



**FEMA**

**DATE:** December 28, 2005

**MEMORANDUM**

**FOR:** Search Working Group  
Chair

**DATE:** Dec 16, 2005

**FROM:** Canine Subcommittee

**SUBJECT:** Minutes: Canine Coordinator Telecon Facilitated by the Canine Subcommittee

Please find the attendance and items addressed at the recent Canine Coordinator conference call:

<b>DATE</b> December 16, 2005	Call #2
<b>Subcommittee Member</b>	<b>Dec 16</b>
Teresa MacPherson, Chair	Y
John Dean	Y
John Gilkey	Y
Mike Marks	Y
Cathy Schiltz	Y
Debra Tosch	Y

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**COORDINATOR ATTENDANCE**

<b>TF</b>	<b>Canine Coordinator</b>
<b>AZTF-1</b>	<b>John Dean</b>
<b>CATF-1</b>	<b>Ron Weckbacher</b>
<b>CATF-2</b>	<b>Bill Monahan</b>
<b>CATF-3</b>	<b>Shirley Hammond, Pat Grant</b>
<b>CATF-4</b>	<b>Darren Bobrosky</b>
<b>CATF-5</b>	<b>Terry Scottt (absent)</b>
<b>CATF-6</b>	<b>Dave Lesh (absent)</b>
<b>CATF-7</b>	<b>Randy Gross</b>
<b>CATF-8</b>	<b>Steve Swaney (absent)</b>
<b>COTF-1</b>	<b>Ann Wichmann</b>
<b>FLTF-1</b>	<b>Mike Marks</b>
<b>FLTF-2</b>	<b>Craig Radelman</b>
<b>INTF-1</b>	<b>Anne McCurdy</b>
<b>MATF-1</b>	<b>Lee Prentiss</b>
<b>MDTF-1</b>	<b>John Gilkey, Mike Berry</b>
<b>MOTF-1</b>	<b>Schiltz, Cathy</b>
<b>NETF-1</b>	<b>Dan Wright (absent)</b>
<b>NMTF-1</b>	<b>Bruce Berry</b>
<b>NVTF-1</b>	<b>Paul Bailey</b>
<b>NYTF-1</b>	<b>Joe Caputo</b>
<b>OHTF-1</b>	<b>Athena Robbins</b>

**COORDINATOR ATTENDANCE**

<b>TF</b>	<b>Canine Coordinator</b>
<b>PATF-1</b>	<b>Dan Hartman</b>
<b>TNTF-1</b>	<b>Deborah Burnett (absent)</b>
<b>TXTF-1</b>	<b>Susann Brown</b>
<b>UTTF-1</b>	<b>Jim Winder</b>
<b>VATF-1</b>	<b>Sonja Heritage (absent)</b>
<b>VATF-2</b>	<b>Jim Ingledue (absent)</b>
<b>WATF-2</b>	<b>Tony Sirgedas</b>

**Roll call**

**Minutes from last call**

- Changed #4 to reflect that teams may take the FSA at home or away *"in accordance with the policy of the individual Task Force"*

**1) Discuss Budgets & Training:**

- Canine element—Non-profit? Annual cost?
- Training sites—cost to create and maintain?
- Care and maintenance of canine—vet/food/stipend/insurance (certified dogs only?)
- Training—TF sponsored training trips?
- Evaluators—TF sponsored shadows?
- Assessments—how often? Home or away? Inside or outside evaluators?
- Progress Checks—method used?
- Timelines—for certification
- Log books—checked?

**2) Roundtable**

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#### 1) Discussion:

