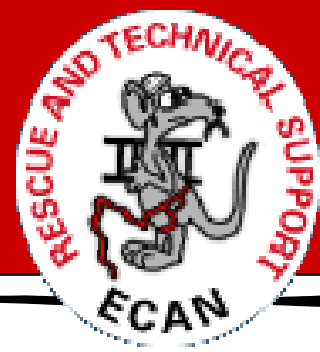


Rescue and Technical Support Search Dogs



The Rescue and Technical Support Team (RATS) is a specialist team of volunteers who are part of Environment Canterbury Civil Defence.

The Search Dog Unit is one of the components of the RATS team, which specializes in training dogs to search for people in Wilderness; Land Search and Rescue (LSAR) and Disaster; Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) situations.

The dogs work off-lead and locate people by air scenting (detecting human scent on the wind currents). The dogs indicate they have found someone by barking.

The Search Dog Unit trains regularly and also takes part in general RATS training, joint training exercises with Civil Defence, Search & Rescue groups and the Emergency Services.

Before becoming operational, wilderness search dogs must pass the national standards set by New Zealand Land Search and Rescue. The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management set and administer disaster (USAR) dog national standards. Civilian and Police evaluators work together, assessing teams in both of these disciplines.

To help you decide, we have put together a series of questions that aim to demonstrate the huge commitment required. Dog handlers are integral parts of rescue teams – and the commitment required often exceeds others who are not handling a dog.

We also run an introductory night 2 -3 times per year where we cover more about training and the use of search dogs. These introductory nights are the next step in the process of joining our team.

***If you answered yes to most of these questions
we would like to talk to you more
Phone Janelle (03) 3773465***



Handler

Are you:

- fit and healthy and can walk with a full pack for long periods in rugged terrain?
- comfortable with heights?
- comfortable being in confined spaces?

- a team player?

Dog

If you have a dog is it:

- have great play drive?
- eager to please?
- friendly to people and other dogs?
- trained in obedience or agility?
- young enough to train?

Skills

Do you have any training in:

- Civil Defence?
- First Aid?
- Bushcraft?
- Rescue?
- Abseiling?

Commitment

Can you commit to:

- 1st four months in training without your dog, learning from other handlers and being a subject?
- 6-7 hours/week at dog training
- approx. 1-2 nights away from home every 3 months?
- extra own time training your dog?
- 1-3 years before assessment?
- time on Civil Defence courses as part of the Rats team?
- some compulsory RATS training?
- time attending courses for LSAR?

Equipment

Do you have:

- Tramping Gear?
- Access to a vehicle?

Financial

In addition to the costs of having a dog can you afford:

- Vehicle expenses for training?
- Purchase of some personal equipment