



Scent Sports Association of New Zealand (SSANZ):  
Rules and Guidelines – Nosework – August 2025  
[www.scentsports.org.nz](http://www.scentsports.org.nz)

## SSANZ DEFINITION OF NOSEWORK

Nosework is a sport that allows dogs to use their natural olfactory abilities and to work in partnership with their handler to locate specific target odours.

Nosework is an uninterrupted performance by a dog and handler to demonstrate working as a team and can be easily performed in a wide variety of locations.

In a SSANZ trial each team works together to locate and communicate that a hide/hides has/have been found.

The arrangement of the searches in Nosework are modelled on those of traditional working detection dogs. The overall performance should convey an image of fun, enthusiasm, and the ability of the team to work in partnership.

Our aim is to provide a safe and enriching environment that promotes a trusting and lasting relationship. Harsh handling will not be tolerated and may result in immediate disqualification and the handler not permitted to participate any further on that day.

The primary focus of the trial is to achieve a qualifying score. Performance/competitive targets may be included at the discretion of the Organisers when providing prizes and awards.

### 1 SSANZ LEVEL REQUIREMENTS – AWARDS

#### 1.1 SSANZ NOVICE NOSEWORK TITLE (NWN<sup>Nov</sup>)

Objective for Novice is to demonstrate the ability of the team to correctly identify a single hide in four different search areas within the allotted time.

**Requirements to be granted the Novice Nosework Title:**

- a) Handler must be a financial member of SSANZ.
- b) Dog must attain two SSANZ Novice Qualifying Trial certificates to achieve their Novice title. Criteria outlined in 1.2.
- c) A dog can continue trialling in Novice until they have accumulated a maximum of five SSANZ Novice Qualifying Trial certificates.
- d) A dog that earns five SSANZ Novice Qualifying Trial certificates will receive the Super Star Award.
- e) An exception to 1.1(c) is when a dog with four qualifying certificates is entered on both days at a double trial and qualifies on the first day. In this instance they are permitted a sixth certificate if successful on the second day.
- f) Once a dog has a qualifying certificate at the Intermediate level, the dog can no longer trial at Novice level.



- g) An exception to 1.1 (f) is when a dog is entered on both days of a double trial in Novice and Intermediate. If the team qualifies in Intermediate on the first day, they will be permitted to trial in Novice on the second day.

### 1.2 To attain a Novice Qualifying Certificate

- a) Complete all four Novice searches, at a single trial, in the respective allocated times and correctly identify all the hides.
- b) Each search element is worth 25 points.
- c) A minimum score of 90 points over the four searches is required to achieve a qualifying certificate.
- d) One incorrect alert call is permitted in total over the four Novice searches. Once a "false, continue" is called by the Judge, the odour still needs to be found and a correct alert called.
- e) The dog must meet any other relevant criteria outlined in the SSANZ rules.

### 1.3 SSANZ INTERMEDIATE NOSEWORK TITLE (NWInt)

Objective for Intermediate is to demonstrate the ability of the team to correctly identify a single hide in four different search areas within the allotted time.

#### Requirements to be granted the Intermediate Nosework Title:

- a) Handler must be a financial member of SSANZ.
- b) Dog must attain two SSANZ Intermediate Qualifying Trial certificates under a minimum of 2 Judges at 2 different locations. Criteria outlined in 1.4.
- c) A dog can continue trialling in Intermediate until they have accumulated a maximum of five SSANZ Intermediate Qualifying Trial certificates.
- d) A dog that earns five SSANZ Intermediate Qualifying Trial certificates will receive the Super Star Award.
- e) An exception to 1.3(c) is when a dog with four qualifying certificates is entered on both days at a double trial, and qualifies on the first day, they are permitted a sixth certificate if successful on the second day.
- f) Once a dog has a qualifying certificate at Advanced, the dog can no longer trial at Intermediate.
- g) An exception to 1.3 (f) is when a dog is entered on both days of a double trial in Intermediate and Advanced. If the team qualifies in Advanced on the first day, they will be permitted to trial in Intermediate on the second day.

### 1.4 To attain an Intermediate Qualifying Certificate

- a) Complete all four Intermediate searches at a single trial in the respective allocated times and correctly identify all the hides.
- b) Each search element is worth 25 points.
- c) A minimum score of 90 points over the four searches is required to achieve a qualifying certificate.
- d) There may be no incorrect alert calls over the four searches.
- e) The dog must meet any other relevant criteria outlined in the SSANZ rules.



### 1.5 SSANZ ADVANCED NOSEWORK TITLE (NWAdv)

Objective for Advanced is to demonstrate the ability of the team to correctly identify two hides in each of four different search areas.

#### **Requirements to be granted the Advanced Nosework Title:**

- a) Handler must be a financial member of SSANZ.
- b) Dog must attain three SSANZ Advanced Qualifying Trial certificates under a minimum of 2 different Judges at 2 different locations. Criteria outlined in 1.6.
- c) A dog that earns five SSANZ Advanced Qualifying Trial certificates will receive the Super Star Award.
- d) Once a dog has a qualifying certificate at Excellent, the dog can no longer trial at Advanced.
- e) An exception to 1.5 (d) is when a dog is entered on both days of a double trial in Advanced and Excellent. If the team qualifies in Excellent on the first day, they will be permitted to trial in Advanced on the second day.

