

Last Updated: April 2024

**BYLAWS  
DOGS-East, INC.**

All organizational procedures and policies set forth in the bylaws of DOGS-East Inc. are also found in the Articles of Incorporation. No organizational procedures or policies included in the bylaws may be in derogation of the Articles of Incorporation.

**ARTICLE I**

1.0 Name: This organization shall be called DOGS-East, Inc.

**ARTICLE II**

1.0 Objectives: The objectives for which this corporation is organized are exclusively educational and charitable. The principle means of achieving these purposes are:

1.1 To provide trained search dogs and trained handlers for the search and rescue of missing and/or lost person(s) upon the request of any official agency.

1.2 To provide continuous training for dog teams to develop and improve the skills and capabilities of its members and to ensure the deployment of skilled search dog teams.

1.3 To promote a greater understanding of the capabilities of the search dog.

**ARTICLE III**

1.0 Membership:

1.1 Members of this corporation shall be composed of dog handlers.

1.2 A dog team shall be defined as a dog handler and his dog.

1.3 This organization shall have voting and nonvoting members.

2.0 Voting members: These members shall have one vote in the election of officers, approving all resolutions brought to the membership by the Board of Directors or individuals except where specifically noted in these bylaws, and in the adopting and amending of the bylaws. Only active members of DOGS-East shall have voting privileges.

DOGS-East will have one classification of membership, that of dog handler. Dog handlers are those members whose primary task is working a search dog. They must also be skilled in search management and base operations as defined by the appended DOGS-East Standards and the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee shall be responsible for developing requirements for the demonstration of skills.

2.1 All voting members must meet the requirements for active status as defined in the DOGS-East Bylaws.

2.2 Candidate: Those members of DOGS-East who have satisfactorily fulfilled the requirements for candidate status as set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards. These requirements include attendance at training sessions, and demonstration of basic knowledge in map and compass and search strategy. Members who have met the requirements may be voted to candidate status by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

2.3 Operational: Those members who have satisfactorily fulfilled the requirements for operational status as set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards. These requirements include attendance at training sessions, demonstration of search skills, radio communication skills, survival skills, search strategy, search management, land navigation, map and compass, first aid, and lost victim characteristics. Candidates who have met the requirements may be voted to operational status by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

2.4 Operational Leader: Those members who have satisfactory met the requirements for operational leader status as set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards. These requirements include attendance at training sessions, response to searches, participation in public relations activities, and a working knowledge of MTL or equivalent. Operational members who have met the requirements for operational leader may be voted to that status by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

2.5 Losing or retiring a dog.

2.5.1 Any operational dog handler who loses or retires a dog shall retain operational status for a period of up to one year insofar as holding offices, serving on committees, representing the organization as an operational handler, and voting privileges provided that the handler satisfies all of the other requirements for continuing membership in DOGS-East. During that period the member must begin training a new dog or be actively looking for a replacement. If he fails to meet these guidelines within the prescribed time he shall automatically revert to applicant status.

An operational dog handler who begins training a new dog shall meet the requirements set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards. During the period the handler is training a new dog, he shall retain all privileges of operational status. Prior to being considered an operational dog team, the handler and new dog must still be approved by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

2.5.2 Any candidate dog handler who loses or retires a dog shall retain candidate status for a period of up to one year insofar as holding offices, serving on committees, representing the organization as a candidate handler, and voting privileges provided that the handler satisfies all of the other requirements for continuing membership in DOGS-East. During that period the member must begin training a new dog or be actively looking for a replacement. If he fails to meet these guidelines within the prescribed time he shall automatically revert to applicant status.

A candidate dog handler who begins training a new dog shall meet the requirements set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards. During the period the handler is training a new dog, he shall retain all privileges of candidate status. Prior to being considered a candidate dog team, the handler and new dog must still be approved by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

2.6 All active members of DOGS-East shall be required to participate in at least 50% of the regularly scheduled DOGS-East training sessions, or other qualifying activities as defined by the Standards Committee. Failure to fulfill the training attendance requirements shall result in automatic removal from active status. Substitutions for scheduled training sessions may be approved by the Board of Directors.

