



RULEBOOK

Version 2.0

From the Founder....

Welcome to K9 Scent Games™! I hope that KSG will be a fun and challenging opportunity for you and your pup(s). I have been involved in the sport of canine scent work since 2010. As a competitor, instructor, host and trial official, I have seen the great value that scent work offers dogs of all breeds, personalities and ages. It also creates an amazing bond between the dog and their handler.

This fabulous sport has completely changed the trajectory of my life, and I have been privileged to witness it enriching the lives of many dogs and people, including my own rescue dogs. Moo, my first scent work teammate and the reason I got involved in the sport, will be honored in KSG, with the “Moo Tips Award” being named for her. This special award will contain all the swabs used in the trial. The nose print on the coveted Golden Nose Award is from my beloved and most accomplished scent work dog, Baron.

My intentions for KSG are not to replace any scent work venue, but to complement them and to provide more opportunities for scent work enthusiasts to be able to compete and have fun with their wonderful dogs.

Let's get ready to play!!!!

Rosana Dropkin, CPDT-KA, CNWI

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Philosophy

It is the mission of K9 Scent Games™ (KSG) to provide a venue for people to have fun with their dogs while competing in a supportive atmosphere, earning awards and titles. KSG trials are intended to support the growth of the scent work sport and to complement other scent work organizations' goals and challenges while sharpening and strengthening your skills as a scent work team.

It is the intention of KSG to be very inclusive, allowing dogs to participate regardless of disability and to welcome handlers of various skill levels ranging from pet owners who are new to dog sports to professional detection handlers.

KSG encourages individuals, clubs, groups and training centers who have knowledge of the sport to host KSG trials.

The rules included in this Rulebook will be modified as necessary for clarification, to reflect improvements or additions to KSG trial guidelines, and to acknowledge any updated thoughts on the sport. KSG welcomes input from handlers, hosts and trial officials on ways to improve KSG trials.

Eligibility

KSG trials are open to purebred and mixed breed dogs with a minimum age of 11 months on the day of the trial or Scent Indication Test (SIT). Wolves, wolf hybrids, coyotes and coyote hybrids are not allowed to participate. Dogs must be vaccinated (or titer tested to show appropriate antibodies) in accordance with your state laws.

Dogs who are sick, late in their pregnancy or lactating cannot participate in a trial. Dogs who have a medical condition that is being treated by a veterinarian or has a wound or stitches that may or may not require bandages can participate with a letter from the veterinarian clearing the dog to participate. This letter must indicate that the dog has been cleared to participate in a scent detection trial on the specific date(s) and must be sent to the Trial Secretary at least 5 days prior to the trial.

There are no specific limitations on physical disabilities of dogs or handlers. Both team members need to be able to safely navigate to and within the search areas. Due to the variety of locations where trials may be hosted, site details and any challenges, such as stairs, uneven ground, steep hill, etc. will be listed in the premium. It is the handler's responsibility to read the premium and determine whether the site is appropriate for them. The Judge or Host has the right to stop a search if they determine that the dog is exhibiting undue stress or pain.

Females in season may participate providing they wear appropriate "panties" at all times except when pottyng. Females in season will run as the last dog(s) in each search. Handlers must notify the Host as soon as possible so run orders can be adjusted and accommodations made for potty areas, if possible.

A dog can enter a maximum of six (6) searches and four (4) SITs at one trial. At the Premier level, a dog can be entered for either a Short Trial or a Full Trial.

Reactive Dogs

Dog reactive dogs are welcome to participate in KSG trials as long as the Handler is able to control the dog. Dogs who pose any threat to humans are not allowed to participate in trials or to be at trial sites. Dogs who are shy or bark when worried are acceptable at trials but those who aggressively lunge and bark at people are not. KSG trials are to be set up and run in a way that dogs who have mild reactivity or shyness with humans are welcome to participate. While scent work is a great sport for reactive and sensitive dogs, for some a trial may be too great of a

stressor. Trial sites vary greatly and some may be more appropriate than others for dogs with space issues. Please contact the Trial Secretary if you have specific questions about a trial site.

Dogs who need additional space are encouraged to wear a red bandana to show others that they need more space. Individuals should never touch any dog without asking its owner for permission.

Registration

Dogs and their owners must be registered with KSG before entering a trial. There is a one-time fee to register your dog and registration is good for the life of the dog. There is no charge for an owner to register.

Registration can be completed at www.k9scentgames.fun

Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility for everyone involved in a KSG trial to conduct themselves in a way that reflects well on the scent work sport and that contributes to a friendly and supportive environment. It is imperative that trial sites (and hotels) are respected and that everyone cleans up after themselves and their dogs. All site-specific rules identified in the trial premium or noted in the Handlers' Briefing should be followed. Alcohol is not allowed to be consumed at a KSG trial. Smoking, if allowed, should be done only in areas designated by the Host.

Handlers should be respectful of volunteers, judges, and other competitors. Any decisions or requests made by a Judge or Host should be accepted graciously.

Handlers should not discuss a particular search or post information about the search on social media until that search has been completed by all teams. A Handler cannot set hides to practice or warm up for themselves or for others on trial grounds.

Dog Guidelines and Safety

Safety of dogs and humans is a priority for KSG. These guidelines have been developed with safety in mind and must be followed by everyone participating in a KSG trial. Electronic and spray collars are prohibited at the trial site. Retractable leashes may not be used at the trial site except during a search. During an on-leash search, the leash must be attached to either a flat buckle, martingale or limited slip collar or the back clip of a harness. Tags or any other objects hanging from a collar, harness, or leash should be removed prior to searching so there is no danger for something getting caught during the search. As long as they don't impede the dog's ability to move about the search area or interfere with the search area in any way, dog accessories such as hair ties, bandanas, and coats can be worn. Unnecessary clothing, costumes or accessories should be removed prior to a search. Dogs cannot wear recording devices while searching.

Dogs must be on leash at all times except during a designated off-leash search if offered by the Judge. Dogs must be kept secure at the trial site, either crated or in a secured ex-pen or vehicle. Dogs should be kept at least 6 feet apart from unknown dogs at all times. Two or more dogs that are known to each other can be in close proximity providing the handlers expressly agree and carefully supervise their dogs.

