



SAR Dogs Otago Inc.



Membership Booklet

MISSION STATEMENT

S.A.R Dogs Otago, through the training of dogs and handlers, aim to provide a readily available team resource; equipped to deal with a wide variety of situations, and therefore able to function effectively along side other Search and Rescue personnel

SAR DOGS Otago (Inc)

Formerly NEW ZEALAND ALPINE SEARCH DOGS (INC) DUNEDIN GROUP

New Zealand Alpine Search Dogs (Inc) was established in 1988 with the intention of setting in place a network of trained dogs/handlers capable of finding lost people in all types of environments. The environments the dogs are trained in are snow/avalanche, bush/wilderness and disaster situations.

The Dunedin Group was established at the end of 1991. This was because we had over ten members locally and it was decided that as numbers were increasing nationally, individual districts should set up their own training groups. The name of the group was subsequently changed in 2001 in order to better reflect the nature of our activities.

The primary focus of our group is to provide highly skilled/trained dogs and handlers as an operational resource to New Zealand Land SAR. Secondary to this we also provide, field team members and administration/support staff who have also attained a high level of skill. We expect team members to have the dedication and commitment to attend this training in their own personal time. The ability to function as part of a team is paramount and potential team members must be prepared to work closely with various personnel and canine resources, often in challenging situations.

Although the role of a search dog handler may appear glamorous nothing is further from the truth, a great deal of time and effort are required, and as a potential handler you will no doubt strive for several years before attaining your desired goal. Some dog and handler combinations may in fact never reach the required level.

The search and rescue fraternity can however, be a rewarding environment in which you will meet various people with whom you share similar interests at the same time as developing skills potentially of value to your everyday life.

As a potential member of our group you will represent not only us, but search and rescue on the whole. Therefore it is necessary to conduct yourself in a professional manner, especially when working in conjunction with emergency services and dealing with members of the general public.

As a potential handler joining our group, we will accept you with any type of dog you have, although some breeds are more suitable than others and in most cases we do not accept any dogs over two years of age. Your dog will be assessed as to its suitability early in the piece. This will give you an idea of what your dog will be like and also give you an idea of what is expected of you.

Depending on the age of the dog when you start, you will be expected to have a fair amount of control over it and it should be well socialised toward both humans and other dogs.

You should have a love for the outdoors and obviously for your dog! Should you become an operational dog handler and are willing to put your name forward for live searches, you should have a reasonable standard of fitness, be reasonably well prepared for a life in the outdoors, have a current first aid certificate (although the group may arrange a course if there is sufficient interest) and be ready to go on callouts most of the time.

Live callouts can happen at any time and in any weather usually bad! Once you decide to go on live searches, you may find yourself in very uncomfortable and trying conditions. You will be expected to keep up and carry your end. Training also requires you to spend considerable amounts of time, often alone in cold dark conditions. Therefore you should be prepared mentally and physically for this.

The standard, to which we train our dogs has been developed and adopted by New Zealand Land SAR and the New Zealand Police. (See online copy, <http://www.nzlsar.org.nz/>)

If you don't have a dog but wish to join the group to help us train ours, you will be entirely welcome. The more 'subjects' we have, the better. And the opportunity exists for subjects to progress to field team members who act alongside other SAR personnel in the field. As a team member you will be expected to maintain a similar level of fitness and skill training as required of our dog handlers.

SAR DOGS Otago (Inc)

JOINING PROCEDURE.

Persons can apply to join in three categories:

- 1) Search Dog Handler
- 2) Support person (field team member)
- 3) Subject

Prospective members are supplied with a membership information booklet and are required to return the preliminary membership information form at the back of this booklet A.S.A.P.

Applicants to join the group as handlers or support personnel take on the status of associate membership.

People who wish to help the group as subjects only, are considered members of the group,

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Dog Handlers / Support members

Prospective search dog handlers and Support members who have become associate members must undertake a three-month probationary period (starting from the date of application). During this time they must attend a minimum of 70% attendance at Monday night training sessions and at least one weekend away.

It is helpful if prospective members have good organisational abilities, are able to learn map and compass skills, are familiar with first aid and have general outdoor experience. And are able to demonstrate a commitment to teamwork.

The group will assist in arranging courses such as first aid, bush craft, map & compass.

New Zealand Land SAR, organise regular courses, which are pre-requisites for operational personnel, our group will arrange placement on these courses for accepted members.

Subject members:

Subjects are the people who make it possible to have search dogs! They need to be hardy and intrepid when following handler's instructions. They need to enjoy dogs and not mind getting wet, cold & dirty; and they need to be able to follow directions well.

Subjects need to have:

- Small bum bag to carry food, drink, plastic bag for sitting on
- Torch
- Good tramping boots, parka & over trousers
- Warm clothes, hat & gloves (as you may be stationary for extended periods)

The group can supply some of this equipment at training sessions. Subjects are welcome at all club activities, meetings, end of year functions etc., but have no voting rights at meetings.

