Introduction

This document is created to promote the growth of PSA and to solidify the decoying protocols and procedures. A certified decoy must realize that his performance and conduct is a direct reflection of himself and PSA. Decoys are held to a higher standard than competitors.

PSA will select decoys via regional camps based on their decoying skills, physical abilities, understanding of the PSA exercises, and integrity. PSA Directors will attempt to certify the most qualified individuals to serve as certified decoys for the organization.

The Board of Directors reserves the right to revoke certification of certified decoys or suspend their position. This handbook will encompass the code of conduct for decoys, the decoy selection process, expectations of decoys, decoy evaluations, and revocation/suspension of certification.

Goals of PSA Decoys

A certified decoy must understand that his performance on the trial field directly affects the overall perception of PSA to the membership, competitors, and spectators. A certified decoy is obligated to understand the rulebook of PSA and conform to the scenarios and guidelines at all times. It is the vision of PSA to provide a fair and safe evaluation of a working dog via standardized exercises and surprise scenario based exercises. As a dog sport organization, PSA is obligated to provide decoys, for events, that are fair and safe and, as such, a certified decoy must understand that the goal of PSA is to provide a fair and safe test for the competitors.
Decoy Committee

The Decoy Committee will consist of three members. There will be a committee member from each region of PSA. The committee member will be responsible for the region from which they were appointed. Responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, organization of evaluation forms, updating decoy lists, decoy counseling, and handling complaints. The committee member will be appointed by the Regional Director. The Regional Director may remove the committee member from the position at any time during the trial season.

Code of Conduct

A certified decoy must realize that his appearance, conduct, and actions are a direct reflection of themselves and PSA. Certified decoys are always under close evaluation by members, competitors, and spectators. It is imperative that a certified decoy conduct himself in a professional manner, both on and off the field. A certified decoy must refrain from conduct, actions, or behavior that could be perceived as embarrassing to the sport of PSA.

Illegal drug use or alcohol abuse will not be tolerated during the course of a PSA event. Casual consumption of alcoholic beverages is allowed after the event away from the competition field, but should be kept within reasonable levels. If a certified decoy is arrested during the course of any PSA event, including off-field actions, the decoy’s certification will be immediately suspended and possibly revoked, pending an investigation by the Decoy Committee.

A certified decoy will also refrain from offensive language when on the field or in the company of members, competitors, or spectators. Any form of cheating or lack of integrity will result in decertification. PSA requests that decoys refrain from socializing or congregating with competitors of the trial once they are suited and have been on the trial field.

The Decoy Committee holds authority to suspend any decoy certification for any legitimate reason. The presiding judge has the responsibility of evaluation, instruction, and overseeing the decoys. The most senior decoy at the trial is responsible for assigning decoys to particular scenarios. The presiding judge holds the authority to overrule decoy assignments.
Selection Process

Prospective certified decoys must attend a regional decoy camp in the region in which they reside in order to certify. No out of region certifications will be allowed. A minimum of Assistant Regional Director is required to be present at a certification camp. The present Director will be accompanied by a senior or certified decoy that will assist with instructions and training at the camp.

Prospective decoys must demonstrate the required skills and knowledge at a regional decoy camp to obtain certification. Decoys will be evaluated on courage, skill, stamina, and ability to follow instructions. Decoys may receive partial certification for two scenarios (car jacking and handler attack) if the Director feels they are qualified but need more experience. Directors may completely certify decoys for all scenarios of PSA if they have met the Director’s minimum requirements. PSA demands exceptional quality, skill, and safety of its decoys.

Decoys certified at the camps will be required to complete a one-trial season probationary period. During the probationary period, decoys are encouraged to attend as many trials as possible to be evaluated by certified PSA judges. After the one trial season the probationary decoy’s evaluation sheets will be reviewed by the Decoy Committee to determine if they will remain probationary or reach the status of “certified decoy”. NOTE: All partially certified decoys will remain in “probationary status”.

“Probationary” decoys are required to attend a regional decoy camp if not promoted to “Certified” decoy status. “Probationary” status is not considered disciplinary action; it’s used for decoys needing skill refinement or evaluation completion. Certified decoys are required to attend two trials per year to maintain their status. Certified decoys and senior decoys will not be required to pay PSA membership dues. Certified decoys that have served as a decoy for three years, are of exemplary skill, show extreme commitment, and have earned excellent performance evaluations will be awarded the status of “Senior Certified Decoys”. These decoys are considered to be of the highest rank, skill level, and certification.

Club and Regional level trials are to be made up of at least three decoys one of which must be at minimum a “certified decoy”. The National Event is to be made up of two “certified” decoys from the hosting region and one “certified” decoy from each non-hosting region. The National Event will also have an alternate decoy that is selected from any region by the hosting region’s directors. It is to be observed as honorable to be selected for Regional and National Events.
The Regional Directors will select the Regional and National Event Decoys from their respected regions based on commitment, skill, and integrity. The certified judge’s evaluation sheets from each trial will serve as a guideline for selection.

**Revocation/Suspension of Decoy Certification**

It is at the sole discretion of the Decoy Committee to suspend a decoy’s certification for violation of any rules, code of conduct violations, or skill inconsistencies. The length of suspension will be determined by the Decoy Committee. The terms of suspension will allow time for the Decoy Committee to present the facts surrounding the suspension to the Board of Directors. It should be noted that a suspension will, under normal circumstances, result in decertification of the decoy in question if requested by the Decoy Committee.

