FEMA

DATE: 14 December 2004

FOR: Rory Rehbeck, Chair
          Search Working Group

FROM: Canine Sub-Committee

SUBJECT: Canine Sub-Committee / Evaluator Conference Call Minutes

Please find the attendance and agenda items addressed on the recent Canine Sub-committee conference call:

MEETING DATE(s) >>	12-8-04 & 12-14-04		
MEMBERSHIP / ATTENDANCE			
12-8-04 Wednesday, 1200 EST, 1 hr		12-14-04 Tuesday, 1700 EST, 1 hr	
Member	**Y/N**	**Member**	**Y/N**
Teresa MacPherson	Chair	Teresa MacPherson Moderator	Chair
Bruce Berry (SWG) Moderator	N	Ann Wichmann	Y
Ann Wichmann	Y	Shirley Hammond	Y
Shirley Hammond	Y	John Gilkey	Y
John Dean	Y	Mike Marks	Y
John Gilkey	Y	Fred Pitts	Y
Mike Marks	Y	Cathy Schiltz	N
Fred Pitts	Y	Nancy Hachmeister	N
Rory Rehbeck (SWG Chair)	N	Bruce Speer	N
Bob Macaulay	N	Elizabeth Kreitler	N
Carol Herse	N	Gary Hay	N
Lynne Engelbert	N	Pat Grant	N
Hilda Wood	N	Cindy Fajardo	N
Anne McCurdy	N	Darren Bobrosky	N
Mike Agnew	N	Bob Sessions	N
Reeny Shannon	N	Debra Tosch	N
Ron Weckbacker	N	Teresa Ortenberger	N
Rose DeLuca	N	Gail LaRoque	N
Jeaneen McKinney	N	Elaine Sawtell	N
Rob Cima	N	Mary Flood	N
Steve Dolezal	N	Amy Rising	N
Deresa Teller	N	Walt Harrison	N
Sheila McKee	N	Lee Turner	N
Rex Ianson	N	Sam Balsam	N
Julie Noyes	N	Randy Gross (attended 12-8)	N

AGENDA ITEMS/DISCUSSION
INTRODUCTION: Bruce Berry
Roll Call: Bruce Berry

The Big Picture Teresa Macpherson
As we evaluate within the parameters of inches and seconds, its sometimes easy to lose sight of the total team. We urge you to look at the Big Picture—we are looking for quality dog teams that can reliably indicate live human scent. As much as we would like to have wording for every situation, Evaluators must sometimes use their judgment and make tough calls. Some good teams will fail and some poor teams will pass, because of the written word. But where we have the flexibility to pass judgment, remember that we are not looking for perfect little robots, but the team that can do the job—the team that we want looking for us and our loved ones.

CSC Update Teresa Macpherson
FEMA has begun to issue certificates that have been backlogged since last March.

New Shadow rules—one application for both levels and the Shadow may shadow the Type 1 & Type II concurrently. The requirements are the same, but they need not be completed in order.

Beginning 2005, the Evaluator Conference calls will be mandatory. As paid professionals, it is incumbent upon us to keep current in our continuing education. And it is only fair to those testing that we all are up to speed and know the rules.

We are still merging procedures from different parts of the country. Let's not dwell on "we've always done it this way" and look to the future, consider all options and improve where we can.

Welcome Kathy Schiltz and Debra Tosch to the 2005 Subcommittee, and a big thanks to Shirley Hammond and Ann Wichmann for their tireless commitment and huge contributions to the Sub-Committee and the system.

After Action Reports Fred Pitts
This year saw the establishment of a new position; the Chief Evaluator. One of the functions of the job is to write an After Action Report. The After Action Report serves multiple purposes; first to serve as a permanent record of the evaluation event. Secondly, as a source of information when investigating complaints concerning the evaluation. The third, but not least important, is as a source of learning that which works well and that which we should never do again.