May be utilised in the field;

eg) Back up support for handlers

Logistical support

Transport

Subject may also be used as co-coordinators of training sessions and can participate in aspects of training such as (SAREX, first aid and (some) team courses, group tramps, etc.)

DOGS

During your probationary period your dog may participate in all training programmes, except for ACTUAL SEARCH TRAINING e.g., socialisation, obedience, tramps.

A more formal assessment to ascertain the dogs suitability for SAR training will be conducted at the beginning and end of your probationary period, suitable improvement will be expected before the training officer recommends your dog for search training.

Consideration will also be given to dog's age, health, size and demeanour.

Your dog should have the following attributes:

- A double coat for protection and insulation in all weather
- An efficient structure (economy of movement)
- A good size (neither too small nor too large)
- Intelligence and trainability
- Scenting ability
- Strong "play drive"
- A lack of inbred game instinct

During the probationary period, the handler is required to work on socialisation, obedience and agility goals; encouraging the dog's motivation, and establishing a rapport with their dog. The Training Officer will help you set and progress towards these goals.

A considerable amount of training in your own time is required.

Examples of some of your possible goals:

Obedience:

- Speaking on command
- Heeling on and off lead
- Sit
- Down
- Down stay
- Retrieving
- Send away

Agility:

- Plank walking
- Steps
- Walking over unstable ground
- Under or through obstacles
- Confidence on high objects (boxes/drums)
- Socialisation:
 - Behaving around other dogs, people, children etc.
 - Loud noises (Traffic, gun shots)

Advice from the training officer and other group members is available on suggested ways to motivate your dog, e.g. play drive, prey drive, food drive.

ALL Members: Assessment at end of probation:

On completion of three months probationary period, the most frequently attending senior handlers in that period will hold an informal meeting and discuss the membership application.

If any areas of concern are apparent, these can be referred back to the prospective member for clarification or suggestions.

If necessary a further probationary period could be looked upon as an option, to declining the membership application.

If necessary the group will decline prospective members whom are deemed unsuitable. By ourselves, or other associated organisations.

SAR DOGS Otago (Inc)

SOME IMPORTANT RULES

Equipment:

Any equipment issued by the group will always remain the property of SAR-Dogs Otago. Every effort should be made to maintain the equipment in the best possible state. Equipment must be returned if membership is not renewed or if requested in writing by the committee.

Use of Emblem:

Members wearing the official logo must conduct themselves with decorum in all circumstances.

Personal Grievances:

Any major grievances that should arise are to be discussed confidentially or addressed in writing privately to the President of the group, not raised with the member.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST:

Contents of Pack for Searches: Prospective handlers need to have as the basics:

- Transport
- Good tramping boots, parka, waterproof leggings
- Good dog leash
- Day and overnight packs
- Maps (NZMS 260 I44 + J44 for starters) & Compass
- Torch, warm headgear, gloves
- Warm clothing (polyprops for example. No jeans)
- Change of clothes
- Tramping boots
- Gloves
- Safety helmet
- Toilet paper
- Radio
- Wet weather gear (wind proof)
- Food/water for handler and dog (3 days)
- Bivvy sack or small tent
- Probe and shovel (for avalanche work)
- Sleeping bag (optional)
- Survival kit
- First aid kit
- Compass
- Map of search area

Contents of First Aid Kit:

- Elastic bandage (6-8 cm)
- Elastoplasts/Band-Aids
- Triangular bandages
- Roll of sticking plaster
- Small scissors
- Tweezers
- Wound gauze or pads
- Safety pins

Contents of Survival Kit:

- Survival blanket
- Sunglasses
- Matches
- Light sticks
- Head lamp (torch) with spare batteries
- Pocketknife
- Candle

Footwear must be solid construction (tramping or climbing boots). Clothing must be warm and insulating.

SAR-DOGS Otago (Inc)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Family Name: Given Names:

Address:

Home Phone: Work Phone:

Cell Phone: Fax:

email:

D.O.B

Membership Sought:

Next of Kin: Phone:

Medical Conditions / Physical Well Being

Previous SAR / outdoor experience

Reasons for wishing to join

Dog's Name:

Breed:

Colour:

Age:

Description:

Medical Conditions / Physical Well Being:

PLEASE REMEMBER IT IS VITAL THAT OUR DOGS ARE IN GOOD HEALTH, HAVE BEEN INNOCULATED AGAINST RELEVANT DISEASES, AND ARE WORMED REGULARLY.

What do you believe you have to offer SAR Dogs Otago?

Experience in Training Dogs: (e.g. Hunting, Obedience etc.)

Other Team / Club Involvement

If accepted for membership I agree to comply with the constitution of SAR Dogs Otago Inc.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

On completion please return to:

S.A.R-DOGS OTAGO, 31 Glendevon Place, Dunedin