

# **Bay Area Recovery K-9s of Florida**

## **Forensic Search and Recovery Unit**



## **Standard Operating Guidelines Manual**

Revised: April 20, 2006

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\*\*All documents referenced in these Guidelines can be found on the team discussion list. If you are unable to access the list, please notify a Board member or Officer and they will either give you an electronic copy or printed copies of the requested documents.

# **1. Introduction**

## **Mission Statement**

To train K-9s, handlers, and technical support to provide competent and professional assistance to law enforcement for the search and recovery of lost or missing persons who are living or deceased.

## **Purpose of SOGs and Procedure to Change the SOGs**

The following Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) are written to provide a general framework from which Bay Area Recovery K-9s of Florida (BARK) will operate. The Board of Directors (BOD), may, at its discretion, modify these guidelines at any time without the consent of the team membership. Any changes must be communicated to the team membership by the Board of Directors within three (3) days of the effective date. The BOD shall not abuse this policy and shall enforce the Guidelines as they are written during normal circumstances.

Should it become evident that the Guidelines require editing the following procedure shall be followed:

Any active member in good standing may request a review and change to the Guidelines at any time. The change shall be written or typed and either handed, mailed or emailed to the Secretary. The requested change shall include a reference to the section of the Guidelines that warrants review, an explanation of the reason for the change and a complete written proposed change. The BOD and the Officers shall review the requested change, submit comments to the requesting member or submit the change to the membership by email within 14 days of the proposed change. The membership shall have up to 14 days to review and comment on the change. At the end of the one-month review period, the change will be put before the membership for a vote. The change shall require a simple majority for acceptance.

## **Team Business**

All BARK team discussions, emails, letters and forms relating to BARK business, callouts, membership and other internal team business shall be confidential. Team business is not to be shared with other teams, civilians, law enforcement or the media without the express written consent by email or letter from a Board member or an Officer of BARK.

## **2. K-9 Handler's Code of Ethics**

BARK has adopted the code of ethics written by former law enforcement officer and SAR K-9 trainer, Jonni Joyce as follows:

AS A SEARCH AND RESCUE K9 HANDLER, my fundamental duty is to serve humankind: to preserve life, to alleviate suffering, to respect human dignity and to encourage the utilization of professionally trained canines.

I will promote the team concept within the SAR community and will not behave in a manner that brings discredit to my team or me. I will develop self-restraint and be constantly mindful of the welfare and feelings of others. I will treat others with the same dignity and respect I wish to be treated with. I will not criticize incident command, as I am not privy to the same knowledge. Honest in thought and deed, I will not utter an untruth towards any other team member, team or agency.

I will not permit personal feelings or ideologies to interfere with the mission of saving human lives. I will utilize all properly trained resources, no matter what their affiliation or political beliefs. I will not engage in public ridicule, nor will I condone such acts by other K9 handlers.

I will conduct myself in an exemplary fashion, both in my personal and professional life. I will not use my service to seek out public recognition or self-promotion. If called upon to provide information to the media, I will promote the professional cooperation between agencies, giving credit where credit is due.

Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature, will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty. I will not discuss the aspects of a search that is an ongoing criminal investigation. I will hold in confidence the information provided by law enforcement and will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives involved in the search process.

I realize that I, alone, am responsible for the professional performance of my K-9 and myself and I will take every opportunity to enhance and improve our level of knowledge and competence. As a professional K9 handler, I support the use of certification testing to written criteria to predict canine performance and successful completion of testing requirements prior to fielding a canine in an actual search.

I will constantly strive to achieve and maintain these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God and man to my chosen service – Search and Rescue K9 Handler.

**[by Jonni Joyce](#)**

### **3. Membership**

#### **General Information**

All persons accepted and approved by BARK are considered members. The applicant will be notified of their membership status within seven (7) days of being approved or rejected. All members must be able to function in any weather at any time for a 12-hour period. They must be able to respond to emergency calls, comply with the BARK by-laws and current standard operating guidelines, and inform their leaders of any limitations. In the field, they must follow the Team Leader's instructions, ask questions, and assist fellow searcher's. All members are required to have an email account and internet access. All operational members are required to have a cell phone. Team members shall attend business and training meetings, further their knowledge of search and recovery, and assist in the improvement of BARK. Each member is responsible for maintaining a positive team image. BARK members are equally responsible for maintaining team integrity and working in a mutually supportive and respectful manner.

#### **Probation**

All BARK candidate members shall go through a ninety-day (90) probation period where they are required to attend weekly team trainings. The first two training sessions will be without their K-9 so that they have a chance to observe and ask questions. The candidate may bring their K-9 to the third training for a basic evaluation for aversion to human remains or a basic evaluation for aptitude for live find. These three months are to be used by the candidate to gain an understanding of the commitment, the amount of time required to train a K-9, the money involved, different training methods, proper biomedical waste handling procedures and many other aspects of HRD and live find training. After the 3 month probationary period, the applicant shall decide if he/she is interested in continuing training with BARK as a member and will submit a complete application package should they decide to remain with the team. The fee for training is \$10/training session until their K-9 is Bark Advanced Certified or Nationally Certified.

#### **New Member Packet**

All new members shall be required to submit a complete application package. The new member packet will consist of a BARK membership application, a copy of the by-laws, a copy of the current standard operating guidelines manual and a checklist of items to be submitted to either a Board member or an Officer. The application will not be accepted until all items are complete. At the time of application, the prospective member will submit an FBI Identification Record Request per the instructions at <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cjisd/fprequest.htm>. Membership in BARK will not be approved until this background check is completed and is satisfactory. It is suggested that the applicant begin this process as early as possible as it may take a month or longer to receive the background check. The fee for the application package is \$25. The fee for membership is \$10/training session. The membership fee is not due until the candidate has been accepted by the Board and Officers.

### **Candidate K-9 Handler Membership**

Any applicant seeking membership as a handler shall possess a valid driver's license, be prepared to train with the mentor assigned to the new applicant, keep a training log and have the canine ready for Certification within the first year of membership. If the canine is under one year of age the Certification may be obtained, but the K-9 shall not be eligible to deploy until the K-9 is at least one year of age.

The candidate's K-9 must be under the control of the handler at all times and be able to follow commands given by the handler. The Board of Directors or designated evaluator will determine if the K-9 would be a benefit to BARK.