Handler Guidelines and Safety

Handlers must be at least 12 years old to handle a dog during a trial. Handlers under the age of 16 must have a parent or appointed guardian at the trial site. All handlers must have control of their dogs at all times.

Multiple Dogs

A Handler may run one dog per search or SIT. If the Handler wishes to run additional dogs on the same search or SIT, the additional dogs must be entered For Exhibition Only (FEO). A dog may be handled by someone other than their owner, but a Handler can only compete with one dog per search or SIT.

For Exhibition Only (FEO)

A dog may enter a search For Exhibition Only (FEO). FEO allows a dog to search but the search does not qualify for titles or placements. This allows for a Handler to run more than one dog in a search. The first dog runs for a qualifying score and placements while each additional dog will run as FEO. In addition, FEO allows for a Handler to enter a search for the purpose of a practice or a warm-up.

At this time, due to KSG's inception, dogs will be allowed to enter any level, even one not qualified for, as FEO. Accepting FEO entries will be at the discretion of the Host.

- Accepting FEO entries will be at the discretion of the Trial Host.
 - For example, a Host may choose to only accept FEO entries after all Standard/Pro entries have been processed OR a Host may choose to allow FEO entries along with Standard/Pro.
- If a dog is struggling with a search, the Handler has the option to ask the Judge to tell/show them where the hide is. At this point, the search would be converted to FEO, allowing the dog to finish the search successfully.
- If a dog is entered in any searches as FEO, those searches must remain FEO and cannot be changed to Standard/Pro (or qualifying) searches.
 - The exception to this rule is if a dog is entered in Novice searches before passing the required SIT. Once the dog passes their Birch SIT, the searches will be converted to Standard. If the dog does not pass the Birch SIT, the team can still run the searches but they would remain FEO.

Dismissals and Disciplinary Actions

While it is certainly the hope of all Judges, Hosts, and KSG that no disciplinary actions would ever have to be taken, these exist to assure the safety of all participants, the integrity of the trial, and the preservation of trial site property.

Anyone, including handlers, spectators, volunteers and trial personnel who reveal the location of a hide or the number of hides for a search where the number is supposed to be unknown to the handler will be told to leave the trial and may lose all qualifying scores earned on that day. KSG will follow up that dismissal with a warning. If two warnings are received, the person is banned from participation in a KSG event for one year. If three such warnings are received the person is expelled permanently.

If a Handler or dog significantly and recklessly damages anything in a search area or at the trial site, a warning will be issued. Anyone being disrespectful and arguing with Judges, Hosts or Volunteers and/or otherwise demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior will be issued a warning. Three of these types of warnings will result in the Handler being expelled permanently from KSG.

Hosts and/or Judges may dismiss Handlers who are treating other people or dogs harshly, either verbally or physically. A Handler may be dismissed for not following rules in the premium or Handler's Briefing. If a dog is behaving in a manner that could endanger another dog or human or is acting aggressively and/or bites another dog or human, they will be dismissed. If a bite breaks the skin, the dog will not be allowed to participate in any KSG events for at least one year. The Handler can ask KSG to review the suspension after six months for possible re-

instatement. Any dog who bites a person or dog for a second time is permanently expelled from participating in KSG events.

Dogs that nip excitedly at their owner or Handler will not be dismissed but may receive a non-qualifying score for the search where the nipping occurred.

If a dismissal is issued, the Handler and dog must leave the trial site immediately. Any disciplinary actions, including dismissals, must be reported to KSG on the approved KSG Incident Report within seven days of the incident.

Hosting a Trial

Any group, club or individual who is interested in hosting a KSG trial and has access to an appropriate trial site should read the Hosting Manual and submit an application to KSG for approval.

Hosts can choose which elements/games and levels to offer at a trial based on the trial site, general weather, and needs of the local/regional scent work community. Trial sites cannot be used for any training, practices, or events containing odor for a minimum of 4 weeks prior to a trial.

No hot containers will ever be reused.

More details and information can be found in the Hosting Manual which can be downloaded at www.k9scentgames.fun *Please note that the Manual is still in progress and the page is under construction. An announcement will be made when the Hosting Manual is available.*

Spectators

The trial premium will provide details about whether spectators are allowed. It is the Host's determination as to whether the trial site is conducive to having spectators. Even if a Host is allowing for spectators, the Judge may determine that a particular search area does not lend itself to having spectators. Handlers have the ability to determine whether a spectator (not including trial workers) can be present during their specific searches. Spectators must remain neutral and quiet during a search and may video a search with the permission of the handler. Handlers can watch searches they are not entered in. They can also watch a search they've entered after they have run the search.

Target Scents and Preparation of Hides

The target scents used at KSG trials are Birch, Anise, and Clove. Only Birch is used for Novice level searches. Any of the three odors, singularly or in any combination, will be used in the Advanced level and above.

Typically, three half swabs will be used in a vessel, although it will be up to the discretion of the Judge exactly how many are used for a specific search. The preparation of the swabs will be consistent with the preparation guidelines for NACSW's K9 Nose Work®, resulting in a similar odor strength/profile.

Scent Indication Test (SIT)

In order to compete for a qualifying score in a search (Q), the dog must have successfully completed a SIT for the odors relevant to the level of the search.

At the Novice level, only the Birch SIT is needed to participate. A dog may register for their Birch SIT as well as Novice Elements in the Standard division on the same trial day. If the Birch SIT is passed, all elements entered will count towards titles and placements. If the Birch SIT is missed, all element entries will be converted to FEO.

Additionally, a dog must successfully pass the SITs for all three odors BEFORE they can enter any trials at the Advanced or higher levels. SITs will be available at the beginning of every trial day when Novice level searches are being offered. The Trial Host will have the discretion to offer SITs on trial days where the Novice level is not offered. The premium will state when SITs will be offered.

The Scent Indication Test consists of 12 plastic shoeboxes, one of which will contain the target odor for that SIT. The shoeboxes must be identical in style and shape and be vented with 2 holes in the center of the lid. Shoeboxes may be clear, but the lids must be opaque. If the shoeboxes are clear, tissue paper will be used to fill the shoeboxes. Weights may be added to the shoeboxes per the discretion of the Judge. The shoeboxes will be spaced at least 30 inches apart from each other and at least 36 inches away from walls and the start line. The Lead Judge may make adjustments to the spacing between the shoeboxes if space is limited. The shoeboxes will be arranged in rows in a configuration that fits within the space (could be 1 row of 12 shoeboxes, 2 rows of 6 shoeboxes, 3 rows of 4 shoeboxes, 4 rows of three shoeboxes, etc.). The start line will be clearly indicated by tape and/or cones.

