



**Review from the ICAR dog Subcommision's Workshop
for Instructors at Serre Chevalier Briançon,
April 2nd to April 6th 2025**





Day 1: Wednesday, April 2nd

Arrival of all the participants. The colleagues from TOPR and GOPR had the longest journey with 14 hours.

The dog handler Subcommittee workshop takes place in France for the first time.

Marcel welcomes the participants and explains the program for the next four days. The main aim is to exchange ideas between the instructors. Various exercises are played out on the search field and have been discussed afterwards.

Fabrice Huot from the police department is the leader and organizer for the accommodation and catering, chairlifts etc.. He makes sure that everyone feels comfortable and can complete a successful workshop.

- 06.30 – 8.00 Breakfast
- 08.00 Shift to the ski area
- 08.30 Ride on the chairlift and start with the dog work
- 12.00 Lunch
- 16.00 Descent with the chairlift
- 18.00 Meeting
- 19.30 Dinner

At the end everybody introduced themselves.

Day 2: Thursday, April 3rd, Weather Sunshine

First exercise: each dog handler searches for one buried person

Second exercise: each dog handler searches for two buried victims

In the morning, we come across a beautiful avalanche field, which will be our workplace for the next few days. Fortunately, our French colleagues had already prepared the holes.

A small challenge for us was, that 20 dog teams were able to complete the two exercises in one day. The focus was on the dog's digging, the dog's ranching and the handler's body language.



Very different types of work were observed. Potential for improvement was seen above all in the digging of the dogs and in the behavior of the dog handlers.

Coordination between the figurant and handler was very important. How is the dog confirmed when it enters the hole? The dog must have a great sense of achievement when it finds the figurant.

The very successful day was rounded off with a theory on the dog's ability to smell different types of snow by Rodolpho from the Serre Chevalier ski resort.

Day 3: Friday April 4th, Weather Sunshine

The task to be solved was to find and report one person fully buried and one person half buried.

The dog teams completed the task very well. There were minor objections to the handler's tactical approach and the dogs' indications.

In the evening, we had a round among the participants about the day, everyone was satisfied.

In addition, all the organizers explained how they recruit instructors and what requirements they need to meet. Recruitment takes place in very different ways. Smaller organizations have no actual recruitment process. The larger organizations carry out an assessment. Great importance is attached to social skills and professional competence everywhere.

Day 4: Saturday April 5th, Weather Sunshine

The main goal of today's exercise was to search with disturbance factors.

First person buried in the hole and shovelers remain standing on the hole, second person lies down in an open trench.

The dogs once again showed what they are capable of. None of the dogs allowed themselves to be disturbed by the people standing on the hole. It was also very impressive how the dogs switched between the different types of alerts. Barking at the open person and digging at the buried person.

Before the final meeting, we were treated to culinary delights by the participants from France, Poland and South Tyrol. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them once again for their food and drink.



The past 3 days were reviewed again in an open discussion round. The feedback was continuously positive:

- Learned a lot
- very good camaraderie
- well organized
- very good avalanche field
- very good experience

The following requests were also submitted:

- work in two groups if possible
- Integrate training

Marcel thanked Fabrice for a good cooperation. It has been easy to work with him during the workshop till the end

This was a fantastic place to have such courses, the terrain was good, good assistance in making fields with piste machine, good accommodation facilities and good food for a small cost. Marcel thanked for the efforts of the participants, wished everyone a safe trip home and gave some good advice along the way.

Fabrice thanked everybody for good work during the workshop and hoped that everyone brought home some lessons.

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