### **Training Fees**

There is a \$10 fee per training session until the K-9 has completed the necessary certification to become operational.

### **Acceptance/Rejection Procedure**

The Board of Directors and the Officers will review the new member applications and determine if the candidate would benefit BARK and notify the candidate of the decision by phone call or in person. The FBI background check must be passed prior to the Board and Officers making a final decision on the membership.

### **Dual Membership Policy**

Dual membership will be granted on a case-by-case basis by the BOD & Officers.

### **National Association**

All members of BARK are required to become a member of a National K-9 certifying organization upon acceptance of BARK membership. All K-9s certified by BARK are required to be certified by a National K9 Organization (NAPWDA, NNDDA, NASAR, etc) within six months of certification by BARK. The National membership and K-9 certification(s) shall be renewed annually.

### **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)**

All BARK members with operational K-9s are encouraged to become NCMEC resources. Please request additional information on this process from a Board member or an Officer. Becoming a resource for the NCMEC is not considered dual membership.

### **Operational Members & K-9s Not Available**

BARK assumes that all operational members are available for call-outs at all times. BARK realizes that there are medical, family and work issues that can interfere with a BARK mission and will consider those types of excused absences. BARK requires that all operational members notify the team, by email, when they will be out of the area for more than 24 hours. This is so that BARK can reliably notify requesting agencies of the number of K-9s teams, handlers and support personnel who will be responding to their request for deployment. All support personnel and K-9 handlers will notify BARK as soon as possible if they or their K-9 will be out of service for any reason for more than 24 hours. The Board shall grant a leave of absence (LOA) to any member who gives the

Board a reasonable excuse. If the member who has requested the LOA is an operational member, the operational status shall be suspended during the LOA. The leave of absence status will be in effect until the member returns to active status or until three months passes at which time the member shall request another LOA or return to active status. The member shall be evaluated for reinstatement of operational status by the Board of Directors. The evaluation shall include a review of the K-9s training logs and a test of the K-9 for the BARK certifications that the K-9 currently holds. The Training Director and Director of Operations shall make the final decision on the reinstatement of the operational status. If operational status is not granted the Board will notify the member of why the member was not reinstated and when the member can request another test.

### **Criminal Convictions & Offenses**

Failing to notify the team of any criminal conviction (including, but not limited to, driving under the influence, public intoxication or animal abuse) either on the membership application or within 5 days after the conviction, could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Failure to report DUI offenses to the board of directors will result in immediate and unconditional termination. All records pertaining to these areas will be kept confidential. BARK is to be considered a drug free work environment. Abuse of illegal or controlled substances will result in immediate and unconditional termination.

### **Resignation Procedure**

Members who resign shall submit an email or written statement to the Board or an Officer of BARK. All property of BARK shall be returned within 5 days of the date of the resignation notification. The return of the property shall be at the former member's expense. Property to be returned shall include but is not limited to: BARK Identification, BARK uniform shirts, BARK logo patches, BARK Business Cards, BARK car magnetics and or lettering and all other items with the BARK logo displayed on them.

## **4. Disciplinary Procedures**

### **General Information**

Members of BARK may be subject to disciplinary action for violating the provisions of the by-laws the standard operating guidelines or the directions of a Board member or Officer. The types of violations that shall warrant a review and determination by the Board of Directors and Officers include, but are not limited to: Ethics violations, misconduct, media free-lancing, poor attendance, insufficient training, incomplete record keeping and incorrect use of forms, K-9 abuse and self-deployment. The Board will make the final decision as to the type of discipline that is warranted.

## **5. Identification**

### **ID Cards**

All members will be issued a BARK identification card with their photo and other pertinent information. These ID cards are to be used to identify you to law enforcement and others during searches, BARK activities and public training sessions. These IDs shall not be misused in any way. All operational K-9s will be issued a BARK identification card with their photo and other pertinent information. These IDs shall be used during mission deployments only. All other uses must be approved by the Board in advance. All member ID cards shall expire one year from the date of issue. All member ID cards shall expire if the member is no longer affiliated with BARK. All K-9 ID cards shall expire on the expiration date of their certified specialty. All ID cards are the property of BARK and must be returned when they expire, upon resignation or upon request of the Board of Directors.

### **Business Cards**

All business cards with the BARK name and or logo shall be approved by the Board prior to being distributed. Each member is responsible for creating and printing their own business cards. All business cards are required to have the full name of BARK, the website address, the call out number & logo as a minimum. Business cards can be printed in black and white or in color.

## **6. Dress Code**

### **Uniform**

BARK is a professional organization, comprised of professional people. Members shall reflect professionalism in their appearance at all times while in uniform and whenever talking about BARK or in any way representing BARK to any agency or any person. The BARK authorized uniform consists of the approved tan t-shirt, tan pants & black/tan hiking or combat boots. This uniform shall be worn on all BARK searches and all BARK sanctioned public or private events unless otherwise stated by the BOD or an officer. The uniform shall be in good repair at all times. No missing sleeves, torn clothing or stained clothing shall be worn to a search or to a public or private demo or fundraiser.

### **Logo**

The BARK logo shall be worn only on missions or during BARK sanctioned public or private events. The logo may also be displayed on a member's personal vehicle with the approval of the BODs. The logo may also be displayed on a hat, bag or K-9. All BARK logos are the property of BARK and shall be returned upon resignation.

**BARK Property**

No money will be refunded for the return of any BARK property whether the member spent personal monies for the property or not. Monies used to purchase BARK property are considered a donation and the items received are considered a “thank you” gift for the donation. BARK property consists of, but is not limited to: Shirts with the BARK logo, the logo patch, business cards, magnetics, vehicle lettering and any item with the BARK logo on it.