### 1.6 To attain an Advanced Qualifying Certificate

- a) Complete all four Advanced searches at a single trial in the respective allocated time and correctly identify all the hides.
- b) Each search element is worth 25 points. Each hide/odour source has equal value.
- c) A minimum score of 90 over the four searches is required to achieve a qualifying certificate.
- d) There may be no incorrect calls over the four Advanced searches.
- e) The dog must meet any other relevant criteria outlined in the SSANZ rules.

### 1.7 SSANZ EXCELLENT NOSEWORK TITLE (NWExc)

Objective for Excellent is to demonstrate the ability of the team to correctly identify 12 hides in total over five different search areas. The five search areas will be one each of container, vehicle, interior, and exterior, and a fifth area selected by the organisation from those four elements. Three different odours may be used as described in the Excellent Criteria section.

#### **Requirements to be granted the Excellent Nosework Title:**

- a) Handler must be a financial member of SSANZ.
- b) Dog must attain three SSANZ Excellent Qualifying Trial certificates under a minimum of two different Judges at two different locations. Criteria outlined in 1.8.
- c) A dog can continue trialling in Excellent until they have accumulated a maximum of five SSANZ Excellent Qualifying Trial certificates.
- d) If a dog receives five SSANZ Excellent Qualifying Trial certificates they will receive the Super Star Award.
- e) An exception to 1.7(c) is when a dog with four qualifying certificates is entered on both days at a double trial and qualifies on the first day. In this case they are permitted a sixth certificate if successful on the second day.

### 1.8 To attain an Excellent Qualifying Certificate

- a) Complete all five Excellent searches at a single trial in the respective allocated time and correctly identify all the hides.
- b) Each hide will be allocated 10 points.
- c) A minimum score of 111 over the five searches is required to achieve a qualifying certificate.
- d) A dog can continue trialling in Excellent until they have accumulated a maximum of five SSANZ Excellent Qualifying Trial certificates.
- e) There may be no incorrect calls over the five Excellent searches.
- f) The dog must meet any other relevant criteria outlined in the SSANZ rules.

### 1.9 SSANZ PREMIUM NOSEWORK TITLE (NWPre)

Objective for Premium is to demonstrate the ability of the team to correctly identify 15 hides in total over six different search areas. The six search areas will be one each of container, vehicle, interior, and exterior, and two more areas selected by the organisation from those four elements. The two additional areas must be different from each other. Three different odours may be used as described in the Premium Criteria section.

#### Requirements to be granted the Premium Nosework Title:

- a) Handler must be a financial member of SSANZ
- b) Dog must attain three SSANZ Premium Qualifying Trial certificates under a minimum of two different judges at two different locations. Criteria outlined in 1.10.
- c) If a dog receives five SSANZ Premium Qualifying Trial certificates they will receive the Super Star Award.

### 1.10 To attain a Premium Qualifying Certificate

- a) Complete all six Premium searches at a single trial in the respective allocated time and correctly identify all the hides.
- b) Each hide will be allocated 10 points
- c) A minimum score of 141 over the six searches is required to achieve a qualifying certificate.
- d) A dog can continue trialling in Premium until they have accumulated a maximum of five SSANZ Premium Qualifying Trial certificates.
- e) There may be no incorrect calls over the six Premium searches

## 2 SET UP OF SEARCH AREAS – GENERAL

- 2.1 Odour-infused Q-Tips are to be placed inside either a plastic or metal vessel and this shall be known as the source or hide.
- 2.2 Hide vessels will have a maximum capacity of 50ml with adequate ventilation to allow the odour to be released into the area.
- 2.3 Hides must be placed in a manner that they cannot be easily displaced by the dog, or secured to a surface such that they cannot be easily dislodged. A hide is to be secured inside a container in a manner that if the container moves the hide will not move or make a sound.
- 2.4 The hide will be placed by the Judge or designated official a minimum of 15 minutes before the first team commences searching.
- 2.5 The hide must not be visible to the team in the normal course of the search.
- 2.6 The hide should not be placed in such a way that it poses a risk of ingestion by the dog.
- 2.7 Additional vessels or containers must be available in case of contamination or visible damage.
- 2.8 The search area should be clean and safe.
- 2.9 The search area will be clearly defined by boundary markers (flags, cones, rope, pegs, or natural visual landmarks), structures, or walls.
- 2.10 There must be a clearly defined start line

### 2.11 CONTAINER SEARCH – GENERAL

- a) All containers used in this search must be clean, and “cold” containers should **never** have been used as “hot” ones or come in contact with odour.
  - i) No contamination from foodstuffs or strong-smelling substances.
  - ii) Containers must be closed but have holes or other visible ventilation points for the odour to escape. Vents shall be no wider than 2.5 centimetres (25mm).
  - iii) This search may be conducted indoors or outdoors.
- b) The start line should be no less than one metre from the first container.
- c) Additional hot containers and blank containers will be on standby in case any have to be replaced, and these should be stored away from the search area.
- d) A distractor is an item intentionally placed in a container to test the dog's ability to ignore irrelevant stimuli and remain focused on locating the target odour.
  - i) Distractions Non-food: Any item that is not intended for consumption by a person or dog
  - ii) Distraction Food: Any item that a dog or person can safely eat.
  - iii) Distractions not permitted - Kong, gun oil, droppings, poisons, any item containing essential oils, any item that is perishable, rotten, dead (e.g. animal, birds, fish), anything toxic to a dog, any highly volatile substances.
- e) Also refer to Set Up of Search Areas - level specific.