2.7 All active members of DOGS-East must meet the search response requirements and recertification requirements established by the Standards Committee. Failure to fulfill search support and other requirements shall result in disciplinary action by the Standards Committee (Article IV, 8.3). Exceptions for extenuating circumstances may be made by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee. Exceptions may be proposed only if the criteria set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards are met.

2.8 In the event of an emergency, the Board of Directors may make an exception on behalf of the General Membership to the training attendance requirement needed to maintain Active Status. This exception shall apply to the entire team and be for a period of no longer than three months. This decision must have a unanimous vote from the Board and must be presented to the General Membership within 72 hours of the vote. The Voting Membership has the right to overrule any decision with a 51% majority vote.

### 3.0 Nonvoting Members

3.1 Applicant: An individual who has submitted an application for membership in DOGS-East and has agreed to a criminal background check submitted to DOGS-East. The Board of Directors will review all results.

3.2 Inactive members: Those members who have not met the requirements for active membership during a period of three months or who have submitted a request for a leave of absence. Any member who remains inactive for more than six months shall be automatically terminated from membership in DOGS-East. A member who wishes to return to active status and has been inactive for less than six months may return if they meet the following requirements:

#### 3.2.1 Dog handlers

3.2.1.1 Dog teams that were operational for at least one year and actively participated in no less than ten searches may return to operational status provided they pass the 40 acre recertification problem for wilderness dog teams and the 2 one-half acre recertification problem for HRD teams as outlined in the appended DOGS-East Standards and satisfy all requirements for active status as set forth in the DOGS-East Standards. In all instances the returning dog team must be approved for return to active membership by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee prior to regaining that status.

3.2.1.2 Operational dog teams that do not meet the above requirements may return to active status provided they pass the 160 acre problem for wilderness dog teams and the 3 two acre above ground problem for HRD teams as outlined in the appended DOGS-East Standards and satisfy all requirements for active status as set forth in the DOGS-East Standards. In all instances the returning dog team must be approved for return to active membership by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee prior to regaining that status.

3.2.1.3 Inactive operational dog teams who are unable to meet the requirements as stated in paragraph 3.2.1.2 within three months after returning shall be automatically removed from operational status. Reinstatement to active status and the new position requires a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

Inactive operational dog teams that cannot meet the requirements for return to active operational status may be reinstated as active candidate dog handlers by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

3.2.1.4 Candidate dog teams may be returned to their status if their period of

inactivity is no more than one quarter provided they satisfy all requirements for active status as set forth in the DOGS-East Standards. Any leave of absence or period of inactive status greater than one quarter shall result in a return of the candidate to applicant status. In all instances the returning dog team must be approved for return to active membership by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee prior to regaining that status.

### 3.2.2. Deleted

3.2.3 Individuals who have been inactive for more than 6 months or who have been removed from membership must submit a request to return to DOGS-East to the Standards Committee. A member may be reinstated by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee. The returning member's status shall then be determined by a separate 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee. This vote must take place within 3 months of a member's reinstatement. During this period the member shall remain at applicant status and must satisfy all other requirements that are set forth in the DOGS-East Standards.

3.2.4 Any individual whose request to return to membership has been rejected by the Standards Committee may resubmit a request to return after one year. The results of this vote shall be final without further recourse by any member of this corporation.

3.3 Dispatcher: Any individual who performs the dispatcher function for DOGS-East on a continuous basis will be a nonvoting member of DOGS-East (unless otherwise a voting member, having reached Candidate or Operational status). As a nonvoting member, the Dispatcher will not be required to meet any of the DOGS-East requirements for dog handlers with regard to evaluations or active status. The Dispatcher may be allowed to perform specific support functions (e.g., boat handling) with the approval of the Board of Directors. Designation of an individual as the DOGS-East Dispatcher shall be made by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee, and shall remain in force unless terminated by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### 1.0 Directors and Officers

1.1 The Board of Directors shall consist of the president, vice president/standards officer, secretary, training director, and treasurer.

