



Scent Sports Association of New Zealand (SSANZ):
Rules and **Regulations** – Nosework – **August 2026**
www.scentsports.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 highlight how naturally and effectively the team works together.

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 with 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_{ov})

Objective for Novice is to demonstrate the ability of the team to correctly locate 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 locate all hides.
- b) Each search element is worth 25 points.
- c) A minimum score of 90 out of a possible 100 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 hide still needs to be located 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 locate 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 locate all hides.
- b) Each search element is worth 25 points.
- c) A minimum score of 90 points out of a possible 100 points over the four searches is required to achieve a qualifying certificate.
- d) There may be no incorrect alert calls over the four Intermediate 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 locate 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 **two** SSANZ Advanced Qualifying Trial certificates under a minimum of 2 different Judges at 2 different locations. Criteria outlined in 1.6.
- c) A dog can continue trialling in Advanced **until they have accumulated a maximum of five SSANZ Advanced Qualifying Trial certificates.**
- d) A dog that earns five SSANZ Advanced Qualifying Trial certificates will receive the Super Star Award.
- e) **An exception to 1.5(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.**
- f) Once a dog has a qualifying certificate at Excellent, the dog can no longer trial at Advanced.
- g) An exception to 1.5 (f) 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 locate all hides.
- b) Each search element is worth 25 points. Each hide/odour source has equal value.
- c) A minimum score of 90 out of a possible 100 points over the four searches is required to achieve a qualifying certificate.
- d) There may be no incorrect alert 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 locate 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 **two** 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 locate all hides.
- b) Each hide will be allocated 10 points.
- c) A minimum score of 111 out of a possible 120 points 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 alert 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 locate 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 **two** 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 locate all the hides.
- b) Each hide will be allocated 10 points
- c) A minimum score of 141 out of a possible 150 points 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 alert calls over the six Premium searches



2 SET UP OF SEARCH AREAS – GENERAL

- 2.1 Two odour-infused Q-Tips are to be placed inside either a plastic, rubber, silicone, or metal vessel and this shall be known as the 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 or secured to a surface such that they cannot be easily displaced or dislodged by the dog. 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 be placed in such a way that it is not at risk of ingestion by the dog.
- 2.7 Additional vessels 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, tape, 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 must never have been used as “hot” ones or come in contact with target odour.
 - i) No contamination from foodstuffs or strong-smelling substances.
 - ii) Containers must be closed but have adequate holes or 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 cold containers will be on standby in case any need to be replaced, and these should be stored away from the search area.
- d) Distractions are items 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 room.
- 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 must 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) Containers must remain separate — do not place containers inside other containers.
- f) The containers will be uniform size with a minimum width of 210mm and maximum width of 600mm.
- g) The containers shall be no more than 400mm in height.
- h) All containers are placed at ground level.
- i) The start line should be no less than one metre from the first container.
- j) 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.
- k) 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) Hide 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) Hide 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 trees, vegetation, objects, walls or boundaries).
- e) Hide maximum height 650mm.
- f) Hide 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. All containers must be made from the same material.
- e) Containers must remain separate — do not place containers inside other containers.
- 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.

4.2 Intermediate Interior search

- a) Search time is 3 minutes.
- b) Search area will be between 60 and 140 sqm.
- c) Hide 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) Hide 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 trees, vegetation, objects, walls or boundaries), with a minimum distance of 2 metres between the two vehicles (unless attached, as in the case of a trailer).
- f) Hide maximum height 650mm.
- g) Hide 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 hide/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.

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) Containers must remain separate — do not place containers inside other containers.
- 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 600mm 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.
- j) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.
- k) There will be one non-food distraction inside one “cold” 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 adjacent to or adjoining each other.
- c) Doors between rooms being searched must remain open.
- d) The search area in total will be between 120 and 400 sqm.
- e) Hide 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) Hide 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 of 2 metres from trees, vegetation, objects, walls or boundaries), with a minimum distance of 2 metres between the vehicles (unless attached, as in the case of a trailer).
- f) Hides must be on different vehicles.
- g) Hide maximum height 650mm.
- h) Hide 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) **Prior to the trial** numbers will be drawn to determine how many hides will be placed 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 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.

