

# BOX SEARCH TO BUILDING.

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We sometimes forget that the box search is taught for reasons other than obtaining your P.D. 1 AT A CERTIFICATION TRIAL.

The box search, or open search, is taught so that the dog will search out a concealed suspect and stay in that area and bark continuously at that hiding place.

The dog is taught to check out and discard a hiding place that does not have live scent in it and bark at the hiding place that does have live scent. The dog is taught to stay with that live scent until called away from it.

It is also taught to search in a certain pattern, using the wind to its advantage.

## **MOTIVATE MOTIVATE MOTIVATE**

Before starting the dog in box searches, I make sure that it is standing off and barking at the suspect as I do not give bites as rewards unless it is absolutely necessary (if all else fails) to stop the dog leaving the hiding place of the suspect. In all my training exercises, the KONG is the motivational instrument and the reward. So, as you can see, in Toronto, we are "bark and hold".

In our box search training, we use all six boxes in the same pattern as the U.S.P.C.A.

Prior to the search, all doors have been propped open.

We start the dog on a thirty foot line and about forty feet from the first box. It may be advisable to wear gloves for this exercise. We have the quarry agitate the dog by teasing it with the kong, then run to the first box and get in with the door still propped open.

Once the quarry is inside, then the dog is given the command "find him". The handler then runs, with the dog, gradually letting the line out. When the dog reaches the box and indicates on the quarry and is barking, praise is to be lavished on the dog and on the signal from the handler, the quarry will toss the kong to the dog. The handler will then run back with the dog to the starting point.

The same procedures will then be used for box 2 and 3. When the quarry runs off to box 4, the quarry will run down past box 1, 2 and 3, and then across to 4.

The handler will then give the command "find him" and will run with the dog down past 1, 2, and 3, allowing the dog to check each box. The handler will then run across to box 4 and again as soon as the dog indicates and barks, then praise, praise, praise and on the signal from the handler, the quarry tosses the kong to the dog.

If the dog is not tired by this time, we will continue onto box 5 and 6, then give the dog a break.

When we start again, the dog will be allowed to see the quarry go to box 1 and go through the same procedure.

On the next run through, allow the dog to see the quarry go towards box 1 then turn the dog away and have the quarry run to box 3. As soon as the quarry enters the box, turn the dog

around and making sure it is motivated to go, give the command to search and then run with the dog, allowing it to check box 1 and 2 and when it indicates on box 3, praise and give the kong reward.

Once you have the dog searching all six boxes on the thirty foot line with the doors open, it is time to go through the whole routine again with the doors closed. Because we have search with the doors open, the dog has the basic idea that when it is given the search command that there will be someone in one of the boxes with its kong. This usually assists in quickly getting the dog to bark on scent.

After seeing the quarry run to the box, get in and close the door, we give the search command and run with the dog to box 1. Show it the slits in the sides of the box and let it sniff at them and then guide the dog to the door and as soon as you see an indication, encourage the dog to bark. As soon as you elicit a bark, the quarry should open the door and throw the kong to the dog.

Carry on in this manner, gradually increasing the amount of barks prior to the dog getting the reward until you can keep the dog barking until you call the quarry out.

The dog must be proficient in its searching the boxes on line before releasing the dog off line. Make sure you know the dog is ready to do it off line. It takes a long time of going around the boxes in a systematic pattern. Do not be in a rush.

You can practice the pattern even when you do not have a quarry. Put the dog on your six foot leash. Do not give the dog any commands, but walk or run around the boxes in your pattern. The reason for giving no commands is that you know there is no one in any of the boxes so we do not want the exercise to be like a failure for the dog.

Once the dog is searching the boxes with you staying in the middle of the field (as per P.D. 1), I find that officers come to me complaining that they find the dog is coming back to them once it has found someone in the box. My advice to them is when box searching, do not recall the dog but to go to the dog. Do not allow the dog to return to you. At any time, you should be able to recall the dog so it is not something you want to make a habit of when practicing your searches. If you do, you may find your dog returning to you when you are conducting a street search in the open, or a building search.

As I said at the beginning, I do not normally give bites as a reward but there are times when I decide that it is necessary. If you are having a problem with the dog not staying at the box or hesitating to bark, then I use the sleeve. I find that it really gets the dog motivated and you will see an improvement after a few searches.