Now that we have had a year of After Action Reports we are finding that while they are for the most part very good, they all focus on differing information. In an effort to standardize the information we receive, a form for the After Action Report has been made. One of the emphisis of the form will be to list not only who passed but who failed and at which stage of the evaluation.
SWG Chair

Chief Evaluator App and PD   Ann Wichmann

With the establishment of the Chief Evaluator position, we find the need to start an application process to ensure that those doing the job are qualified to do the job. When it is implemented everyone who is eligible and willing will need to apply. Nobody will be grand fathered in.

The application willinclude:

Name, Address, Contact Information, Task Force Affiliation
Date of Type I Canine Certification   Date of Most Recent Certification
Date Rostered FEMA Type I Lead Evaluator

Served as a FEMA rostered lead evaluator at least 6 for each level

Please list experience in coordinating or managing large events, particularly within the FEMA system.
Applicant understands that the Chief Evaluator will be the liaison between the evaluators and the sponsoring task force, and that the resolution of difficult situations and decisions may rely on your skill at conflict management.

Applicant understands that the Chief Evaluator is responsible for preparing a well-written documentation of the evaluation process (After Action Report) and ensuring that all evaluation paperwork is transmitted to participants and task forces within 10 days of the evaluation.

Please attach a written statement from your task force in support of your application to become a Chief Evaluator. The statement should include information on your ability to resolve conflicts, manage large groups of people, and provide leadership in complex circumstances.

Shopping & re-finds, when is it a fail?   John Dean
Does the canine exhibit a focused bark?

When the handler hears the canine barking or is advised by an evaluator that the canine is barking (minimum of three barks), the evaluator will instruct the handler to go to the canine. The handler may now verbally praise and encourage the canine. The handler must proceed directly and safely to the area indicated by the canine. The handler will promptly identify the scent source by the canine's actions. On the first alert, if the handler is unable to quickly locate the scent source by the canine's actions, he or she must immediately leave the site at the direction of the evaluators and restart the search.

***What if the canine performs a re-find, looks back towards the handler, or starts to return to the handler as they approach the area after an initial focused bark alert.
***(The handler may now verbally praise and encourage the canine.)
- If the canine immediately returns to a focused bark alert and the handler is able to quickly locate the scent source there is nothing in the DESCREP that would cause this behavior to be a failure. The lack of a focused bark alert is usually the main issue when the subject of a re-find or shopping behavior is seen during a test.
- Three barks is the requirement to call an alert from a remote location. A continued focused bark alert is necessary to promptly identify the scent source by the canine's actions.

Type II Set-up (moving teams thru as a single unit)   Fred Pitts
The set-up of the test is not to be designed to put further stress on the teams being evaluated. Evaluators arranging the format for this purpose are incorrect.
The presentation of the Type II evaluation process has evolved into two different styles and you may see either at an evaluation. One is taking teams through the elements in groups of three or four, or at least smaller groups. The other is to take the entire group through as a numbered unit. The subject is slated to be a topic of further sub-committee discussion.

Ladder--up and/or down? Mike Marks
The up direction on the ladder is the only allowable direction in the evaluation. In training canines should learn both the up and down direction.

"Slow" what should it be, and how to evaluate it   Mike Marks
We are looking for a visible change of pace upon the delivery of the command. We are looking for demonstration of control by the handler over the canine. Use common sense and do not fail a dog only for this issue.

Lack of control -- what is it? Shirley Hammond
Control and safety.
Use common sense, it is somewhat subjective. Our goal is not to seek ways to fail teams but to certify that a team has demonstrated a base level of skill. The handler must maintain continual control of the canine -- at all times.   The handler is responsible for the care and safety of the canine at all times.   These two sentences are very important and must be considered by the evaluators if the canine and handler are not working as a team. If the handler is not in control of the canine it is not being responsible for that canine's safety. Use common sense, it is somewhat subjective. Our goal is not to seek ways to fail teams but to certify that a team has demonstrated a base level of the skill.   Again use good common sense. Some dogs are such eager workers that they may anticipate, but if they respond to the handler's come or stay commands then they are under control. You and the dog area team and should demonstrate mutual respect and cooperation.