The team will have 3 minutes to complete the search. The time will start when any part of the dog crosses the start line. The search is completed when the dog makes an indication and the Handler calls "Alert". It is acceptable for the Handler to raise their hand instead of or in addition to calling "Alert". The dog must show a clear change of behavior when indicating at a shoebox. The Handler should call "Alert" loudly and clearly and/or raise their hand. The Judge will answer with a "Yes" or "No". If the Judge's response is "Yes", the Handler can reward the dog next to the shoebox with the odor so as not to contaminate the shoebox if food is dropped. If the response is "No", the Judge will indicate the correct shoebox to the Handler. The Handler may take their dog to that shoebox and reward. This is not an opportunity for the dog to continue searching but for the dog to be rewarded at the shoebox with the odor. During the test the Handler cannot touch or move the shoeboxes.

If a dog does not pass the Birch test, the Host has the option to let the team re-run the test one time with a different hide placement. This applies only to the Birch test. There will be an additional charge to complete the second test.

Each SIT is entered by odor being tested and a Handler can choose which tests to enter. It is not a requirement to enter all three. Handlers can enter dogs in one or more SITs as FEO for warm-up purposes.

The Host determines the order that the SITs will be run, but if there will be a second test for Birch, the second test will be run right after the first Birch test.

Dogs who have passed an ORT from NACSW will not be required to enter a SIT for that odor. Proof of passing the ORT must be provided to the Trial Secretary or to KSG prior to or upon trial registration.

TRIALS

General

Entering a Trial

An event can consist of one or more levels. Within the Novice, Advanced and Excellent (NA&E) levels, a dog can be entered in a maximum of 6 searches per trial day, not including SITs. If a dog is entered in searches in any of these three levels, they cannot enter in Premier searches on the same trial day.

The Premier level will consist of either 4 or 5 searches. If a dog is entered in the Premier level, they can choose to enter a Full trial (all the searches offered) or a Short trial (only the first two searches).

Any combination of elements can be offered at an event. At the NA&E levels, if a Host decides that one or more elements are not appropriate for a particular event due to site limitations or weather conditions, the Host may choose to not offer that element or elements and offer duplicate elements instead. If duplicate elements are offered, they will be numbered to differentiate the searches. For example, if two Solo searches are offered during the same trial, they will be named Solo1 and Solo2.

On occasion, a host may be approved to add a “Bonus” search to their trial. Qs earned in a Bonus search will still count towards earning titles and will have placements as in any other search, but will not count towards a Golden Nose Award.

Example 1: A Host is offering 6 searches at the Novice level and 6 at the Advanced level: Interior1, Interior2, FastFinds, Solo1, Solo2 and Container at each level. The trial will be held in August in the South, so the Host had chosen to not offer Exterior searches at either level. Spanky has earned his Novice titles in all but the Solo level. Spanky can enter up to 6 searches at this trial, so his owner will enter him in Solo at the Novice level and the other 5 searches at the Advanced level.

Example 2: In the trial above, Spanky CAN NOT enter Novice Solo1 and Advanced Solo2 since Spanky has not yet qualified for Solo at the Advanced level. Spanky CAN enter Novice Interior1 Pro and Advanced Interior2 Standard since Spanky has already earned his title in Novice Interior.

Example 3: This will be Brandy’s first trial. The Host is offering all 5 elements at the Novice level. Brandy can be entered in all 3 SITs as well as all 5 Novice searches.

Example 4: A Host is offering all 5 elements at the Advanced level. Buster tires easily these days, so his handler is only entering him in 3 of the elements. Not entering all the elements is perfectly acceptable.

Example 5: A Host has offered 5 searches at the Novice level. There is a very long waitlist for Novice Containers. Upon review, KSG approved the Host to add a “Bonus Container” search at the Novice level. Bella is entered in all 5 Novice searches and also enters the Bonus Container search. Ella Qs in all 5 original searches and earns a Golden Nose Award. If Ella would have Q’d in 4 of the original searches, she would not qualify for a Golden Nose Award regardless of whether she Q’d in the Bonus search.

The Host will create and post a run order for each search or combination of searches. There is no set order for elements or searches and the Host, with input from the Judge, will determine the best order for a specific trial based on the trial site, number of entries and the most efficient flow. The Host will also determine when breaks in searches will occur. The schedule for the day will be communicated in the Handlers’ Briefing.

It is important for Handlers to be aware of their placement in the run order and have their dog ready to search when it is their turn. However, if something happens and a Handler is not ready when it is their turn, the next Handler on the run order can be called and the skipped Handler will be added back into the run order at a better time for them. If a Handler is running multiple dogs and there is a conflict or additional time is needed between dogs, the trial worker will rearrange the run order to accommodate the conflicts and assure that everyone makes it to their searches.

The searches are the same for every dog entered in a specific element or game at a specific level.

A Handlers' Briefing will either be held at the beginning of the trial, posted on the event's Facebook group, and/or emailed before the trial. The Briefing will discuss logistics of the trial site and the schedule for the day. It is each Handler's responsibility to review the rules and guidelines and become familiar with them before the trial.

Dog in White

A Dog in White will be run prior to any competing teams. The Dog in White will help the Judge determine if there are any unforeseen circumstances in the search area. A Dog in White is not required for SITs or FastFinds.

During the Search

Handlers may praise, touch, encourage or talk to their dogs during the search. Handlers may not touch or move anything within the search area without permission from the Judge. If the dog moves an item in the search area, Handlers are to leave the item alone. It will be reset by the Judge or a trial worker. Handlers may not use clickers during the search.

Handlers may use food or toys to reward their dog once a hide is found. If using food, Handlers must be careful to not drop food. When rewarding at a container, the Handler should reward off to the side of the container. If using a toy as a reward, Handlers must not use a toy that squeaks or makes noise. Toy rewards must be held by the Handler at all times and should not be allowed to drop on the floor, on a container or disrupt the search area. Neither food nor toy rewards can be thrown as throwing them could disrupt the search area. Dropping food or toy rewards could contaminate the search area, hide location, or container. Contamination with food or toy rewards may result in point deductions.