Another exercise to work on is placing other handlers' clothing in boxes while the quarry is hiding in another box. The handler, to start with, will know which box the quarry is in so that if the dog starts barking at any other box, then the handler can go to that box and open it up and show the dog that there is no one inside.

Do not admonish the dog for this, just send the dog off to search the rest of the boxes. By doing this, we are telling the dog not to show us where stale scent is, but show us where live scent is. You will find that not saying anything to the dog when it false alarms that the dog will figure out the difference between stale scent and live scent.

Now, to go and teach the dog to search a building for a suspect (concealed or exposed)... Prior to teaching this exercise, the dog must have been tested inside a building for any

shyness on shiny or slippery floors and stairways. Also test for shyness in darkness.

If you do have a dog that is a little shy on floors, if this is the only problem you have with the dog and you do not want to wash the dog out of your course, then take your time with the dog. Do not try to drag the dog along the floors, but take a book and sit in one of these rooms, give the dog a favourite toy and let the dog play.

Be prepared to be there for a long time as this can solve the problem. There are also pad sprays that you can get that assist the dog with its footing on shiny floors. I have found that this can help.

When introducing the dog to building searches, I like to start from outside. I want the dog to see the suspect run into the building so that whenever you take your dog to a break and enter (burglary) and enter the building, the dog is already motivated. It knows what your actions are when you are going to release it to do building searches.

Start with the quarry teasing the dog with its kong. The quarry then runs into the building and stands in the first open office. The handler, with the dog on a six foot leash attached to the read ring of the collar, gives out the warning that he/she has a Police Dog and the persons should surrender, etc.

The handler then gives the command to search (i.e. "find him") and runs with the dog through the front doors and into the first office where the quarry is. When the dog indicates on the quarry, it must commence barking and standing off, whether the quarry is standing, sitting or lying down.

All the time the dog is standing off and barking (leash should be loose), the dog is to be praised. If the dog pulls on the leash, then it is to be given a correction, commanded to speak, and praised when it does. On the signal from the handler, the quarry will produce the kong and toss it to the dog.

The distance I like to keep the dog from the quarry is approximately four feet.

We then go back outside and start again. We go through the same buildup with the quarry running in and into the second office and either stand, sit or lie down. The handler will again give out the warning and then give the search command.

The handler will go with the dog, making sure the dog goes into and searches the first office and then onto the second. As soon as the dog indicates, encourage the dog to speak and as soon as the dog does, praise must be given and continued as long as the dog stands off and barks.

The dog is then given his kong reward. This exercise continues in this way until the dog is systematically searching the rooms, finding the quarry and standing off and barking. The kong is now also concealed and the dog has to stand off and bark in anticipation of getting it.

We now move on to the quarry being concealed from view.

We will start the dog in the same way, only this time when the quarry goes into the room, the quarry will close the door until there is only about a 1/4 inch opening.

Before entering the building, the quarry will tease the dog with the kong, then run off into the building and into the first room. The handler will give out the warning and give the dog the

search command, going with the dog into the building.

When the first door is reached, the handler will point to the crack at the bottom of the door. When the dog sniffs and gives an indication, encourage the dog to bark. When it does, praise must be given. On the signal from the trainer, the handler will aggressively order the quarry out of the room.

As the quarry opens the door, the kong will be tossed to the dog who will then be taken out of the building, back to the starting point. We then go through the same routine with the quarry going to the second room and closing the door, but leaving the first room's door open. We do this in the early stages so the dog does not give us a false indication.

The handler will start the dog off in the same manner and will come into the building, go in and around the first room, then to the door of the second room. Again, as the dog sniffs and gives an indication, it is to be encouraged to bark and when it does, praise is to be given. The handler will order the quarry out and the kong given to the dog.

This progression will continue, with breaks. Do not do too many without giving the dog a break.

When the handler can enter the building, give out the warning, motivate the dog and go with the dog on the six foot leash with the dog sniffing at each closed door all the way down the hallway and when it indicates and barks (without any assistance from the handler) then it is time for off-leash building searches.

I do not recommend that building searches be done on leash in street applications unless there is a hazard to the dog or handler.