### 2.12 INTERIOR SEARCH – GENERAL

- a) This search will be conducted inside a building or room.
- b) This area may be a whole room or defined section within a larger area.
- c) The interior can be as it was found or staged at the Judge's discretion.
- d) Also refer to Set Up of Search Areas - level specific.



### 2.13 EXTERIOR SEARCH – GENERAL

- a) Exterior areas (refer to definitions) should be outdoors and may be covered, in the case of a deck or patio.
- b) The exterior area can be as it was found or staged at the Judge's discretion.
- c) Also refer to Set Up of Search Areas - level specific.

### 2.14 VEHICLE SEARCH – GENERAL

- a) The first vehicle must be no less than 3m and no more than 10m from the start line.
- b) There must be clear access (minimum of 2 metres) to all sides of the vehicle.
- c) Hides will not be inside any vehicle.
- d) Refer to Set Up of Search Areas for level-specific criteria.

### 3 SET UP OF SEARCH AREAS – LEVEL SPECIFIC

#### 3.1 NOVICE SEARCH CRITERIA, IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL CRITERIA.

- a) One hide per search element.
- b) Oil of Clove Bud (*Syzygium aromaticum* syn. *Eugenia caryophyllata*) is the odour used in SSANZ Novice trials.
- c) No formal indication or TFR (Trained Final Response) is required for the handler to call alert.
- d) The judge should observe a change of behaviour from the dog.

#### 3.2 Novice Container search

- a) Search time is 2 minutes.
- b) May be conducted indoors or outdoors.
- c) 10-15 containers set in a geometric shape.
- d) Containers must all be made from the same material and may be either cardboard or plastic.
- e) The containers will be uniform size with a minimum width of 210mm and maximum width of 600mm.
- f) The containers shall be no more than 400mm in height.
- g) All containers are placed at ground level.
- h) The start line should be no less than one metre from the first container.
- i) There is to be a minimum distance of 750mm and a maximum distance of 1500mm between containers. If the containers are in rows there is to be a minimum distance of 900mm and a maximum distance of 1500 between rows.
- j) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.

#### 3.3 Novice Interior search

- a) Search time is 3 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 60 and 100 sqm.
- c) Odour maximum height 650mm from the ground.

#### 3.4 Novice Exterior search

- a) Search time is 3 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 75 and 200 sqm.
- c) Odour maximum height 650mm from the ground.

#### 3.5 Novice Vehicle search

- a) Search time is 3 minutes.
- b) One passenger vehicle, either a car, ute, or minivan.
- c) The first vehicle must be no less than 3m and no more than 10m from the start line.
- d) Clear access to all sides (minimum of 2 metres from walls or boundaries).
- e) Odour maximum height 650mm.
- f) Maximum depth under vehicle 100mm.

#### **4. INTERMEDIATE SEARCH CRITERIA, IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL CRITERIA ABOVE**

- a) One hide per search element.
- b) Oil of Sweet Birch (*Betula lenta*) is the odour used in SSANZ Intermediate trials.
- c) No formal indication or TFR is required for the handler to call alert.
- d) The judge should observe a change of behaviour from the dog.

##### **4.1 Intermediate Container search**

- a) Search time is 2 minutes.
- b) May be conducted indoors or outdoors.
- c) 12-18 containers set in a geometric shape.
- d) Containers must be random size and be either cardboard or plastic. However, all containers must be made from the same material.
- e) The containers shall be no more than 400mm in height.
- g) All containers are placed at ground level.
- h) The start line should be no less than one metre from the first container.
- i) There is to be a minimum distance of 750mm and a maximum distance of 1500mm between containers. If the containers are in rows there is to be a minimum distance of 900mm and a maximum distance of 1500 between rows.
- j) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.

##### **4.2 Intermediate Interior search**

- a) Search time is 3 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 60 and 140 sqm.
- c) Odour maximum height 650mm from the ground.

##### **4.3 Intermediate Exterior search**

- a) Search time is 4 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 100 and 300 sqm.
- c) Odour maximum height 650mm from the ground.

##### **4.4 Intermediate Vehicle search**

- a) Search time is 3 minutes.
- b) Two vehicles of any type (refer to definitions) and placed in any configuration.
- c) If a trailer is connected to a vehicle that will be classified as two vehicles.
- d) The first vehicle must be no less than 3m and no more than 10m from the start line.
- e) Clear access to both vehicles on all sides (minimum of 2 metres from walls or boundaries), with a minimum distance of 2 metres between the two vehicles (unless attached, as in the case of a trailer).
- f) Odour maximum height 650mm.
- g) Maximum depth under vehicle 100mm.