❑   In regards to agility:

- o The canine's behavior on the obstacle must be evaluated as a safety issue.
- o Slow is defined as a visible change in pace. We are looking for control. Use common sense and do not fail a dog only for this issue.
- o If an eager dog anticipates/ desires to get on an obstacle that it has not been directed to, but responds in a timely manner to the handler's commands that is not cause to fail. If this behavior continues then it is possible that the team may fail on the Ground Rule: The handler must maintain control of the canine.
- o In regards to a dog that leaves the course, for whatever reason, and fails to respond the handler's command in a timely manner then the it is possible for the evaluators to fail the dog on Ground Rues:
  - The handler must maintain continual control of the canine -- at all times.
  - The handler is responsible for the care and safety of the canine at all times.
- o The ladder is an up the ladder element. Train the dog to go up and down the ladder
- o The down ladder requirement is being considered in committee.

- ❑ The DSCREP says (in agility portion of Type II test) that the canine "should" negotiate the obstacles "confidently and carefully". It doesn't say they must, and it isn't on the eval sheet.   Does this mean that even if the dogs falls repeatedly and /slips and slides, crashes and cries his way up the ladder, across the plank, or the wobbly surface, that it must be a pass? Is there any performance criteria except that the canine eventually gets across the obstacle?
  - o The handler is responsible for the care and safety of the canine. Use common sense. There are some dogs that talk and complain about things they do not like but they can do them. Talking is not cause to fail a dog if the dog is demonstrating he can do the skill. On the other hand, if the handler is not using common sense and fulfilling his responsibility for the care and safety of the canine then it is up to the evaluators to act on behalf of the canine using ground rules.

False alerts Teresa MacPherson
- o An alert must be correctly called by the handler. Thus, a dog may false alert, but if the handler calls it correctly, there is no penalty. Once the alert is called/flagged, it cannot be taken back. In other words, a handler cannot accumulate alerts and then decide which ones to keep. ☺
- o In flagging the alerts, the handler should make sure it can be seen, even if the dog alerted underneath rubble. In this case, the handler should use two markers. This will aid the handler in his mapping and help locate a victim quicker. In any event, flagging will not fail a team.
- o In setting up distractions, they should not overlap with the scent of the victim. The subcommittee has made a policy that 0-3 distractions are permitted on any one pile with a maximum of 5 total.

SWG Chair

Pinpointing as time runs out--how much time?: Ann Wichmann
  o Must occur before the time runs out, period. But may be done from a
     short remote distance. Flagging may be done afterwards.

AGILITY   John Gilkey
In the Agility Handler Information section of the DSCREP it states that:

- The canine should negotiate the obstacles confidently and carefully.
- The canine should negotiate the obstacles under handler control.

This discussion is to clarify the use of the word "Should" in these statements. Webster's
dictionary describes "should" as the past tense of "shall" and states that it is used to
express an obligation. In the context of a dog doing agility work we ALL have an
obligation to make sure the canine is completing each obstacle in a SAFE manner in
CONTROL of the handler. We all know this is a subjective call; this is why a consensus
of three evaluators must be reached before a final decision is made for or against a
testing team.

While we are on the topic of semantics the Ground Rules Section of the Type II test
states:

- The handler is required to follow all Ground Rules.
- The handler must maintain continual control of the canine.
- The handler is responsible for the care and safety of the canine at all times.

If someone would like to challenge the current wording of the DSCREP, the evaluators
do have the option of failing a testing team for not following these ground rules.

The bottom line is that we are not out to intentionally fail teams, we should all
encourage hard work and we should be proud and excited for each new team that has
passed. Along those same line we should not be afraid to "Make the tough call" and fail
a team who is out of control or unsafe.