1.2 Any vacancy in the Board of Directors shall be filled by the voting members at the next regular business meeting. The individual elected to fill the vacancy shall

serve until the next annual meeting of the corporation.

1.3 The president with the approval of the Board of Directors shall have the authority to appoint working committees and chairpersons as necessary.

1.4 The directors shall receive no compensation for their services as directors.

1.5 The board shall govern and be responsible for conducting all business of the corporation, unless specifically stated in these bylaws.

1.6 Upon verbal or written notification to all board members, special meetings of the board may be called at any time by any board member for any reason of imperative interest to the function of this corporation.

1.7 The Board of Directors shall be charged with the enforcement of the Bylaws and DOGS-East Standards. The Board of Directors may suspend or impose other disciplinary action on a member by a 3/5 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by Board Members if they deem that the actions of the member or dog have hindered the operations or negatively affected the reputation of the corporation.

1.8 The Board of Directors shall have the authority to grant extensions outlined in the appended DOGS-East Standards of no more than 6 months to dog teams who are unable to meet the standards of performance within the time period specified in the DOGS-East Standards. The Board of Directors shall advise the Standards Committee of its decision at the next scheduled Standards meeting. This decision may be overruled by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

1.9 The Board of Directors shall have the authority to spend up to \$500.00 for expenses directly related to this corporation's operation without approval from the membership. Any expenditure exceeding \$500.00 shall be approved by a majority of the voting members present at a general or special meeting at which a quorum exists. A phone poll of the voting membership may be conducted if the calls are documented. Such a poll must be entered into the minutes of the next general meeting.

1.10 The DE investment/endowment funds shall be managed on a day-to-day basis by the DE BOD. The DE Standards Committee shall have oversight authority and provide directions to the BOD on investment goals and directions. This clause does not give the BOD or Standards Committee the authority to spend or obligate any funds without the approval of the general membership. The specific value of the funds may be withheld from general membership

1.11 Sixty (60%) percent of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the Board to conduct business.

1.12 In the event that any member of the Board of Directors reverts to inactive status, he immediately relinquishes his office. The office will then be filled in accordance with ARTICLE IV, 1.2.

1.13 A slate of officers shall be submitted from the Nominations Committee for the office of president, vice president /standards officer, training director, secretary, and treasurer at a scheduled business meeting in June of each year. Nominations may also be made from the floor. Any nominee who is not present shall have indicated in writing his acceptance of the nomination. Elections shall be held in July; officers shall take office on August 1.

1.14 In the event a member of the Board of Directors anticipates being unavailable for an extended period of time the Board of Directors shall designate an operational member to assume his duties as a Board member during his absence.

## 2.0 Officers

2.1 President: The president shall be the executive officer of the corporation and shall preside at all meetings of the corporation and perform all other duties commonly incident to the office. A member must have been operational for at least one year to be eligible for this office.

2.2 Vice President/Standards Officer: The vice president, in the absence of the president, shall exercise all powers of the president. He serves as chairman of the Standards Committee and evaluation team. He is responsible for overseeing and enforcing the DOGS-East Standards as well as developing standards to qualify dogs and handlers, subject to the approval by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee. He shall maintain records of handler proficiency. A member must have been operational for at least one year and have served at least one year as an evaluator to be eligible for this office.

2.3 Secretary: The secretary shall maintain the minutes of meetings, handle general correspondence, and maintain permanent records of the corporation. If he is a resident of Virginia he shall be listed as the registered agent of the corporation and shall be responsible for maintaining all required registrations. To be eligible for this office, the member must have been an active voting member for at least 6 months.

2.4 Treasurer: The treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the corporation. He shall be responsible for completing and filing all tax and financial statements required of the corporation. He shall also be responsible for arranging a yearly scrutiny of the corporation's financial records. This scrutiny is to be conducted by someone other than the treasurer and shall be scheduled within one month after the end of the fiscal year. To be eligible for this office a member

must have been an operational member for at least one year.

