

Tracking Dog - Level 1 (FH 1)

Maximum Points 100	(Command: “Such”/”Seek”/”Track” or “Find”)
Performing the Track	= 80 points
4 Articles (4 x 5)	= 20 points

1. Prerequisites

As a prerequisite for participation in this test, the dog must have reached a minimum of 18 months of age and have taken and passed the VDH-BH test.

2. Tracking Performance

The dog must exhibit confident tracking [track sureness] on a track that is laid by a stranger that is a minimum of 1,200 paces long and a minimum of 3 hours old. The track must include six (6) ninety degree corners, adapted to the terrain, and must be crossed at least twice by a second person at well-spaced points. Four (4) articles that have been well-scented by the tracklayer, who has carried them in his/her pocket for at least 30 minutes prior to laying the track, are to be placed on the track at irregular intervals. Different types of articles must be used on the track (for example, leather, material, wood). The articles must be a maximum of 10 cm long [about 4"] by 2-3 cm wide [7/8" to 1 1/4"] by 0.5 to 1 cm thick [1/4" to 3/8"] and should not differ significantly in color from the terrain. All articles are to be provided with a number so that the number on the start stake matches the number on the article. The articles are to be found by the dog and either picked up or indicated.

Before beginning the exercise, the handler must report to the judge whether the dog will pick up or indicate [the articles]. Doing both, picking up and indicating, is incorrect. Only such articles will be scored that correspond to the method reported by the handler [to the judge] (picking up or indicating).

The handler has the option of tracking the dog either off lead or on the tracking line.

The tracking line may sag, so long as the handler doesn't drop it.

3. Laying the Track

[Note: When referring to a stranger laying the track, it simply means that someone other than the handler lays the track.] The track is to be laid by someone who is a stranger to the dog.

The tracklayer receives a track diagram from either the judge or the tracking coordinator. Either the judge or the tracking coordinator describes to the tracklayer how the track is to be laid, using the distinguishing features of the terrain, such as individual trees, light poles, buildings, etc. Before laying the track, the tracklayer shows the articles to the judge. The start of the track must be well indicated by a marker stuck in the ground to the left of the starting point and which must remain in place during tracking. After pausing briefly at the starting point of the track, the tracklayer walks in the direction indicated by the judge.

The articles are to be laid on the track at irregular intervals. The first article may not be put down less than 250 paces from the start of the track. The fourth and last article is to be placed at the end of the track. Placing articles at the corners or in the immediate vicinity of a corner is not permitted. Articles should be placed on the track, not next to it. The tracklayer marks the tracking diagram with an "x" for the location where the articles have been placed.

It is important that the track is laid over different kinds of terrain [cover] and over a well-traveled established road. The track must be laid in a realistic manner. A predictable pattern is to be avoided.

Thirty minutes after completing laying the track, another person, also a stranger to the dog, is selected to cross the track at two different points as specified by the judge (not on the first or last leg).

4. Working the Track

The dog should remain on the starting point long enough to take the scent. The dog must be trained in such a way that it picks up the track as calmly as possible without any influence from the handler. (The tracking command is permitted.) Under no circumstances should the handler use his/her hand to create in the dog the urge to forge ahead. If the handler believes that the dog has not picked up the track correctly, the dog may be started over, but only if it is not more than 15 paces from the starting point. A mandatory four (4) point deduction is made.

The track should be worked calmly so that the handler can follow at a regular pace. When the dog locates an article, it must immediately pick it up or indicate it convincingly. The dog may indicate by sitting, lying down or standing. The handler must immediately go to the dog, take the article and raise it in the air. The handler may praise the dog and immediately continue the track. If the dog encounters an object on the track that was not placed there by the tracklayer, it should neither pick it up nor indicate it. If the dog picks up the cross track and follows it about 25 paces off the main track, tracking must be terminated.

5. Scoring

The maximum of 100 points may be awarded only if the dog has presented a convincing performance from beginning to end on the track and all four articles have been picked up or indicated. All corners must have been confidently worked out. The dog must not be influenced by the cross tracks.

Five points will be deducted for each article that is not found. Both picking up and indicating is incorrect. Four points will be deducted for any article incorrectly picked up or indicated.

6. Awarding the FH Title (FH 1)

The FH 1 title may only be awarded if the dog has earned a minimum of 70 points. The following ratings are assigned:

Maximum Points	Excellent (V)	Very Good (SG)	Good (G)	Satisfactory ("B")	Insufficient ("U")
100 points	100 – 96	95 – 90	89 – 80	79 – 70	69 - 0