## 5 ADVANCED SEARCH CRITERIA, IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL CRITERIA.

- a) Two hides per search element.
- b) Oil of Clove Bud and/or Sweet Birch are the odours used in SSANZ Advanced trials. A combination of two different odours may be used in one vessel.
- c) There will be one non-food distraction in the container search, placed inside one of the cold containers.
- d) No formal indication or TFR is required for the handler to call alert.
- e) The judge should observe a change of behaviour from the dog.
- f) Handlers are required to call the two alerts, and "finish" (either before or after the Judge confirms that the find is correct). If "Finish" is not called, the maximum time for the search will be recorded.

### 5.1 Advanced Container search

- a) Search time is 3 minutes.
- b) May be conducted indoors or outdoors.
- c) 18-20 containers set in a geometric shape.
- d) The containers must be random size and made from cardboard, plastic, or metal. There can be a mixture of different types of containers.
- e) The containers shall be no more than 400mm in height.
- f) All containers are placed at ground level.
- g) The start line should be no less than one metre from the first container.
- h) There is to be a minimum distance of 300mm and a maximum distance of 900mm between containers. If the containers are in rows there is to be a minimum distance of 900mm and a maximum distance of 1500 between rows.
- i) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.
- j) There will be one non-food distraction inside one container.

### 5.2 Advanced Interior search

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 2 and 6 minutes.
- b) The interior search will be two or three rooms or spaces adjacent to or adjoining each other.
- c) The search area will total between 120 and 400 sqm.
- d) Odour maximum height 900mm from the ground.

### 5.3 Advanced Exterior Search

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3 and 5 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 150 and 400sqm.
- c) Odour maximum height 900mm from the ground.

### 5.4 Advanced Vehicle search

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3 and 4 minutes.
- b) Three to four vehicles of any sort (refer to definition) and in any configuration.
- c) If a trailer is connected to a vehicle that will be classified as two vehicles.
- d) The first vehicle must be no less than 3m and no more than 10m from the start line.
- e) Clear access to all vehicles on all sides (minimum 2 metres, unless attached)
- f) Hides must be on different vehicles.
- g) Odour maximum height 650mm.
- h) Maximum depth under vehicle 100mm.



## **6 EXCELLENT SEARCH CRITERIA, IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL CRITERIA.**

- a) There will be 12 hides in total over the five searches.
- b) Judges will draw numbers to determine how many hides they will be placing in each search area, divided up as 3, 3, 3, 2, 1.
- c) Judges will advise handlers of the number of hides in each search area.
- d) Oil of Clove Bud, Sweet Birch, and/or Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) are the odours used in SSANZ Excellent trials. A combination of two different odours may be used in the one vessel.
- e) There will be three distractions in the container search. *See section Container Search General*
- f) No formal indication or TFR is required for the handler to call alert.
- g) The judge should observe a change of behaviour from the dog.
- h) Handlers are required to call the relevant number of alerts, and “finish” (either before or after the Judge confirms that the find is correct). If “Finish” is not called, the maximum time for the search will be recorded.

### **6.1 Excellent Container search**

- a) Search time will be set by the judge and will be between 3-4 minutes.
- b) May be conducted indoors or outdoors.
- c) 18-22 containers set in a geometric shape.
- d) The containers must be random size and made from cardboard, plastic, or metal. There must be a mixture of different types of containers.
- e) The containers shall be no more than 400mm in height.
- f) All containers are placed at ground level.
- g) The start line should be no less than one metre from the first container.
- h) There is to be a minimum distance of 300mm and a maximum distance of 900mm between containers. If the containers are in rows there is to be a minimum distance of 900mm and a maximum distance of 1500 between rows.
- i) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.
- j) There will be three distractions inside three containers, two non-food distractions and one food distraction.

### **6.2 Excellent Interior search**

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3-6 minutes.
- b) The interior search will be two or three rooms or spaces adjacent to or adjoining each other.
- c) The search area will total between 120 and 400 sqm.
- d) Odour maximum height 1100mm from the ground.

### **6.3 Excellent Exterior Search**

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3-6 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 150 and 400sqm.
- c) Odour maximum height 1100mm from the ground.

#### 6.4 Excellent Vehicle search

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3-4 minutes.
- b) Three to four vehicles of any sort (refer to definition) and in any configuration.
- c) If a trailer is connected to a vehicle that will be classified as two vehicles.
- d) The first vehicle must be no less than 3m and no more than 10m from the start line.
- e) Clear access to all vehicles on all sides (minimum 2 metres, unless attached)
- f) Hides must be on different vehicles.
- g) Odour maximum height 1000mm, and 650mm for private passenger vehicles
- h) Maximum depth under vehicle 150mm, and 100mm under private passenger vehicles.

#### 7. PREMIUM SEARCH CRITERIA, IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL CRITERIA.

- a) There will be 15 hides in total over the six searches.
- b) Judges will draw numbers to determine how many hides they will be placing in each search area, divided up as 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1.
- c) Judges will NOT advise handlers of the number of hides in each search area.
- d) Oil of Clove Bud, Sweet Birch and/or Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) are the odours used in SSANZ Premium trials. A combination of two different odours may be used in one vessel.
- e) Some hides may be inaccessible.
- f) There will be four distractions in the container search. Two non-food distractions and two food distractions, placed inside four of the cold containers.
- g) No formal indication or TFR is required for the handler to call an alert.
- h) The judge should observe a change of behaviour from the dog.
- i) Handlers are required to call alerts, and “finish” (either before or after the Judge confirms that the find is correct).
- j) If “Finish” is not called, the maximum time for the search will be recorded and a major fault will be incurred.

