

Who are we?

GARD is a specialized volunteer canine search and rescue resource for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Teams are comprised of specially trained civilian handlers and search dogs that are certified to standards that meet or exceed those required by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

GARD Training Standards

GARD members must undergo the same training in Search and Rescue (SAR) as all certified state ground searchers in Virginia – Field Team Member (FTM), plus additional specialized training for search dog handling. Several members have a higher certification of ground search training, such as Field Team Leader (FTL).

GARD teams are required to have training above and beyond that of a typical FTM, including CPR / First Aid (human & canine), canine behavior, obedience, agility and trained indications to signal a find, plus search skills and scent theory.

In addition, the handler must pass a state written exam, and the team must pass rigorous evaluations in both day and night operations.

Our teams receive additional specialized training in dealing with various subject behaviors and ongoing education in SAR related topics, as well as holding group trainings on most weekends throughout the year.



What we do?

We provide specially trained dogs in air-scent, Human Remains Detection and trailing dogs to search for people who are lost in the wilderness, suburban and disaster situations, in all weather conditions. We have searched for lost children, Alzheimer's patients (Williamsburg), overdue hunter (Dismal Swamp) and hikers and other victims of natural (Suffolk Tornado) and man-made (Pentagon) disasters.

In addition, we provide preventative SAR and educational programs for schools, scouts and church groups, etc. upon request.



When & Where GARD can help.

The versatility of our dogs permits their use in a wide variety of environments and weather conditions, including – but not limited to - farmland, wilderness, and open suburban / urban areas.

Several of our teams have had additional training in disaster response work, and can assist with searches in buildings, landslides, floods and related incidents.

How the Dog Teams Operate:

Air-Scent Teams:

These dogs are trained to locate any human scent in a specified search area. They detect the microscopic particles that are released from the human body and carried on the breeze. This type of dog does not need a scent specific article, works off leash enabling it to efficiently search a large area, and can function in most environments.



Human Remains Detection Teams:

These dogs are trained to locate human remains whether above or below ground, and in wilderness, urban, & disaster environments. They work off leash, and detect the gasses produced specifically by the human body as it decays.



Trailing Teams:

These dogs generally work on leash, and are trained to follow the scent trail of a specific individual regardless of weather or terrain. This team requires a scent article containing the scent of the missing person in order to accomplish its task.



Want to know more?

If you have any questions about our group, or if you would like to see if canine search and rescue is for you, please feel free to visit our website or contact the person listed below on this pamphlet.

We are a state certified, volunteer service, providing specially trained Search and Rescue Dogs, free of charge, to the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the surrounding states.

GARD is a non-profit 501(3c) organization. The only way we can continue our services is through donations. If you care to make a donation, you may send it to:

GARD, Inc
4651 Backwoods Road
Chesapeake, VA 23322-2456

POC: Peter McClintock
757-642-3348

E-mail: paw@widomaker.com

Website: www.gardk9.org

There is one limitation in the use of GARD teams – we cannot respond to searches for known criminals that may be a treat to the team.

Greater Atlantic Rescue Dogs (GARD)



Search
and
Rescue

... That others may live ...