The Indication

When the Handler believes the dog has found a hide during a search, the Handler can indicate to the Judge that the hide has been found by either calling "Alert" or by raising their hand above their head. The dog must exhibit a change of behavior without the Handler cueing them to alert. Once an Alert has been called, a Handler cannot retract it. The dog must either be at or have been at the location of the hide for the call to be accepted. The Judge may ask "Where?" if they are not clear on where the dog indicated the hide location and the Handler must point to the location of the hide. The handler may not re-cue the dog to confirm or clarify the location of the hide.

During a search with multiple hides, the handler may call "Alert" or raise their hand each time the dog indicates and then must call "Finish" when they have completed their search.

Warm Up Boxes

A set of two blank boxes and one box with odor, the hot box, will be set up for the dogs to have a warm up run before their search, if desired. The odor used for the hot box will be the same odor as the SIT being given at that time. Once all SITs are completed, the hot box will contain a combination of all 3 odors. The next dog to search is always given priority use of the warm up boxes.

Videotaping and Photography

The premium will note whether or not videotaping will be allowed during searches. It is possible that, once on site, the Judge may opt to prohibit videotaping of a specific search or searches due to the nature of that search area.

If videotaping is allowed, the Handler may bring someone who is not entered or who has already completed that search with them to video their searches. A handler can choose to wear a recording device. Dogs may not wear a recording device. Posting videos or photos of a search on social media prior to all teams completing that search will result in dismissal from the trial.

The host may hire a professional photographer and/or videographer. If so, the photos and/or videos will be available for purchase after the trial.

Search Areas

Search area perimeters will be clearly marked with cones, flags or tape so that the boundaries for the search are clear to the Handlers. If a fence, wall, or other pre-existing boundary is marking the edge of a search area, no markers will be needed. Boundaries of the search area indicate that a hide will not be placed outside those boundaries. There will be no penalty or point deductions for dogs working outside of the boundaries.

The start line for each search will be clearly marked with cones or tape. Time will start when any part of the dog crosses that line regardless of whether the handler has cued them to search or not. Not crossing the start line could result in point deductions or an NQ for the search. It will be the Judge's decision as to whether the reason for missing the start line was related to the dog working odor and any decision related to penalties will be at their discretion.

Dogs must arrive at the search area on leash and be maintained on leash throughout the search unless the Judge has offered an off-leash option for a specific search. In the event that the Handler chooses to start the search off-leash, the equipment change should occur right behind the start line. Handlers can begin off-leash permissible searches off-leash but choose to place the dog back on leash if needed during the search. Likewise, Handlers may start the permissible off-leash search with the dog on leash and unleash them sometime during the search. Dogs must be put back on leash before leaving the search area.

Search areas cannot be closer than 30 feet from each other unless separated by walls.

Search Times

The Judge will establish a maximum time for a search. Failure to complete the search successfully within the maximum time will result in an NQ. The timer will start the time when the dog crosses the start line. For searches with a maximum time of one minute or longer, every effort will be made to give Handlers a 30 second warning. There will be no 30 second warnings given for searches with a time limit less than one minute or any FastFinds

searches. Failure for the warning to be given is not an appealable action and if the search exceeds the maximum time, it will be an NQ regardless of whether a warning was given or not.

Timers can be worn by handlers at any level.

Repeating a Search

A Judge may allow a team to repeat a search if there is an extreme or unexpected circumstance that may unfairly impact the dog's performance. Repeating a search is up to the Judge's discretion.

LEVELS

KSG has four levels of difficulty: Novice, Advanced, Excellent, and Premier. Within the first three levels, there are two divisions: Standard and Pro.

The first three levels, Novice, Advanced and Excellent (NA&E), are very similar in the way points, titles and faults are earned. The Premier level changes things up with how the searches are set up, points are accrued and titling requirements.

Due to this, this next portion of the Rulebook will be divided into 2 sections: the first section will discuss the NA&E levels and the second section will focus on Premier.

Novice, Advanced and Excellent (NA&E)

At the NA&E levels there are five elements: Container, Exterior, FastFinds, Interior and Solo. At these three levels, dogs can earn an Element Title in each of the five elements. To earn an Element Title, the dog must earn three qualifying scores (Qs) in that element. Once a dog earns a title in an element, the dog can be moved up to the next level for that element or stay at the currently titled level, independent of the other elements. At any of these three levels, if the Handler decides to keep their dog at the currently titled level, they will move to the Pro Division. Dogs in the Pro Division will run the same search as dogs in the Standard Division, but will be competing for placements against other dogs in the Pro Division. Handlers can also choose to move a dog competing at a higher level to a lower level in the Pro Division if they feel it is in the best interest of their dog. This will allow for any dog to continue to play scent work game, particularly if age and physical impairments make it less comfortable for them to compete at a higher level.

An Overall Title is earned when a dog has earned an Element Title in all of the five elements in that level.

Once a dog has earned an overall Excellent title, they can be entered in Premier trials and earn Premier level titles. If a dog earns their Excellent Interior and their Excellent Exterior titles, they can enter Premier level searches and accrue points, but will not earn a title until they have earned their Overall Excellent Title.

○ Level Info

Novice

Novice is the starting level for all dogs except for those who meet the exceptions listed below. At the Novice level, Birch will be the only target odor used. Each search will have one hide and it will be accessible to the dog.

The exception is FastFinds which will have two hides. The height limit of a hide at the Novice level will be approximately 36 inches. There will be no intentional distractions placed in a Novice search area.

The Handler is required to call “Alert” when the hide is found. Time will stop with the “Alert” call. If the Judge gives a “Yes”, the Handler may step in and reward their dog. If the “Alert” call was incorrect, the Judge will show the handler where the hide is, giving the handler the opportunity to reward the dog at source before leaving the search area.

A dog may skip the Novice level and begin at the Advanced level if the dog has an NACSW NW3 title or an Excellent Overall title in either AKC or UKC. Proof of the title should be sent to KSG or the Trial Secretary. A retired professional detection dog may also be entered at the Advanced level, skipping the Novice level, providing they pass the SIT for all 3 odors or provide proof of passing an ORT for all 3 odors.

