Similar to other types of area searches, the dog team searches the avalanche debris area using a systematic grid by taking advantage of the wind.

The search strategy focuses on speed and efficiency in an attempt to find and rescue the subject alive. However, the safety of all search teams is the number one concern.

Preparations for avalanche searches:

- **Secure area and assess and control existing avalanche danger**
- **Maintain accurate record of all searchers and equipment on scene**



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**Serving the community  
to save lives**

Wyoming K-9 SAR  
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**WY K-9 Dispatch 307-739-7175**



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