2.5 Training Director: The training director serves as chairman of the training committee and is responsible with the help of training committee members, for developing a progressive training schedule for dogs and handlers, in all phases of search and rescue operations. He shall maintain records of member's attendance and training sessions. He will also be responsible for reviewing training logs of members once per quarter or designating an operational member(s) of the training committee to conduct the review. To be eligible for this office an individual must have been an operational member for at least one year.

2.6 Registered Agent: In the event the secretary is not a resident of Virginia, any of the above officers that is a legal resident of Virginia may be designated as the corporations Registered Agent by the Board of Directors and will assume those duties from the secretary. If none of the officers are residents of Virginia, a legal Registered Agent will be retained as required by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3.0 Committees: The following standing committees shall perform duties as set forth below:

3.1 Training Committee: This committee shall consist of 3 operational members and 1 candidate. Members of this committee shall be appointed by the training director. The committee shall be chaired by the training director. It shall be responsible for the scheduling and coordination of all training sessions. It shall be responsible for ensuring that training sessions address the skills and information needed by dogs and handlers. These skills include but are not limited to radio communication, survival, first aid, map and compass, and search strategy. The committee will also be responsible for periodically critiquing training methods employed by the unit. The training committee will meet at least once per quarter.

3.2 Standards Committee: This committee shall be composed of all active operational members and shall be chaired by the Standards Officer. The Standards Officer may schedule a Standards Committee meeting at any time provided at least one-week verbal or written notice is given to all members of the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee shall be responsible for development and maintenance of the DOGS-East Standards and the DOGS-East Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). It shall be responsible for the review of the progress of all dog teams, the advancement of dog teams to candidate, operational, and operational leader status, and the removal of dog teams from the corporation when warranted. Following any evaluation, the Standards Committee shall review the evaluation with the evaluators. The committee shall be responsible for reviewing the status of dog teams who have failed to meet the requirements set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards and may suspend, terminate or impose other sanctions on the dog team with a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the committee.

3.3 Evaluation Team: This committee shall be composed of operational members. One of the members shall be the Standards Officer. Members of this committee shall be voted on by the Standards Officer and must meet the requirements set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards. This committee shall be responsible for administering all evaluations in accordance with the DOGS-East Standards. This committee shall report directly to the Standards Committee the results of all evaluations.

#### 4.0 Meetings of the Membership

4.1 Annual Corporate Meeting: The annual corporate meeting shall be held during the month of July of each calendar year. The date, time, and place shall be determined by the Board of Directors and announced by the President, or in his absence another member of the Board of Directors, two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Election of officers of the corporation shall take place at the Annual meeting. The newly elected officers shall assume office August 1.

4.2 General Membership Meetings: General meetings shall be held once each quarter per calendar year. The date, time, and place shall be announced with the publication of the quarterly training calendar. The third quarter meeting may be held at the same time as the Annual Corporate Meeting.

4.3 Standards Meetings: Standards Committee meetings shall be held once each quarter per calendar year. The date, time, and place shall be announced at the publication of the quarterly training calendar.

4.4 Special Meetings: Special meetings of either the general membership, the board of directors, or the Standards Committee may be called at any time. The date, time, and place of the special meeting will be decided once the availability of the majority membership is known. The president will organize special meetings for the board of directors and the general membership. The standards officer will organize special meetings for the standards committee.

4.5 Quorum: For purposes of transacting the business of the corporation at either an annual or general membership meeting a quorum consisting of at least all of the following must be present: 50% of the general membership with voting privileges, 50% of the active operational membership, and 60% of the Board of Directors. For purposes of transacting the business of any committee a quorum of at least 75% of the members of the committee must be present. However, this shall not prohibit the committee from enacting its own rules concerning the percentage of affirmative votes needed to rule on individual matters brought before the committee.