##### 7.1 Premium Container search

- a) Search time will be set by the judge and will be between 3-4 minutes.
- b) May be conducted indoors or outdoors.
- c) 18-22 containers set in a geometric shape.
- d) The containers must be random size and made from cardboard, plastic, material, or metal. There must be a mixture of different types of containers.
- e) The containers shall be no more than 400mm in height.
- f) All containers are placed at ground level.
- g) The start line should be no less than one metre from the first container.
- h) There is to be a minimum distance of 300mm and a maximum distance of 900mm between containers. If the containers are in rows there is to be a minimum distance of 900mm and a maximum distance of 1500 between rows.
- i) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.
- j) There will be four distractions inside four containers, two non-food distractions and two food distractions.



## 7.2 Premium Interior search

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3-6 minutes.
- b) The interior search will be two or three rooms or spaces adjacent to or adjoining each other.
- c) The search area will total between 120 and 400 sqm.
- d) Odour maximum height 1200mm from the ground.

## 7.3 Premium Exterior Search

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3-6 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 150 and 400sqm.
- c) Odour maximum height 1200mm from the ground.

## 7.4 Premium Vehicle search

- a) Search time will be set by the Judge and will be between 3-4 minutes.
- b) Three to five vehicles of any sort (refer to definition) and in any configuration.
- c) If a trailer is connected to a vehicle that will be classified as two vehicles.
- d) The first vehicle must be no less than 3m and no more than 10m from the start line.
- e) Clear access to all vehicles on all sides (minimum 2 metres, unless attached)
- f) Two Hides may be on the same vehicle.
- g) Odour maximum height 1000mm, and 650mm for private passenger vehicles.
- h) Maximum depth under vehicle 150mm, and 100mm under private passenger vehicles.

## 8 ODOUR PREPARATION

- 8.1 Three to five drops of a single essential oil are to be placed on a cotton make up remover pad at the base of a sealable glass jar. Q-tips/cotton buds are then added to the jar. Note that Q-tips/cotton buds must *not* have plastic handles. The jar is then sealed with an airtight lid to allow the odour to infuse. QTips must be prepared a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 72 hours before use at a trial.
- 8.2 The maximum number that can be put into a hide vessel is 2 Q-tips, the minimum is one Q-tip.
- 8.3 At Advanced level and above, combination hides may be used by placing two different odour infused Q tips in the same vessel.

## 9 SEARCH RULES – GENERAL

- 9.1 The location of the hide/s must not be known to the handler.
- 9.2 The team is expected to start the search by crossing the start line. If neither the dog nor the handler crosses the start line, the team will incur a minor fault.
- 9.3 Time begins when any part of the team enters the search area.
- 9.3 At any time during the search the handler may use verbal and/or physical interaction, food, or a toy to encourage and support their dogs while searching.
- 9.4 Handlers need to indicate verbally and/or visually by calling “alert” and/or while raising a hand above their head, to communicate to the judge that the handler believes the dog has found the hide, and the Judge will respond accordingly:
- a) At Novice level if the alert call is **not** correct the Judge will say “**False – Continue**” on the first incorrect call, and a fault will be given (see section 10,2)
  - b) In Intermediate level no false alerts are permitted.
  - c) In Advanced if an alert is called on a hide already found the Judge will say “**Already found – Continue**” and a fault will be given. (See Section 10.2). If the handler calls the same hide a third time the search will finish.
  - d) A Judge may ask “**Where?**” for further clarification after the alert is called. If the handler is unable to adequately indicate the location of the hide to the Judge’s satisfaction, then it is considered a false alert.
  - e) In Novice and Intermediate levels timing concludes when the Judge has identified the call as “**Correct**” or “**Yes**”.
  - f) At Advanced, **Excellent, and Premium** level, the timing concludes when the handler calls “finish”.
- 9.5 Reinforcers (food or toys) may be visible.
- a) Handlers may take their reinforcers into the search area or leave them **on an elevated** location outside of the search area specified by the judge, which will be the same for all participants.
  - b) Food must be contained either in a pocket/treat pouch if carried, or in a closed container outside the search area at the place specified by the judge.
  - c) Reinforcers may be used at any point during the search.
  - d) Handlers must not contaminate the search area with their reinforcers. No food or toys may be thrown or dropped within or adjacent to the search area.
  - e) If, in the Judge’s opinion, the search area has been contaminated, a major fault will be deducted.
  - f) Handlers must not damage the search area or anything within the search area when reinforcing their dog.
  - g) If the reinforcers/rewards are left outside the search area, the dog must leave the search area under control and may not be sent ahead of the handler.
  - h) **If, in the Judge’s opinion, the dog has not left the search area in a controlled manner, a major fault may be applied.**
- 9.6 Searches may be conducted off lead with permission from the Judge after consultation with the Organiser.
- a) If an off-leash option is available, the handler may choose to take the dog off leash and put the dog back on leash at any time during the search with no penalty.

## 10 FAULTS

Faults are applied based on the following regulations/criteria.