Advanced

At the Advanced level, all three target odors, either individually or in any combination may be used. There are between 1 to 3 hides per search based on the Element parameters. The number of hides will be known to the Handler. The hides may be accessible or inaccessible to the dog. The height limit of a hide at the Advanced level will be approximately 42 inches. Depending on the Element, there may or may not be intentional distractions at the Advanced Level (see Element descriptions below).

The Handler is required to call “Alert” when a hide is found. If the Judge gives a “Yes”, the Handler may step in and reward their dog and then continue searching if there are additional hides. The Handler calls “Finish” when the search is complete. The time stops with the “Finish” call. If on any call of “Alert” the Judge gives a “No”, the search is over. The Judge may or may not choose to indicate where a missed hide is to give the Handler the opportunity to reward the dog before leaving the search area. The Judge will not indicate more than one hide, regardless of how many hides are in the search area.

Excellent

At the Excellent level, all three target odors, either individually or in any combination may be used. There are generally between 1 to 4 hides per search based on the Element parameters. The number of hides will be known to the Handler in Exteriors and Solo and unknown in Interiors, FastFinds, and Containers. The hides may be accessible or inaccessible to the dog. The height limit of a hide at the Excellent level will be approximately 48 inches. Depending on the Element, there may or may not be intentional distractions at the Excellent Level (see Element descriptions below).

The Handler is required to call “Alert” when a hide is found. If the Judge gives a “Yes”, the Handler may step in and reward their dog and then continue searching if there are additional hides. The Handler calls “Finish” when the search is complete. The time stops with the “Finish” call. If on any call of “Alert” the Judge gives a “No”, the search is over. The Judge may or may not choose to indicate where a missed hide is to give the Handler the opportunity to reward the dog before leaving the search area. The Judge will not indicate more than one hide, regardless of how many hides are in the search area.

○ **Elements, Parameters & Divisions**

Containers

The Containers Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in a container. Various types of containers can be used in the same search. Containers may be placed on the ground, elevated on other objects

such as chairs or benches or suspended by hanging with string or hooks. If containers are elevated or suspended, they will be no higher than the height limit for the level of the search being set. The scent vessel should not be visible in the container. If using clear containers, tissue paper will be used in all of the containers. Closed metal, plastic, or wood containers (such as metal paint cans, plastic shoeboxes or wooden boxes) will be vented or have a way for the odor to escape either through seams or holes.

Container searches may be held indoors or outdoors. The Judge can decide whether the search is on or off-leash, assuming a secure area. Handlers should never touch a container.

The number and type of containers will vary by level (see below). Food, toy and/or novel odor distractors may be used in all levels except Novice.

Dogs can step on, paw or nudge the containers but the Judge may award a fault with point deductions if the dog's actions are purposely damaging the containers.

- **Novice**: Containers will be made from cardboard, wood, metal or plastic. There will be between 12 to 20 containers placed at least 30 inches apart. There will be one hide. Time limits will range from 1:00 to 2:30 minutes. There will be no intentional distractors.
- **Advanced**: Containers can be any type of container, including fabric. There should be no luggage, purses or backpacks used. There will be between 12 to 25 containers with no specific spacing. There will be a known number of hides ranging from 1 to 3. Time limits will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes. There will be one or two distractors.
- **Excellent**: Containers can be any type of container, including fabric. There will be between 20 to 35 containers with no specific spacing. There will be an unknown number of hides ranging from 1 to 3. Time limits will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes. There will be anywhere from one to three distractors.

Interiors

The Interiors Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in a room or indoor area. Examples of the types of areas that may be used for interior searches include classrooms, bathrooms, offices, conference rooms, large spaces inside a building or a portion of any of the above. The size of the search area will be at the Judge's discretion. The Judge will choose a size appropriate for the level being tested. Interior searches may include multiple rooms as long as the rooms are adjoining at the Novice or Advanced level or in very close proximity at the Excellent level. There may be a blank room or search area at the Excellent level. If no hides are found, the handler will call "Finish" to indicate they have completed searching the area.

There may be one intentional distractor placed in the search area for Advanced level searches and up to two intentional distractors placed in the search area for Excellent level searches. Intentional distractors can include food, toys and novel odors. Hosts and Judges will do their best to assure that there are no unintentional food or toy distractors, although there is no guarantee that an area will be clear.

Any pawing or behaviors that are excessive and damaging to containers, furnishings or other items in a search area may be awarded a fault with point deductions.

- **Novice**: There will be one hide in the search area with no intentional distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes.
- **Advanced**: There will be a known number of hides, ranging from 1 to 3. There may be one distractor. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes.
- **Excellent**: There will be an unknown number of hides ranging from 0 to 4. There may be up to 2 distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 5:00 minutes.

Exteriors

The Exteriors Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in an outdoor area. Examples of the types of areas that may be used for exterior searches include courtyards, sides of buildings, parking lots, playgrounds, grass areas, and patios. Vehicles may be permitted within the search area. For closed vehicles such as cars or trucks, hides will only be placed on the outside of the vehicles. Hides can be placed anywhere within an open vehicle such as golf carts or four-wheelers. The size of the search area will be at the Judge's discretion. The Judge will choose a size appropriate for the level being tested.

Dogs will have many challenges in outdoor areas as they may have to contend with scents from other animals, food and nature. They may also have to contend with any type of weather conditions on trial day such as high winds, heavy rain, snow or high heat. Therefore, there will be no intentional distractors placed in the search area.

- **Novice:** There will be one hide in the search area with no intentional distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes.
- **Advanced:** There will be a known number of hides, ranging from 1 to 3. There will be no intentional distractors and the time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes.
- **Excellent:** There will be a known number of hides ranging from 1 to 4. There will be no intentional distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 5:00 minutes.

FastFinds

The FastFinds Element will focus on the dog finding multiple hides in containers within a short amount of time and will test Handlers being able to read their dogs under pressure. FastFinds may occur inside or outside. It is an on-leash search. The specific parameters are determined by the search level. There will be no 30-second warning in the FastFinds element.