4.6 Proxies: A member who is unable to attend a meeting may vote on a specific motion by submitting a proxy. The proxy must contain the motion presented to

the membership and indicate clearly the member's vote. The proxy must be dated and signed. The proxy shall only be valid for the date indicated on the proxy. Electronic proxies (i.e. e-mail/texts) will be accepted as valid proxies.

4.7 Motions: A motion of the voting membership may be presented and voted on without having a meeting if the members making and seconding the motion e-mail the motion to be voted on to all voting members at least two weeks in advance of the voting deadline. The voting deadline will be determined by the officer presiding over the subject committee. Anyone whose vote is not received by the secretary by the voting deadline will be counted as an abstention. The secretary will then use any approved means (phone, e-mail, text, announcements at the next general meeting, etc. depending on the urgency of the action) to inform the membership of the results.

## 5.0 Dues

5.1 A one-time fee shall be due from each applicant upon receiving the DOGS-East Applicant's Kit. The level of the fee will be determined by the general membership. The Training Director shall be responsible for assembling the Applicant's Kits.

## 6.0 Evaluation Procedures

6.1 Evaluation procedures and standards of performance for dogs and handlers shall be set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards. The standards and evaluation procedures may be amended by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee. All proposed amendments shall require 2 weeks written notice to all voting members.

6.2 The Standards Officer may propose, in extraordinary instances, that an exception be made for a specific member with regard to the appended DOGS-East Standards. Such an exception must be approved by a 75% affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

7.0 Search and Rescue Operations: Search and rescue operations of this corporation shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standard Operating Procedures. Said Standard Operating Procedures may be amended by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

8.0 Disciplinary Action/ Removal from Office and Membership: The members of this corporation are required to adhere to the DOGS-East Standards set forth in the appendices of these bylaws. Members are also expected to conduct themselves professionally whenever they are representing themselves as a member of this corporation. Any member whose actions have adversely affected the reputation or operations of this corporation may be subject to disciplinary

action by the Board of Directors (See Article IV, 1.7).

8.1 A member may be removed from membership in this corporation by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

8.2 An officer who fails to fulfill his responsibilities or whose conduct has adversely affected the reputation or operation of DOGS-East may be removed from office by a 51% affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

8.3 Any member who fails to meet the standards of performance set forth in the appended DOGS-East Standards may be subject to suspension, termination or other sanctions. Such sanctions shall be determined by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

9.0 Resignation: Any individual who intends to resign from D-E may do so verbally or in writing. A resignation must be made to at least one member of the Board of Directors. Submitting a written withdrawal within one week can retract a resignation. If no written withdrawal is received within the one-week grace period, the resignation will stand and the individual's D-E membership will be terminated.

## **ARTICLE V**

1.0 Mission Response: No member of this corporation shall respond to a search without first notifying the designated dispatcher of DOGS-East, or a member of the Board of Directors. Nonoperational and inactive members shall not respond as an operational member on an actual mission. Limited exceptions to this policy may be defined in the DOGS-East Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). No exceptions will be allowed that are not specifically covered by existing clauses in the SOP. Any member who acts in contradiction to this shall automatically be removed from membership from this corporation. Members who are removed from membership under this clause may be reinstated by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

1.1 Any member who knowingly allows a nonoperational or inactive member to respond to a mission as an active, operational member shall automatically be removed from membership in this corporation. Members who are removed from membership under this clause may be reinstated by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the total votes cast by eligible members of the Standards Committee.

## **ARTICLE VI**

1.0 Amendment: These bylaws may be amended at any annual, general, or special meetings by a 2/3 vote of the voting members. All proposed amendments

shall require two weeks written notice to all voting members. All voting members shall be sent a copy of the proposed amendment.

## **ARTICLE VII**

1.0 Distribution of Funds: No distribution of corporate funds shall at any time be made to members of this corporation upon dissolution or otherwise. This prohibition shall not prevent the corporation from reimbursing members for authorized mission related expenses. Such reimbursement shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the voting members. Such reimbursement shall come from any available funds in the corporation's possession.

1.1 All monetary transfers from the Investment account to the operating bank account will be carried out electronically, unless approved by the Board of Directors.