### 10.1 Element failure

- a) If no hides are found the team will lose all the points for that element.
- b) If the time for the search element has run out, the team will only gain points for the hide/s found.
- c) If the handler requests help from the judge or aborts the search, the team will lose all points for that search.
- d) Fouling. If the dog vomits, urinates, or defecates at any time while searching the search will end and the team will lose all points for that search.
- e) If, in the opinion of the Judge, harsh or intimidating handling has taken place they may deduct all points for that search.

10.2 Faults are deducted according to three categories – incorrect alert call, major faults, and minor faults.

#### a) Incorrect Alert Call

- i) At Novice level the first incorrect Alert Call will incur a deduction of 6 faults. The Judge will call “False – continue” and the team may continue the search.
- ii) At Intermediate level an incorrect call will incur element failure.
- iii) At Advanced, **Excellent, and Premium** level an incorrect call will end the search but if a hide is found before the incorrect call the team will gain the points for that hide.
- iv) At Advanced, **Excellent, and Premium** level the handler calling alert on an already found hide will incur a deduction of 6 faults. The Judge will call “Already found – continue” and the team may continue the search. If the hide is called for the third time the search will end.

#### b) Major faults incur a deduction of 5 points on each occasion.

- i) Damage to the search area: including but not limited to excessive pawing or digging which require the replacement of equipment, odour, or container.
- ii) Compromising the search area: handler's reward delivery has jeopardised the integrity of the search area by damage or contamination.
- iii) Dropping food or rewards at any time during the search.
- iv) The dog damages or interferes with the hide placement.
- v) Leaving the search area. The team (handler and dog) leave the search area together during a search.
- vi) Fouling in the vicinity of the search area: including, but not limited to, marking on nearby trees or defecating.
- vii) Scattering or throwing of food or toys in the immediate vicinity of the search area.
- viii) Safety issues or other infractions that may place the dog, handler, judge, or stewards in a potentially dangerous situation.

**ix) Failing to call finish in Premium level.**



c) **Minor Faults incur a deduction of 2 points.**

Faults will be given for:

- i) Tangling the line.
- ii) Dropping the line.
- iii) Handler error.
- iv) Neither the handler nor the dog crosses the start line.

The judge's decision is final. No challenge or argument directly with the judge will be tolerated,

*(NOTE: provisions for **Elite** and **Ultimate** levels are currently being finalised and will be added to these regulations in due course).*



## 11 TRIAL ENTRY CRITERIA

All entry criteria must be met for a team to participate in a SSANZ trial.

### General entry requirements

- 11.1 All handlers must be financial members of SSANZ, and dogs registered with SSANZ. The handler must stay the same for all four elements of the trial.
- 11.2 To enter an Intermediate Trial a dog must have its Novice Nosework Title.
- 11.3 To enter an Advanced Trial a dog must have its Intermediate Nosework title.
- 11.4 To enter an Excellent Trial a dog must have its Advanced Nosework Title.
- 11.5 To enter Premium a dog must have its Excellent title.
- 11.6 Once a dog has a qualifying certificate at the level above the level at which the dog is currently tilted, the dog can no longer trial at the lower level.
- 11.7 An exception to 9.3, 9.4, and 9.5 is when a dog is entered on both days at a double trial in two levels and qualifies on the first day at the higher level. In this instance they are permitted to run at the lower level on the second day.
- 11.8 Handlers may only trial one dog at each level at a trial.
- 11.9 Dogs may trial with an alternate handler to their owner. The alternate handler must stay the same for all four elements of the trial.
- 11.10 A Judge may not enter a dog in the specific trial they are judging.
- 11.11 A Judge at a trial may enter a dog in another trial at the discretion of the Organisation.
- 11.12 Organisers and officials may participate in a trial at the discretion of the Organisation provided it does not impede the smooth running of the trial.
- 11.13 Handlers must not be involved in the setting of the hide.

### Requirements of the handler

- a) Have not been banned or excluded from trialling with SSANZ.
- b) Enclosed, secure footwear must be worn at all times. A handler who presents with insecure footwear will be asked to rectify the problem. If no attempt is made to rectify, the handler may be asked to leave the trial.
- c) Training vests, bags, hats etc., may be worn during searches.

### Requirements of the dog

- a) All dogs must be registered with SSANZ.
- b) Over the age of six months.
- c) Dogs attending the trial should be clean. Dogs who are excessively dirty will be excluded from trialling that day.
- d) Dogs attending the trial must be in a state of good general health. Dogs who raise health concerns for the judge may be excluded if a veterinary certificate is not available.
- e) A Veterinary Certificate giving a brief outline and stating a dog is fit to trial is required if an injury/disability/illness is obvious. A vet release form is available from SSANZ (on request) for completion prior to a trial.
- f) Dogs must have a current vaccination record, issued by a registered professional.





- g) Dogs must have a current registration with their local council.
- h) Bitches in season are NOT allowed to participate, nor permitted at the venue where the trial is held.
- i) Notification is required to be given to the organisation at the earliest indication that a bitch may be in season at the time of the trial.