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 and materials of containers.
- e) **Containers must remain separate — do not place containers inside other containers.**
- 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 **600mm** 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.
- j) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.
- k) There will be three distractions inside three “cold” 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 **between two and four** rooms adjacent to or adjoining each other.
- c) **Doors between rooms being searched must remain open.**
- d) The search area in total will be between 120 and 400 sqm.
- e) Hide 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) Hide 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 of 2 metres from trees, vegetation, objects, walls or boundaries), with a minimum distance of 2 metres between the vehicles (unless attached, as in the case of a trailer).
- f) Hides must be on different vehicles.
- g) Hide maximum height 1000mm, and 650mm for private passenger vehicles
- h) Hide 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) **Prior to the trial, numbers will be drawn** to determine how many hides will be placed 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” when they determine all hides have been located (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 and materials of containers.
- e) **Containers must remain separate — do not place containers inside other containers.**
- 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 **600mm** 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.
- j) Containers can be weighted to reduce accidental movement by the dog.
- k) There will be four distractions inside four “cold” 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 **between two and five rooms** adjacent to or adjoining each other.
- c) **Doors between rooms being searched must remain open.**
- d) The search area will total between 120 and 400 sqm.
- e) Hide 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) Hide 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 of 2 metres from trees, vegetation, objects, walls or boundaries), with a minimum distance of 2 metres between the vehicles (unless attached, as in the case of a trailer).
- f) Two hides may be on the same vehicle.
- g) Hide maximum height 1000mm, and 650mm for private passenger vehicles.
- h) Hide 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. Q-Tips must be prepared a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 72 hours before use at a trial.
- 8.2 Two Q-tips must be placed inside the hide vessel.
- 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 If, in the opinion of the Judge, harsh or intimidating handling has taken place they may disqualify the team from the trial.
- 9.2 The location of the hide/s must not be known to the handler.
- 9.3 Search time starts when either the dog or the handler crosses the start line. If neither the dog nor the handler crosses the start line the team will incur a minor fault. Time begins when any part of the team enters the search area.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 Handlers may not lift or carry dogs during the search.
- 9.6 If, in the opinion of the Judge, an action is taken for safety reasons no penalties will be applied.
- 9.7 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, Excellent, and Premium** 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 end.
 - 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, Intermediate, **Advanced, and Excellent** levels, timing concludes when the Judge has identified the **final** call as “**Correct**” or “**Yes**”.
 - f) At Premium level, the timing concludes when the handler calls “finish”.



9.8 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. **When left outside the search area, the location will be specified by the judge and 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 location specified.**
- 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 **or surrounding** 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.

9.9 Searches may be conducted off lead with permission from the Judge. **Organisations will advise judges if the venue is not suitable for off lead searches.**

- a) If an off-leash option is available, the handler may choose to change between off leash and on leash at any time during the search with no penalty.

10 FAULTS

Points are awarded or deducted according to the following categories:

10.1 Per Element

- a) If no hides are found the team will not be awarded any 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 Finish is called prior to finding all the hides, the team will only gain points for the hide/s found.
- d) If the handler requests help from the judge or aborts the search, the team will only gain points for the hide/s found.
- e) 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.

10.2 Incorrect Alert Call

- a) At Novice level the first incorrect Alert Call will incur a deduction of 6 points. The Judge will call "False – continue" and the team may continue the search.
- b) At Intermediate level an incorrect Alert Call will incur a deduction of 25 points and will end the search.
- c) At Advanced, Excellent, and Premium level an incorrect Alert call will end the search but if a hide/s is found before the incorrect call, the team will still gain the points for hide/s found prior to the incorrect call.
- d) At Advanced, Excellent, and Premium level the handler calling a second alert on an already found hide will incur a deduction of 6 points. 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 and incur an additional deduction of 6 points.

10.3 Major faults incur a deduction of 5 points on each occasion

- a) Damage to the search area: If, in the judge's opinion, damage has been caused to the search area by the team (for example, excessive pawing, digging, trampling etc.) sufficient to require replacement or repair of equipment.
- b) Compromising the search area: Actions of the handler or dog that have compromised the search area by causing damage or contamination that may impact on following searches/teams.
- c) The judge observes the handler dropping food or rewards at any time during the search.
- d) The dog damages or interferes with the hide placement.
- e) Leaving the search area. The team (handler and dog) leave the search area together during a search.
- f) Fouling in the vicinity of the search area including, but not limited to, marking on nearby trees or defecating.
- g) Scattering or throwing of food or toys in the immediate vicinity of the search area.
- h) Safety issues or other infractions that may place the dog, handler, judge, or stewards in a potentially dangerous situation.
- i) Failing to call finish in Premium level.