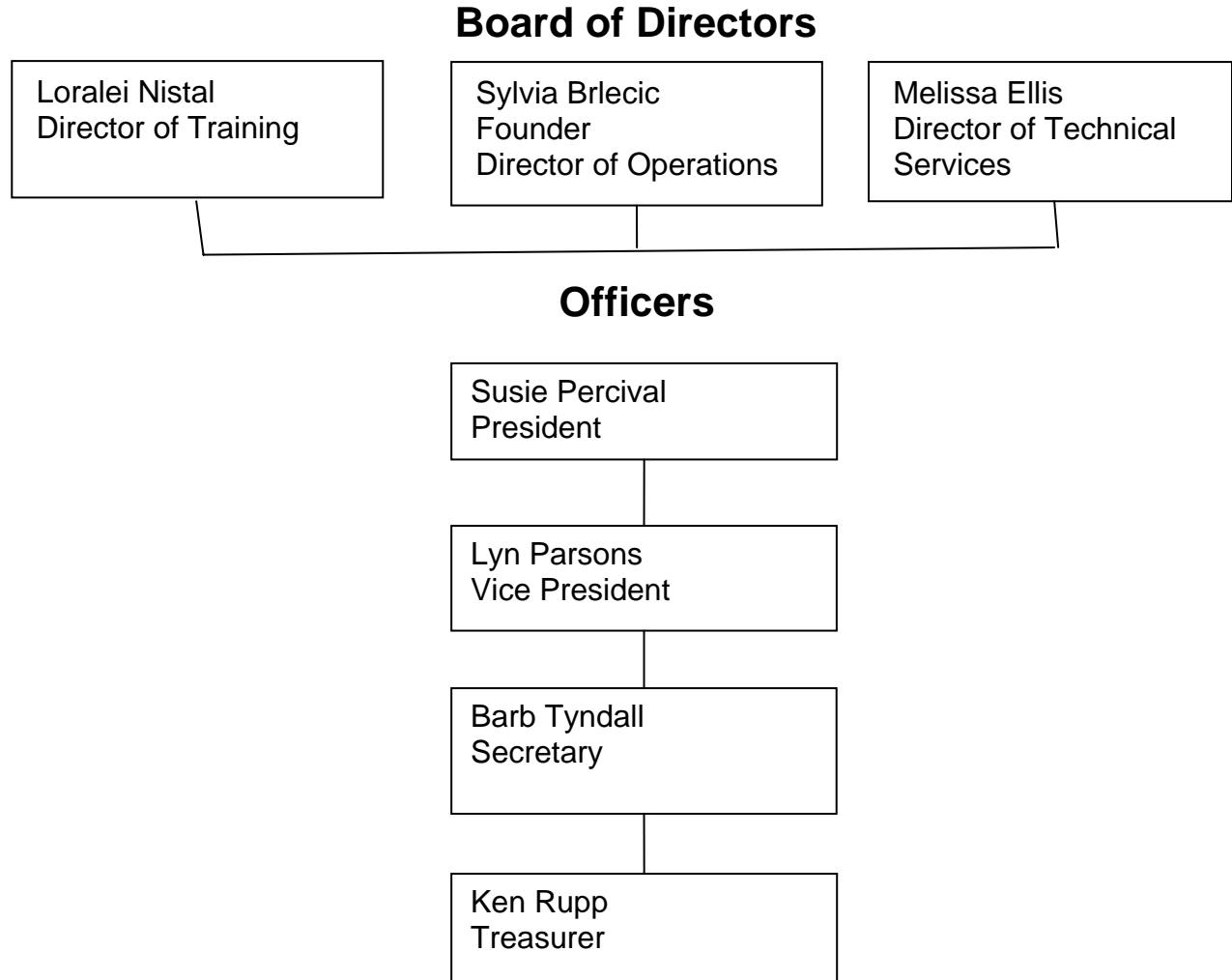
**Conduct**

Conduct while in uniform shall adhere to the BARK bylaws and current Standard Operating Guidelines and be professional at all times. Members in uniform shall not drink alcoholic beverages, visit bars or liquor stores or project an image that is not up to the high standards of BARK.

## 7. Unit Structure

### Structure

The team will consist of a Board of Directors, Elected Officers and Members. The Board of Directors shall consist of the Director of Operations, the Director of Technical Services and the Director of Training. The Officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, as defined in the by-laws.



## **8. Media Relations**

### **General Information**

All media relations or dealings with organizations outside of BARK will be handled by the BARK Board of Directors or designee. Absolutely no free-lancing will be tolerated within the team's ranks and deviation from this protocol will result in disciplinary action up to and including the immediate unconditional termination of BARK membership of the individual.

## **9. Demos/Fundraisers**

### **General Information**

All activities will be conducted in a professional manner with the image of the team being the top priority. Failure to act professionally or in a manner becoming a Search and Rescue Team will result in disciplinary action. One member of the officer corps will be required to attend every event. Officer corps consists of any Board of Director or elected Officer.

### **Demo Policy**

BARK will do free demonstrations for law enforcement agencies, fire departments and other agencies that may request our services. BARK will also do free presentations for schools and other child oriented institutions. BARK will examine on a case by case basis any request for a demo at any other type of venue. Demos do not generally bring in much, if any, funds. BARK members already have large training and mission related expenses without unnecessarily contributing to that expense. BARK members will be expected to attend LE Demos that are held in their geographic area.

### **Fundraisers**

BARK will hold various types of fundraisers located throughout the state. Fundraisers are vital to the mission accomplishment and future of BARK. BARK members shall be expected to attend fundraisers, especially those that are held in their geographic area.

## **10. Meetings**

### **General Information**

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules as directed by Article XXI of the by-laws. The Board or an Officer of BARK shall notify the membership of the meeting date, time, place and general purpose by email. Attendance is required at all BARK meetings. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they shall notify a Board member or an Officer no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. Meetings may be conducted in person or electronically as determined by the Board.

## **Minutes**

The BARK Secretary or a designee will take the meeting minutes. A draft of the minutes is due by email to the Board no later than three (3) days after the meeting. The Board will review, edit and distribute the minutes to all members via email within three (3) days of receipt. The Secretary shall keep a file of all meeting minutes.

## **11. Voting**

### **General Information**

All currently active members in good standing shall be eligible to vote after an initial six (6) month probationary period. This probationary period will be used to become familiar with the operations of BARK and to get to know all of the members of BARK and so that each member will be able to cast a knowledgeable vote. The Board can rescind the voting rights of any member at any time for any reason. Voting may be done in person and/or by email. Each eligible member shall cast one vote per issue only. Members who are on a leave of absence shall be eligible to vote if they have already met their 6 month probationary period.

