



Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

MEMORANDUM

FOR: Search Working Group
Chair

DATE: 3-30-04

FROM: Canine Subcommittee

SUBJECT: Canine Subcommittee Evaluator Conference Call Minutes

Please find the attendance and items addressed at the three recent Canine Subcommittee evaluators conference call:

MEETING DATE(s) >>	3-23-04, 3-24-04, 3-30-04		
MEMBERSHIP / ATTENDANCE			
Member	March 23 rd	March 24 th	March 30 th
Teresa MacPherson [Interim Chair]	Y	Y	Y
Ann Wichmann	Y	Y	Y
Shirley Hammond	Y	Y	Y
Mike Marks	Y	Y	Y
Fred Pitts	Y	Y	Y
John Dean	Y	Y	Y
John Gilkey	Y	Y	Y
Bruce Berry (SWG-Modrator)	Y	Y	Y
Bruce Speer (outgoing Chair)	Y	Y	Y
Anne McCurdy (outgoing member)	Y	Y	Y
Dean Scott (Program Office)	Y	Y	N

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EVALUATOR ATTENDANCE

March 23rd	March 24th	March 30th
Julie Noyes	Rose DeLuca	Sonja Heritage
Sam Balsam	Jeaneen McKinney	Cathy Schiltz
Hilda Wood	Pat Grant	Ron Weckbacker
Walt Harrison	Lynne Englebert	Mike Agnew
Bob Sessions	Mark Dawson	Gary Hay
Nancy Hachmeister	Rex Ianson	Pat Gilliland
Rob Cima	Elizabeth Kreidler	Gail Laroque
KathyJo Carlysle	Darren Bobrosky	
Cindy Farjardo	Amy Rising	
Sally Timms	Teresa Ortenberger	
Rory Rehbeck	Monica Barger	
Steve Swaney	Sheila McKee	
Tony Sirgedas	Diane Whetsel	
Bill Kidd		
Tory Kidd		
Robert Milner		
Mary Flood		

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AGENDA ITEMS/DISCUSSION

Bruce Berry—moderator

Reminder of the Code of Conduct (not covered on the conference call)

- No transportation/use of illegal drugs/alcohol.
- No firearms allowed.
- Normal radio protocol used/traffic kept to a minimum.
- Know your chain of command/who you report to.
- Limit procurement of equipment.
- Do not take things without authorization.
- Act professional.
- Remain ready even when unassigned.
- Recreation limited to unassigned hours.
- Maintain and wear safety gear and clothing.
- Your actions reflect your organization and FEMA.
- Assessing/addressing inadequate performance.

Teresa:

Update and overview

Certified teams (after CA):

Type II=88

Type I=67

Total=155 (5.5 per TF)

Certificates:

The FEMA Program office has distributed all certificates for teams certified through Jan, 2004 (the TN evaluation).

All certificates were sent to TFLs or Program Managers. Please contact the appropriate Regional Representative if there is a problem.

Evaluator Payment:

There is now a mechanism for payment tied to the Cooperative Agreement. The verbiage is in the "Statement of Work". This language has been distributed to the TFLs and the process of payment of overdue funds has begun.

Rotation Roster:

Response time has been shortened in order to expedite the process. The goal is to have the evaluator list for each test completed three months ahead of time. Evaluators will be contacted twice in a 48 hr period. If there is no response, the Program Office will continue down the list. Commitment is crucial and cancellations result in log-jamming subsequent tests.

New Shadow rule for Type I:

In order to expedite the shadow process for Type I evaluators, the CSC has amended the requirement of "administration of two Type II tests" to "one Type II test". All other requirements remain the same, but they may be completed in any order.

New Position—Chief Evaluator:

He/she is the POC for the hosting Task Force. He/she must be a rostered Type I Lead. We are working on official compensation language, but currently suggesting extra payment from the hosting TF grant fund. The Chief 's duties include certifying the Test site, coordinating site set up, conducting briefings and debriefings using the peer reviews, and distributing the evaluation sheets and after action reports to the appropriate entities (among other things!)