### **Menacing dogs**

- a) A dog that has been classified as menacing or dangerous under the Dog Control Act (1996), may participate in a SSANZ Trial at the discretion of the Organisation.
- b) Additional information must be provided to the Organiser on request. This can include, but is not limited to:
  - (i) Owner name.
  - (ii) Owner address.
  - (iii) Dog name.
  - (iv) Dog breed.
  - (v) Dog colour.
  - (vi) Type of classification.
- c) A copy of the exemption document must be provided with the entry form.
- d) A dog that has been classified as menacing under the Dog Control Act (1996), and which has been granted an exemption under Section 33E (5) of the Dog Control Act (1996) by the local territorial authority that has jurisdiction over the trial location, may participate at a SSANZ Trial within the parameters of the exemption.
- e) SSANZ Organisations may still require dogs with a menacing classification to be muzzled at all times, even if they have an exemption.

## **12 EQUIPMENT**

- a) Lead length and type is at the handler's discretion.
- b) Leads can be attached to a suitable harness or collar for the searches. Correctly fitted non-restrictive harnesses are permitted for use in SSANZ trials.
- c) If the line is to be attached to the harness it must be affixed to the top (spine), not to any front clip that may be present.
- d) Check, choke, slip, prong, citronella collars, head halters, and E collars are not permitted in the search areas.
- e) Optional equipment worn by the dog such as coats, boots, or muzzles other than those outlined in 12.d, may be permitted at the discretion of the Judge, and permission will not be unreasonably withheld.
- f) Belly bands or incontinence nappies are permitted to be fitted to a dog while searching. If a dog lifts its hind leg or squats as if to pee while searching it will still be faulted as a fouling incident.
- g) All equipment must be correctly fitted.

### 13 SSANZ TRIAL PROTOCOL

- 13.1 No unofficial odour may be brought anywhere onsite, other than in the confines of a private vehicle.
- 13.2 A briefing will be given before the trial starts.
- 13.3 Out of bounds areas will be outlined.
- 13.4 Health and safety details for the venue will be advised.
- 13.5 General housekeeping and details of the trial will be covered.
- 13.6 If a handler has any concerns regarding the running of the trial or regarding any set up of search areas/judging matters, they must in the first instance bring up their concerns with the Organiser. If the issue cannot be resolved by the organisation, members can complete an Incident Report by contacting the SSANZ Secretary for a link to this form.
- 13.7 Search areas will be defined visually and may also be broadly outlined during the briefing.
- a) Handlers are NOT allowed in the search areas until it is their turn to trial unless authorised by the Judge or delegated official.
  - b) If a trialist enters the search area without authorisation they may be disqualified from the trial.
- 13.8 Handlers are prohibited from discussing any detail in relation to the search or the operation of the search with any other participant or spectator until ALL teams have concluded that search.
- 13.9 If, in the opinion of the Judge, harsh or intimidating handling has taken place they may deduct all points for that search.
- 13.10 The Judge or Organiser may ask a trialist to leave if it is deemed necessary in the interests of the safety and welfare of other dogs, handlers, stewards, and/or judges, or for bad sportsmanship, including but not limited to disrespectful treatment of volunteers, officials, or fellow trialists, and intentional disclosure/knowledge of the hide locations.
- 13.11 Recording of the event is allowable under the following circumstances:
- Recording of event - Handler**
- a) A handler may wear and use visible head or chest mounted video equipment.
  - b) Recordings of any search must not be shared with anyone until the trial has finished.
  - c) Recordings cannot be used to challenge the judge's decision.
  - d) Use of any recording equipment must not delay the start of any search, and the judge and organisation reserve the right to refuse set up of ground mounted recording equipment.
  - e) A handler may apply to the Organisation for permission to have a separate person record their search and the following will apply:
    - i) Permission will be granted at the discretion of the Organisation and/or Judge.
    - ii) Any person recording a search must follow all directions given by the Judge or other designated official.
    - iii) The Judge or designated official reserves the right to ask a person recording searches to leave.



## Recording of event - Organisation

- a) An organisation may provide a photographer / videographer for some searches.
- b) If any recording is to occur at a trial, this must be advised by the Organisation at the time of trial entry, or at the briefing.
- c) Handlers must be given the choice, at the time of trial entry, to agree or refuse any photos or video being taken of them, their dog, and/or their searches.
- d) With permission from the handler, photos or video taken may be used by the Organisation for purposes of sharing on social media, future advertising, and/or with sponsors, and must be made available to the handler in question on request.
- e) If a professional photographer is at the venue, photos and/or video may be available to purchase and may only be shared with the permission of the subject of the photo or video.
- f) Organisations are not responsible for recording each and every search.
- g) Only the videographer(s) arranged by the Organisation may take photos or video of handlers, dogs and searches at the trial venue.
- h) The handler, Judge, or designated official reserves the right to ask the videographer to leave if they believe that is appropriate.

## 14 ORGANISATION or HOST REQUIREMENTS

- 14.1 To host a SSANZ trial the Organisation must be a current financial SSANZ Organisational Member.
- 14.2 Organisers must apply to have a trial recognised as a SSANZ trial by:
  - 14.2.1 Filing a completed “application to hold a SSANZ trial” form with the SSANZ secretary.
  - 14.2.2 Filing the application form at least three months prior to the trial date.
- 14.3 Upon approval trial advertising must state the following:
  - a) “This trial is being conducted under the rules and regulations of the Scent Sports Association of New Zealand (SSANZ).”
  - b) All trials must advertise a closing date, no less than 21 days prior to the trial date, and entries must be kept open until that date has arrived.
  - c) Judge/s for each search and/or level.
  - d) Any awards or prizes.
  - e) If there is going to be a videographer or photographer in attendance, this should be noted on the registration forms.
- 14.4 Only once the trial entries have closed can ballots (if required) be carried out.