- AZ-TF1 has no set budget policy. The budget is based on funding received each year. They have a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization (Arizona Search Dogs, Inc.) which helps fund the purchase of new dogs, care, and training of CSS teams through fund raising and donations. Local community members and Fire personnel can also designate part or all of their United Way donations to the canine program through the 501(c)3. The non-profit group owns the dogs and works as partners with AZ-TF1 in supporting their CSS program. The Dept. reimburses the group for most normal medical care and routine costs are billed to The Phoenix Fire Dept. by their team Veterinarian and her office. This arrangement between the nonprofit and the TF is a work in progress and is adjusted each year to correspond with available funding and needs of the TF and training group.
- CA-TF1 has no program set up at this time. Each handler pays their own expenses.
- CA-TF2 took years to draft and re-draft their canine policy, which has just recently been implemented. They have six dogs in their program (4 certified and 2 in training). Each handler receives \$1500/yr per dog and a kennel, crate, and e-collar. Food expense is reimbursed. No separate medical expense is reimbursed, but the handler may use any or all of the \$1500 as he pleases. Type I teams are TF supported for training once a month out of the four required trainings. Teams in training are TF supported for training once a month out of the seven required trainings. They are requesting a \$15,000 canine budget for training and travel, whereby each handler will be supported for 2 days a month. Food and vet policy will remain as is.
- CA-TF3: After a team passes progress check III they receive VPI insurance. The handler receives a stipend for maintenance (\$83/mo). South San Francisco FD handlers were given crates, dishes and bowls. This does not apply to civilian handlers. The TF does not maintain a training site.
- CA-TF4 has nothing formally set up to cover anything. All handlers have independent arrangements either through their Dept. or the Foundation.
- CA-TF5 absent
- CA-TF6 absent
- CA-TF7 has no formal policy for its canine element. Handler's have individual arrangements with their fire departments. The Depts. are very cooperative about granting time off for trainings, including those provided by the Foundation. The departments also grant time off for handlers to attend courses, certifications tests, etc.
- CA-TF8 absent
- CO-TF1 has liability insurance for training. Certified teams receive a \$600/yr stipend and teams that have passed a pretest receive \$300/yr as a stipend. They have a couple of non-TF supported training/testing sites.
- FL-TF1 pays for dog food, vet bills, has 4 vehicles dedicated to K9 and is looking to acquire a van for transport. Support program for sending handlers to out of town trainings is in progress. In process of developing advanced test/training site.
- FL-TF2 put aside \$100,000 for the K9 program last year out of grant funds. They put money into Foundation training (they backfilled their handlers going to California for the handler's course and group trainings). Backfilling is the highest expense. Currently not backfilling, except for shadowing and testing. The TF supports travel for training, excluding backfill. They have spec'ed out a 24' trailer for K9 teams to use for group trainings, etc. Supplies cost \$25,000 including, hot dog alarms, crates, e-collars, etc. The TF pays for VPI insurance after certification. The handler pays for the policy and the TF reimburses them. There is no cooperative agreement between the TF and fire departments.

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- IN-TF1: Their Non-profit spent \$20,000 including the canine evaluation test. They operate solely on donations. Their training sites are free. The handlers do have a vet that donates its services. The TF does not provide dog food. The TF does not sponsor outside training trips other than CSS, CPs, and tests. There is no shadow support.
- MA-TF1: While on one year probation the handlers receive no benefits. After 1<sup>st</sup> year they receive a \$1000 stipend, 2<sup>nd</sup> year \$2000, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> year \$3000. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> year it stays at \$3000. The expenditures must be pre-approved and then get signed off. Each handler on a fire department has worked out their own personal schedules with their depts. The training sites are all free sites but if hosting a test where machines are needed, it comes out of test funds. If handlers pass their test, it does not come out of their stipend. If they do not pass it is subtracted from the stipend. They have no pet insurance but if an emergency incident occurs, the TF will pay for it, especially if it happens during training.
- MD-TF1 handlers are attached to fire depts. so money goes into the general fund. Their K9 annual cost is unknown as of now. They are trying to get training sites but as of now there is no cost to maintain a site since they use the academy's site. Care and maintenance of K9s (vet and food) is covered once certified (civilians). No pet insurance is paid for by the TF. The TF will pay travel for any "team" trips but handlers have not attempted to get reimbursed for any individual trips. Backfill is paid if the team goes out of town. The TF sponsors evaluators, shadows and testing teams. There is a van for K9 team with kennels to use for deployment and training. The TF purchases six months of dog food for handlers at a time. Cert Preps: TF is happy with the last one and is planning to send four to the next.
- MO-TF1's program is going to change this year but in the past, if they pass an in-house test they were approved for two training trips to prepare for testing. If Type II, they were approved for 2-3 training trips, and, if Type I, they were approved for 3-4 training trips. The TF issues a van and pays for travel. If a team is certified the TF pays for pet insurance and they have a team vet that donates heartworm, etc. The TF also pays for dog food if certified. The TF reimburses for testing if the team passes. If the don't pass, they do not pay. The TF does not pay for shadowing. The TF site is maintained by the TF.
- NE-TF1: absent.
- NM-TF1 reimburses handlers for pre-approved trainings, whether in training or certified. They have no site maintenance. Handlers are reimbursed for two tests. They are trying to have TF sponsored medical, food, and two trainings a year. They are also trying to receive a stipend for replacing agility equipment and additional props. Due to deployment donations, the K9 group formed a non-profit to off-set expenses the TF does not reimburse. NM-TF1 has monthly TF trainings. The K9 teams attend the TF training and then train on the second day of the TF training. A new team first attends a TF training without their K9. K9 Team assessments are 4 times a year.
- NV-TF1 K9s are owned and paid for by the TF. They do not pay for insurance on K9. The food is paid for by the police dept. Kennels and the police dept.'s training elements are paid for by the TF. The TF also pays for training if pre-approved.
- NY-TF1 dogs are owned by the police department. Vet bills and food is paid for by the PD. The only medical the TF pays for is the FEMA vet check required post deployments. Trips are covered by the TF. Teams are evaluated monthly by the PD. New handlers and dogs are selected for the TF from candidate PD canine teams. They are looking for dogs that can cross train while recruiting their canines. PD agility training has been modified to incorporate US&R canines as well.

