

GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING AIDS: MAKING, HANDLING & STORAGE

1. Prior to procuring and handling materials for training aids it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that you receive the Hepatitis B series of shots (takes about 6 months).
2. When handling items such as blood or other materials it is also recommended that you wear rubber gloves and protective goggles.
3. When making training aids that the K-9 will retrieve or tug with make certain that the containers are strong enough so that the K-9 cannot come into contact with the training materials. Narc bags (small canvass bag) or a double Ziploc secured inside of a closed end PVC tube are good choices to keep a safety barrier between the training aid and the K9.
4. Choose containers that are as odor neutral as possible. I.E. - don't use jars that have had other chemicals or strong odors in them, as you will also be training your K-9 to find these odors (secondary odors).
5. Keep track of what containers and non-cadaver training materials (towels, twine, zip ties, tape, Ziploc bags, etc.) you use so you can proof off of them later in training.
6. It is best to obtain containers that are new such as jars and cans from a store such as the Container Store or Wal-Mart. This way you can be sure that you are not training any secondary odors. PVC pipe with end caps with no adhesive, mason jars, un-used paint cans and Tupperware type containers make good choices. Coffee cans, food containers or anything porous like paper are not good choices.
7. Wash any container that has been allowed to come into contact with the K-9's saliva with hot water and no detergent. The K-9's saliva as well as your scent can become a secondary odor that the K-9 is detecting. When washing a container, do not use any soap or detergents, only hot water and a sterile scrubber, and then allow them to air dry. When washing cotton towels in a washing machine do not use detergent. The reason for this is to limit any possible secondary odors from the soap or detergents.
8. When handling any containers or materials wear rubber gloves, this is for your safety as well as to limit your human scent from being on the training aid. While it is not possible to totally eliminate your scent on the training aids, you can limit the amount. If you use surgical gloves, avoid using latex gloves with powder, as they also leave secondary odors. Clear plastic gloves (like those that are used at Subway Sandwich Shops) are effective in creating a barrier without leaving much secondary odor. If you are packaging, repackaging or resizing your training aids, use a sturdier glove like thick

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- rubber – not leather – gloves that extend further up the arm and wear eye protection.
9. Use a variety of types and materials for containers for your training aids. You will need to have a couple of containers that are NEVER used to hold training materials. These containers will be used to PROOF the K-9 off of the odor of the container, this way you will be certain that the K-9 is not indicating on the odor of the container.
 10. You can store your training materials (I.E. blood, teeth, etc.) inside of a military surplus 50 cal. or M-60 metal ammo can. These containers have a gasket seal around the top and will seal tight. You can purchase these at most Army surplus stores. Make sure the seal is in good enough condition to prevent moisture from entering the can and that they do not have rust, grease or other contaminating scent already on the inside before placing your training aids.
 11. When storing your training materials, separate them by the type of material (I.E. - blood, bone, dirt, tissue, etc.) and store each TYPE of material in separate ammo cans. This is to avoid cross contamination of your scents sources (I.E. - adipocere or dirt will cause all of the other materials to smell like the stronger odor). It also makes it harder to isolate the scents you are trying to imprint. You can have one ammo can that has a little bit of everything in it. If you use a freezer, do not store any aids that are not in an airtight container with any other aids since the scent will still propagate from one aid to the other aids. Do not store bone in the same freezer or near any other liquid or moist training aids to avoid unintended cross contamination.
 12. Store your ammo cans with the training materials in a cool place. Store some of your materials in a freezer. This will keep them from continuing to decompose. This way you can have training materials that are at different stages of decomposition. If you know the age and origin of your training aids, mark some of them (on the container and record the type of marker used for later proofing) so you can age them yourself if needed. Recording the age of your training materials is helpful in your training records to insure that you are training on a spectrum of scents and stages of decomposition.
 13. If you have a training aid that has dried out, adding a little bit of water can revitalize the process of autolysis (decomposition).
 14. When using dirt from under a body, be certain that moisture doesn't cause the dirt to mold. You can avoid this by keeping your dirt in the freezer until you are going to train with it. Once you use it in your training session put it back in the freezer, this will keep mold from forming. Be mindful that the dirt

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- will be very porous and will absorb the scents of any other training aids that are stored with it.
15. Whenever possible, train with training materials from other teams or other trainers in your area. These materials will not have your scent on them and will be at a different stage of decomposition. In many cases, training materials from other areas and trainers will be from scent sources that are subject to completely different environmental conditions than materials from your own area. This is helpful in increasing the spectrum of scent sources your K9 is exposed to.
 16. You should train with as wide of a variety of training materials as possible. Your training should include when possible, blood - fresh and decomposed, teeth, bone, tissue, dirt, adipocere, liposuction, Pseudo I/II, etc. Be creative in seeking your training aids, but do not do anything contrary to local law. Local Medical Examiners are allowed, but not required, to provide fluid soaked gauze pads and other materials at their discretion. This is a privilege and one that can be revoked to the detriment of all legitimate cadaver K9 trainers at any time if the privilege is misused. If they provide materials make sure to ask what kind of materials were used to collect them (sterile gauze, heat sealed bag, fluid jar, paper towel, etc.) so that you can obtain 'blanks' for proofing later.
 17. Make sure you know what you are training your K9 to locate. If you use only hair, then expect your K9 to find hairbrushes and loose hair. This is also true with using discarded tampons, Kleenex or discharged seminal fluid. Unless you plan on searching for JUST those items, make sure to mix your training materials to include a more applicable scent source, like hair AND bone for example. Make sure to discuss your training objectives with your trainer.
 18. When using negatives (proofing the K-9 off of the odor of the containers, etc.), be certain that you handle and place the negatives BEFORE you handle the actual training aids so that you don't contaminate the negatives with the odor of the training aid. Or have someone else set up your negatives and you set up your hot aids, or vice versa.

The aforementioned guidelines are just that ... guidelines. They are not intended to replace common sense, local regulations or to replace your existing training plan. If you have questions or concerns about any of these guidelines, please discuss them with your trainer.

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TRAIN SAFELY.... TRAIN SUCCESSFULLY!