## **12. Forms, Pamphlets, Letters & Website**

### **Authorized Forms**

The Board of Directors and Officers will from time to time edit existing BARK forms or create new forms for use by BARK members. BARK members shall not modify these forms without the prior written consent of the Board. All BARK authorized forms will be used for their intended purpose. It is the responsibility of each BARK member to obtain a copy of the needed form and make copies for their own use.

### **Authorized Pamphlets**

The Board of Directors and Officers will from time to time edit existing BARK pamphlets or create new pamphlets for use and distribution by BARK members. These pamphlets shall be distributed only as intended. An example would be if a pamphlet were created to be handed out to LE only, then that pamphlet shall not be given to the media and vice versa. BARK members shall not modify these pamphlets without the prior written consent of the Board. Most pamphlets should be printed in color, but may be printed in black and white if necessary.

### **Letters**

All letters must be written on BARK letterhead, reviewed and signed by a BARK Board member. Letters shall be written to LE to update them on the existence and status of BARK. "Thank you" letters shall be written to individuals who have assisted BARK during a search or have donated significant amounts of money or property.

### **Website**

All website updates and changes shall be coordinated through the Director of Technical Services. New members shall be responsible for submitting their biography, their K-9s biography and a digital photo of themselves with their K-9 for display on the website as a part of their complete application package.

## **13. Use of Funds**

### **Reimbursement Procedure**

In certain cases and when a purchase is pre-approved by the Board, a member may be eligible for reimbursement for BARK related expenses such as the cost of gas while on a mission, hotel expenses while on a mission, approved seminars, approved certification tests and other expenses approved by the Board. The member wishing to be reimbursed must submit a written request to the Treasurer that details the expense, how it would benefit BARK and the cost. The Treasurer shall forward the request to the Board along with a current financial report within 3 days of the receipt of the request. The Board will make a decision within 3 days of the receipt of the Treasurers report and the request. The Board will notify the Treasurer and the member of the decision by email along with the amount that is authorized. If the request is granted, the member shall submit all receipts related to the reimbursable expense to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will reimburse the member within 3 days of receiving the receipts.

## **14. Record Keeping**

### **General Information**

All pertinent records will be maintained by the appropriate individual or member of the officer corps. Release of any documentation must be approved and released by a BARK Director. In the event that a Director is unavailable, the President will have authority to approve or disapprove all releases. ANY INFORMATION WHETHER PERSONAL OR OTHER WISE, CLASSIFIED AS CONFIDENTIAL, WILL NOT BE RELEASED FOR ANY REASON.

### **Record Keepers**

The Director of Operations shall be responsible for keeping all team records including but not limited to: all new member applications, a log of all search callouts, a copy of all certifications for all members and K-9s, all law enforcement reference letters, all media references to BARK and all other BARK related records. It is the responsibility of each member to maintain records of all training, call-outs and other events.

### **Training**

The Director of Training shall be responsible for ensuring that all dogs and handlers are meeting the team training requirements for attendance and record keeping.

## **Financial**

The Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining a current financial record for BARK and for providing a financial report by email to the entire BARK membership between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the months of January, April, July, October. All BARK financial information is to be kept in strict confidence and not to be released outside of the BARK membership, except where required by law. The Treasurer shall be responsible for filing the tax report at the end of each year and for maintaining the 501c3 status.

## **15. K-9**

### **General Information**

All BARK canines should be non-aggressive to people, crate-trained and controllable by their handlers. All K-9s must be crated or kenneled when not currently working or training. All BARK K-9s shall be encouraged to seek CGC certification. A copy of the CGC certificate must be given to the Director of Operations upon receipt. The canine should be friendly and capable of being worked off lead. However, canines generally worked on lead, such as tracking/trailing K-9s need not meet this expectation. The canine is expected to be sufficiently obedience trained, to be under the handler's control at all times, and capable of being controlled by others, if necessary. The canine should respond instantly and eagerly to voice commands and/or hand signals while in the presence of other canines and people, and while under the duress of unusual noises and situations. Abuse of any kind toward any K-9 is not tolerated and is grounds for immediate termination. The canine should be capable of working with the handler in moderate terrain, a minimum of 8 hours (given breaks at reasonable intervals) for three consecutive days. Operational status will be determined by the Training Director and the certifiers. Deployment on specific missions will be determined by the Director of Operations or designee.

### **Crate Training**

All members of the team are required to crate train their K-9s so that it is comfortable staying in its crate for extended periods of time. All K-9s are expected to be quiet while in their crate/car. All K-9s will be kept in their crates/car on all searches and/or at all training sessions, unless the dog is searching, training or on a short break.

### **Age**

K-9s can begin search and rescue training at 8 weeks, however, no K-9 will be brought to any training ground or exposed to other K-9s prior to having received its full series of initial vaccinations. K-9 handlers are encouraged to train their K-9s frequently and are expected to have the K-9 ready for certification within one year from the date the training was started. There are K-9s who may certify prior to reaching the age of one year, however, those K-9s will not be allowed to deploy until they have reached the age of 12 months.

## **Health**

All K-9s are to be kept in good health both mentally and physically. Regular vet checkups are required. K-9s that are underweight or overweight or otherwise unhealthy will not be allowed to deploy until they are returned to good health. All K-9s with questionable health must be cleared by a veterinarian at least annually or more frequently as determined by a veterinarian. The Board will have the final say in determining if deployment of the K-9 could be detrimental to its health. K-9s that have any communicable disease to either human or animal shall not be allowed on training grounds, near other K-9s or deployed on missions.

All K-9s shall be kept on regular flea & tick medications during the parasite season unless their vet has stated otherwise. It is suggested that handlers also carry a flea and tick spray when either practicing in or being deployed into tick and flea infested areas. All K-9s shall be kept on regular heartworm medications during the entire year unless otherwise stated by their vet. All K-9s shall be kept current on all vaccinations required by law. It is also suggested that the K-9 be vaccinated against Bordatella since they will be in close contact with many other K-9s.

## **Rx Medications**

All K-9 prescription medications will be reported to the Director of Training. The purpose of the medication, the dosage and the length of time that it is to be given will be reported immediately upon starting the medication.

## **Obedience & Agility**

It is suggested that all K-9s take a formal obedience and agility class. These classes will assist in forming a strong bond between the handler and K-9 as well as teaching the K-9 some of the commands that will be used on missions. Please have your K-9 evaluated by your vet prior to attending an agility class to determine if your K-9 is in good health to do the climbing and jumping required in agility.