If an evaluator is qualified for this position and is asked to fill it as his/her name comes up in the rotation, there is no pressure to agree to filling this position, if, for any reason, the evaluator is not comfortable in accepting it. He/she may refuse the Chief position and then agree to fill any other position for which they are qualified.

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Fred:

Comments

As professional evaluators our job at an evaluation is to certify that a team has completed the tasks mandated by the standard. We do this by producing a legal document, the score sheet, which accurately and legibly reflects what occurred on our site.

Our written comments must only reflect what we personally saw the team do. They will not contain any assumptions we may make, our personal analysis of the handler or canine's actions, criticism or advice. The only purpose for commenting is to illustrate what occurred on our site during the evaluation to support the scores given and help in making a final decision at the evaluator's consensus meeting. We may not assume that the handler will want to benefit from our advice unless they ask. We may only answer requests for advice after the testing is over. Remember that many handlers are anxious while testing and any verbal remarks outside those necessary to the process of evaluating the team and insuring safety on the site may be interpreted negatively. It is also possible that there are people out there looking for a way to discredit an evaluator or evaluation. Stray comments have a way of becoming a tool to that end. As an evaluation team we must be able to communicate with each other, please keep in mind that the easiest way to avoid misinterpretation and possible offense is to keep any remarks well out of the hearing of the handler or any bystanders.

Going hand in hand with appropriate comments is evaluator demeanor. Again, handlers can be anxious and can read things into the evaluator's attitude. If we as evaluators are aware of our demeanor it can help to be consistent from team to team.

Type I cover sheet

There has been some confusion resulting from a chief evaluator sending out a cover letter to each task force further describing their team's performance. It is not a part of the chief evaluator's responsibility and should not occur in the future.

Applications

The current standard has a revised application in it. The application from any previous standard may not be used. When accepting applications we must ensure that they have both required signatures, they are legible and complete. It really helps the Chief Evaluator if it clearly states who and where at the task force the score sheets are to be sent. If the handler writes their address legibly they will have a better chance of receiving their score sheets in a timely manner.

Shirley:

Marking system & mapping skills

I refer you to Site Map map-form on www.disasterdog.org This is a search map. It can be used for Type I site map to indicate the location of any victims found.

For the Type I test these are the important factors to consider:

- Map must be clear and concise
- Rough Sketch of the whole search area assigned
- Use your compass to determine North direction and mark it on your map in the correct orientation to your sketch of the search area.
- Indicate the wind direction
- Note specific landmarks, roads, steep areas, valley, high points, any unusual material,
- Colored concrete, power lines, hazards
- Use correct Victim Making
- Put your name, date and time on the map. Very important

Methods of making a map:

- You can use GPS coordinates
- You can use natural division that seem obvious
- You can divide the search area into quadrants and label the quadrants A,B,C,&D. In this method assume the front of the pile is on a street. Picture a rectangular pile on a street draw mid line from front to back and then draw a mid line from side to side. Start labeling at the street on the Left quadrant "A", going clock wise the next quadrant is "B", then "C" and then the last is the right quadrant "D" on the street.

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STRUCTURAL MARKING:

These are structural assessments of the bldg. Made by the engineer and Hazmat Notes are listed below or to the side.

The marking consists of 2'x2' square box with an arrow pointing to the direction of the entrance. This square indicates that the bldg is relatively safe or search.

The square box with a slash from the Left upper corner to right lower corner indicates that the bldg has significant damage. Be careful. Handler should send dog into suspect areas and stay in safe zones May need some shoring of small areas.

The square box with an X in it indicates high risk – Hazards- unsafe until mitigated. Dogs should do a perimeter search and search any other areas visible with Handler in safe zone.

SEARCH MARKING:

Upon entering the bldg place one 2' long diagonal slash from top left to bottom right. Indicate date/time-entered bldg.

When search is complete - add second diagonal slash making an X.

Use the:

- Left space to put the Task Force identification, date and time you left the building.
- Right space to put any hazards found.
- Bottom space to mark any victim information:
 - V no circle is unconfirmed – possibly a victim
 - V circled is confirmed by second dog or search cam
 - V circled and horizontal line through V indicates confirmed dead
 - V with a circle and an X through it mean the Victim has been removed.