10.4 Minor Faults incur a deduction of 2 points.



Faults will be given for:

- (a) Tangling the line.
- (b) Dropping the line.
- (c) Handler error.
- (d) 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 **Handlers under the age of 16 are considered youth handlers (See addendum 1)**
- 11.3 To enter an Intermediate Trial a dog must have its Novice Nosework title.
- 11.4 To enter an Advanced Trial a dog must have its Intermediate Nosework title.
- 11.5 To enter an Excellent Trial a dog must have its Advanced Nosework title.
- 11.6 To enter Premium a dog must have its Excellent title.
- 11.7 Once a dog gains a qualifying certificate at a higher level, the dog can no longer trial at the lower level. Exceptions are:
 - **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.**
 - **When a dog has entered a trial and after entries have closed they qualify out of their current level, they may trial at the level for which they have already entered.**
 - **However, If the Organisation is also offering the next level up the handler may request to trial at the higher level. The decision will rest with the Organisation as to whether they can accommodate the request.**
- 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 same event, 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.
- 11.14 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.



11.15 Requirements of the dog

- a) All dogs must be registered with SSANZ.
- b) Over the age of six months.
- c) Dogs must be in good health, fit to trial, and free from infectious diseases or parasites.
- d) 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 the scentsports.nz website for completion prior to the trial.
- f) Dogs must have a current vaccination record, issued by a registered professional.
- g) Dogs attending the trial should be clean. Dogs who are excessively dirty will be excluded from trialling that day.
- h) Dogs must have a current registration with their local council.
- i) Bitches in season are NOT allowed to participate, nor permitted at the venue where the trial is held.
- j) Notification is required to be given to the organisation at the earliest indication that a dog needs to be scratched for any reason.

11.16 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 may 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 Electronic 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 10.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. 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.
- a) Out of bounds areas will be outlined.
 - b) Health and safety details for the venue will be advised.
 - c) General housekeeping and details of the trial will be covered.
 - d) There will be an opportunity for triallists to ask questions.
- 13.3 If a handler has any concerns regarding the running of the trial or regarding any set up of a search area/judging matter, they must in the first instance bring up their concern with the Organiser. If the issue can not be resolved by the Organisation, members can complete a Trial Feedback Form which can be found on the SSANZ website and Facebook page.
- 13.4 Safety concerns must be raised immediately with the Organiser. The Organiser may pause the trial while the safety concerns are investigated and mitigated where necessary. All attendees should be notified of safety concerns if they cannot be mitigated. If members do not believe safety concerns are dealt with adequately, a Trial Feedback Form should be completed after the event.
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 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.
- 13.7 If, in the opinion of the Judge, harsh or intimidating handling has taken place they may deduct all points for that search, and may disqualify the handler from the trial.
- 13.8 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.
- 13.9 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 recording equipment.



- e) A handler may ask 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 at any time.

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) Individuals must be given the choice 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) Videographer(s) arranged by the Organisation may take photos or video of handlers, dogs and searches at the trial venue.
- h) **Organisations may choose not to allow handlers to record their own searches.**
- i) 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 Trials must be run under the SSANZ Rules and Regulations.

14.3 Organisers must apply to have a trial recognised as a SSANZ trial by:

- a) **Emailing** an application with details to the SSANZ secretary.
- b) **Emailing** the application at least three months prior to the trial date.
- c) **The application must include the intended date of the trial/s, venue, judge/s and levels.**
- d) **SSANZ reserves the right to request additional information prior to giving approval.**

14.4 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.
- c) Judges
- d) **Venue of trial**
- e) Any awards or prizes.