On the closing date for entries, team spots will be allocated in the following order:

- (i) Dogs that have fewer than two qualifying certificates in Novice and Intermediate, or fewer than three in Advanced
- (ii) Dogs that have between two and five qualifying certificates in Novice and Intermediate, or three to five in Advanced
- (iii) In the event of the organisation receiving more entries than available spaces, a random draw from the remaining dogs will be conducted to fill the remaining spaces in the trial.



- 14.5 SSANZ will not be responsible or held liable for any accident or injury that may occur at a trial. SSANZ encourages all Organisations to hold public liability insurance for their trials.
- 14.6 Organisers can run searches and levels in any order to suit their requirements, provided these meet the criteria outlined for each individual search.
- 14.7 The Organiser is responsible for contracting SSANZ Judges.
- a) The Organiser and Judge are to communicate between themselves directly and decide on any monetary or other remuneration – this is not the responsibility of SSANZ.
- 14.8 Organisations are responsible for providing the correct equipment and search areas as required by the SSANZ Regulations, including the odour infused Q-tips and a suitable range of hides/vessels. **A raised table, chair, or other suitable platform must be available for handlers to place personal effects before the start of the search.**
- 14.9 Entry fees charged to enter a trial are set by the Organiser.
- a) Entry fees are the property of the Organiser.
  - b) Entry fees should be fair and reasonable to the trialists.
- 14.10 The Organiser is responsible for obtaining official SSANZ Qualifier Certificates.
- 14.11 At their discretion, Organisers may present additional participation certificates/awards, but these are not officially recognised by SSANZ for the purposes of any titles.
- 14.12 The Organiser may set a competitive aspect to a trial or provide prizes if they wish. If there is a competitive aspect prizes in a trial will be awarded based on the following criteria:
- a) Teams with no faults are placed above faulted teams.
  - b) Awards and prizes are the responsibility of the Organiser.
- 14.13 Organisers may hold additional novelty scent events at SSANZ trials with the understanding they are conducted within appropriate criteria for SSANZ.
- 14.14 Organisers must forward a copy of all resulting scores and search times to the SSANZ Secretary within 7 days of the trial's conclusion.
- 14.15 Organisers must keep records of the trial for 12 months after the trial date including but not limited to:
- a) Application to hold a SSANZ trial.
  - b) Entry forms.
  - c) Menacing dog information and exemptions.
  - d) Financial records.

These regulations are based on a combined interpretation of rules from the USA and NACSW, modified following initial Novice tests conducted in February 2015 and adopted for SSANZ since July 2019.



## DEFINITIONS

Alert:	Word used by the handler to communicate to the Judge that the dog has indicated the location of the odour.
Accessible hide:	A hide that the dog can get close enough to place his nose on but not pick up with his/her mouth.
Change of behaviour:	Any behaviour by the dog which makes it clear to the Judge and/or handler that the dog has encountered odour.
Exterior:	Examples of areas include the exterior of a building, a parking lot, grassy paddock, courtyard, deck/patio, space between buildings, covered outdoor deck/patio, basketball/tennis courts etc. The spirit of this search is that it is outside. Please do not cheat and pretend that a garage with the door open is suitable for use as an exterior for example.
Finish:	The handler is required to call "Finish" in Advanced <b>level and above</b> when they believe all hides in the search area have been located and called. The "Finish" call stops the official search time, and the search. If "Finish" is not called, the maximum time will be allocated to that search. In Premium level a major fault will be applied.
Handler:	The person participating in the search with the dog.
Inaccessible hide:	A hide that the dog is not able to place his nose on. A hide may be inaccessible due to reach, containment, or height.
Judge:	Official scorer at a trial, SSANZ approved Judges.
Level:	One specific level of a SSANZ trial or title e.g., Novice.
Official:	A person commissioned by an Organiser to help run a trial.
Organiser:	A current financial Organisation member of SSANZ.
Owner:	The registered owner of a dog.
Search:	One element of a level e.g., container search.
Start Line:	<b>A clear line marked by cones or other items that indicate where the search will begin. The team is expected to start the search by crossing the line. A minor fault will be deducted if neither the dog nor the handler crosses the line. Time begins when any part of the team enters the search area.</b>
Team:	A dog and handler for a level at a trial.
TFR:	Trained Final Response e.g. sit, down, stare, sustained nose touch.
Trial:	One level involving all four elements.
Vehicle:	<p>At novice level the vehicle must be a car, ute, or minivan.</p> <p>At the higher levels vehicles and towable implements can include, but are not limited to, buses, trucks, trailers (car, truck, animal floats, caravans), tractors, four wheelers, and forklifts.</p> <p>Two-wheeler motorbikes, ride-on lawn mowers, wheelbarrows, broomsticks, rickshaws, horse-drawn carriages, vacuum cleaners, etc are not allowed to be used for a vehicle search.</p> <p>If a trailer/caravan/animal float is connected to a vehicle, that will be classified as two vehicles.</p>