Bruce S:

K9 aggression (police canines)

We have made it quite clear in the past that all teams must go through this part of the test. All of the members of the canine sub committee agree that this should continue to be the case.

In the case of a K9 patrol dog, the person picking up the dog cannot be a team member. But the rules do not say that a team member could not be with the evaluators watching the stranger pick up the K9 for safety reasons. If the team member stopped the exercise for any reason like signs of stress, the team would be removed from the test. This would allow a team member to stand back and watch for all of the warning signs and step in before we have a bite. The team member should be in the group of evaluators and not acting like a monitor which the canine may be taking clues from.

Mike:

Agility obstacles (appropriate & inappropriate)

A new agility course will be constructed for the test. Do not use obstacles that are permanently built on the agility course (tire bridge). The obstacles must be designed to test the canine on the elements described.

The 4 mandatory obstacles:

- An 8 foot ladder secured at a 45 degree angle.
- A plank elevated at least 6 feet and no more than 8 feet with nothing on the plank.
- A 3 foot high unsteady, wobbly surface.
- A dark narrow tunnel containing at least one right angle turn. There should be no objects in the tunnel.

Other obstacles that can be used:

- A seesaw
- A slick, slippery/unpleasant surface
- A moving plank suspended on 2 barrels
- A crawl

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John D:

Proof/test dogs

The CSC highly recommends the use of a proof/test dog(s) prior to the start of both the basic and advanced Canine Readiness Evaluations. Agility/elements can be run the day before or prior to the start of a basic test. Obviously running the rubble portion of either evaluation will have to be done immediately prior to the actual test. The proof dog(s) needs to be certified at the level of the test being administered. The testing handlers do not need to be present to witness the proof dog being run.

Advanced planning on the part of the sponsoring TF with assistance from evaluators, home team members, shadow evaluators, and certified teams on site to watch the event are all possible resources to successfully accomplish this task. In an effort to provide consistency and fairness in the testing process nationwide, the utilization of a proof dog is important to the success of our testing process.

Anne M:

What is a bark?

Webster defines a **bark** as:

1. The harsh abrupt sound made by a dog. 2. a sound, as a cough, that is similar to a bark
to speak sharply, to utter a loud harsh voice

To me, this is definitively different than:

Whine – to protest or complain in a childish annoying fashion

Whimper – to cry or sob in soft intermittent sounds

Howl- to emit or utter a long, mournful, plaintive sound

Squeak- to utter or make a brief thin, shrill cry or sound

Squeal- to utter or produce a loud, shrill cry or sound

The DSCREP states “Due to the varied and stressful demands of a disaster search, an enthusiastic and **obvious** bark alert is imperative.

I believe the word **obvious**, is well... obvious!

Yes folks – the annoying neighbor dog tied up to his doghouse next door is BARKING.

We use the acronym FBILHS... not FWILHS, FHILHS or FSILHS.

So, to bark, or not to bark... that is the question. And you as evaluators must be able to make the appropriate call.

The collar released, the dog ran away
Headed straight for the barrel, he would soon get to play.
But out from his mouth, there came no big bark
Instead just a whine, then he went to mark.

Peer reviews

Peer review forms are now being used after evaluations. The Chief Evaluator passes them out to the testing participants. The completed forms are then collected and forwarded to the Canine Working Group. The forms can be, but do not need to be signed. The purpose of the form is to obtain feedback on the evaluation staff.

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Ann W:

Standard Operating Procedures

The Canine Sub-Committee is developing a Standard Operating Guide for conducting the DSCREP. The goals of providing this document are consistency and standardization of the tests and ease of presentation for the task forces. Hopefully they cover all the aspects of the test setup and delivery, including post action reporting. Information contained in the SOP has come from the DSCREP, Canine Sub-Com Policies, organizational efforts of various task forces, and the Guide which CA-OES had put together. We hope to have the SOP approved for use by mid-summer.