- 14.5 Only when 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) Judges and stewards (see definition) of the event will be accepted first.
 - (ii) Dogs that have fewer than two qualifying certificates in that level will be accepted next.
 - (iii) Dogs that have between two and five qualifying certificates in that level will be allocated a place by random draw.
 - (iv) If there is a ballot, teams that do not receive a place will be added to a wait list.
 - (vi) The wait list will be ordered according to the ballot drawn. The wait list will be emailed to handlers who were unsuccessful after the ballot. Should a team withdraw their entry, handlers on the wait list will be offered the empty slot in order of ballot drawn.
- 14.6 SSANZ will not be responsible or held liable for any accident, illness, or injury that may occur at a trial. SSANZ encourages all Organisations to hold public liability insurance for their trials.
- 14.7 Organisers can run searches and levels in any order to suit their requirements, provided these meet the criteria outlined for each individual search.
- 14.8 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.
- 14.9 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. Judges may prefer to provide their own q-tips and hides/vessels - it is the Organisations responsibility to liaise with judges in this regard. A raised table, chair, or other suitable platform must be available near the start line of each search area for handlers to place personal effects (and reinforcers if the handler chooses).
- 14.10 Entry fees charged to enter a trial are set by the Organiser.
- a) Entry fees are the property of the Organiser.
- 14.11 The Organiser is responsible for obtaining official SSANZ Qualifier Certificates.
- 14.12 At their discretion, Organisers may present additional participation certificates/awards, but these are not officially recognised by SSANZ for the purposes of any titles.
- 14.13 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.
- 14.14 Organisers may hold additional novelty scent events at SSANZ trials with the understanding they are conducted in a manner that is consistent with SSANZ protocols.
- 14.15 Organisers must forward a copy of all resulting scores and search times to the SSANZ Secretary within 7 days of the trial's conclusion.



- 14.16 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) Trial results
 - d) Menacing dog information and exemptions.
 - e) Financial records.
 - f) Records of any incidents, complaints or safety issues.

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 hide.
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.
Cold Container:	A container that has not ever been used to hold a hide
Event:	Several trials run in the same time frame at the same venue.
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, playground, 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 Premium level and above 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.
Hide:	Vessel containing odour
Hot Container:	A container that is being, or has been used for target odour at any stage.
Interior room:	An indoor space that is enclosed by permanent floor-to-ceiling walls, partitions, or glazing and has a defined boundary separating it from adjoining spaces. To be considered a separate room, the space must be substantially enclosed and have a clear means of entry or access. Partial walls, dividing walls that do not fully enclose a space, furniture, shelving, screens, or other internal features do not create separate rooms. Toilet cubicles, shower cubicles, changing cubicles, and similar subdivisions that do not extend from floor to ceiling are not considered separate rooms.
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:	A clear line marked by cones or other items that indicate where the search will begin. The search time will start when either the dog or handler crosses this line.. A minor fault will be deducted if neither the dog nor the handler crosses the line.



Steward:	The person who is working with a Judge to brief and/or time keep at any element.
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:	At novice level the vehicle must be a car, ute, or minivan. 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. 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. If a trailer/caravan/animal float is connected to a vehicle, that will be classified as two vehicles.
Vicinity of the search area:	The area surrounding the designated search area.
Volunteer:	A person helping in no official capacity



Addendum 1

SSANZ Youth Handler Policy

Handlers younger than 16 years of age can trial at SSANZ trials with the following:

- Be a member of SSANZ.
- Must have an adult guardian accompany and be responsible for the youth and the dog at the trial.
- As the youth team requires the adult guardian to support them at the individual elements of the trial if the adult is also trialling in the same level the adult to be placed earlier than the youth in the running orders.

The guardian is to be nominated with the entry.

A statement is completed as part of the entry as who is the adult guardian responsible for the team acknowledging the below statement.

I acknowledge that under the Dog Control Act 1996 I am legally responsible for the dog's control and compliance. I will remain on site and within line-of-sight during all runs, carry a leash, and ensure compliance with all council bylaws and event rules.

If it has been noted on the entry form that the dog is reactive the guardian must accompany the team at all times.

When the guardian goes to the search areas, they:

- Must stand where instructed and not impact any of the search areas
- Cannot speak or move while a team is searching
- Will not coach the team between or during elements.



Addendum 2

SSANZ Photography Guidelines

In principle, photographers and videographers are welcome at SSANZ trials, however there are a few things that should be taken into account for the safety and well-being of all.

Recording of Event - Handler

This is covered under Regulation 13.8. The onus is on you to ensure that you adhere to these regulations and it is courteous to confirm with the judge that they are happy for you to record your search.

It may also be OK for a friend who has either completed their search or is not running a dog later in that trial, to come through with you to take photos / video on your behalf. You should always ask the presiding judge if they are happy with this. Please do not assume it is OK.

Photographers are required to remain outside the search area and should ask the judge where they would like them to stand for the duration of the search. Your request to bring someone else in may be declined if the space is crowded or not conducive to recording for any reason, for example an interior space where the start line is just through a doorway. In the event that a judge declines or asks your friend to leave, they must comply immediately without further discussion.

