

**NEK9 SAR Member Residency Requirements:**

1. To be eligible for member status in New England K-9 SAR you must be a primary, legal resident of New Hampshire or Vermont or reside year-round in a town in Maine, Massachusetts, or New York that has part of its town limits within ten miles of the NH or VT border.
2. Currently active NEK9 SAR members who move outside of the NEK9 SAR residence-requirement area may continue to maintain their active member status at the discretion of the NEK9 SAR Executive Committee provided:
  - a. They continue to meet all search response and training participation requirements.
  - b. They have been an active NEK9 SAR member in good standing for at least 5 years previous to moving.

**Trainee:**

- Received unanimous vote of membership to participate as trainee
- Provide criminal records check
- 80%/60% training and search attendance required
- Non-voting
- Evaluated every 6 months by executive committee from mentor reports to see if making the kind of progress needed to maintain trainee status,
- Must successfully complete wilderness certification within 2 years from beginning of trainee status
- Able to participate as field assistant in searches at the discretion of their mentor and OL

**Member:** (*may be **certified** handler or **certified** communications officers\**):

- 80%/60% training and search attendance required
- Voting privileges (upon successfully passing wilderness certification.)
- Dog handlers must maintain all certification & specialty skill levels
- Submit yearly proof of criminal records check in NH/VT

**Life member:**

***The executive committee may grant honorary life member status*** to any member who has made extraordinary contributions to NEK-9 SAR.

- Non-voting
- No participation level requirements
- Open invitation to participate in all unit training
- Invited on a case by case basis to assist at searches at the discretion of the OL

**Auxiliary Member** (might include inactive members of NEK9, or individuals whose experience with other search organizations or law enforcement make them ideal “friends” of NEK9 SAR. This status would be recommended by the executive committee and voted on by the membership:

- Non-voting
- Associate relationship with NEK9 SAR
- No participation requirements
- Open invitation to participate in all unit training
- Might be invited on a case by case basis to assist at searches at the discretion of the OL

**Medical Waivers:** granted on a case by case basis to members who are experiencing medical issues themselves or within their family. The member should let the OL know the details of their situation. The OL will bring the medical waiver request to the Executive Committee for their approval. The medical waiver will apply until the medical issue is resolved. The waiver will release the member from meeting the full search response and training requirements. The member will be asked to keep the OL up to date on their situation. Because of the impact of a medical waiver on the team it will be subject to on going reevaluation.

If the dog and/or handler were unable to train or respond to searches during their medical waiver, then, before returning to full callout status, the training committee chair and the OL will need to determine if they are search ready.

**Leave of absence (sabbatical):** Granted to members for limited periods of time (months) so they will not be penalized for missing training or searches. The following is a partial list of possible reasons for a sabbatical request. The need for a sabbatical should be seen as unusual or one-time in nature.

- Family or job issues that will be resolved within a known period of time
- Work or travel opportunity

Achieving a leave of absence requires that the member write a letter to the executive committee outlining the member's reasons for the leave of absence and date of reinstatement. The executive committee will consider the request and if granted will detail the terms for reinstatement. The dog and handler returning from a leave of absence will not be used for searches until the training committee chair and the OL consider them to be search ready.

Any member wanting to take more than a few months leave will need to resign from NEK9 SAR and if interested ask for Friend status. They will be able to make a fast track re-application for membership at any time they want to be considered for active membership.

Currently we have three application procedures:

### **New Member Applicants:**

These individuals must file an application as outlined in the Trainee Status section. If approved then the applicant attends two unit trainings after which the entire membership must vote unanimously to accept them as a trainee.

### **Certified handlers from other units:**

These individuals are given a different application form which includes references which the president checks. The executive board reviews the application and references and if positive the handler is asked to attend 3 unit trainings. At the end of the three unit trainings we would then vote on whether to offer them trainee status. An active certified member from another unit would maintain trainee status for no more than 6 months within which they would have to pass #3 & #4 of our wilderness certification test. They would achieve member status after passing these two tests. An inactive, but previously certified member of another unit, starting a dog would be required to meet the same certification and member status requirements of new member applicants (trainee status with a mentor reviewed biannually and must certify to all four wilderness tests).

### **Fast Track Application for previously certified NEK9 SAR handler members:**

They would use an application form designed to determine why they were ready to return. The executive committee would review the application with the applying person and then decide whether to recommend that they should be asked to come to 3 unit trainings. At which point the entire unit would vote on offering them trainee status. They would be assigned a mentor and would be reviewed on a 6-month basis. They would be required to certify to all 4 of the wilderness tests and not just the last two, as an active handler with a new dog is required to do. They would not return to voting status until they had passed certification.