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- OH-TF1's probationary period is 6-12 months. They are currently developing a policy. There is no vet care for canines on probation but if catastrophic the TF will help. The TF provides insurance for certified teams. Their site was built using the TF's budget and testing fund. Their agility site was donated by the local community. A K9 vehicle was purchased by a fire dept, not the TF. The TF will pay for testing and FEMA courses but does not pay for shadows. The TF bought vests for the dogs. Concerning backfill, most handlers are civilians but for firefighters, it is up to the individual dept.
- PA-TF1 pays for travel and per diem for all TF teams, In the 2006/2007 budget they are looking at a stipend of \$1500 in addition to the travel expenses. The TF does not pay for insurance. The TF is planning to send 4 teams to the next CP.
- TN-TF1: absent
- TX-TF1 is planning to send 4 K9 teams to the Florida CP. See Susann's write-up:
  - Budgets
    - Canine Element
      - A Non-profit
      - Cost for our canine program this past year was \$100,000. That will vary depending upon the number of handlers training and testing.
    - Cost to create our rubble sites
      - \$25,000 for 2 sites with donated materials (concrete/wood) and use of our own vehicles for transport (cost reflects personnel costs and equipment rental to place rubble)
      - TF estimates it could easily be 10 times that if materials are purchased and if the site must be engineered
    - Care of Canines
      - Provides costs of annual visit to include exam, vaccinations, heartworm preventative for certified dogs only. Does not provide for retired canines
    - Training
      - Sponsors up to 3 training trips per year per handler for handlers in training. Have done 1 per year for those at the Type I level
    - Evaluators
      - Pays for expenses incurred in the shadow evaluation process
  - Training
    - Assessments
      - Currently does not do additional testing outside of what is required for certification. Most handlers have certified away vs. home.
    - Progress Checks
      - Have written their own and during training, they're given once every 6 to 8 weeks. Our progress checks go up to Type II. TF will rewrite them early this year to go from initial training to Type I.
    - Timelines for Certification
      - TF will make some changes due to the Type I certification requirement. TF previously required handlers to be Type II between 6 months and 15 months of training, depending upon dog's initial training level. TF will alter that to about 18 months for Type I.
    - Log Books
      - Doesn't check them though would like to have a web-based tracking program similar to what other detector dog programs have.

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- UT-TF1 pays for the purchase of dogs, maintenance, food, equipment and cost for training and testing. The K9 program has received two years of seed money. The long term plan is to go to a plan similar to AZ's...a non-profit funding mechanism to augment and support the TF program. The fire department will allow their handlers to train while on duty in exchange for demos, other PR, etc. They have two vehicles that are not dedicated to K9 but they are used primarily by K9. They also have one vehicle that is dedicated to K9.
- VA-TF1: absent
- VA-TF2: absent
- WA-TF1: Most expenses are run through a non-profit canine organization. The TF sponsors two off-site trainings a year per team. Tests are reimbursed for first attempt (pass or fail) and upon certification. They have no site maintenance. Vet care is supported by TF on deployment, but if the canine injured during a TF training, the TF will pick up the vet tab. The TF provides a driver to transport their agility props to different areas.

#### **2) Roundtable:**

##### **Q: Do most TF's require training logs ?**

- VA-TF1 does and they are submitted monthly
- UT-TF1 does and submits to TF
- CO-TF1 uses a BLOG system. Also has a resume on each dog
- MD-TF1 uses a conference call between handlers before the training (train on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend). They use the TX model.

##### **Q: Human Remains detection in US&R program- what are TFs doing about it?**

- ? Some TFs have members that are also on State/local teams who are certified in other disciplines. The canine coordinators know who is certified in what discipline. TF funds can't be used for recovery training. Non-profit group funds can be used more freely. Comment was made that while we want to be prepared for anything and everything, we must ensure that our dogs remain well-trained live-find search dogs and are not diluted by cross-training.

##### **Q: Is it possible for each coordinator to break down what is covered by the TF?**

- ? CSC will create a spreadsheet and distribute to coordinators to complete

#### **Next Call**

—June 2006, roundtable format