Recording of Event - Organisation

The remainder of this document is dedicated to official photographers that have a prior agreement with the host organisation to either photograph or video parts of the trial. This is also covered under regulation 13.8 which states:

- 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, 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 photographer/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 photographer/videographer to leave if they believe that is appropriate.

Official photographers have a responsibility to the trialing teams not to interfere with the search, distract the dog or handler, or provide any clue as to the location of any hide(s).



Recommended best practice would include:

1. Ask the organisation in advance if any teams have indicated on their entry that they do not wish to be photographed / recorded. Ideally, have a copy of the running order so that you can keep track of when they are due in any search that you are covering.
2. Liaise with the judges before the trial briefing to check that they are OK for you to a) be present, and b) confirm where they would like you to locate yourself. While you may have some preference for best light and other factors, the judge's decision is final.
3. Ideally the dog and handler will be able to see you from the start line so there is no risk of them being startled.
4. Experiment with and finalise your lens and camera settings before any teams come through. A big zoom lens is generally best.
5. Disable any shutter noise so that there is no clicking to distract the teams, or even give them a clue that they are close to the hide location. Take a range of shots, not just targeting the hide location(s), especially as not all dogs will be successful and some like photos of their dog working.
6. Arrange with the organisation to attend the handler briefing with the judges to advise people which elements you will be covering and give handlers the opportunity to speak to you regarding any specific needs they or their dog have. Let them know how you will make photos available after the event.
7. Minimise movement and chatter in the search area especially when there are teams present. The judge and steward need to concentrate. Definitely don't commentate on the search or utter "call it" under your breath.
8. If a dog is distracted by you or your camera, slowly lower your camera, turning the lens away from them, and turn or lower your head to break any eye contact with the dog. Note, they may bark, stare, or simply want to approach and sniff. Do not attempt to interact with the dog or handler at all.
9. If a team has indicated that their dog is reactive, but they would still like to have photos taken, you need to ensure that you will be safe. Make sure the handler is comfortable with where you are before starting their search, especially if they intend to complete the search off-lead. You may need to exit the area for safety so it is useful to have already identified an exit route that does not take you past the start line.
10. If you hope to move from one area to another while a trial is still running, you also need to have thought about your route in advance so that you minimise the risk of disrupting teams.
11. Never enter or walk through the search area without the express permission of the judge.
12. Always check with the handler concerned before using any image outside of what has previously been agreed with the organisation for sharing.



Addendum 3

Excellent Trials

SSANZ would like to support Organisations to run Excellent Trials. In order to facilitate this, Organisations will have the option to run “integrated” Advanced and Excellent trials until the end of 2026. **This integrated format will be reviewed in January 2027.**

Organisations may still opt to run either Advanced or Excellent as stand-alone trials if they wish and the option to run “integrated” trials applies solely to Advanced and Excellent.

Integrated Trials Outline

The parameters of Excellent Searches are the same as Advanced.

With a little forethought and planning as outlined below, an Organisation can integrate running an Excellent Trial with an Advanced Trial, utilising the same search areas for Containers, Interior, Vehicle and Exterior. They then only have to set up one additional search for Excellent which may be selected from any of the 4 elements.

Organisations would have to advertise that they are running an “Integrated Advanced and Excellent Trial”.

Judges would be invited for both Advanced and Excellent, and would judge the same element(s) at each level.

Handlers would only be able to run 1 dog and to choose between entering Advanced or Excellent, ie would not be able to enter one dog in Advance and another dog in Excellent.

Results will need to be on the appropriate separate Result Sheets,

The draw by the judges for the number of hides in each Excellent search would need to be completed before the running order is set.

Once the draw for the hides is done, the running orders can be prepared using the following format for those searches that will be run by both levels:

- 1 For any Excellent searches that have drawn 3 hides, the judge will first set up the search for Advanced with 2 hides. Once all Advanced teams have run, the judge will place out the third hide, wait an additional 15 minutes, and then the Excellent teams may run through.
- 2 For a search that has drawn 2 hides, it will be the same for both levels. Ideally Advanced teams would run first, followed by the Excellent teams.
- 3 For a search that has drawn 1 hide, the judge will first set up the search for Excellent with a single hide. Once all Excellent teams have run, the judge will then place out the second hide, wait an additional 15 minutes, and then the Advanced teams may run through.
- 4 For the container search, the additional distractions will need to be in place for Excellent. If this search draws 1 hide and so is run for Excellent first the containers that have had additional distractions(for Excellent) in them will need to be replaced with cold containers.

