

Protection Dog Buyer's Checklist

How to Evaluate a Protection Dog Before You Make a Costly Mistake

A trained protection dog can become one of the strongest security decisions you make. The right dog can live calmly beside you, travel through normal life, obey under pressure, and respond when violence becomes real. The wrong dog can create stress, liability, confusion, and danger in the very environment you are trying to protect.

Use this checklist before you compare dogs, companies, videos, pedigrees, or prices. A protection dog is not simply a purchase. It is a long-term security decision.

1 Daily Safety and Stability

Question: Can this dog live safely around the people and normal activity that belong in your life?

What to look for:

- Calm, neutral behavior around routine household movement, guests, public environments, and periods of inactivity.
- Clear obedience and the ability to settle when nothing is wrong.
- Evidence that the dog has been raised, tested, and selected for daily life - not only protection work.

Warning sign: The dog looks impressive during aggression work but appears nervous, reactive, unstable, or difficult to settle in normal situations.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 breeds and trains for The Switch: calm and stable in normal life, capable when a real threat requires action, and able to return to control when the threat is over.

2 Children, Guests, and the People You Care About

Question: Can this dog live safely with the people it is supposed to protect?

What to look for:

- The company should explain how the dog has been prepared for children, guests, employees, relatives, and unfamiliar people.
- The individual dog should be matched to your actual household, not sold with a blanket promise.

Warning sign: The seller minimizes daily safety or treats uncontrolled suspicion and aggression as proof of protection ability.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

If a dog is not safe around your children, it is not a protection dog. The same standard applies to the people who legitimately belong in your life.

3 Other Animals and Household Fit

Question: Can this individual dog live responsibly around the animals in your home?

What to look for:

- Honest discussion of the dog's history, temperament, prey drive, and experience with other animals.
- A structured introduction and management plan suited to your household.

Warning sign: The seller guarantees that every dog will be safe with every animal in every situation.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 dogs are raised within an environment that includes other dogs and puppies. Proper matching, structure,

and integration still matter for every placement.

4 Breeding Lines and Genetics

Question: What has the breeding line been selected to produce across generations?

What to look for:

- Clear breeding priorities tied to the dog's mission: health, stability, mental strength, problem solving, stress resilience, and protection capability.
- Standards that qualify or disqualify dogs from breeding.
- Long-term feedback from dogs produced and placed by the same program.

Warning sign: The primary proof is breed purity, registration papers, appearance, famous pedigree names, or sport titles.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 does not breed for purebred status or show-ring appearance. We maintain healthy genetic diversity and select for safety, combat capability, health, judgment, and the ability to live calmly beside the owner.

5 Real-World Protection Ability

Question: Is the dog prepared for a real attacker, or only for a controlled demonstration?

What to look for:

- Training that includes changing threats, pressure, weapons, movement, confined spaces, ground fighting, and more than one attacker.
- The dog recognizes human aggression rather than merely familiar bite equipment.

Warning sign: The only proof offered is a predictable bite routine in which the person presents a clean equipment target.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 trains for real-world protection. The dog must recognize the threat, adapt as the confrontation changes, remain committed to the fight, and stay under the handler's control.

6 Control, Obedience, and The Switch

Question: Can the handler control the dog before, during, and after aggression?

What to look for:

- Strong obedience and clear communication in daily life.
- The ability to activate when necessary, disengage when commanded, and return to stable behavior afterward.
- Control that does not eliminate the dog's willingness to protect.

Warning sign: The dog is constantly intense, easily triggered, difficult to call off, or unable to settle after stimulation.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

A true protection dog must provide both stability and capability. The dog should not create danger when there is no threat, and it must not fail when a real threat appears.

7 Training Philosophy

Question: Is the dog trained for sport performance, apprehension, or real-world personal protection?

What to look for:

- A clear explanation of the mission the training is designed to serve.
- Evidence that the dog can function outside rehearsed routines and familiar equipment.
- Training that prepares the dog to think and adapt instead of repeating one fixed response.

