

March 11, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I've known Mr. William Parker of The Parker Group for well over 20 years. As a Field Canine Coordinator (FCC) for The Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Mr. Parker has always been in the forefront as an innovative thinker demonstrating strong technical and operational knowledge both in Police techniques/tactics and Explosives Detection Canine (EDC).

Mr. Parker's possesses practical hands-on experience as well as outstanding "real world" experience. This has always led to him and whichever organization he worked with to be noticed at being on top of their game.

While with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Police Department he was often sought after to lead pilot projects for TSA. Putting our canines through rigorous testing prior to implementation of any new ideas. This testing ran from what testing should be conducted during annual evaluations to which canines should be used for Personal Screening Canine (also known as Vapor Detection Canines, Patent Pending by Auburn University). The concern was with pointed eared canines or flopped eared canines.

While at AMTRAK he was requested to address members of Congress on the use and value of such canines, aiding in the TSA's budget increase to purchase more dogs. This all during the TSA's initial phase of utilizing Personal Screening Canine. Then Inspector Parker was already utilizing Vapor Dogs at Union Station (non TSA dogs), protecting the traveling public. Inspector Parker created the AMTRAK non TSA certifications standards for the entire AMTRAK Rail System. These certification standards were administered to both non TSA and TSA Teams. These certification standards remain in place today. AMTRAK TSA Teams have since opted out of this testing due to changes in contractual agreements.

Now as owner of The Parker Group he has come up with a rigid set of standards providing certification for Explosives Detection Canines. These standards are one of the toughest in the industry.

Mr. Parker has created the evaluation standards for MGM at National Harbor, MD and Springfield, Mass. I've adjudicated evaluations at both locations and the teams performed in an outstanding fashion. It's important to note that none of the handlers had attended a professional Canine Handlers Course and far exceeded handler capabilities which had attended formal schools.

His expertise on techniques used to train EDC's are above reproach. The TSA and other government agencies do not condone the use of harsh methodology to encourage a response from a dog. Operant conditioning, which we might better call operant learning, the learner's voluntary, unconstrained responses are essentially spontaneous, and that reinforcing these responses makes them richer and more effective. This relationship between reinforcement and freely chosen operant responses is ultimately what makes creative learning creative and more meaningful to the canine. The most powerful source of variation and the best nurturing for creative learning is play. Where some trainers would rather use force Mr. Parker would rather use the method that makes it more meaningful and memorable to the dog and the canine handler.

Mr. Parker's training abilities have been proven to be efficient and effective to the team (handler and canine). The canines always pickup quickly using his methodology and the repetitiveness of the training drills assist the handlers in committing the appropriate actions into muscle memory. This ensures the handler does not interfere in the dogs abilities to detect explosive odor. Mr. Parker's training methodology works and is a proven success.

Any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at K9FCCEch@gmail.com

Cecilio E. Echeandia Jr.
Retired Field Canine Coordinator
Department of Homeland Security
Transportation Security Administration