

Training dogs and dog handlers since 1983

ANNETTE van Rensburg and her company, Security Dogs & Dog Handler Training Centre, has been training dog handlers in South Africa since 1985 and that many guards have never touched a dog before attending dog handler training.

“This can cause extreme fear in some guards, so to be successful, they have to go from ‘zero to very competent’ very quickly,” says Annette.

Annette says the company has condensed the DHI PSIRA course into four days of intensive learning. This beginner’s course consists of a 100-page manual, as the trainee has to learn how to care for the dog, clean the kennel, diagnose sickness, how to read a dog’s body language, how to get it in and out of a kennel, and all the humane aspects which the public and the law expect, as well as when to investigate and when to call for back-up.

Annette says the public are very conscious and concerned that security dogs are treated properly, and as the dogs and their handlers are exposed to the public, it is very important that dog handlers are 100 per cent qualified in handling a dog properly.

To check whether the training establishment chosen is legal and accredited to train dog handlers or whether a dog handler is qualified, companies need only log onto www.psira.co.za for confirmation.

Annette says now that Security Dogs & Dog Handler Training Centre is accredited by SASSETA, part of the dog handler training costs can be claimed back through the Skills Development Levy Scheme. She says

one can apply for mandatory grants by completing a Works Skills Plan before 30 June each year.

Under the new SASSETA training system, each course is give a number of credits and each credit is worth 10 hours of training/learning.

Dog handler courses offered include:

- Care for a service dog.
- Handle a trained service dog to deter crime.
- Supervise kennel practices.
- Handle a patrol dog to assist in searching for and the apprehension of a suspect.
- Handle a trained sniffer dog to assist in the detection of substances. ■