Site Set-up

The site set-up shall follow all the requirements of the DSCREP, including size, height, and nature of materials. These factors (and perhaps local factors such as weather and winds) should all be considered in an attempt to provide a standardized evaluation opportunity. Therefore, a particularly steep, high, or difficult materials site should be at the lower end of allowable size, and a site that is flatter and easier, may be at the higher end of allowable size. If possible, sites should provide a mix of materials and surfaces.

Type II evaluations should utilize helper locations which are safe and capable of controlling scent dissemination (tubes, boxes, etc) and which are more shallowly buried. Type I evaluations should also utilize helper locations which are safe and may control scent dissemination, but these locations will be more deeply buried. Use a test dog and be prepared to have various dogs locate scent at different locations. Every attempt should be made to balance the factors of any given site to provide a consistent, standardized evaluation to meet national certification standards. We should provide tests that do not vary widely in difficulty from month to month.

Repetitive Barking

The Canine Subcommittee has defined repetitive barking as three barks. Therefore, for a handler to call an alert, the dog must perform at least three barks. These must be barks, rather than squeals, whines, whimpers, etc. The handler should have this explained to them prior to the rubble portion of the evaluation. In the Bark Alert exercise, a minimum of three barks are also required; however, timing shall start at the first bark.

Chief Evaluator Position

The Chief Evaluator is responsible for administering a post evaluation survey to all participants and forwarding the results to the Canine Subcommittee. The Chief Evaluator is also responsible for copying and sending evaluation sheets to each participant and their task force leader as provided on the application. A copy of the evaluation sheets should also be sent to each evaluator so that they have a record of their scoring and comments. This shall be accomplished within ten days of the evaluation. The cost for copying and mailing the evaluations should be included in the evaluation funding and should be reimbursed by the sponsoring task force from allocated funds.

The Chief Evaluator is also responsible for submitting an After Action evaluation report to the FEMA Program Office, the Canine Sub-Committee, DogTalk, and the compiler for the National Certification List. This report shall include the date and type of evaluation, the evaluators for each type, the participants for each type, and the successful certifying teams for each type. Re-certifications should be noted. Any issues, problems or successes shall be noted for future resolution or implementation. In a Type II evaluation, the Chief Evaluator should list each team and their success or failure for each element, which will allow us to track the elements which need increased training effort. This report shall be submitted within ten days of the evaluation.

John G.

Injured Canine

The following recommendations should be referenced when dealing with an injured canine in the course of a DSCRE. First and foremost all parties involved should consider the overall health and welfare of the canine when making decisions during this often-stressful time.

It is the opinion of the Canine Working Group that during a time of injury the official timer for the search event shall not stop the clock. Each Canine Search Specialist should be prepared (equipment and training) to deal with an injured canine during the course of a search problem. To that end, if a minor injury does occur, the CSS should tend to his/her canine and continue with the search problem. If the CSS is not prepared, with

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equipment and training, to deal with the injury then the search problem should stop and the canine taken for medical treatment immediately. If the CSS or evaluator cadre feels the injury is significant enough (to stop the clock) then the search problem should stop and the canine taken for medical treatment immediately.

Evaluators, please be aware, when making this decision, that this is a very stressful time for the CSS. We should make every effort to allow the CSS to make the final decision but we must always consider the health and well being of the canine. A decision to override the handler's decision should include a consensus of all evaluators at that particular search site.

In any event, if a canine is injured during the DSCRE, no matter how minor, a veterinarian should evaluate the canine, at the earliest convenience. Evaluators please record this event on your paperwork; we should document these types of events for future reference.

Questions 3-23-04

Q: Can you be failed for mapping skills?

A: It is not, at this time, the policy to fail an otherwise passing team for inadequate map skills as long as it is the consensus of the evaluation staff that the handler made a good faith effort to produce a useable map. It is an opportunity to help further the handler's knowledge of mapping. Not seriously attempting to produce a useable map is a fallible issue. This is an issue that requires more attention at the Task Force training level.

Q: Can you be failed for building markings?

A: Yes. This is a required skill for good reason. If there is a secondary collapse an incomplete building marking can help rescuers find a missing search team. It also helps searchers keep from re-searching an area that has been cleared when that is not their intention or assignment.