# **16. Training**

## **General Information**

All training will be conducted as if on a search. All appropriate safety precautions will be taken. All members will follow all instructions by the individual in charge of that training session. If training in a public area (not on a members property), all members will wear shirts that identify themselves as search and rescue or recovery members.

## **Bi-Annual Meetings**

BARK will hold at least two mandatory statewide trainings per year for the entire membership. These trainings will give the members and their K-9s a chance to socialize with each other and exchange training ideas. The Board will announce these Bi-annual trainings by email at least two weeks in advance. The Board will have the option of inviting other K-9 teams to these trainings.

### **Frequency**

All members and K-9s in training shall train at least twice a week. All training shall be kept in a training log for each dog and will be inspected by the Training Director on a quarterly basis. These logs can be requested at any time by any Director or team certifier. Each member of the team is responsible for logging his or her training at each training session. In addition, it is the responsibility of each member in training to train with the Director of Training or a team certifier on a quarterly basis so their progress and their K-9s progress can be evaluated. All operational members and K-9s shall train at least once a week. All trainings shall be logged. Failure to maintain the required training frequency and documentation requirements may result in disciplinary action or expulsion from the team.

### **Additional Training**

All members are encouraged to pursue additional training in search and rescue and other related disciplines whenever possible. The Board shall be notified of all outside training that the member is pursuing that relates to search and recovery work. New members should be ICS 100/200/700 certified one year from application. This can be accomplished via the Internet on the FEMA website, or by taking classes offered by various ICS Trainers. All members should have current certifications in CPR and first aid and have training from a qualified trainer in hazardous materials and blood born pathogens.

### **Training Aid Guidelines**

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). When handling items such as blood or other materials you must wear rubber gloves and it is recommended that you wear protective goggles and face mask. See Attachment F for specific guidelines on handling training aids.

## **17. Certifications**

### **Purpose**

To have all K-9 Search and Recovery K-9 teams use a minimum standardized, objective based evaluation that can and does determine the ability of a canine to locate living or deceased persons. Each handler/K-9 team will be evaluated to verify that it can meet the objectives on an annual basis. Certification from Bay Area Recovery K-9's of Florida, Inc. or a National K-9 certifying organization such as the National Narcotic Detector Dog (NNDDA), the International Police Work Dog Association (IPWADA), or the North American Police Work Dog Association (NAPWDA) will allow the K-9 team (K-9/handler) to respond to call outs within the limits of their certification providing the K-9 has met the age requirement of 12 months.

### **BARK Certifiers**

The Training Director will designate members and/or outside certifiers for each certification test. The certifier shall have trained and certified no less than one HRD or live find K-9 and maintained an active membership in search and rescue for no less than three years. The certifier's K-9 must have at least one verified find. Certifier must have a full understanding of canine behavior the different working styles of breeds and handlers. The certifier must have crime scene preservation training, scent theory training and navigation training.

### **Membership in a National K-9 Certifying Organization**

Annual National membership and annual K-9 certification is required for all members of BARK. BARK shall pay the membership and certification cost if there are enough funds. If there are not enough funds, the member will be required to pay the fees. In return the member must remain an active member in good standing with BARK for a period of one year after each fee is paid by BARK. No payment will be made should a member attempt to attain National certification without prior approval from the BARK Board of Directors. Should the member resign prior to the one-year date, the member shall reimburse BARK for all fees paid by BARK.

Prior to certification by a National K-9 Certifying organization, a BARK member will test and pass either the Advanced HRD BARK test, the Tracking/Trailing test or the Air scenting test. The member will then be required to pursue National Certification in the BARK certified specialty with the National organization. Annual recertification with BARK is not required if the National certification is maintained.

### **Certification Procedures**

When a BARK member wishes to be evaluated for BARK certification he/she must do the following: The member who wishes to be evaluated for certification shall contact the Director of Training and request that the certification test be scheduled. The BARK coordinator shall determine if the member is ready for certification testing by verbally reviewing the appropriate standards with the member. The test will be administered within one month of the request at the convenience of the evaluators. Before the test, the member will be asked to show what he/she has in their field pack. If the pack is deemed inadequate, the evaluators may opt to cancel the test. Items required to be in the pack are listed in this section under "mission pack". The member shall explain his/her search strategy at the beginning of the test. Should the member change his/her strategy at any time during the test, he/she shall inform the evaluators of the change and reason for the change. Once the test has begun, the only allowable communication between the member and the evaluator(s) shall be about navigation, search strategy, communications to base and how the K-9 is working.

During a test for field support the member will be asked to locate him/herself on a map and give correct coordinates at least once. For all disciplines, the member must locate him/herself on a map and be able to give the correct coordinates at the beginning and end of the test. After completion of the test, nothing regarding the test shall be discussed with the member until the evaluators have reviewed and scored the test. The

results of the test will be presented to the member by the evaluators within two hours of the completion of the test. If a member fails, the Training Coordinator shall decide under what criteria the member may retest. The evaluators' decision on the outcome of the test is final.

### **Technical Support**

K-9 handlers and other members of BARK shall obtain training from outside sources in land navigation, map & aerial reading, FRS communications, first aid, CPR, basic wilderness survival, ICS, clue awareness and crime scene preservation. Technical support personnel must know their limitations and if they are assigned a support position that they feel is beyond their capabilities, they must inform IC immediately.

### **Mission Pack**

One aspect of obtaining a K-9 certification will be to determine if the handler is deployable. The handler shall assume that the pack will be used for an 8 hour deployment and will pack accordingly for the test. The handler shall present for inspection by the certifier(s) a mission pack consisting of at least the following items: enough water for the handler and the K-9, snacks for the K-9 and handler, flagging tape, latex gloves, leather gloves, flashlight or head lamp, compass or GPS, pencil and paper, insect repellent, knife and toilet paper. The handler shall also carry first aid equipment for him or herself and the K-9. The minimum first aid equipment required is: sterile dressings, vet wrap, chemical cold pack, scissors, wound antiseptic, moleskin, lanacaine, eye solution, adhesive tape, tweezers, needle, single edge razor blade and assorted band-aids.