- **Novice:** The search will consist of three straight lines of either 3 or 4 containers for a total of either 9 or 12 containers. The lines can be set in any direction. Cardboard boxes will be used. The boxes will be placed at a minimum of 30 inches apart. Two of the lines will contain one hide each for a total of two hides. The time limit for the search is fixed at 45 seconds.
- **Advanced:** The search will consist of three groups of either 4 or 5 containers for a total of either 12 or 15 containers. The containers may be cardboard boxes, plastic toolboxes or plastic shoeboxes. The containers may be placed any distance apart and, in any configuration, as long as the groups are distinct. There will be one hide in each group for a total of 3 hides. The time limit for the search is fixed at 45 seconds.
- **Excellent:** The search will consist of four groups of 4-6 containers for a range of 16 to 24 containers. The containers may be cardboard boxes, plastic toolboxes or plastic shoeboxes. There is an unknown number of hides within a range of 1 to 4. More than one hide can be in a group. The maximum time for the search is 75 seconds.

Solo

The Solo Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in the designated search area independently from the handler. The search area will be clearly marked by tape, cones or flags. The size of the search area will be at the Judge's discretion. The Judge will choose a size appropriate for the level being tested. Solo searches can be held indoors or outdoors. The search area may be in the form of an interior, an exterior or a container type search. Containers may be suspended or elevated, but no higher than the limit set for the level. Searches are generally run off-leash but may be required to be run on-leash taking the safety of the dog into

consideration. If the search is required to be on-leash, the Handler should be careful to not disturb the search area with the leash. If the Handler does disturb items in the search area with the leash, they may incur a fault.

The intention of the search is for the dog to work independently from the handler. This is done by the handler staying outside of the search area while the dog goes in the marked area and searches. The handler may not give the dog hand signals or verbal cues to guide the dog while the dog is searching. If the dog steps out of the search area, the handler may guide the dog back into the search area to continue working. Once the dog has found the hide, the handler may step inside the search area to reward the dog.

The Judge will determine the boundary of the start area and if the handler is allowed to walk along the boundary of the search area. This will be communicated to the handler before the start of the search.

If given the option, the handler may choose where to start the search, but may incur a fault if the start is unduly delayed.

- **Novice:** There will be one hide in the search with no intentional distractors. The maximum distance the hide will be placed from the start line is 6 feet. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:00 minutes.
- **Advanced:** There will be one hide in the search with no intentional distractors. The maximum distance the hide will be placed from the start line is 12 feet. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes.
- **Excellent:** There will be one hide in the search area. The maximum distance the hide will be placed from the start is 18 feet. There will be between one to three distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes.

○ Divisions

- **Standard:** Dogs compete in the Standard Division when they are competing for a Novice, Advanced or Excellent Element title.
- **Pro:** Handlers have a choice to enter dogs in the Pro Division once they have achieved a Novice, Advanced or Excellent Element title and want to remain at the same level.

○ Scoring, Qualifying & Titling

Standard Division Scoring & Titling

Scoring is based on points earned, time spent during the search and number of faults given. If the dog finds all of the hides and the Handler calls “Alert” and “Finish”, as appropriate, within the maximum allowed search time, 100 points are awarded for the search. Any faults will cause deductions from the original search score. To earn a qualifying score, the maximum number of points per search indicated below must be earned:

- Novice 90 points
- Advanced 95 points
- Excellent 100 points

Placements are awarded based on the search with the highest score and the fastest time.

Three qualifying searches in an element will earn an element title.

Pro Division Scoring & Titling

Scoring for qualifying searches in the Pro Division is the same as in the Standard Division.

Five qualifying searches in an element at the Pro Division will earn a Pro Division element title.

For every 5 additional Qs in an element that the dog has titled in would add a numeral to the end of the Standard Division title

For example: Niko titles in Novice Containers (SGN-C) but the handler decides to continue to compete at the Novice level in Containers instead of moving up to the Advanced level. The team will now be competing in the Pro Division. After earning 5 additional Novice Container Qs, Niko would earn a Novice Containers 2 (SGN-C2). Five additional Qs would earn him an SGN-C3 and so on.

○ Point Deductions, Faults & Non-qualifying Events

Faults

Each fault is a 5-point deduction from a team's score. Multiple faults can be accrued during one search.

Faults are assessed at the Judge's discretion and include but are not limited to:

- Contamination of the search area by dropping food, a toy reward hitting the ground or by other means. If a handler repeatedly takes actions that result in contamination, multiple faults may be accrued
- Excessive delay at the start line
- Poor leash handling causing disruption of the search area or of the dog's search performance
- Moving items within the search area without the Judge's permission
- Dog not crossing the start line when entering the search in the Advanced and higher levels

There will be no point deductions for dogs that jump on and/or move things within the search area or crush containers as long as the dog is not out of control and purposefully damaging items. The dog cannot be showing aggression and the handler must gain control of the dog without corrections or harsh treatment.

Non-qualifying Events

Non-qualifying events include but are not limited to:

- False alert
- Handler unable to indicate where the hide is when asked "where" by the Judge
- Handler re-cueing the dog to find the hide after calling "Alert"
- Exceeding the maximum search time
- Handler failing to call "Finish" at the Advanced or higher levels within a reasonable time after leaving the search area
- Handler stepping into a Solo search area before calling "Finish" unless rewarding the dog
- Handler calling "Alert" without the dog indicating or showing a change in behavior
- Dog eliminating during the search even if they stepped out of the search area to do so
- Dog eliminating within 5 feet of the start line of a search area
- Handler treating or correcting the dog harshly in the search area
- Dog acting aggressively towards people in the search area

- Handler or dog significantly and recklessly damaging anything in the search area or the trial site
- Handler being disrespectful to Judge, Hosts, or Volunteers
- Overexcited nipping

Premier

○ **Level Info, Parameters & Eligibility**

The Premier level is structured differently than the first three levels. There are no specific “element” type of searches, rather, there are search areas and games. Premier Level titles as well as Championship titles are earned based on points earned during searches as opposed to the number of qualifying searches, as is the case at the first three levels.

To qualify to enter trials at the Premier level, a dog must have earned a title in both the Excellent Interior and Exterior elements. Once a dog has earned these two titles, they can enter Premier level searches and earn points, but titles will not be awarded until the dog has earned an Overall Excellent title. If a dog has earned their Overall Excellent Title, scoring and titling will accrue as described.