Trainee Advanced judges are allowed to use Excellent searches for mentoring appointments. Therefore, it would be possible for them to enter Advanced with their own dog and then accept a mentoring appointment in the 5th (additional) Excellent search, with prior agreement from the host organisation and coaching Judge.



Addendum 4

Reuse of areas

Context

SSANZ relies on our organisations to provide search areas that are safe, meet the regulatory requirements for the various elements, and allow for a fair trial. This means search areas must be free from excessive or unnecessary distractions.

Molecules of essential oil that have drifted, adhered to, been absorbed by surfaces, or are lingering in an area from an earlier trial can potentially cause dogs to have to investigate and eliminate them before sourcing the intended hide/s, all within their restricted search time. Additionally, a handler may have to read the situation and interrupt their dog's search to redirect them.

When areas are reused, there is a risk of previous fouling or other contamination causing further distraction. Furthermore, dogs trialing at both levels may be disadvantaged if they rely on memory.

Guidelines

Spaces selected for trials should not have been used for any essential-oil based nosework activity in the preceding three months.

Ideally, all search areas used at an event will be clean, unique and completely separate from one another.

The guidelines below are designed to uphold best practice in circumstances where:

- any portion of a search area must be reused, OR
- search area boundaries are shared and there is a risk of odour drift between areas.

(These are collectively referred to as “affected areas” below.)

Organisational Responsibilities:

1. **Avoid Same-Day Reuse:** Aim not to reuse areas on the same day, unless for:
 - exterior searches where earlier hides have been placed on removable objects, including but not limited to vehicles and containers, OR
 - neighbouring but not overlapping search areas where every effort is taken to air out the space, and earlier hides have been placed on removable objects, including but not limited to vehicles and containers, OR
 - overlapping search areas, where every effort is taken to air out the space, and earlier hides have been placed on removable objects, ideally at a reasonable distance from the other search area boundary.
2. **Provide Adequate Equipment:** Supply sufficient vehicles and containers to ensure that no "hot" vehicle or container is reused during the event.
3. **Notify Judges:** Inform judges in advance of all affected search areas.
4. **Hold Daily Pre-Trial Meetings:** Conduct mandatory pre-trial meetings each morning with judges to review the day's search areas, identify affected areas, and discuss the operational plan. Care may need to be exercised if a judge will be trialing at one of the affected levels.
If judges will not be in attendance until later in the day, ensure that adjoining or overlapping boundaries of any affected areas from the morning are clearly marked (masking tape or similar) to avoid any misunderstanding.
5. **Air Out Search Spaces:** Make every effort to “air out” affected areas between searches. Time allocated for ventilation must account for the space size, airflow, the proximity and the duration that previous hide/s were out.
6. **Restrict Staging Areas:** Ensure that staging of teams does not occur within the boundaries of a later search area.



Judges' Responsibilities:

1. **Collaborate with other Judges:** Coordinate with fellow judges who are allocated linked areas to confirm boundaries, discuss sections of the search space, and plan hide placements to minimise impact. If another judge is entered, commit to debrief them fully after your search has completed.
2. **Select Hide Placements with Care:** Determine where and how the earlier hides can be placed either on removable objects or at a reasonable distance from the later search boundary.
Note: Placing hides on removable objects is mandatory if a hide falls within a search area that will be reused later in the same event. SSANZ does not permit marking previous hide placements within a search area.
3. **Promptly Remove Hides:** Remove hides immediately after the last dog completes the search.
4. **Relocate Removable Objects:** Where a hide has been placed on a removable item, remove it from the area as soon as practical to a pre-determined location well clear of subsequent searches (e.g., the results room). Advise the organisers so items are returned before leaving the venue.
5. **Ventilate Indoor Areas:** For indoor search areas, leave doors and windows open whenever practical to encourage odour dispersal.
6. **Maintain Strict Odour Hygiene:** Always practice proper odour hygiene when setting hides:
 - a) Ensure the Q-tips are fully contained within the scent vessel and never make contact with external surfaces.
 - b) Ensure gloves used to handle raw scent materials/Q-tips are never used to touch the exterior of the vessel or to place the hide in position.
 - c) Think carefully before placing any odour-containing jar, carry case, or other receptacle onto a surface either in or immediately adjacent to the search area where it might leave traces of odour and create a distraction.