### **Alerts**

The handler will tell the certifier the alert his/her K-9 demonstrates at the source before the test begins. Passive alerts shall be considered, a sit, a down, a stand, or a bark without digging. Aggressive alerts shall be considered, a bark and dig, aggressive digging, tearing up foliage. The manner of the alert is not as important as the commitment to the source/victim. The K-9 is not allowed to leave the source/victim until such a time that the handler releases the K-9 from the alert.

### **Failure**

The team of handler and K-9 shall have no false alerts or alerts on animal remains. The K-9 must demonstrate complete commitment to the source/victim and the handler must call the find correctly. A K-9 that leaves the source before the handler calls the find and releases the K-9 shall fail. A handler can call the search off during the first half due to the K-9 being ill, injured, or having an unknown off day without the test being considered a failure. (A handler that knows the working habits of his/her K-9 shall not have a failure due to calling off the test provided that they make the call within the first half of the test). A K-9 injured during the test will not receive a failure. Retesting of a K-9 pulled from the test in the above fashion shall be allowed to retest at any time. The Training Coordinator shall decide the time frame for retesting. Prior retesting the training records of the K-9 must reflect that the problem has been corrected and the Director of Training must concur.

## **General Testing Information**

Only human remains will be used for HRD certification, these aids will consist of bone, and material obtained from the medical examiners office. No pseudo aides will be used for certification.

Handlers must be at least 18 years of age and a member in good standing with a Search and Rescue team. The K-9 and handler will be considered a team and the handler will be tested along with the K-9. All handlers will be tested on the trust and control they have in the K-9. They also will be tested in the attention they pay to the search area, wind direction, grid pattern, rest for the K-9, general well being of the K-9. The K-9 must work off lead and also show that it will work on a long line in the event that a roadside search would be called, or an area where the K-9 could be in danger. The handler must also show a personality that has respect for fellow SAR personal and LE. The handler must not show abusive action to the K-9. No electric collars are allowed.

## **HRD – Land**

### **Basic**

Basic certification will consist of the following: An area of 50 yards by 50 yards shall contain two sources. One source shall be buried at a depth of 12 inches and shall have aged for 24 hours minimum and 72 hours maximum. One dummy hole will also be dug and the K-9 must not alert on the dummy hole. The dummy hole will be dug at the same time the sources are placed. One source shall be left at the surface and shall be hidden in such a fashion that the K-9 or the handler cannot see the source.

This level of certification will allow the K-9 to deploy only if an advanced K-9 is available to confirm the area this K-9 has worked. This level cannot clear any areas.

### **Intermediate**

Intermediate certification will consist of the following: Two search areas 50 yards by 50 yards each containing two sources and one dummy hole in each area.

#### **Area #1**

This area shall have human bone with no less than 3 animal bones, the K-9 must alert the human bone and disregard the animal bone. This area will also have a bury 18 inches deep and shall have aged 1 month minimum or 2 months maximum.

#### **Area #2**

This area shall have a source on the surface. This source shall be hidden in such a fashion that the K-9 or the handler cannot see the source. There will be an elevated source no less than three feet and no more than six feet above ground. This source also will be hidden in such a fashion that the K-9 or the handler cannot see the source.

This level can deploy but again an advanced K-9 must clear the area, this level cannot clear an area.

### **Advanced**

Advanced certification shall consist of the following: Area size shall be no less than two acres. This area will have animal bone scattered through out the search area. Rags, jars, pvc pipe and other trash will also be scattered through out this area, the area will be littered with many different articles that one might encounter during a search. The K-9 must not alert or show over due interest in any of the scattered items. There will be several dummy holes dug at different times and one dummy hole dug the day of testing. The K-9 must not alert on the dummy holes.

Throughout the two acre area there will be a bury three feet deep, aged over six months. There will be an elevated source that has aged for no less than one week. There will be human bone (2) and one surface source. There will also be a clear area (no source) approximately 150 feet by 150 feet.

At the advanced level, the K-9 and the handler must show a work relationship that provides complete satisfaction to the certifier. That they work as a unit and are able to clear a no source area and make clean correct finds.

This level shall be deployed as a HRD recovery team and can clear areas.

### **HRD – Water**

#### **Basic**

A source shall be placed in shallow water. The K-9 must alert the area as the boat passes over the source. This alert may be aggressive or passive. The handler will call the area by the reaction of the K-9.

#### **Intermediate**

The source shall be put at a depth of 6 feet, the K-9 must alert as he/she enters the scent and continue to alert as the boat passes over the source. The handler must direct the boat driver to reenter the area and triangulate the alert area. The handler will direct the boat personal where to place the markers. The source must be within the triangle.

#### **Advanced**

The source will be placed at a depth of 10 to 12 feet, the K-9 must alert as it enters the scent and continue to alert as the boat passes over the source. The handler will direct the boat driver to reenter the area and triangulate the alert area. The handler will direct the boat personal where to place the markers. The source must be within the triangle.

### **Tracking/Trailing – Wilderness**

The Team will be given a scent article and the Point Last Seen (PLS). The PLS area will be contaminated by two other persons besides the trail layer. A direction of travel must be established by the Team. The trail must be a minimum of 8 hours old, if exposed to full sunlight and 12 hours old if aged overnight. The actual age of the trail shall be determined by the testers according to the climate conditions and terrain. The trail must be 0.75 to 1.25 miles long, through moderate to difficult terrain and crossing at least one road or trail to find the subject. The trail will be contaminated by two fresher cross tracks a half mile or so after the start. The K-9 should also indicate two or more of five articles to be left on the trail by the tracklayer. The Team must find the subject in a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed 3 hours. Good handler and K-9 endurance, strategy and navigation skills should be exhibited. The K-9 must give a positive indication that it has found the tracklayer. Any K-9 showing signs of undesirable and/or unstable behavior during the testing process will not be certified.

### **Tracking/Trailing – Urban**

The SAR Team will be given a scent article and the Point Last Seen (PLS). The PLS area will be contaminated by normal pedestrian traffic in the test area. A direction of travel must be established by the Team. The trail must be a minimum of 4 hours old, if exposed to full sunlight and 12 hours old if aged overnight. The actual age of the trail shall be determined by the testers according to the climate conditions and terrain. The trail must be 0.50 to 0.75 miles long, through terrain typical of an urban area. At least 50% of the trail shall be hard surfaces such as concrete pavements and black top streets or parking areas. The trail shall be laid in an area that has significant pedestrian traffic. The trail shall pass through at least one active vehicle intersection. The K-9 should also indicate two or more of five articles to be left on the trail by the tracklayer. The team must find the subject in a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed 2 hours, exhibiting handler and K-9 endurance, strategy and navigation skills. The K-9 must give a positive indication that it has found the tracklayer.