On your first off-leash search, go through the same routine with the warning. Once the warning has been given, I like to have the dog bark so that the suspect knows that a dog is truly there. The handler will now release the dog with the search command. It is very likely that the dog will charge off down the hallway in search of the suspect. This is acceptable as the dog is showing a lot of intensity. The dog must then be called back and ensure it checks every door. It does not take a long time before the dog gets into a pattern of searching.

Start hiding a person inside a closet, inside the door. This way the dog gets used to not only searching hallway doors, but room interiors.

Do double hides where you hide two persons in the same room. Do not tell the handler. When the dog indicates on a hiding place, just have one person come out. Take the one person out and return and send the dog off to search again. When the dog again indicates on the same room, you will soon see how well the handler has learned to read and trust his dog.

Start hiding quarries up high so the dog does not stay low all the time. We want the dog looking up as well. This helps the dog to bark on scent when the quarry is concealed high up.

It is not always possible for the dog to pinpoint the exact location of the suspect, which is why it is most important that the dog becomes proficient at barking on scent. Remember, you are a team and the dog has done its part in telling you there is someone close by. Now you do your part.

This is why you should make yourself aware of whether the heating or air conditioning is off or on and how this may effect the dog's searching. Does the building have false ceilings? Knowing these things may help you in knowing how the scent is being distributed throughout the building.

Make sure you work your dog on gunfire in the building. You will find your dog's reactions can differ greatly from searching outside in an open field. If you find that your dog is a little sound sensitive inside a building, but is okay outside then work on your building searches with gunfire and you will probably find that the dog will soon accept it as just another noise.

When doing a building search and your dog starts indicating by barking at a door that is not in your sight, and there are rooms that have not been checked that are between you and the dog, you must make a decision as to whether you call the dog back to you and attempt to get it to search the other rooms (the dog will more than likely go back to the original room it was barking at), or have the dog stay at the door and you and your cover officer check the other rooms.

I think the latter is the best way to go about it. Once you and your cover officer have checked all rooms between you and your dog, call the dog back to you from the door.

Making sure you have cover, call the suspect to come out. Always tell the suspect to voice out prior to exiting the place of concealment because the door that the dog is barking at is not necessarily the place where the person is.

This is due to the fact that scent is blown around and some rooms take in the scent (inhale) and some blow it out (exhale). So, by telling the quarry to voice out, you get a better pinpoint area. When calling the suspect out, I always like to have the person crawl out on all fours into the hallway and then go through your arrest routine.

Whenever you make an arrest with your dog, whether it be by way of a building search or open search and you dog has apprehended the suspect, do not allow your cover officer to make the arrest until you have control of your dog. It is very likely that if they go to grab the suspect while the dog is still on the suspect that the dog will get confused and let go of the suspect and bite the cover officer.

Always remember when releasing the dog to do an open or building search , to make sure your cover officers know what you require of them. They are to watch your back and NOT watch the dog, as so often happens.

Never get ahead of the dog and do not advance until the areas have been cleared. Because we get so many false alarms in building searches, we do not want the dog to become complacent as many of us do, because there are so many false alarms. Get a patrol officer to hide for you, especially if you have gone five searches without a find.

Do not wait for training day.

Finally, a word about "bark and hold" as opposed to "bite and hold". When I teach building searches and open searches, the dog is first taught with the suspect exposed, as our dogs must stand off and bark when they find a suspect.

I do not wish to say that one way is better than the other. I have heard it said that when searching for a person armed with a gun and a "bark and hold" dog enters, the dog will get shot as opposed to a "bite and hold" dog who is trained to go in and bite. I think we forget

that the suspect does not worry which dog is entering the room because the suspect is going to shoot the dog anyway.

A "bark and hold" dog is also taught to engage a suspect who becomes aggressive and fires a gun. I have also read and heard that you are leaving too much of a decision to the dog. My thoughts are that the dog is not left to make a decision because the actions of the dog are determined by the actions of the suspect.

This is my opinion and this article is written to give you a different aspect of training. I am not saying which is best as the political climate of your area sometimes dictates which way you train.

As in all phases of training, if you have a problem, please do not hesitate to go back to the basics.

If anyone wishes to contact me on this or any other exercise, please do not hesitate to do so.

**THINK BEFORE YOU USE YOUR DOG, BUT NEVER THINK FOR YOUR DOG.**

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