A search area will be defined as a particular area including anything within that area. One search area may be both inside and outside. A search area may have vehicles or containers within it but the entire area is to be searched. A search area may be very large or very small. The maximum time allowed for the search may be relatively long or relatively tight. The Judge may define the search and the criteria based on more traditional “element” rules or may impose some “game” rules on the search. This level is designed to test a team’s ability to negotiate challenging searches with new rules and pressures, while making it fun for both the Handler and Dog.

There may be 4 or 5 search areas per Premier trial. The search types will be defined at the trial and will not be specifically listed in the premium. The Host will recommend search areas and games to the Judge who will make the final decisions on the parameters and type of each search during the trial walkthrough. A Handler may enter a dog for a Full Trial, which will consist of all the searches set for the day, or a Short Trial, which will consist of the first two searches set for the day.

At the Premier level, all three target odors, either individually or in any combination may be used.

Hides at the Premier level may be accessible or inaccessible to the dog. The height limit of a hide at the Premier level will be approximately 72 inches. There may be up to 3 intentional distractions. The number of hides for the Premier searches will be determined by the Judge. There may be a known number of hides, a range of hides or an unknown number of hides.

The Handler is required to call “Alert” when the dog has found a hide and “Finish” when they believe the dog has completed the search. If the Handler believes the search area is blank, they must call “Finish”. The time stops with the “Finish” call.

○ Games

Premier searches and games may be similar to some searches that happen at the first three levels but with a noticeable increase in difficulty. There will also be new games that are not played at the first three levels such as:

- No Returns - Search Teams cannot return to an area to search after they cross a certain point designated by the Judge.
- Super Search - This game would have an unknown number of hides ranging from 1 to 12.
- Containers (Premier style) - This game would have a large number of containers with a known number of hides. There might also be distractors in some containers. Any type of container, including fabric, where a hide can be placed out of sight, can be used. Luggage, purses or backpacks are acceptable as long as they are new. Containers can be placed any distance apart, and can be elevated and/or stacked.
- FastFinds (Premier style) - This game could be played within a variety of search areas as opposed to with containers and would have a more varied time allowance.
- Solo (Premier style) - This game would be similar to a Solo search from the first three levels with the hide(s) being placed up to 22 feet from the start line multiple hides and even multiple areas.
- Exteriors (Premier Style) - This game would be a more difficult exterior search than those seen at lower levels. The Exterior area could contain vehicles, containers, a small building, multiple areas or a blank search.
- Interiors (Premier Style) - This game would be a more difficult interior search, where multiple rooms may be used and blank areas may be present. There also could be containers present in the interior search.

It is expected that new games will be developed and added to the Premier searches.

An easily printable table summarizing the parameters of all the elements and games broken down per each of the four levels can be found at the end of the document.

○ Scoring & Titling

The maximum points that can be earned at each Premier trial is 100. The number of hides for the entire trial will be divided into 100 to determine a point value per hide. A blank search will count as one hide. Finding all of the hides, clearing a blank search if present, and making the appropriate finish calls will earn a team 100 points (assuming no faults). A team who scores 100 and has no fault deductions will be awarded a 25 point bonus. Points will accumulate for Premier titles and Championships.

Handlers are allowed up to two faults in one search, each one with a point penalty equal to one half of a hide's point value. The third fault during a search will end the search. The team will maintain the points earned up to accruing the third fault.

For example: Patches was entered in all four searches offered at a Premier trial. The judge set a total of 20 hides at that trial. 100 points divided by 20 hides equals 5 points per hide. Patches found 18 of the hides earning 90 points but one false alert was called causing a deduction of ½ of hide's worth of points (-2.5). Patches earned 87.5 points for the trial.

Points earned at a Premier trial are accumulated for titles and championships. Titles are earned by accumulating points as indicated below:

SGP1..... 150 points
SGP2..... 350 points

SGP3..... 650 points
SGCH (Scent Games Champion) 1000 points

Once a dog has earned a Champion title, they can continue to earn Championships with each additional 500 points accrued in addition to their original 1000 points:

SGCH2 1500 points
SGCH3 2000 points
SGCH4 2500 points (... *and so on*)

○ **Faults**

A team is allowed two faults during a search, each fault amounts to a point penalty equal to one half of a hide's point value. The third fault will end the search. Faults are assessed at the Judge's discretion and include but are not limited to:

- False alert
- Handler unable to indicate where the hide is when asked "where" by the Judge
- Handler re-cueing the dog to find the hide after calling "Alert"
- Contamination of the search area by dropping food, toy reward or by other means. If a handler repeatedly takes actions that result in contamination, multiple faults may be assessed
- Excessive delay at the start line
- Poor leash handling causing disruption of the search area or of the dog's search performance
- Moving items within the search area without the Judge's permission
- Dog not crossing the start line when entering the search

There will be no point deductions for dogs that jump on and/or move things within the search area or crush containers as long as the dog is not out of control and purposefully damaging items. The dog cannot be showing aggression and the handler must gain control of the dog without corrections or harsh treatment.

○ **Non-qualifying Events**

Non-qualifying events include but are not limited to:

- Exceeding the maximum search time
- Handler failing to call "Finish" within a reasonable time after leaving the search area
- Handler stepping into a Solo search area before calling "Finish" unless rewarding the dog
- Handler calling "Alert" without the dog indicating or showing a change in behavior
- Dog eliminating during the search even if they stepped out of the search area to do so
- Dog eliminating within 5 feet of the start line of a search area
- Handler treating or correcting the dog harshly in the search area
- Dog acting aggressively towards people in the search area
- Handler or dog significantly and recklessly damaging anything in the search area or the trial site
- Handler being disrespectful to Judge, Hosts, or Volunteers
- Overexcited nipping

Titles & Awards (all levels)

There are five Element Titles for Novice, Advanced, and Excellent, one for each element. A dog earns an **Element Title** by earning 3 qualifying scores in that element at a single level. **Overall Level Titles** are awarded by earning all five Element Titles for that level. Once a dog earns an Element Title, the competitor can choose whether to move up to the next level or to stay at the currently titled level. This choice can be made for each element independent of the other elements. If the competitor chooses to stay at the level they just titled in, they will be moved to the Pro Division.

Rosettes are awarded for titles earned in the Standard and Pro Division as well as the Premier Level. Rosettes are also awarded to the 1st through 3rd placements in each search at all levels.