### **Air Scent**

Day light, area search for one subject hidden in an area not to exceed 80 acres in moderate to difficult terrain: The team must find the subject in a reasonable amount of time exhibiting handler and K-9 endurance and strategy, not to exceed two hours, excluding three rest periods. K-9 must demonstrate at least one distinguishable alert to the scent cone during the search. K-9 must demonstrate by a predefined method that it has found the subject and then alert the handler to the subject's location.

Night time area search for one subject hidden in an area not to exceed 40 acres in moderate to difficult terrain: Any K-9 showing signs of undesirable and/or unstable behavior during the testing process will not be certified.

### **Decertification**

Pulling a certification issued from BARK may be done at the request of the membership of BARK for the following reasons: Misconduct by the K-9 or handler, disrespectful behavior to LE or other SAR personal, failure of the K-9 to work in the fashion that was displayed during certification. Failure to keep and submit training logs, advanced K-9s must train a minimum of once a week, and K-9s below that level must train a minimum of twice a week. It is understood that the certification must continue to be earned. Anyone notified that their certification has been pulled must return the certificate to the officers of BARK.

## **18. Callouts**

### **General Information**

All call-outs will be directed to the Director of Operations or designee. BARK can only be requested to deploy by law enforcement, the fire department, the NCMEC or other agency in charge of the mission. All call-outs will be conducted in a professional manner and as directed by the Incident Commander or Team leader. There will be times that BARK will be incorporated into another team and function as a member of that unit, every member will be required to act accordingly and follow the directions of that team's leader to the extent that those directions do not violate BARK ethics or the safety of K-9s or members. One member of the officer corps will be required to attend every event. Officer corps consists of any board of director or elected officer.

### **Conduct During Missions**

All of our actions, on the radio, in public, or between us, must be serious, professional, polite, tactful, and complete. Dealing with the subject's relatives can be very touchy and may be best left to a counselor. Search related questions by the media are answered only by a PIO (Public Information Officer). We realize we are volunteers with legal and logistical limits, but we will try our best to find the subject. Realizing our limits comes from practice and experience. After the search, the search area and the command post must be policed for litter. We wish to come in quick, and leave without a trace. Overall, members of BARK will ALWAYS act in a professional manner.

### **Notification**

All members will be notified by email or phone call of all call-outs, but may not be requested to deploy on every call out. Deployment of K-9s will be determined by the Board which will take into consideration the nature of the mission and law enforcement needs requests. All members are required to attend 75% of all missions that they were requested for during each calendar year.

### **Firearm Policy**

The law enforcement agency in charge of the mission shall direct the BARK members on whether or not they will be allowed to carry a firearm during deployment. In no case, shall a BARK member carry a firearm if they are not properly licensed and trained.

### **Handler**

For field operations all handlers will be in possession of a current and valid driver's license, and BARK identification. The K-9 handler must have crime scene preservation training, clue awareness training and FRS communication abilities. It is highly suggested that the K-9 handler also have basic wilderness survival, navigation skills, map and aerial reading abilities and compass and GPS skills. K-9 handlers shall also obtain certification in CPR, first aid, ICS and NASAR SAR Tech II. At the end of each deployment, the handler shall submit a search report to the Director of Operations or designee and retain a copy for their own records.

### **Support**

Support personnel will be in possession of a current and valid driver's license and BARK identification. Communications knowledge, navigation, compass, GPS, map and aerial, clue awareness and crime scene preservation skills are minimal requirements. It is suggested that support personnel also obtain certification in CPR, first aid, basic wilderness survival, ICS and SAR Tech II. At the end of each deployment, technical support shall submit a search report to the Director of Operations or designee and retain a copy for their own records.

### **Command**

Due to the nature of the response of BARK Law Enforcement shall be considered the command (IC) unit. Direction will be administered by Law Enforcement. A Board member or officer of BARK will be assigned to work within the IC unit of Law Enforcement to insure the safety of the search teams and be the communication between Law Enforcement and the responding search team. This Board member will also be responsible for obtaining the names, agencies, mailing addresses and email addresses of all LE in charge on scene. The Board member or Officer in charge shall also request that LE provide BARK with a letter of recommendation on their agencies letterhead. The Director of Training or designee shall be responsible for the final summary mission report to LE. This report shall be finalized and mailed to the requesting agency within 5 days from the last day of the search.

### **Personnel Accountability System**

The team will participate in a passport system whereby each member will carry two cards identifying them as a member of this unit. One of these cards will be handed to the assigned person at the scene or to the highest ranking non-search officer from BARK, the other will remain with the BARK member.

### **Mission Procedures**

The meeting location will vary and all instructions for the meeting place will be forwarded to the entire team. It is each team member's responsibility to plan their departure that the time set is their time of arrival. Tardiness for searches will result in action of discipline. The briefing is given by a Unit or Team leader to inform the assembled personnel of the situation, provide an orientation to the area, provide objective information and answer questions. The briefing must be as complete as possible.

The staging area is the central place for searchers to congregate. It is usually separate from the command post, where only the command staff operates. The staging area should have food, water, and bathroom facilities (as coordinated by the support leader). The staging area is where all members park their vehicles, receive a pre-search briefing and search assignments, and move to the field. The staging area is usually separate from the place where the family and friends of the subject reside. Upon arrival at the staging area, members check in, are formed into search teams, and are briefed about the subject and situation (while taking notes). All information given in the briefing is confidential. The following information will be contained in the briefing: Search information form, terrain description, other units responding, communication frequencies, map photocopy, special skills needed from searchers, current weather forecast and areas already searched. No one leaves the staging area alone, without direction, or ill equipped. The staging area director will ensure that the teams are properly dressed and equipped, or they will remain at the staging area, be assigned to a support team, or be sent home.

The supply officer may loan out limited equipment. Team leaders shall report to the search manager and provide a listing of capable and properly equipped BARK members. Radio operators will be given private normal and alternate radio frequencies by word of mouth. The staging area director will usually remain at the staging area. The teams will travel, as directed, to the search site or to their specific search areas. Interviewing will be done by assigned qualified personnel or by a member of the officer corps.