A majority vote by the Board of Directors is required for decertification of a certified decoy. The Director of Judges may issue a temporary suspension without consulting the Board of Directors. The Director of Judges will document any disciplinary actions in the certified decoy’s file via written reprimand. Any regional director, assistant director, or certified judge complaints in reference to any decoying issues shall be forwarded directly to the Decoy Committee via written documentation.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Director to investigate documented complaints from members, competitors, or spectators in reference to a specific decoy. The Regional Director shall forward a written report of his findings to the Decoy Committee for disciplinary action. If the Regional Director finds the complaint to be without just cause then the Regional Director shall forward the written report to the Decoy Committee with an “unfounded” status.

Lack of participation or interest in the sport by a decoy is just cause for the Decoy Committee to request a vote by the Board of Directors for certification revocation of a decoy. Any certified decoy that was decertified for lack of participation may recertify via a regional decoy camp. If the Decoy Committee finds that a certified decoy’s skill level has declined the Decoy Committee may place the certified decoy on probationary status requiring them to attend the regional decoy camp. If a decoy is decertified for rulebook infractions, code of conduct violations, or integrity issues they will not be reconsidered for recertification. A decertified decoy may compete in PSA however; they will be required to pay membership dues in order to do so.
Expectations

PSA expects all probationary, certified, and senior certified decoys to provide a fair, safe, and consistent test at every PSA event. PSA requires decoys to move fluidly from scenario to scenario to maintain trial time. Decoys are expected to be in position to start scenarios. Scenarios should not be delayed for decoys to get into the starting position. Decoys should hustle into position to maintain trial fluidness. PSA expects decoys to be prepared by memorizing the standard PSA scenarios.

PSA requires all decoys to be comfortable catching dogs in all areas of the bite suit. The dogs that compete in PSA primarily target the insides of the arms as well as upper legs and lower legs. Occasionally some dogs will bite in the center of the body. This is not desired, however, certified decoys must be proficient and safe in catching these dogs.

PSA decoys are required to catch dogs smoothly with adequate absorption of the dog’s entry to the grip. Some dogs thrive on making contact with a decoy’s body and PSA decoys are encouraged to allow this without moving away (bailing). A decoy moving the dog’s target area away from the dog (bailing) is undesirable in PSA. PSA decoys will not esquive dogs in PSA trials unless instructed by the presiding judge.

PSA expects certified decoys to be courageous, animated, and vocal while maintaining safety and consistency when decoying trials. PSA expects certified decoys to challenge a dog’s character and, when possible, flaunt a dog’s weakness. PSA relies on its certified decoys to test a dog’s willingness to engage and remain in the grip.

PSA expects decoys to be powerful in their work while maintaining control. Decoys are expected to test a dog’s character by pressuring the dog without becoming reckless. Decoys are required to administer precise controlled stick hits in compliance with the PSA Rulebook. The stick hits are expected to be of reasonable power and not with intent to injure or inflict unnecessary pain to the dog.

PSA expects certified decoys to attend trials and at minimum maintain the requirements for certification. Certified decoys are expected to maintain a level of physical fitness allowing them to effectively decoy complete trials. PSA requires decoys to follow judge’s directions and have the ability to memorize surprise scenarios for Level Two and Level Three competition.

PSA expects decoys to adhere to the PSA Rulebook at all times.
Evaluation Process

Certified PSA decoys will be evaluated at each trial they decoy. The certified presiding judge, or judges, will complete a decoy evaluation form for each decoy that appears in the trial. Decoys will be evaluated for presentation, safety, consistency, catching, driving, efficiency, familiarization of scenarios, and overall performance.

Judges will evaluate and grade the decoys in the stated areas via a 1-5 rating scale. Judges will use the following rating scale: 5 being excellent, 4 being good, 3 being satisfactory, 2 being poor, and 1 being unsatisfactory. Just as judging a dog, the judge must document, on the evaluation form, an explanation for the assigned grade. Any additional issues not covered in the rated categories will be documented on the evaluation form in the comments area. The evaluation form is not designed to be used for negative only comments. Positive comments are also required.

The decoy evaluation form will be reviewed by the Decoy Committee for promotion, discipline, counseling, and decertification of decoys. Decoys must make a conscious effort to appear in various scenarios for evaluation. The Decoy Committee will maintain decoy evaluations and keep record of each decoy’s performance. The Decoy Committee will review each evaluation and consult with decoys in any areas requiring adjustment.

Equipment Requirements

PSA decoys are required to possess and maintain their bite suit. PSA does not require decoys to wear a specific brand or make of suit. The decoys are required to maintain the appearance and quality of their bite suit. PSA decoys are encouraged to inspect their bite suits for rips, tears, holes, fabric loops, and excessive wear. Hidden sleeves and PDC-SD sleeves should be inspected to insure they are safe to use for the dog and decoy.

Decoys are encouraged to wear shoes that prevent slipping (i.e., plastic cleats, turf shoes, or light boots). The decoys are required to use clatter sticks of appropriate thickness as to not cause injury to the dog. The clatter sticks should be approximately 1-1 ¼ inches in diameter. PSA decoys are encouraged to wear an athletic supporter (i.e., jock strap, cup, etc.) for safety purposes, if applicable.