



Frequently Asked Questions

Volunteer Canine Handler, Urban Search & Rescue (USAR)

1. How long does it take to train a USAR dog?

It takes on average 18 months for teams to pass the basic level of qualification. However, to reach operational readiness it often takes 2-3 years.

2. How much of a commitment is the volunteer K9 handler role?

The commitment is bigger than most people think. K9 handlers and their dogs that go on to reach qualification will attend group training sessions every weekend and spend at least one hour every day training their dog at home.

3. How do I know if my dog and I suitable for K9 USAR?

Please see attached document (K9 USAR Suitability) to evaluate if you and or your dog may be suitable.

4. Is there an age limit for handlers and dogs?

Handlers must be at least 18 years old. There is no upper age limit for handlers. Ideally dogs are less than 4 years old. Puppies must be at least 16 weeks old to sit the initial assessment.

5. Do I need a specific breed of dog?

Most successful USAR dogs are usually herding dogs, gun dogs or mixes thereof. However, there have been many successful USAR dogs from other breeds. We do not allow brachycephalic breeds (snub nosed dogs) due to risk of overheating.

6. I think my dog and I may be suitable. How to I join the K9 USAR team?

You will need to attend a K9 handler and K9 screening day which is held roughly four times per year. To book a place, please email K9USAR@qfes.qld.gov.au

7. How often and where do you train?

We train one day every weekend and one night every fortnight at a training facility in the Port of Brisbane.