A debriefing is a complete, chronological review of the search and includes everyone who participated. The event is reviewed from first reported missing to area cleanup. Emphasis is placed upon what we did right, what needs fixing, and suggestions for improvements. A secretary will be appointed to take notes and record ideas. All incident participants are required to attend.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is the way of dealing with the effects arising from the stress of an emergency situation. It includes the techniques to avoid or reduce exposure to stress, reinterpretation of the stress, and techniques to reduce and ventilate the effects of stress. It is highly recommended that each team member involved in a search attend CISM.

Each person who was in the field must check out. Each person must return any and all gear that was checked out for the search to the supply office. The remaining food will be distributed or if shelf-stable, stored with the other BARK group gear. The supply officer gathers all the loaned out equipment and reports to the search manager. Once the staging area is cleared of searchers, cars, and litter, the staging area director reports to the search manager and then he/she may leave.

All the reports, map copies, notes and everything else should be saved and given to the Director of Operations for mission write-up. All the material used on the search must be replaced. All gear must be refurbished and restored to working order. After every search, a file is created containing a written review of the search, copies of the maps, search plans, communication logs, check-in lists, team rosters and other miscellaneous information. This file is used to prevent future mistakes, better understand lost subjects in our area, determine which techniques work well, and provide a solid reason for requesting donations.

Use of and operation of FRS radios shall be conducted in a professional manner as stated by FCC regulations and pursuant to the Amateur Radio Operators License. Cell phones will be used as an alternate means of communication unless other wise directed by the Authority Having Jurisdiction.

### **Self-Deployment**

Self-deployment is when a member of BARK deploys without the direction of the Board or an Officer. Self-deployment is not tolerated and will result in immediate and unconditional termination of the team member.

## **19. Standby Rules**

### **General Information**

If a member and or K-9 are placed on standby at a Board Members direction, that member may NOT deploy with another team, whether they are a member of that team or not, without the express consent of the Director of Operations or designee. If a member is requested to deploy for the NCMEC and is on standby for BARK, that member shall notify the Director of Operations and deploy for the NCMEC. Live search requests shall ALWAYS take precedence over HR searches.

## **20. Safety**

### **General Information**

Safety shall always be foremost for all members of BARK, K-9s included. If you feel that you or a K-9 is being put into an unsafe position, please notify the Director of Operations or designee as soon as possible. Do not do anything that would jeopardize your safety or the safety of a K-9.

### **Training**

A safety officer will be assigned to all technical training sessions. The safety officer will have the authority to stop all activity if he/she feels the actions of any individual or group are a danger to themselves or others. If the safety officer evaluates the environmental or weather conditions and finds them to be dangerous, he/she can terminate the training session immediately.

### **Call-Outs**

A safety officer will be assigned to monitor the group's actions and will have the authority to suspend all search activity should he/she feel that any individual or group is in danger of harming themselves or others including the victim(s).

### **Clothing**

Durable, long pants shall be worn to protect the legs. Snake chaps or snake boots may also be worn. Long sleeve shirts may be worn in areas where mosquitoes are thick or where arms need to be protected from stickers and thorns. Hats that are either plain or with the BARK logo may be worn to protect the head. Life vests shall be worn at all times while performing water searches from boats.

### **Wildlife & Dogs**

The state of Florida and Georgia, where we usually train and deploy to are home to several dangerous species of wild animals and many stray dogs. It is the responsibility of the member to familiarize themselves with the types of dangerous animals that they may encounter; how to identify them, avoid them and deal with them should they have an encounter. Some of the dangerous species that may be encountered are: poisonous snakes & spiders, gators, snapping turtles, hogs, panthers, bears, rabid animals and stray or wild dogs.

### **Weather**

The weather in Florida and Georgia is severe in heat and humidity. It is imperative that you always bring plenty of water and snacks for you and your K-9 on every training and search. If you are susceptible to heat stroke, please notify the member in charge of the training or the Director of Operations or designee. Florida is also the lightening capitol of the U.S. Please take immediate and appropriate precautions if you are on a search or training and lightening is in the area.

### **K-9**

Always keep your K-9 on leash or otherwise confined unless the K-9 is working. Do not allow your K-9 to meet other unknown K-9s without the handlers' permission. Ensure your K-9 is well hydrated and feed before, during and after each search. Ensure that your K-9 takes appropriate rest periods so as not to overheat. Should your K-9 overheat, you shall administer First Aid to the K-9 immediately. When the K-9 is stabilized, you shall notify the member in charge of the training or the Director of Operations or designee. You shall also notify the Director of Training as soon as possible.

**Liability & Receipt of Standard Operating Guidelines  
(Revised: April 20, 2006)**

BARK does not have insurance of any kind that covers the team, the team property or its members. BARK does not insure its members or their K-9s against injury or death. It is suggested that each member maintain his or her own medical, life, property and/or liability insurance. SAR work can be dangerous and every member must accept this risk factor or danger and agrees upon signature of receipt of this manual that Bay Area Recovery K-9s of Florida, Inc., its Board members and or Officers are not liable for any and all injuries, property damage or loss of life to his or her self, his or her K-9 or to anyone that may sue any member of BARK. Each member has the right to refuse any task that he or she feels is an unacceptable risk that is assigned to him or her without fear of disciplinary actions. Participation in BARK activities, missions and trainings constitutes acceptance of the dangers and risks that may be involved to the team member, his or her K-9 and his or her property.

I understand that this Standard Operating Guidelines Manual supersedes all previous handbooks, manuals, personnel policies, correspondence and oral representations, if any, that I have previously received from or have been advised by Bay Area Recovery K-9s of Florida, Inc. (BARK). I understand that the guidelines reflected in this manual can be changed with or without cause, with or without notice, at any time by the BARK Board of Directors. I agree that I have read this manual and will abide by the code of ethics and all of the rules, policies and guidelines contained in this manual. If I find the code of ethics or any of the rules, policies or guidelines objectionable, then I will notify the Board of Directors immediately in writing.

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Member's Signature Date

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Member's Printed Name

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Witness Signature (Must be BARK BOD or Officer) Date

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Witness Printed Name and Position

Please return this signed page to a Board member or Officer along with your complete application for membership package.