Warning sign: The company presents sport titles, a command bite, or a clean bite-and-hold routine as proof of real-world protection capability.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

A sport dog can be highly accomplished at following its sport routine. That does not prove the dog has been prepared to live safely in your home or fight effectively during a real attack.

8 Ability to Counter a Changing Threat

Question: What happens when the attacker fights back, presents a weapon, or changes the problem?

What to look for:

- The dog remains in the fight while moving, repositioning, releasing when necessary, retargeting, and re-engaging effectively.
- The dog can distinguish the greater threat instead of remaining fixed on one rehearsed bite.

Warning sign: The trainer assumes the confrontation ends the moment the dog makes contact.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 develops combat-effective dogs that can solve changing problems. Commitment matters, but remaining attached to one bite while ignoring a weapon or second attacker is not the complete standard.

9 Dog-to-Buyer Matching

Question: How does the company determine which individual dog fits your life, personality, household, and security needs?

What to look for:

- Questions about your routines, travel, public exposure, children, animals, handling experience, security concerns, and preferred timeline.
- A willingness to recommend a different dog, a lower training level, more time, or no sale when the fit is wrong.

Warning sign: The company pushes the most intense or immediately available dog without first understanding how you live.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 works with each client to identify the best dog for the life it will actually live. The right dog is worth waiting for.

10 Integration and Handler Preparation

Question: Will you be trained to live with, handle, and maintain the dog?

What to look for:

- Instruction in commands, obedience maintenance, household routines, boundaries, public handling, and the dog's protection work.
- A defined integration process before the placement is considered complete.
- An at-home option when the buyer needs the dog integrated directly into the home environment.

Warning sign: The dog is delivered after a brief demonstration and the buyer is expected to figure out daily management alone.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 provides Integration Training. Family Protection clients may complete the standard facility process or select At-Home Integration and Delivery; Elite placement includes the at-home process.

11 Support After Placement

Question: What help remains available after the dog enters your life?

What to look for:

- Direct access to the company when questions arise.
- Help with integration problems, household changes, training maintenance, and continued development.
- A company that stays connected long enough to learn how its dogs perform after placement.

Warning sign: The relationship effectively ends when final payment is made and the dog is delivered.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Fortress K9 provides ongoing support because no training program can anticipate every situation the dog may encounter after placement.

12 Timeline and Investment Planning

Question: Do the dog, payment schedule, and delivery timeline fit your real situation?

What to look for:

- Transparent pricing and a clear explanation of what each training level includes.
- A realistic timeline based on dog selection and remaining training.
- Payment options that do not pressure you into choosing the wrong dog.

Warning sign: The seller hides pricing until late in the process or pressures you to choose a dog because it is available now.

FORTRESS K9 STANDARD

Current Fortress K9 paths include a Trained Companion Dog starting at \$20,000, Core Protection at \$40,000, Family Protection at \$65,000, and Elite Protection at \$100,000. Payment schedules of 3, 6, 12, or 18 months may be available. A longer timeline can also allow earlier customization of the dog to you.

Final Buyer Check

- [] Do I want a true protection dog rather than an intimidating dog or an impressive demonstration?
- [] Can this dog live safely with the people, animals, and routines in my life?
- [] Do I understand the difference between sport performance and real-world protection?
- [] Has the breeding line been selected for the same mission I expect the dog to perform?
- [] Can the dog remain under control without losing the willingness to protect?
- [] Does the company have a complete system for selection, training, integration, and support?
- [] Am I prepared for the responsibility and investment?
- [] Does the individual dog fit my life better than the first dog available?

Choose the Right Next Step

You do not need to have every answer before beginning the conversation. Joel Ryals begins with a personal text - not an automated message - and can answer initial questions before a phone consultation is scheduled.

SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION | REVIEW TRAINING LEVELS & PRICING

Text 813-836-9244 or visit FortressK9.com and select the path that fits your decision.