A special award of excellence, the **Golden Nose Award**, is given to all dogs who enter the maximum allowed searches for a trial day and qualify in all of the entered searches. At the Premier level, the dog must find 90% of the hides or more to qualify for this award. All of the teams earning the Golden Nose Award will be eligible to receive a special recognition award, the **Moo Tips Award**. The Judges may choose the recipient of this award by random draw or by a unanimous vote. This award consists of a personalized jar signed by the Judge and Host containing all of the scented swabs used in that trial.

A **Championship title** can be earned by accumulating 1,000 points in the Premier level. Teams can work towards additional Championship titles by accruing additional points. At the incremental titles can be earned following the same point system as in Premier. When an additional 1,000 points are reached, a new Championship title will be earned. These titles will be noted by a number following the Championship title, e.g. SGCH2, SGCH3. The team will earn a large rosette ribbon with each championship title.

List of K9 Scent Games™ Titles:

Novice*

Scent Games Novice Container SGN-C
Scent Games Novice Exterior.....SGN-E
Scent Games Novice FastFindsSGN-F
Scent Games Novice Interior SGN-I
Scent Games Novice SoloSGN-S
Overall Scent Games Novice Title SGN

Advanced*

Scent Games Advanced ContainerSGA-C
Scent Games Advanced Exterior.....SGA-E
Scent Games Advanced FastFinds SGA-F
Scent Games Advanced Interior SGA-I
Scent Games Advanced Solo SGA-S
Overall Scent Games Advanced Title.... SGA

Excellent*

Scent Games Excellent Container..... SGE-C
Scent Games Excellent Exterior..... SGE-E
Scent Games Excellent FastFindsSGE-F
Scent Games Excellent Interior SGE-I
Scent Games Excellent Solo.....SGE-S
Overall Scent Games Excellent TitleSGE

Premier

Scent Games Premier 1 SGP1
Scent Games Premier 2 SGP2
Scent Games Premier 3 SGP3

Championship**

Scent Games Champion..... SGCH
Scent Games Champion 2..... SGCH2
Scent Games Champion 3..... SGCH3 , etc

Championship titles should precede dog's name

* - Titles in the Pro division for these levels will be indicated by adding a numeral at the end of the corresponding Standard Division title.

For example, after earning her title in Advanced Solo, Ziggy continued to trial at the Advanced level at the Pro division. So far, she has earned 10 Qs in the Pro Division and a title of SGA-S2.

** - Further Championships can be earned with each additional 500 points accrued in addition to their original 1000 points.

For example, Kodiak earned his SGCH title last year. He has continued to trial at the Premier level and has earned an additional 500 points. He has now earned a title of SGCH2.

Judges

KSG has an approved panel of judges who have been selected based on their understanding of scent work detection and scent work sports. They are able to place appropriate hides based on the search level, element, and environment. They have the ability to read the changes in behaviors in a wide variety of dogs. They have good people skills, time management skills and the ability to pivot when the unexpected occurs and changes need to be made quickly. KSG Judges have received appropriate training on the specific rules of KSG and are able to implement those rules at trials.

Each KSG trial has a Lead Judge. Depending on the size of the trial and the number of elements and levels offered there may be additional judges. Judges are responsible for setting hides, determining the time limit for each search, determining whether there is an off-leash option and scoring each team's run. The Judge observes a Dog in White when applicable.

Anyone interested in becoming a KSG Judge, should contact KSG for an application to begin the approval process.

Public Health Guidelines

In the face of a public health issue, KSG and/or KSG trial hosts may implement public health strategies recommended at the time of a trial, to provide as much protection to participants, volunteers, and officials as possible. This could include, but not be limited to: limiting spectators, requiring the wearing of masks, and requiring social distancing. When possible, the premium will outline any potential public health strategies that will be employed. However, since these issues may be dynamic, additional restrictions may be announced after the premium has been published. Hosts will do their best to keep competitors updated.

Hold Harmless

Anyone registering, entering, handling, volunteering, or attending in any capacity a trial or sanctioned K9 Scent Games™ (KSG) activity does so at their own risk and agrees to hold KSG, board members, the host or hosting club, judges, volunteer workers and trial site owners harmless. Anyone entering or handling a dog at a KSG event agrees to have read and understood the rulebook and agrees to uphold all rules, regulations and the Code of Conduct.

Contact Us

K9 Scent Games can be reached the following ways:

- Email: K9ScentGames@gmail.com
- Website: www.K9ScentGames.Fun
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/k9scentgamesgroup



... at a Glance

Version 2.0

		Containers	Interiors	Exteriors	FastFinds	Solo
NOVICE	# of Hides:	1	1	1	2	1
- Birch - Max Height: 36" - Points to Q: 90	Distractors:	0	0	0	0	0
	Time:	1:00-2:30	1:00-3:30	1:00-3:30	45 sec	1:00-3:00
	Notes:	12-20, min 30" apart			3 lines of 3-4 boxes, min 30" apart	Hide up to 6' from start

ADVANCED	# of Hides:	1-3	1-3	1-3	3	1
- Birch, Anise, Clove, Combo - Max Height: 42" - Finish call required - Points to Q: 95	Distractors:	1-2	0-1	0	0	0
	Time:	1:00-3:30	1:00-4:00	1:00-4:00	45 sec	1:00-3:30
	Notes:	12-25, any distance apart			3 groups of 4-5 containers, any distance apart, any configuration	Hide up to 12' from start

EXCELLENT	# of Hides:	1-3 (Unknown)	0-4 (Unknown)	1-4 (Known)	1-4 (Unknown)	1 (Known)
- Birch, Anise, Clove, Combo - Max Height: 48" - Finish call required - Points to Q: 100	Distractors:	1-3	0-2	0	0	1-3
	Time:	1:00-4:00	1:00-5:00	1:00-5:00	75 sec	1:00-4:00
	Notes:	20-35, any distance apart			4 groups of 4-6 containers, any distance apart, any configuration	Hide up to 18' from start

PREMIER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Elements, just search areas and games - 4-5 searches per trial - Type of search will be determined by Host/Judge - Scoring is based on the number of hides found during the trial - Max 100 points per trial; bonus 25 points for teams that find all hides with no faults - Searches may be a known number, range of hides, unknown number or blank - There may be up to 3 distractors in a search area 					
- Birch, Anise, Clove, Combo - Max Height: 72" - Finish call required						