Q: A question arose at the test last weekend. "If a dog passes with a marginal performance with five of six victims found, the dog leaves the victims several times and the evaluators don't think that the team should pass what should we do with that?"

A: It depends. The Canine Working Group needs to review this issue. It is matter of language, interpretation, and application. Comment: The wording for commitment to the scent location in the Type II is good.

Q: During the Type I test if a dog injured itself and the handler feels it can bandage it and go on, who makes the call?

A: The time does not stop. There were a small variety of answers. For now handle on a case-by-case basis. This needs to be addressed by the Canine Working Group. If all three evaluators on a site feel that the evaluation needs to be halted for safety reasons then it should be.

Questions 3-24-04

Q: The Chief evaluator also evaluates?

A: Yes.

Q: The verbiage for market rate of pay leaves a hole for a bean counter to pay less, true?

A: FEMA has made it clear to the Task Forces that \$300 per day is the amount of pay for each evaluator. The wording is to satisfy the lawyers.

Suggestion; the definition of a bark alert should read that it is a MINIMUM of 3 barks.

Suggestion: The after action report should contain any problems which may have occurred at the test. These should not be published in DOGTALK, only the statistics; i.e. how many tested and who passed.

Q: Where can one get a copy of the statement of work?

A: It is in the cooperative agreement.

Q: On the building marking system, does the date go on top?

A: Yes

Q: Where can we get copies of the mapping sheet?

A: Coming out in dog talk and on the web site.

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Q: Whom do you contact for shadow evaluation opportunities?

A: The hosting Task Force.

Q: Do the test/proof dogs do every element including rubble on Type I.

A: Yes, it is preferred that every rubble pile be proofed.

Q: Size of sites, how do you estimate a reasonable area?

A: It is somewhat subjective. The evaluator staff must figure out a balance between size and difficulty (including climate) and rope off the excess.

Q: Where can the evaluator rotation schedule be found?

A: On www.disasterdog.org, although, right now, it should not be considered current because we are not far enough ahead in arranging evaluators for tests. The goal is to have arranged each evaluation staff far enough out that evaluators can plan around when they evaluate.

Q: Where do I find the mapping symbols for victims?

A: www.disasterdog.org under Testing forms/ test day materials

Comment: FEMA funds 9 type I evaluators for each evaluation. Type II evaluators coming up on their expiration date or just wishing to evaluate should call a task force sponsoring a test and ask to evaluate.

Q: May a type II evaluator elect to participate at their personal expense?

A: Certainly.

Questions 3-30-04

Comment: Police department dogs; New York and Nevada dogs are required to be dual-purpose dogs. The dog needs to be able to select which job it is doing. The aggression test is done first, before any search command is given possibly making it unclear what job is to be performed. To bite or not to bite, that is the question. Teams should not be penalized because of the format of the test.

A: The canine subcommittee will address this issue further.

Q: Three barks are required at the barrel and they can fail for doing less?

A: Yes.

Q: Victim markings – can we ask what the other victim markings are?

A: Yes, but it would not affect their score. It is an opportunity to teach.

Q: What is the Chief Evaluator position?

A: The Chief Evaluator is a single point of contact for the hosting task force to the evaluation staff. This evaluator

Coordinates with the Task Force to confirm that the evaluation site is adequate.

Advises and coordinates with the IC to facilitate a fair, smooth running evaluation.

Supervises the distribution of evaluators at the sites.

Organizes the briefings and meetings.

Is responsible for the distribution/collection, completeness and accuracy of paperwork (i.e. score sheets, peer reviews, etc).

Comment: Type II evaluators wishing to keep their slot must call task forces to get themselves used. Only type I evaluators are on the rotation to be called.

Q: I have been a type I handler in the past and a Type I and Type II evaluator in the recent past. Why am I not currently on the evaluator list?

A: The problem is, apparently, that this handler is between dogs and is therefore not currently attached to a Task Force. Some Task Forces are advised by their legal council to require that an individual be a deployable resource to be attached to the Task Force. Under the current rules an individual not attached to a Task Force may not be a FEMA evaluator. This problem needs to be worked out at the task force level.