WORKING AS AN EVALUATOR   John Gilkey

There is no easy way to discuss the next topic without sounding as if we are preaching,
it does not involve a "dog issue", it does not involve a "test issue", it involves an
EVALUATOR issue… When you are evaluating a test you are working for the
Sponsoring Task Force, as an agent of FEMA. In either case a code of conduct
applies. A case has been brought to the attention of the sub-committee of an evaluator
being brought in a day early to set up a test but, that person DID NOT set up the test
and instead chose to do some personal business.   Not only does this put the Chief
Evaluator in a tough situation; they are expecting you to help with set up, but it also
constitutes an act of FRAUD. The Chief Evaluator will coordinate with the sponsoring

Task Force who has done what and for how many hours they should be paid. As an Evaluator, you are hired to perform a job namely set-up and evaluate a test, any impropriety in doing this looks bad on the entire program. We as evaluators have to hold ourselves at a higher standard than the average handler; we are responsible to make sure tests are fair and impartial. How would it look if this incident were to be on the front page of your local newspaper? What would you as John/Jane Q. Citizen think? Let us all take this as a reminder that we are being watched, in both good and bad ways, and to police ourselves as not to tarnish the reputation of this program.

Mapping access on the Type I test   Fred Pitts
Some evaluators give handlers their original access (perimeter or limited) PLUS the
  ability to return to any alert sites, while others limit them to only the original access
  which is correct?
  - o Access is set to the site search criteria;
    - ▪ Full access pile – full access to site during mapping.
    - ▪ Perimeter access pile – access to the perimeter and high point only while mapping.
    - ▪ Limited access pile – access to the starting point only while mapping.

Questions and Answers – All

Limited access pile - can person stay on pile to do mapping? Yes, can stay at the point that they are on to do the map at the end of their search time. However, once they leave the pile, they cannot go back on.

How soon is Dean Scott getting the calls out for tests to be evaluated? Two months ahead of the test, but he has to wait for the TF to make their 3 selections.

Chief evaluator, you must be or have been a Type I handler to be the Chief. A STM cannot be the Chief.

Research a biannual meeting for evaluators in place of a test. Can't do this but the CSC has requested FEMA to have an evaluator workshop. Or could combine an evaluator meeting with an informal training weekend to have face-to-face discussions.

Are any TF's doing any unofficial Type I test? Is there going to be any requirement to pass a Type I pretest before taking the real Type I test? No.

Slow. Does this mean that a dog moves slow throughout the entire course or does it mean the dog goes slow when the handler says slow? Yes. Overall, it means slow and controlled. There will be some discussion on the CSC to remove this requirement.

Climb up/not down on the ladder. There is a set of policies that will be updated in January of each year. The policies will be posted on the disasterdog.org website.

Tape on the bark barrel. Do not use duct tape to hold the lid on the bark barrel. Screw the lid in place or bury the lid end of the bark tube into the dirt and drill holes in the other end for scent to come out.

Pinpointing - care, safety and welfare of the dog. Pinpoint the location of the subject, perform a quick vet check, and continue searching. When completed the search problem and off the pile, do a quick vet check, water dog then do the debrief, then go back and do a complete vet check.

Loss of control - agility. Control if done unsafely the canine should fail, i.e. the dog is not in control on obstacles. If the dog is not in control on a single element then don't fail it, but if not in control on multiple elements, fail the dog.

Evaluators need to fill out evaluator paperwork on the pile during each of the handler's testing and not wait until a break or the end of the day. If the evaluators cannot fill out the paperwork due to rain/snow, have a "write-in-the-rain" book/paper to make notes on and then transfer to the evaluator sheet later. Don't rely on your memory to fill out the paperwork. This is an injustice to the testing teams and fair and complete evaluations.

False Alerts—If handler gains access to a pile by virtue of a false alert, correctly called by handler, he must leave pile and restart. Rationale is that it's a team effort and if handler can read his dog accurately they will not be penalized for a correctly called false alert (though there's an obvious training problem).

Agility—on an obstacle, if dog is "heeling" along with handler is this preceding? Dog's nose must be in front of all parts of handler's body.
Agility—should we have set distances between obstacles? CSC will consider.
Distractions—0 to 3 on any one pile with a maximum total of 5—applies to scent distractions only.

Type I course construction reads "the rubble debris should consist of concrete, wood, mixed material, partially or completely collapsed structures". Does this mean the test sites do not have to be predominantly rubble? CSC will review.

"Slow"—agreement in this call as to its elimination in agility.